



Mutual
AGREEMENT

Mutual Agreement

(A Presidential Romance)

By
Chiquita Dennie

Copyright © 2020 by Chiquita Dennie

All rights reserved.

No part of this book may be reproduced in any form or by any electronic or mechanical means, including information storage and retrieval systems, without written permission from the author, except for the use of brief quotations in a book review.

This is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, and incidents are either the product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously, and any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, business establishments, events, or locales is entirely coincidental.

For questions and comments about this book,
please contact 304 Publishing at
304publishing@gmail.com. Visit the official
website

Table of Contents

[Title Page](#)

[Copyright Page](#)

[Latest Releases](#)

[Introduction](#)

[Synopsis](#)

[Disclaimer](#)

[Chapter 1: Sebastian](#)

[One Year Earlier—President Hunter’s Fundraiser](#)

[Two Months Later](#)

[One Month Later](#)

[Chapter 2: Sebastian | Present Day](#)

[Chapter 3: Laila](#)

[Chapter 4: Laila](#)

[Chapter 5: Laila](#)

[Chapter 6: Sebastian](#)

[Chapter 7: Sebastian | Two Days Later](#)

[Chapter 8: Laila](#)

[Chapter 9: Laila](#)

[Chapter 10: Laila | One Week Later](#)

[One Week Earlier](#)

[Present Day](#)

[Chapter 11: Sebastian](#)

[Chapter 12: Sebastian](#)

[Chapter 13: Laila](#)

[Chapter 14: Sebastian](#)

[Chapter 15: Laila | One Month Later](#)

[Chapter 16: Laila](#)

[Chapter 17: Sebastian](#)

[Chapter 18: Sebastian | One Day Later](#)

[Chapter 19: Laila | One Month Later](#)

[Epilogue: Sebastian | One Year Later](#)

[Playlist: Mutual Agreement](#)

[About The Author](#)

[What's Next?](#)

[304 Publishing Company](#)

[Catalogue of Releases](#)

[Acknowledgments](#)



Latest Releases

LATEST RELEASES FROM Chiquita Dennie

The Early Years-A Prequel Short Story Antonio
and Sabrina: Struck in Love 1, 2, 3,4,5 Heart of
Stone, Book 1 (Emery & Jackson)

Heart Of Stone Book 1.5 Emery & Jackson A Valentine's Day
Short

Janice and Carlo: Captivated By His Love

Heart of Stone, Book 2 (Jordan and Damon)

Temptation

Heart of Stone, Book 3 (Angela and Brent)

Bottoms Up Heart of Stone, Book 3.5(Jessica and Joseph
Short

Cocky Catcher

Bossy Billionaire

Love Shorts:A Collection of Short Stories

Joaquin Fuertes (The Fuertes Cartel Book 1)

Exposed (Salvation Society Novel)

Joaquin Fuertes (The Fuertes Cartel Book 2)

Refuel(A Driven World Novel)

Pressure(A Driven World Novel)

Until Serena(HEA World Novel)

Exposed (Salvation Society Novel)

Heart of Stone, Book 4 (Jessica and Joseph)

Upcoming Releases (2021/2022):

She's All I Need

Summer Break Series 1-3

Untitled Small Town Series 1-4

Something Gained

Dare To Love



Introduction

GRAB SOME WINE AND get ready for more spicy, sinful, sexy romance.

Are you signed up for my newsletter?

Join today and find out all the latest in new releases, contests, giveaways, sneak peeks and more.



Synopsis

I'M SEBASTIAN HUNTER, President of the United States. My job and reputation rely on discretion. Those around me know their roles. My rivals can't wait for me to make a mistake. Now that I've met her, they have their chance, and they intend to use it to their full advantage.

She and I had an agreement—one and done, but she broke our agreement and I'm left to pick up the pieces and deal with the fallout.

This isn't what I signed up for, but it's my reality. If I handle this right, I hope I don't lose her in the process.



Disclaimer

THIS WORK OF FICTION contains strong language and explicit sexual content and is only intended for mature readers. This story may contain unconventional situations, language, and sexual encounters that may offend some readers. If you're looking for sweet, fluffy romance, I would recommend another book. This book is for mature readers (18+).



Chapter 1: Sebastian



I LEANED BACK IN MY chair and closed my eyes in aggravation as I listened to the ringing phone. My driver and security detail had called me from the car and told me she was refusing to get in. We'd done the same dance every time since this began. I blew out a breath of frustration and ran a hand down my face when I heard the phone get picked up on the other line. "Get in the car," I demanded, checking the time on my watch. I didn't like to keep Tony waiting on her. She was pissing me off with this attitude; she knew I needed to be somewhere in an hour.

"No," her sexy voice drummed through the phone.

I closed my eyes and massaged my temples. "Do you want me to come and get you personally? Is that what this is about — me showing my face?" I snapped, running a hand down my face. I sat up, annoyed.

"This is about you, thinking I'll come at your demand. It doesn't work like that," she replied.

I sighed, thinking of the first day we met. I could admit that this wasn't supposed to go this far. Laila was testing my patience, and she knew what that would mean.

"What do you want?" I questioned.

"I want you to leave me alone and find someone else."

I chuckled at her comment; she was so determined to push me away. Still, I had news for her—our agreement would never end. I needed her like the air I breathed; I was falling even deeper in love. I couldn't confess to something we'd both mutually agreed would never happen. The situation had started as just sex, and nothing else. Falling in love with a woman who used to be an escort was not something that I could tell my family and colleagues about.

“That'll never happen,” I responded.

“Sebastian, we need to end this,” Laila said.

“Laila, get in the car and meet me now.”

A knock on my office door interrupted us, and my assistant walked inside. I stood and nodded at her.

“They're ready for you, Mr. President,” Joanne said, and I held my index finger up, letting her know I'd be there in a second.

“I think they need you more, Mr. President,” Laila said and ended the call.

“Laila... Laila!” I growled and slammed the phone down on the receiver. I buttoned my jacket and moved around to the front of the desk. I stared at the presidential seal with my hands in my pockets.

A meeting with my senior staff about the upcoming agenda was supposed to happen tomorrow morning. But a last-minute change in the legislation's wording had hindered the plans I'd made for tonight. The meeting would carry on for hours and hours if I didn't speak up fast enough.

“Mr. President.” Claudette, the Chief of Staff, strolled inside with the Deputy Chief of Staff, Charles, and the Communications Director, Will.

“Claudette, Charles, have a seat. Will, I thought you went home sick?” I questioned, taking the binder off my desk.

“I’m fine, sir.” Will waved me off and sat next to Claudette.

I tapped his shoulder, then strolled back to my desk and leaned against it with my ankles crossed. I flipped through the dates and schedules for upcoming events.

“Mr. President, we wanted to meet with you about the latest housing proposal,” Charles brought up.

I’d run for president two years ago, and we’d made strides in certain areas of the country: proposing higher tax cuts, implementing campaign financing, and drawing up education plans to hire more teachers. No one thought I could win; as a freshman senator from California, I had spoken about things that would be revolutionary.

As a single Thirty-eight year-old man with no kids, the media tried to bring up any and all of my past relationships. If they only knew about my current situation with Laila Daniels, they would destroy us in the papers.

“What’s changed?” I asked.

My phone rang. I held my hand up to stop him from continuing and answered the call on the office line.

“Sir, I have Tony on Line 2 for you,” Joanne said.

“Put him through,” I stated and waited for the call to come in from the car.

“Mr. President, I have your package,” Tony told me.

I smiled. She needed me as much as I needed her. “Secure the package, Tony; I’ll be there soon,” I replied, ended the call, and glanced at the staff.

“Should we reschedule, Mr. President?” Claudette asked, knowing that I was going to cancel to meet up with Laila. Some people might question why Claudette would keep a secret like this, but she had been a longtime friend. At first, it didn’t go over well with her, but over time, she’d come to respect my decisions and secrets. However, once in a blue moon, we’d clash.

She was married to my other best friend, Ray Garret, a fellow congressman in the Senate. He was the reason I’d met Laila a year ago.



One Year Earlier—President Hunter’s Fundraiser

I TOOK A SIP OF THE 30-year-old scotch, and the smooth salted-caramel aftertaste lingered on my tongue. Claudette hated when I snuck off to be alone, but these things were boring, and I

hated having to listen to boring stories from older congressman, telling me I was doing too much too fast and changing the landscape of our country.

I finished off the drink, placed the glass atop the desk, and left the private study of Hollywood filmmaker, Elliot Stedam. I opened the door, walked out, and accidentally bumped into someone. She almost fell, but I caught her when I wrapped my arms around her waist.

“Excuse me, I didn’t see you there,” I said.

“No problem, Mr. President,” she replied, smoothing out her dress. She lifted her head, and my breath caught in hesitation. I cleared my throat. “Can I have my arm back?” she asked

I looked down and noticed that I was still holding her arm.

“If I say no...?” I remarked with a sly smirk.

“Then my date will be upset and start looking for me,” she answered and bit her bottom lip.

“Who are you here with?” I asked, not taking my eyes off her full heart-shaped lips.

The music from the jazz band started to play in the background. Claudette had told Elliot that it was more of an old Hollywood theme for today, so most of the guests would be dressed up.

“I’m here with Carlton Stewart. Do you know him?” she asked.

I knew Carlton really well; he was my former rival during the primary for the election. In the beginning, we made a pledge to not do any attack ads. But the second he was down in the polls, multiple fake stories came out about me and my family. “I do. I thought he

was in a relationship,” I commented as I released her arm and slid my hands into my pockets.

She tilted her head and grinned, showing wide white teeth. I scanned from the top of her hair down to her thick curvy frame in her tight red dress with a split up to her thigh, and one shoulder strap. The low-cut neckline showed off her plump breasts. “Tonight, he’s single,” she responded and started to walk off.

I caught her by the elbow. “Wait.”

“Mr. President, I’ve already made a donation to your fundraiser,” she turned around and said.

I chuckled at her statement. “I appreciate that, but I wanted to know how long you have been seeing Carlton.”

“Why?” she inquired, placing her hand on her hip.

Before I could respond, the announcer called my name. “Ladies and gentlemen, President Sebastian Hunter,” the announcer said.

“I think you’re being summoned,” she stated, pointing at the stage as the crowd started clapping.

“What’s your name?” I asked.

“Why?”

We started to walk back into the party room.

“I’d like to talk to you about your donation,” I replied.

“You won’t need my name. I can promise that we won’t run in the same circles,” she explained.

Claudette started to walk over to us, but I wanted to continue finding out more from this intriguing woman. “There you are.

Are you ready?" Claudette asked, standing next to me and waving her hand in my face as I watched the young woman walk up to Carlton and lock arms with him. "Mr. President, are you listening?" Claudette asked.

"I'm sorry, what?"

"Who was that?" Claudette gestured to the sexy woman, who then disappeared into the crowd.

"I don't know, but I want you to get her information."

"Why?" Claudette asked, folding her arms. "She donated."

"You've never wanted to know the names of everyone who donates," Claudette said.

"Well, I'm changing my mind. I don't need a speech," I answered, sliding my hands into my pockets..

"Are you sure?"

The blinding flash of the cameras surprised us as we started to walk toward the stage.

I shook hands with the announcer and grabbed the microphone. I waved to the crowd. "Ladies and gentleman, I want to thank you for coming tonight."

I was greeted with a loud roar of cheers and clapping. I glanced across the sea of people and spotted Carlton, whispering in the ear of the beauty whom I was speaking with a few minutes ago. She stared up at me, not taking her eyes away.

I cleared my throat. "I hope the media knows I didn't pay for that reaction," I said, and they laughed.

"We love you, Mr. President!" a young woman yelled out.

"I love you, too."

"Hunter! Hunter!" The loud cheers started up again.

"Thank you, thank you. I just want to say I appreciate the support for what we're doing in my administration." I continued to look out into the crowd. "The money we raise will help us continue for the next election."

"Are you running again, sir?" someone called out from the back of the room.

"All I will say is that the fight doesn't end with the presidential election. We have local elections, as well," I answered.

The announcer came back onstage and took the microphone. "Thank you, Mr. President. We'll continue the rest of the evening with food and drinks," he announced.

I stepped offstage and took photos with a few people, as Claudette stood behind us, directing the crowd. I smiled, but my mind was still on the woman I'd bumped into, who'd started to walk out of the room with Carlton. I decided it was now or never if I wanted to make a move. Was it stupid? Probably, but I needed to know her name before she left.

"Excuse me for one second," I told the couple that had walked over for a photograph.

"Where are you going?" Claudette asked.

“I’ll be right back.” I pushed through the crowd as the Secret Service surrounded me for protection. “Carlton, I’m surprised to see you here,” I blurted out, looking between him and his date.

“Mr. President, I wouldn’t miss any opportunity to check on my competition.” Carlton chuckled, grabbing his coat from the receptionist at the door. We stood in the lobby, while more guests came and went.

“Of course, you wouldn’t. Did you get my email about the tax plans?” I asked, creating any excuse to prolong her stay.

He held her long fur coat up as she slid her arms inside. “I did; I was going to reply and have my assistant follow up,” Carlton explained.

“My Chief of Staff will set up a meeting, Where’s Margaret? Last I heard, you two were engaged,” I boldly stated.

His face dropped, then he grimaced. She shook her head and giggled. “We broke up,” he explained.

“Oh, well, are you going to introduce me to your date?” I extended my hand to her. She looked down at it, then reached over to shake.

“Laila is my friend. Laila Daniels” Carlton said.

Now, I had a name to go with the beauty that stopped me in my tracks. Her sensual dark brown skin glowed against her red dress. “Nice to meet you, Laila Daniels.”

“You, too, Mr. President.”

“I hope we’ll be seeing you again at another event.”

“I doubt you’ll see me again,” Laila said and turned to leave.

I gripped her palm tighter, not letting her. “Why do you say that?”

“I didn’t vote for you,” Laila smartly stated, walking off with Carlton and laughing.

“Mr. President, we need you to take a few questions,” Claudette said.

“Find out everything you can about Laila Daniels.”

“Who’s Laila?” Claudette asked. “Hopefully, a special friend.”



Two Months Later

“WHERE ARE YOU GOING?” Claudette asked.

“I’m having lunch with Ray,” I replied.

“Why wasn’t I invited?” Claudette questioned as Joanne placed file-folders atop my desk.

I stood to take my coat off the rack. “I have some things to talk to him about.”

“I’m the Chief of Staff, sir.”

“I know, Claudette; I hired you.” I joked, opened the door, and treaded out.

Claudette followed me. “So, why am I not coming to a lunch meeting with you and the congressman?”

“Because I requested that he come alone. Don’t worry, I’ll explain everything later,” I said.

The Secret Service opened the front door of the White House, and I got inside the waiting car.

“Fine, but I want a full report,” Claudette complained and narrowed her eyes in frustration.

“Okay, boss,” I chortled and shut the door of the motorcade. Claudette had always believed in me since all of us were in college at Harvard.

I hadn’t gotten Laila out of my mind since the moment we’d met. I even went so far as to call Elliot to see if he knew anything about her and if she was involved with Carlton seriously.

The driver pulled off onto the road with Tony, my Head of Security, giving out commands. 20 minutes later, we ended up at Ray and Claudette’s home on 29th Street. I stepped out of

the vehicle, and the front door opened. I went upstairs and shook hands with Ray.

“Mr. President, you know this is crazy,” Ray said, stepping to the side and allowing me to enter, then closing the door behind me.

“It’s only crazy because I’m the president. Any regular guy would ask a friend for help getting a woman’s number.”

Ray grabbed a folder off the dining room table and passed it over to me. I opened it and saw photos of Laila and Carlton, and another one with an older woman. I scanned the attached paperwork, and I saw a name in bold that I wasn’t expecting to see.

“Yeah, an escort,” Ray blurted out.

“Penelope’s Exclusive Dates,” I mumbled.

“You’re stepping into something that will blow up badly,” Ray remarked, lifting another file-folder and handing it to me.

“How long?” I asked.

“From what my contacts say, she was an escort a few years back.”

“I don’t care,” I said and slammed the folder closed.

“Sebastian, I’m not only your friend, but your congressman, and my advice is to leave this woman alone,” Ray said.

“Ray, how long have we known each other?” I asked.

He rolled his eyes and sighed. “Over 12 years,” Ray answered.

“So, you know I’ve always done what I want, on my own terms.”

“Yeah, like a stubborn, arrogant asshole—”

I raised my hand to cut him off. “That’s President Stubborn, Arrogant Asshole to you.”

“You might scare everyone else, Sebastian, but like you said, I’ve known you longer and will tell you the truth.”

“And the truth is...?”

“For the past two months, you’ve slipped and haven’t been present in meetings.”

“I need to see her one time, and then I’ll get back to being focused,” I replied.

“I don’t think it’s a good idea. Even though she’s working as a therapist now, she worked as an escort before,” Ray informed me.

A knock came at the door. Tony stepped inside. “Mr. President, Claudette said you’re needed back at the White House,” Tony stated, holding up his cell.

“Thanks, Tony. I’ll be out in a second.”

“Listen, your focus needs to be on governing,” Ray continued. “The media doesn’t need to be distracted from what we’re building.”

“Set up a meeting with her,” I told him, reaching for the door, while holding the file-folder.

“You’re not going to let this go, are you?” Ray asked.

“No,” I responded and walked out of the house.

I headed back downstairs to the car. A group of onlookers spotted me as they rode their bikes across the street. “Mr. President! We love you!” they yelled.

I waved, ducking into the car.

Tony closed the door and slid into the front seat. He drove us back toward the White House. The police cars drove alongside us as the traffic stopped to allow us through.

“Tony,” I began.

“Yes, sir,” he replied.

“Can I trust you?” I questioned.

“Of course, Mr. President.”

“Good.”

I sat back in the car and read over Laila’s file. I wondered what had made her choose the escort life and work at Penelope’s Exclusive Dates. It was well known around D.C., and the police were trying to find a way to shut the place down, but they always came up empty.

The car arrived back at the White House, and Claudette was standing outside with a hard glare on her face as I got out of the car.

“You had lunch at my house with Ray,” Claudette said.

“I was hoping Ray wouldn’t tell you that.”

“We don’t keep secrets from each other, Sebastian.” “I had him find some information for me.”

“About what?” She stood next to my desk and waited for an answer.

I didn’t like keeping things from her, but until I knew for sure what I had in mind for Laila, I would keep it to myself. Claudette would more than likely try to talk me out of my plans. If it made her job easier, she would want me to settle down, get married,

and have kids in a week. I hadn't dated since I became president. Before hitting the campaign trail, I was a former lawyer, working long hours, and dating was mostly limited to one woman who understood my lifestyle. Now, I was the president and leading the American people. When I signed up, I made a commitment to serve. That was until I bumped into Laila Daniels. Something about her made me want to find out more.



One Month Later

IT TOOK A FULL MONTH to find out how to get her alone with me, plus how to avoid the media's attention and get security in place without knowing who they would be keeping hidden.

Laila wasn't too happy about me forcing this meeting. When she showed up at the Rainbow restaurant with Tony, I wanted to kiss her pouty lips. "Why am I here?" she asked, standing next to the chair and holding her clutch purse.

"Have a seat," I said, jumping up to pull her chair out.

"Mr. President, why am I here?" Laila asked, crossing her arms and glaring at me.

"I'll tell you once you sit down."

“Do you know who I am?” Laila asked, hovering over the table and tapping it with her finger.

“I do, and I don’t care. Now, have a seat,” I demanded.

She took a seat, clasped her hands together, and leaned over the table.

I lifted the bottle of wine and poured some first into her glass, then mine. “Do you like red wine?” I asked, raising the glass toward her.

“Sebastian.”

“Say it again.”

“What?”

“Say my name again.”

“Not until you tell me why I’m here,” Laila muttered.

“You’re here because I couldn’t get you off my mind.”

“That was almost three months ago,” she stated and leaned back in her chair.

“Be honest with me—did you really not vote for me?” I asked.

She shot me a crooked grin. “I didn’t, and this little date is not helping your case for reelection when it comes up.”

“Then I’ll have to work harder at proving my worthiness in other ways.”

“How old are you?” Laila questioned, lifting the glass and taking a sip.

“I’m Thirty-seven, and you?” I asked—even though I already knew everything about her, down to her blood type.

“Thirty-two, which you probably already know, since you’re the president,” Laila answered, wrapping her hand around the wine glass and tipping it toward me.

“I have a proposition for you.”

“I was wondering how long it would take for you to make a request.” She cocked her head to the side and smirked.

“Penelope is constantly under investigation. Why did you continue working there?” I questioned.

“The security and money,” Laila mentioned.

Ray’s personal chef and owner of the restaurant, Jeffrey, brought out two plates with our prepared meals. I’d had him close the place for tonight, and he didn’t know who the guest would be. Ray followed him and placed an envelope in his hand after he finished.

“Mr. President,” Jeffrey said, placing the food on the table.

“Aren’t you a congressman?” Laila questioned, pointing at Ray as she picked up her napkin to put it in her lap.

“I am.” Ray narrowed his eyes at me. I knew he wasn’t getting along with Claudette about my little situation. He’d told me they’d gotten into arguments.

“Shouldn’t you have talked him out of this little date?” Laila leaned against the table with her palm cupping her cheek.

“Believe me, I tried, but Sebastian does what he wants to do,” Ray complained, standing with his hands deep in his pockets.

“So, you agree it’s a date?” I asked.

“I’m not agreeing to anything, Mr. President,” Laila said. Her ravioli smelled good. She lifted her fork and dove into the meal.

I appreciated the feisty, strong-willed attitude that Laila presented. Unlike other women, who fell at my feet when they were in my presence, Laila wouldn’t be swayed so easily. “Thanks, Ray. You can leave us.”

He nodded and walked back to the kitchen.

I grabbed a glass of wine and stared at the beauty before me.

“You stare any harder, and I might have to call your Secret Service to check up on you,” Laila joked.

I smiled at her comment. I moved the yellow envelope toward her.

“What’s this?” Laila pointed at it with her fork.

“A contract.”

Her eyes widened in curiosity. “A contract for what?” Laila put the fork down and wiped her mouth with her napkin.

I pushed it across the table toward her to read. “I would like to see you exclusively; no other men while you’re under contract.”

“You’re kidding, right?” Laila asked, flipping through the five-page document. It was mostly NDA paperwork, that would need to be filled out and sent back to me.

“I never kid about what I want, Laila.”

“Why me?” Laila queried, dropping the papers back down and taking a bite of her pasta.

“Honestly, from the moment I bumped into you; I can’t think of anything else.”

“You run the free world. How has that been working out for you?” Laila teased, wiping the sides of her mouth with her napkin.

If she only knew from the moment our eyes connected, she was going to be mine, and anyone who got in the way would be dealt with accordingly. “Not good because I’m distracted.” I ran my tongue across my teeth and grinned.

“Let me guess—turning you down will only cause more distraction for you.” Laila picked up the contract again and scanned over everything.

“You’ll be well compensated for your time.”

“It’s not about the money,” Laila said.

“Tell me what I need to do to get you to sign.”

“Not be the President of the United States,” she responded, throwing her napkin on the table.

“I’m discreet, Laila; the only people who know about you are already here.”

She looked toward the door to the kitchen, where Ray had gone. “What do I get out of this, besides money and sex?” Laila inquired.

“You get friendship.”

She chuckled at my statement and started to stand.

I reached over and grasped her hand, pulling her around the table to sit on my lap. “What can I do to make you comfortable with this arrangement?”

Laila stared into my eyes as I ran my palm up her back, making small circles. “I have rules,” she said.

“Okay.”

“We never go out in public. I want double what you’re paying. No falling in love; this is strictly sex. And I get to pick the times,” she demanded.

I shook my head. “I can agree on the payment, to not go out in public, and to not fall in love, as long as you are not dating anyone else. But I choose the times and places.”

“No, I have work, and I’m not going to be exclusive with you,” Laila insisted and tried to stand again.

I pressed a kiss to her cheek that trailed to the side of her ear. “I won’t interfere with your work, but I don’t want you with anyone else.”

“Let me guess—Carlton?” She laughed, folding her arms across her chest.

“Not just Carlton. But I can’t help but feel like I’m not alone in this.” I trailed a finger down her chin.

*“You’re the most eligible bachelor in the world. Why me?”
Laila crossed her legs.*

I stared at her sexy thigh, sticking out of her dress. “You intrigue me.” I said.

“And that’s worth \$500,000?” she asked.

I buried my face in her neck. “Worth every penny,” I said.

“My gut is telling me this will turn into a disaster,” Laila mentioned.

I released her, so she could stand. “I’m not looking for just sex; I want to know everything about you.”

“You already have a file on my life, and my medical records,” Laila snapped, holding the folder up.

“I want to know everything, in your own words.”

She sighed and rubbed her temple. “Mr. President, this is crazy.”

“I know.”

“Then why do this?” Laila asked.

“Because I want you.”

“I’m not looking for love or marriage,” Laila stated.

“Neither am I.”

“Then find some other woman to occupy your time, so you don’t end up with the headline of ‘A Former Escort and the President Getting Cozy’,” Laila explained.

I laughed at her comment and stood, closing the space between us. The perfume she was wearing was driving me crazy; it smelled like vanilla. “Sign the papers or don’t. But just know that I’ve enjoyed meeting you and hope we’ll meet again,” I said. I kissed the top of her forehead and walked to the front door to leave.

Tony held the car door open, and I climbed in. He walked around to the passenger side and waited for Ray to come out. Five minutes later, Laila walked out and headed to the car that I’d had Ray provide to take her home in if she didn’t decide to come with me. Ray marched right out once her car pulled off. He opened the door, jumped in, and sat opposite me. He held up the envelope. I took it out of his hands and opened it to see that she had signed.

“She said either she’s crazy, or you’re too stupid to know this is a bad idea,” Ray quoted.

I smirked. “She really signed it.”

“She did—and make sure you stick to the rules,” Ray stated.

I started to pull out my phone and call her, but Ray held his hand up to stop me.

“I need to talk with Penelope first,” I said.

“That’s already been arranged,” Ray said.

“You told her?” I slid the papers back into the envelope and folded them up, then placed them in my briefcase.

“My people did, and she wasn’t too happy. Laila hasn’t worked for her in a while, but Penelope’s very protective of her girls,” Ray explained.

I groaned, knowing Penelope might try to do something underhanded to keep her name and business in the clear.

“The rules say you call, and she shows up,” Ray continued. “But let me remind you, Mr. President, this is not a good idea.”

“When have I ever had a bad idea, Ray?” I tapped on the partition for Tony to start the car, as Ray shook his head in annoyance.

OceanofPDF.com



Chapter 2: Sebastian

Present Day

TONY WAS OUTSIDE THE loft door, and the driver was downstairs with two more security personnel. I'd told Claudette that unless it was an emergency, I wasn't to be interrupted.

I opened the loft door and leaned against it, peering at Laila, sitting on the couch, wearing a black trench coat. *Was she out on a date?* I thought. I dropped my wallet and cell on the side table, next to the door. I gritted my teeth as we stared at each other. “Why do you fight me on this?”

“I told you last time, we shouldn't continue doing this.” Laila jumped up and tried to walk around me to leave.

I caught her around the waist and nudged her against the door, putting all my weight flush against her and using one hand to hold both of hers above her head. “So, why did you come here?” I moved my leg between her thighs, maneuvering my free

hand down to lift her chin, so she had to give me her undivided attention. I lowered my head to close the space between our lips. I glanced up at her eyes as she tried to ignore the sexual tension between us. “Can I kiss you?” I asked.

She shook her head. “You don’t deserve a kiss.” Laila looked around the room to avoid eye contact.

A smile tugged at my lips. “What do you think I deserve, then?” I rubbed a hand across her breasts, leaned down, and kissed alongside her chin, then down to her chest.

“Sebastian...” Laila whimpered in my arms.

“I missed you.” I eased up a little and sucked on her neck; hopefully, I’d leave a mark.

“This is the last time. We’ve done this for over a year.” Laila squirmed in my arms.

“So, we should make it worthwhile, then,” I responded, pulling away and dropping her hands.

She wrapped her arms around my neck. I gripped her plump, round ass and lifted her into my arms. She clasped her legs around my waist. We stumbled to the back of the loft, while I stuck my tongue down her throat. We fumbled into the bedroom, and I lowered her to her feet to undress. I removed my coat and tossed it on the chair, along with my shoes. She took off her trench coat and started to bend down, but I stopped her.

“Leave those on.” I pointed at her heels.

She looked down. “What?” she asked.

“Leave your heels on,” I said, removing my tie and shirt.

The coat dropped to the floor and seeing her soft curves and glowing brown skin took my breath away. She’d gone out in

public wearing only a black lingerie set. Her full breasts peeked through the sheer bra, and her thong was swallowed by her plump ass. I smacked both cheeks as she spun around in front of me. She was like a living doll with her pouty lips, curvy figure, long legs, and sexy smile. I loved staring into her dark brown eyes. She was like a book that I wanted to continue reading, and I'd never get tired of picking up again.

“Shit,” I hissed in amazement.

“Making it worth your while,” Laila commented, reaching out to unbuckle my pants. They dropped to the floor, and she lowered herself along with them. She gripped my large member in her hand and teased the tip with her tongue. Often, I would start our oral session, but today, she was taking control.

“Fuck... Laila,” I hissed, trying to compose myself.

This woman was my superpower and weakness at the same time. I felt I could do and be open after all our late-night conversations about our goals and dreams, and her career and family life. Funnily enough, we didn't really talk about politics, other than the events I had to attend. For the most part, she listened to me just talk about how I wanted to change

things for the better and fight for a better outcome for all families. I came from a privileged background, and my parents taught me to treat everyone the same as I'd want to be treated. Since meeting Laila, things had started looking up 10 times faster, and I didn't know if I ever wanted to come down from my high of loving her.

Our time together started as just a friendship and sex, but over time, I could admit that my feelings had grown. I'd learned that Laila was just as controlling as me and getting her to open up was a job within itself.

“Damn, Laila,” I muttered. My head fell back.

Her palm ran up my chest as her mouth pushed forward and down to the base of my dick. “Mmm...” she moaned, and the vibration of her tongue and hands did something to me.

I couldn't believe I was really at a point in my life when I felt love and wanted to be loved by only one woman. “Baby...:” I gripped the back of her head.

She slapped it away and pulled back. “What did you call me?”

My chest heaved up and down. “Laila, don't start.” I stepped out of my pants and grabbed the condom out of my wallet, then slid it on. I turned her around to get on the edge of the bed with her legs open and back arched.

“Sebastian... wait... ahhhh!”

“Shit!” I pushed forward into her sex, biting my bottom lip to avoid moaning. I moved a hand up her back, then down to her thighs. I trailed kisses as we moved in sync.

“Sebastian... please...”

I tweaked her nipples as her head fell back in anguish. I captured a smooth rhythm between us as she grabbed hold of the sheets. Her sweet voice was calming to me as she called out my name and begged me not to stop.

“You belong to me, Laila. Don't you forget that.” I pulled out and slammed back into her center.

“Yes! Ahhhh... oh, my God!”

Laila tried to squirm away from the pleasure, and that only pushed me further. I circled my hips, lifting my leg onto the bed, while I grasped the top of her shoulders. “Shit... Laila...

goddamn, you feel so good, baby.” I twisted and plucked her nipples as her warm nectar released.

“I’m... coming,” she whimpered, trembling in my arms.

“I’m right behind you.” I quickened my strokes as her body started to convulse and shake.

“Ugh... Sebastian!” she shouted as her orgasm covered the sheets.

I never got tired of seeing the remnants of her juices dripping on the sheets. It had become my favorite thing when we were together like this. “Fuck!” I yelled, released into the condom, and gently eased out of her. I fell beside her on the bed, trying to catch my breath. My eyelids were getting low, but I knew she would more than likely slip out if I didn’t keep her close by. I jumped up and went to the bathroom to remove the condom, wash my hand and rejoin her on the bed. I wrapped arm around her waist and brought her against my chest, then moved the covers over us.

She kissed the top of my chest, and my lips. “Sebastian,” she mumbled.

“Shush... go to sleep,” I said, running a hand up and down her arm as we drifted off to sleep.



TWO HOURS LATER, I smelled the aroma of food. I rubbed a hand across my rumbling stomach. I turned on my side and felt that the bed was empty. I jumped up. I grabbed my pants and walked into the bathroom, which was empty, too. I headed toward the front of the loft and saw Laila, wearing my white shirt, sitting on the couch and eating a sandwich and fries.

“You’re still here?” I asked, strolling toward the couch. I sat next to her and ran a hand across her thigh.

“It was late,” she responded.

I looked over at the clock on the table that read 12 AM. “I don’t want this to end.”

She sighed and placed her plate on the table, then turned toward me. “Sebastian, we have an agreement.” Her eyes narrowed in annoyance, and she tried to get up and leave.

I reached over and grabbed her, pulling her close to my chest. “Can you honestly say you don’t feel anything?” I slid a hand under her shirt, eased it across her stomach, toward her breast, and squeezed.

“You trying to tease me?” Laila whispered. Her eyes were closed, and she was holding her hand against my chest.

“I’m trying to make you my girlfriend,” I announced.

Her eyes popped open in shock. “I need to go,” Laila told me.

I tightened my hold around her waist. “No, we’re going to talk about this.”

She chuckled at my statement. “You want me as your girlfriend? A former professional escort?” Laila asked.

“I want the woman who I’ve spent the past few year getting to know. The highly intelligent Spellman grad and brilliant therapist, Laila Daniels.”

“So, the headlines will be ‘Former Escort, Now Girlfriend of the President’?” Laila joked.

“Why did you become an escort?” I questioned, wanting to keep her in my presence for a bit longer.

“Penelope found me and offered me a job to make extra money while I was going to school. No, I didn’t grow up in an abusive home; I just needed to make money to help my family,” Laila explained.

“Why not work a regular job?”

“Do you think I sleep with every guy I go out with?” She arched an eyebrow curiously.

“I wouldn’t care if you did; that doesn’t matter to me.” Her energy was on a different level than what I was used to. It was not just about the physical with us; I’d also enjoyed our phone conversations and just having dinner together, away from the world. I enjoyed pretending to be a normal couple.

“I can count on my hand how many I slept with—and that was by choice,” she remarked.

“We’re both grown, and I don’t care about what anyone else says.”

“I put myself through school with my job and helped my family,” she said.

“I understand.”

“Do you understand the amount of scrutiny that we would be under if we went public?”

There was a knock on the door. She stood and walked to the back of the loft. I jumped up and went to the door.

“Sir, Claudette is on the line,” Tony explained, holding up his phone. “She’s saying that she would like to meet tomorrow morning.”

I nodded, taking the phone out of his hand. “Yeah?”

“Mr. President, you have a meeting in the morning with Congressman Carlton,” Claudette stated.

I watched as Laila came from the back with her coat and heels on. I put my arm around her waist to stop her from leaving. “Push the meeting to 10.”

“Sebastian,” Claudette groaned in frustration.

“Claudette, stop worrying,” I said, ended the call, and tossed the phone on the couch.

Laila cocked her head to the side.

“Where are you going?” I asked.

“Home,” Laila answered.

“You never answered my question.”

“Which is...?” Laila inquired.

“Do you want to be with me?” The room was silent as her body tensed, and our eyes connected.

My background in relationships wasn’t good; that was because I’d never experienced a full-blown relationship with a woman besides a few dates with Delilah Reynolds. We had an understanding that I’d bring her with me to events to further her career in advertising, and we’d both only wanted sex with no strings attached. Somehow, over time, she’d wanted more, and I had to end things because my bid for the presidency had ramped up, and I didn’t feel the same way about her. I never wanted

anyone to depend on me when I knew my career was my life, and the path of public office that I'd chosen would have been hard for someone to grasp and endure the long nights, media attention, and their family being put in the spotlight unjustly. Laila had changed every doubt and objection in my mind and heart, and I wanted to try to see where we could go together.

“What happened to the contract?” Laila asked.

“Fuck the contract!” I pressed a kiss on her lips.

She laughed at my outburst, lifting her arms around my neck. “I need to think about this,” Laila said.

“You have one day, and I need an answer by tomorrow.”

“See? You're already being pushy.” Laila laughed and shook her head.

“I'm the president; I can do what I want.” I slid my tongue inside her mouth and squeezed her ample ass. Laila moaned and bent her head back as I gripped her neck gently. “Let's go back to bed,” I said.

“Okay.” She exhaled slowly, taking control of the kiss.

I wanted to take my time with her since I'd pushed my meeting back tomorrow. Carlton was only trying to push my buttons about the bill that my team had brought up to the House and Senate. I needed to get Claudette to meet with Laila, so she would be prepared for what was to come if things got out publicly.

I shut the bedroom door and laid her down on the bed. I removed her coat and kicked off her shoes. I lifted her left leg and kissed the back of her foot, then massaged her sole.

“You trust me?” I continued to massage up and down her leg toward her hip.

“No.” She chuckled and rolled her eyes.

I smirked, released her leg, and hovered over her body, staring into her eyes. I brushed her hair out of her face. Laila brushed a hand across my face, and I kissed the inside of her palm. “The contract is null and void.” I grabbed another condom out of my wallet, unbuckled my pants, and sheathed my dick. Every time we were together, I slept better at night, more comfortable after a stressful day. So, I planned on worshipping every inch of her body tonight.



THE NEXT MORNING, I had my men take Laila home, while I was driven back to the White House to deal with upcoming meetings. Today, we had a meeting with Carlton to get his support for an infrastructure bill that my team was working on. The problem was that we’d had our ups and downs. The motorcade pulled in front of the White House a few minutes later, and I stepped out. Claudette and Charles were waiting for me at the entrance.

“Mr. President, we have Carlton and his assistant waiting for you,” Charles said and passed me the latest revisions on the bill.

“Good, have a dinner set up for four, please, at the residence,” I stated, walking down the hall toward the Oval Office.

“Can I ask who all is coming for dinner?” Claudette queried, passing me a form to sign.

“My parents, and Laila.”

“It’s serious, then?” Claudette asked.

I removed my coat, and Joanne hung it on the coat rack as I allowed Claudette to step into my office first.

Carlton, Will, and Jimmy stood up. “Mr. President,” Carlton, extending a hand.

I took it for a shake. “Carlton, good to see you again.” I motioned for everyone to take a seat.

“You, too, sir,” Carlton replied and sat back down.

I unbuttoned my jacket and took the chair opposite Carlton. “So, I hear you had some questions about the bill?”

Claudette picked up copies of the documents and passed them around the room.

Carlton declined, holding up his own version. “I have a few concerns, and I’m not sure it goes far enough,” Carlton said, opening the document.

I checked the time on my watch and sighed. He loved pushing my buttons. “What concerns, Carlton? My team built the best bill for everyone.”

“I’d like to add some revisions or adjustments to the numbers,” Carlton implied. His assistant opened his briefcase and pulled out more paperwork.

“What’s this?” Will took the paperwork and flipped through the color-coded tabs.

“Essentially, I think we should give a 3% increase, instead of the 5% that you’re pitching,” Carlton said.

“Pitching?”

“It’s nothing personal, Mr. President. Just looking out for the budget,” Carlton said, pointing to the line items that would pay for the government funding.

“This is not a debate, Carlton.”

“Congressmen, do you have ideas about who should be included?” Claudette asked.

“As a matter of fact, I do—a great firm in my town,” Carlton explained.

I clenched my teeth. He thought I would buckle and give in, but I wouldn’t be hustled. He’d lost the race, and he needed to get over it. I crossed my legs, leaned back in my seat, and stared at him as I fixed my tie. “I’m not changing the percentage, Carlton.”

“Then, Mr. President, we don’t have a deal,” Carlton responded.

“This isn’t about fattening your friends’ pockets, Carlton.”

“Excuse me, Sebastian?!” Carlton shouted, jumping up.

“Mr. President.”

“What?” Carlton replied.

“Address me as ‘Mr. President’. You lost the race; get over it.”

“What the president is saying is that we need to focus on building as a team,” Claudette said, trying to smooth things over.

“I know what I said, and I mean it,” I argued, then said to Carlton, “You and your assistant can leave.” I stood and walked over to the beverage cart, then poured a glass of water.

Carlton and Jimmy stood, preparing to leave. “Mr. President, I think you should reconsider my offer,” Carlton urged.

“I don’t think I will.”

“Then I’ll have no choice but to vote no when it comes up in the Senate.”

“You do what’s comfortable for you, and I will do the same.”

He stomped out of the room with Jimmy behind him, and I chuckled to myself.

Five minutes later, the press secretary was escorted inside for the daily briefing. “We need to get him back here for a meeting,” Charles mentioned.

I shrugged, not really caring if I had his support behind the bill. He was acting like a child who had lost his prize.

“I’m disappointed that we couldn’t get a yes from him,” Claudette said.

I went to sit behind my desk.

“Carlton is always looking out for himself,” Will said.

“I want this sent for a vote,” I demanded. “I’m not folding on this rate.”

“What’s the agenda for today?” Claudette asked, turning to our press secretary.

“Nothing too heavy: basic spending, and upcoming trips,” Kaitlin said.

“Great, push back the announcement on the infrastructure deal.”

“What happened? I thought it was locked in for a yes vote,” Kaitlin inquired, taking notes.

“*Carlton* is what happened,” Charles blurted out.

I narrowed my eyes at him. “Carlton is trying to play hard ball,” I remarked.

“Is this going to be an issue?” Kaitlin wondered.

“Probably, but I want this deal to happen,” I replied.

We continued to discuss the plans for the upcoming visits with different schools for the Teacher of the Year ceremony. I checked my calendar and texted Tony to make sure that things were in place.

I knew as soon as Laila saw the news that she’d be pissed, so I needed to prepare myself for the outcome and get her to understand that it was better to come at things like this full-steam ahead, rather than hide it, which would have just made us look guilty. I refused to let anyone make me feel guilty for wanting her.



Chapter 3: Laila



I SOAKED IN THE TUB after Tony dropped me off this morning. I hated to admit that when Sebastian and I were apart, I just wanted to call him and see him again. I put up a hard front when we were together but being around him had been wonderful and amazing—not only from the sex, but also the conversations about our families. He could see beyond my beauty and really look at my soul and heart.

At thirty-three, my life was pretty normal. My parents, Brooklyn and Timothy Daniels, had sacrificed and worked hard for me to get into college—until my mom was diagnosed with cancer.

To avoid dropping out of college, I started working at Penelope's Exclusive Dates. Penelope Monroe was a well-known madam in D.C., and over time, I looked to her as a mentor and an older sister. Even though she'd recently turned 45, she looked 10 years younger. Working for Penelope had paid off, because after I made enough money to put myself through college, I worked at Bayview Medical, interning and researching as I built my career as a therapist. Eventually, I opened a practice in the building with my own clients.

Carlton was a longtime client of Penelope's, and she'd hooked me up with him. I'd had boyfriends here and there, but they could never handle my lifestyle, and so I decided to keep love out of my decisions. So, being with Sebastian would be scary and exciting at the same time. He was confident, sweet, arrogant, sexy, and cocky. One thing he showed me was loyalty, and my feelings had progressed. I hated to admit that he had me wide-open. I knew that the second the public saw us together; my life would change forever. Telling my parents that their daughter had put herself through school by escorting with wealthy men would probably cause them hurt and embarrassment—especially once the public got a hold of the

story. They'd been through enough, having cameras shoved in their faces nonstop.

I ran a towel over my arms as tunes about love and sacrifice by Jennifer Hudson played in the background. I closed my eyes and moved the towel over my breasts, recalling Sebastian brushing his lips against them last night, pressing his large 6'2" body against my 5'6" frame. I tucked my lip between my teeth and groaned in pleasure at the thought of having his long, thick girth inside my mouth again. Carlton wanted to have me on his arm to show off as his little toy, but Sebastian worshiped not only my body, but my mind, and every curve from the top of my head, to my full lips, and all over my dark brown skin. I never had to fake it when we had sex—unlike with Carlton. Sebastian knew how to please a woman. To Carlton, it was all about getting his rocks off, and I'd be left having to use a vibrator to have an orgasm.

Deep in my thoughts, I wanted to go back to what had happened last night and use my vibrator, but my phone pulled me out of my dream. I noticed my best friend, Cristin, had texted that she was at my door. Cristin was still in the business and worked with Penelope as an escort. We'd met in college. She'd studied political science, and I was a psychology major. People told me all the time how easy it was to talk to me and confess their deepest secrets.

Cristin: I know you're in there.

Me: I'm getting out of the tub now.

I stepped out of the tub and drained the water, brushed my teeth, rinsed out. I walked out of the bathroom and picked up my robe, then strolled to the front door of my house. I stepped aside as Cristin carried in a bag of food and coffee.

“Vanilla-almond extra-hot latte,” Cristin said and passed the coffee over.

I took a sip and closed the door. “Thank you.” Cristin plopped down on the couch and pulled the boxes out. I smelled my favorite: a strawberry waffle, and a scrambler. “You got my favorite.”

“I did, since that’s what you mostly eat—breakfast!” Cristin called out.

“I eat more than breakfast.”

“I know, but if it were up to you, we would have breakfast for lunch and dinner every day,” Cristin commented.

I rolled my eyes and grabbed the waffles and fork out of her hand.

“So?” Cristin looked toward me.

“What?”

“How was last night?” Cristin asked.

“It was fine.”

“Just fine? I don’t buy that, Laila,” Cristin stated, cutting into her omelet.

I grinned at her tone since she never brought up her dating habits. Cristin Lee was 31—a year younger than me—and worked as the Special Assistant to Congressman Turner Johns in the House. If he only knew who she was outside of the office, it would be a scandal all over the world.

Penelope is very discreet and keeps her team safe, so the real world won’t find out. The dates were all set up in advance. The only way anyone could have known about us was if the men gave themselves up, but most of them were in the public eye because

they were celebrities, politicians, and professional high-profile businessmen.

“He asked me to be his girlfriend,” I explained.

“As in being a couple?” Cristin questioned, stretching her right arm across the back of the couch.

“Something like that.”

“How are you feeling about that?” Cristin took a sip of her coffee.

I shrugged, not ready for the onslaught of emotions that would come with being the girlfriend of the president, and the public finding out about my past. Sebastian not only wore his

heart on his sleeve, but he also put his family and friends above his own happiness. I could admit that my feelings had grown over time; sometimes, I sat up and waited for his late-night calls, or for when Tony would drop off gifts for me from Sebastian. It just made our situation difficult because it wasn't the typical boy-meets-girl type of thing.

“I need to get dressed,” I said.

“Do you have a client today?” Cristin asked.

“No, I'm mostly doing paperwork in my office today.” I stood, taking my coffee with me as Cristin strolled behind, talking about her latest dating issues. I pushed the door open and walked to my closet to pick out some comfortable business attire for the day.

“What does Carlton think about you moving on?” Cristin asked, sitting on the edge of my bed.

“I stopped talking to Carlton a year ago.”

“You know, he still thinks he owns you,” Cristin replied, grabbing the remote off the night table and turning the TV on.

I listened as the news was giving a special report on the president and his cabinet meeting. “*Today, we have President Hunter, meeting with Congressman Stewart,*” the anchorman said.

“There’s your boyfriend,” Cristin said and pointed at the TV.

I peered over my shoulder and saw Sebastian in his blue suit, shaking hands with Carlton.

“*We have breaking news, ladies and gentlemen,*” the anchorman continued. “*It seems President Hunter’s press secretary has made an announcement.*”

“*Hello, everyone,*” the press secretary stated. “*The president wanted to make a statement before it gets blown up in the media.*”

“What do you think this is about?” Cristin waved at the TV.

I shrugged; I never kept up with the happenings of Sebastian’s world.

“*The president brought up a bill to Congress—a policy that everyone was onboard with—until Congressman Stewart decided to reject it,*” the press secretary said.

I already knew something was off about this situation. Carlton was an egomaniac, and if he couldn’t have his way about things, then he’d bring everyone down with him.

“That means my phone will be ringing in five minutes,” Cristin said, and, like clockwork, it started ringing. She picked it up and answered.

I jumped up and went to toss my empty cup in the kitchen trash can.

“Yes, I’ll be right there,” Cristin replied, ended the call, and stood with her plate of food, then headed to the kitchen.

“Work calls?” I yelled out.

She pushed her leftovers toward me, and I waved her off. “We should do dinner and dancing sometime.” Cristin leaned against the door, while I finished cleaning the kitchen.

“Didn’t we just do a movie and shopping a month ago?”

“That was a month ago. Please, bestie?” she pouted.

I laughed at her little tantrum. “Fine. I’ll check my schedule and get back to you.” I opened the fridge and grabbed a bottle of water.

Cristin reached out for a hug, and I stuck my tongue out at her. She returned the gesture, and I followed her toward the door to let her out. I finished cleaning my apartment and changed to leave for work.



AN HOUR LATER, I WAS sitting in my office, going through files and catching up on work that I hadn’t handled in a while. My secretary, Joyce, was off today since I didn’t have any clients. Joyce was an older woman in her 60s, who was

recommended by Penelope because she was looking for something to do, now that her kids were grown and had kids of their own. She was a widower and working at the office kept her busy.

I liked being in the office by myself. It was peaceful and gave me more time to really understand the workload with each person in my care. I returned a few emails and checked over my supply inventory to see what I needed Joyce to order for me when she came back to work.

My phone started ringing. I picked it off my desk and noticed Penelope's name.

"I was waiting for you to call, and you never did, so I decided to call you," Penelope said when I answered.

"Sorry, things are crazy on my end." "What's going on with you?" Penelope said.

"Nothing."

"That doesn't sound like nothing. You and the president are doing more than what you usually do with clients." Penelope asked.

I heard rustling on the other end. "We're having fun. How did you?" I flipped through the list of potential clients that Joyce had left on my desk for me.

"Ray made me aware. I've told you many times not to fall in love with a client," Penelope replied.

I sighed; glad she couldn't see my pained expression. "I'm starting to regret it already."

“Where are you now? We should meet for lunch,” Penelope said.

“Working at the office.” I typed in a password and opened my calendar to see what I had coming up.

“How is that going? I know you didn’t want any help with startup money,” Penelope said.

I made a note to call back one of my longtime clients who had been seeing me. “Things are great and busy as ever.”

“Well, that’s good. And Joyce is working out for you?” Penelope queried.

“She’s great.”

“You remind me of a younger version of myself, Laila. Don’t let the political world crush your spirit,” Penelope said.

I blew out a breath of frustration. “I’m glad you called, Penelope,” I said.

“Me, too. I’ll let you go. But don’t forget lunch soon.”

“Sounds good. Let me get through this stack of folders, and we’ll talk,” I said and ended the call. I glanced over to a new email that popped up and saw it was from one of my clients, Delilah. “*Hi, Dr. Daniels, I wanted to see if you have an opening for a noon appointment,*” I read out loud. Joyce usually responded to appointment requests, but since I was here, I’d schedule her for some time in the coming weeks. I finished wrapping up my work and decided to head to my parents’ house. I was starting to clean up for the day when someone tapped on the door, and I called for them to come inside.

“Dr. Daniels?” Delilah said.

“Hi, Delilah; you caught me at a bad time.”

“Sorry, I apologize. I really need to talk to you.”

“Um...”

“Please, I’ve been spinning things around in my head,”
Delilah said.

I gestured for her to take a seat on the couch. “What’s going on?” I grabbed my notepad and pen and came around to the chair in front of the couch to take a seat.

“I’ve been thinking about my past, and the mistakes I’ve made with my relationships,” Delilah said, fidgeting with the hem of her dress.

“What mistakes?”

“A guy who I thought loved me was only using me.”

I checked my watch to look at the time and sighed. “Is there somewhere you have to be?” Delilah asked.

“Actually, yes, I’m sorry. A family emergency.” “Oh.”

“Listen, make an appointment with my secretary, and we can talk about this more.”

“Okay,” Delilah said and stood to leave.



Chapter 4: Laila

I OPENED THE CAR DOOR of my Audi A4, connected my Bluetooth, and started the car as I reversed out of my parking space. I turned at the stop sign and pulled into traffic, listening to my favorite singer, Jill Scott, while thinking about Sebastian. I slowed at a red light, and my phone vibrated. I picked it up to see Cristin texting me.

Cristin: Club Lux?

Me: Shouldn't you be saving the world?

Cristin: That's your boyfriend's job.

Me: Not funny.

Cristin: We need a night out. Drinks, dancing, and good dick.

Me: LOL! I already have one out of three.

Cristin: Don't rub it in.

I chuckled at her response and pulled up to my parents' home. I stepped out of the car and headed to the front door. It opened without me knocking.

"Hey, baby." Mom held her arms out.

I reached over and gave her a hug. "Hi, how are you feeling?" I asked.

"I'm feeling good. The cancer isn't back, so don't worry," Mom told me.

I strolled inside and went to the kitchen, then grabbed a bottle of water out of the fridge. She knew I'd been worried that it could come back ever since she went into remission. It scared me the

first time, and I was a lot younger, so now, after researching and educating myself, I wanted to make sure that if she needed the best of the best, then we'd get it for her.

“Do you have any aspirin? I have a terrible headache.”

“Have a seat. Let me check the cabinet in the bathroom,” Mom said, walking to the back of the house.

I stood in front of the counter with my eyes closed and head down. “I need to call Ray again,” I whispered to myself.

Mom came back in the kitchen and handed me two Advils, staring at me.

I downed them, chugging the water. “What?” I asked.

Mom continued to stare at me as she went to the stove and picked up her knife, then started cutting the tomatoes. “The president?” Mom said.

“Mom,” I groaned, tossing the empty water bottle in the trash can. I sat in a chair at the table.

“We always wanted you to aim high, but this is huge,” Mom joked.

I rolled my eyes, nervously biting my nails. “Ma!”

“Calm down and tell me what's going on,” she said, dropping the knife and turning toward me.

“I can't say.”

“You can't? Or you *won't* say?” she questioned. “It's complicated. I wasn't expecting this to happen.” “Do you love him?”

I shook my head. “I care for him and have feelings, but I don’t think it’s turned into love,” I lied, not admitting that it was bordering on love, but I wanted to deny it for as long as possible.

“We should have him over for dinner,” Mom said, sitting across from me.

“He’s the president. I doubt he can just drop by for dinner with the family.”

She slapped the top of my hand. “Stop being sarcastic. Your father and I want you to be happy. We just didn’t expect it with *him*.”

“I didn’t, either.”

“Your life is going to be turned upside-down.”

“Why are you so calm about this?” I questioned, picking a cookie off the table and taking a bite.

“Because you deserve to be loved,” Mom remarked, rubbing my hand.

“I know this isn’t conventional, but I’ve never been in love.”

“You can have a love and a career, baby.”

“I know but seeing my friends and the crap they put up with just brings on a big headache.”

“I’m surprised it hasn’t gotten around in the media yet,” Mom stated, jumping up to turn the heat down under the boiling pot.

“It will.”

“Are you going to stay for dinner?” Mom asked.

“I have to talk with Sebastian first,” I said, taking into account that I might end up in jail later, after I confronted him.

“He’s cute,” Mom said.

“Where’s Dad?” I asked, changing the subject.

“At work. You know, he’s putting in overtime, as usual,” Mom fussed, folding her arms across her chest and facing me.

“He doesn’t have to do that anymore; I have plenty of money if you guys need anything.”

“Your father is a proud man. He’ll never slow down.” Mom smiled.

I jumped up, extending my arms for a hug.

“I already know your private life. Don’t worry,” Mom said.

I kissed her cheek and released her. “Tell Dad I love him, and I’ll see you guys later,” I said, walked to the door, and opened it to reveal a crowd of photographers and flashing lights. I slammed the door shut and leaned against it, trying to compose myself.

“Laila Daniels! Ms. Daniels!” voices screamed from outside.

“My life is over,” I groaned.

“Go out the back, and I’ll distract them,” Mom suggested.

“No, I can’t leave you here by yourself.” I stuck my hand into my purse to dig my phone out and get Ray on the line.

“Who are you calling?” Mom asked, peeking through the window.

“Stay away from the window,” I said. I motioned for her to get back and sit down.

“More of them showed up.” Mom pointed out the window.

I closed the curtain, walked to my old room, and closed the door, calling Ray on the phone.

“He’s in a meeting, Laila,” Ray whispered.

I dropped onto the bed. “I don’t care if he’s negotiating with the leader of North Korea; you get him on the phone now,” I said through gritted teeth.

He sighed, and I heard whispering on the other end. “Give me a minute,” Ray responded.

I leaned back on the bed and closed my eyes, trying to massage my migraine away.

A few moments later, I heard a deep voice come onto the phone with an attitude. “What’s the problem, Laila?”

If I wasn’t secretly turned on just from his voice, then I’d curse him out for being so abrupt with me. “The problem, Sebastian, is that a group of photographers are stacked in front of my parents’ house,” I spat, sitting up and strolling to the window to peek out.

“What do you mean?” he questioned.

“I mean you got your wish, Mr. President.”

He groaned and cursed at someone on the other end.

“Listen, I’m sending Tony and Ray to get you,” Sebastian said.

“No, I want you to leave me alone. This has gone on long enough.”

“That’s not happening.”

“Sebastian.”

“Laila, I need to finish this meeting. I’ll meet you later tonight for dinner at the loft.”

“And if I don’t come?” I questioned.

“Then I’ll come to your parents’ house,” Sebastian said.

“You’re crazy.”

“No, I’m a man who wants you, and you’ve made it clear that you want me, too,” Sebastian replied. He ended the call.

I dropped my phone on the bed and paced the bedroom floor for a little while. Then I grabbed my phone again and left my room to find my mom.

“What did he say?” she asked when I found her.

“He’s sending someone to pick me up.”

“Good. Your father is going to freak out once someone tells him,” Mom said.

“You and Dad should come stay with me for a few days until it dies down.”

She waved me off and went into the kitchen to finish cooking.

“I’m serious,” I urged.

“It won’t be over in a few days, baby. You need to understand that you’re going down in the history books.”

I plopped down onto the chair, holding my head in my hands. “I can’t believe this is happening.”

A knock at the door caused me to jump up and curse them out for interrupting my life. I yanked the door open, and it was only Tony standing there. I leaned out the door and looked around. All the news vans were gone.

“What did you do?” I asked.

Tony motioned at the car, and the door opened. Seeing Ray step out meant that Sebastian wasn’t playing with me. “I gave them another story,” Ray said and stepped inside the house.

“Just like that?” I asked, folding my arms over my chest.

“Being a congressman has its perks. Are you okay?” Ray questioned, looking around the living room.

My mom came out of the kitchen.

“Mrs. Daniels, sorry about the press,” Ray said.

“No worries. I knew my daughter would be famous one day. I just didn’t think it would be for dating the president.” She chuckled.

I groaned in annoyance. I needed to meet with Penelope as soon as possible.

“Are you ready to go?” Ray asked.

I nodded and picked up my purse. I kissed my mom on her cheek. “I’ll call you later—and stop talking to Cristin about my love life.”

“Be safe.” She kissed my cheek, waved me off, and walked us out of the house.

“We’ll keep some security at your house to make sure they don’t come back,” Ray told her.

“Is this like the mafia or something?” Mom joked.

“It can get to that level if it’s important to Sebastian,” Ray explained.

“I hope the president is not taking advantage of my daughter,” Mom told me.

This so-called “relationship” would be the death of me if I didn’t get control of things.

Tony held the backseat door open, and I slid inside. Ray followed in next, and the door closed.

“Where are we going?” I asked.

“Out of town,” Ray replied.

My head swung around fast at his comment.

“He’s finishing a meeting, and then he’ll meet you,” Ray continued.

“Meet me where?” I wondered, putting my seatbelt on.

“Camp David,” Ray answered.

I almost passed out. “Ray, you need to talk some sense into him. I can’t go to Camp David with him.”

“That’s not my decision, Laila,” Ray told me.

“I don’t have any clothes. Plus, I have work and family obligations,” I lied, knowing that Penelope would be looking for me, since I’d asked to have lunch with her.

“Sorry, but I answer to the boss.”

“The boss is the president?”

“Exactly. You won’t need to stop because we have everything you need.”

“I have a meeting; I can’t just leave.”

“Penelope understands, and you can contact her when you get back.”

“The president is kidnapping me,” I mumbled to myself.

“You’re being overdramatic, Laila.”

“No, I want to talk to him now, or I’ll call my friend and say I’m being kidnapped.”

He glowered at me. “Fine. Tony, can you take us to the residence?” Ray sat back in his seat, and Tony turned the car around and drove toward the White House.

I felt a little nauseous about coming to the last place I should be seen, but I wanted to make things clear with Sebastian. 40 minutes later, we made it back to the White House without being detected. Ray and Tony escorted me through the residential area, and I stood in Sebastian’s office, waiting for him to finish his meeting.

I heard loud arguing that sounded like Sebastian, and I was starting to feel a little less confident about demanding to see him. “Where is she?”

“She’s in your office,” I heard Ray say.

“Get the plane ready and tell Claudette to clear my schedule,” Sebastian told him. He opened the door and stared at me intensely. I opened my mouth to speak, and he held his hand up to stop me. “No.” Sebastian said.

“I’m not—”

“You’re going to listen and stop behaving like you’re the only one who gets a say in this relationship.”

“There were photographers at my parents’ house... and this press release!” I screeched.

He marched over and backed me up against the desk, then turned me around. My back was to his chest. Sebastian tangled my hair in his fingers and pushed me forward against the desk, then whispered in my ear, “You think I’m playing with you?” He gently bit the side of my ear.

“Sebastian!”

He lifted my dress and kicked my legs open, then pushed his erection against my ass. “Shit, Laila, you drive me crazy.” He reached around and grabbed my neck, hovering over my back.

“I told you, I don’t play by your rules,” I said through ragged breaths. I could just imagine if we were in the oval office, and someone walked in, what the reaction would be from his staff and the media.

“You think I’m Carlton?” he asked, ripped my panties off, and smacked me on the ass.

“Ahhh!”

“Answer me,” he demanded, rubbing the sting away.

I shook my head. “No, baby,” I groaned when I felt his hands separate my ass cheeks.

He blew air against my pussy and stuck his tongue inside.

“Shit, you taste good,” I heard him say.

“Mmmm... do you love it?”

“You know, I do,” he said, biting each of my cheeks. He stood up, and I heard him unbuckle his belt.

There was something about having a man so powerful worship at my feet. Sebastian thought I was always in control, but deep down, I could barely hold eye contact with him and not fall further in love with the way he treated me. Everyone knew I was a tough, headstrong woman, determined to meet my goals. But sometimes, it was nice to come home to someone and have them take care of me. The other night, when he gave me a bath and washed my hair in the tub, I wanted to blurt out that I would move in, but I changed my mind.

“Stop treating me like the enemy, Laila.”

“Stop demanding what you can’t give me in return,” I replied.

“What can’t I give?” he asked, grabbing me by the hips.

I looked around the room and took in the setting. It was midday, and we were alone in the presidential office. I’d wanted to be away from this man since the first day I met him because he was more trouble than he was worth—even including the constant orgasms that he gave me. “You can’t give me everything,” I said, releasing the long-held words that I kept playing in my head.

“Has it occurred to you that I’m about to fuck you in my office?”

I exhaled a long-held breath. “It’s business.”

“No, this is personal,” he responded, pushing me forward and angling his dick at my entrance. He eased inside, not afraid to moan at the pleasure we were giving each other. I hated how he could control my emotions when I promised myself to never get involved with clients on a personal level. “Laila,” Sebastian

growled, towering over my back with his large shaft buried so deep, I could feel him in my guts.

“Oh... God, Sebastian,” I moaned, feeling Sebastian’s hands roaming over my body, caressing my butt and pressing kisses along my shoulder blade.

His strokes grew faster and faster as he pumped in and out. He started sucking on my neck. I gripped the side of the desk and closed my eyes. “You feel this?” Sebastian whispered in my ear.

I almost had a heart attack when he pulled out quickly, dropped to his knees, and locked onto my clit. “Wait... no... Sebastian... okay,” I gave in; I couldn’t keep fighting back and forth. My eyes watered, and my breathing became shallow.

“Wait for what, huh?” Sebastian was eating this opportunity up... literally.

“Shit!”

Sebastian stood. I thought he was done, and I could get away, but he spun me around and lifted me onto the desk. He pushed back inside, spreading my legs wider. My head fell back in ecstasy as he kissed a trail down my neck. “I want you, and only you,” Sebastian said.

“What about the... media?” My body started to shake as my climax lingered from the tip of my toes up to my spine.

“Let me worry... about that.”

I leaned up and found his lips. I gripped the back of his head as my juices ran down my thighs and onto his dick. He rubbed a finger across my thigh and pulled back, then sucked the juices off his finger. I trembled in his arms, watching that sexy smirk of his,

knowing he was the only one who could do my body like this. I tried to fight him, but he was letting me know who was in charge.

“Mmmm... my favorite taste,” Sebastian said, then pulled out and put himself together.

“You didn’t come?” I questioned, jumping down and watching as he stepped into the bathroom that was connected to the office.

He passed me a wet towel to clean up. “It’s not about me. You needed that; I’ll get mine later.”

“This won’t solve anything, Sebastian.” I wiped between my legs and tossed the towel into the trash, then fixed my clothes.

“Wrap up what you need to do. I have a few phone calls, and then we can leave.” Sebastian kissed the side of my cheek.

I was in shock; he just really came in there and fucked me, like it was just an everyday thing for us. The door closed, and I picked my phone out of my purse. I called Penelope.

“Are you all right?” Penelope asked.

“Sort of.”

“It’s all over the news, and I’ve received a few phone calls,” Penelope whispered.

I sighed and put my head in my hand. “Penelope.”

“Don’t worry, Laila. I can handle myself.”

“Are they camped outside your place?” I inquired, standing and heading to the TV in the corner of the room. I turned on the local news.

“No, just my office. Don’t worry; nothing will happen. I have too many friends.” Penelope chuckled.

I felt a little better. I thought of Penelope as an older sister who always looked out for me. She was still single at 45, with no kids and running a multi-million-dollar business. “I hate this has happened because of me,” I said.

“You’re not the first girl who fell in love with a client.” “I feel silly; you taught me better than that.”

“Don’t beat yourself up. I don’t think Sebastian would have let you get away regardless,” Penelope announced.

I believed her. Sebastian was very determined to not let me get away. “I’m heading out of town for a few days, but when I get back...”

“...we can do dinner,” Penelope said.

The door opened, and I stood. Claudette walked in with Ray. “Let me call you back,” I said and ended the call before Penelope could answer.

“The plane is ready,” Claudette said.

I picked up my purse and headed toward the door. “Can you explain to me why he’s doing this?”

“Laila, I’m going to be honest with you. I didn’t want this to happen,” Claudette said.

“You and me both,” I answered and followed them.

“You two will be in Camp David for a few days, and things can calm down,” Claudette explained.

“What about my parents?” I asked.

“We have them under protection, and when you get back, I have some interviews set up for you.”

“No.”

“*No?*”

“I’m not doing any interviews or magazine shoots. This is my life, and I don’t owe anyone an explanation.”

“Laila, I hear you. But we need to get ahead of this situation.”

“This wouldn’t *be* a ‘situation’ if your boss would have let things stay the way they were.”

“Paying for an escort’s time?” she countered. Claudette obviously wasn’t happy about me, but she must have gone along with it because of her friendship with Sebastian.

Claudette stayed behind to wrap up the last-minute details to help us get in front of the media frenzy. Tony opened the door of the town car, and I got in alone. Someone tapped on the window, and I slid it down.

“He’s going to meet you on the plane,” Ray said.

“I’m not doing any interviews, Ray. I don’t care what anyone says.”

I leaned back in my seat and pushed the window button up. I pulled my phone out of my purse and saw that it was blowing up with multiple notifications from social media and emails. Everything was saying, “*The President’s Girlfriend: Who is She? Where Did They Meet? Is She Really An Escort?*”

I texted my mom to let her know I was good and going out of town for a few days.

Me: Hey, Momma, I'll be out of touch for a few days.

Mom: Keep me updated. I love you.

Me: Are you and Dad good?

Mom: Your Dad's upset but understands.

“Who leaked the story?” I asked.

“I have a feeling it was Carlton Stewart,” Claudette stated.

“Why?”

“Because of the bill. He’s trying to force Sebastian to agree to a price adjustment,” Claudette remarked.

“I can’t believe it.”

“You dated him in the past, correct?” Claudette mentioned.

I nodded. “Briefly,” I answered.

“Seems he’s determined to make an example out of you to force Sebastian’s hand,” Claudette said.

“What are you going to do?” I questioned.

“Sebastian will handle it from here.” Ray said.

“Handle it how?” I inquired.

“He’s going to make a statement to the public,” Claudette said.

“I could talk with Carlton and get him to retract.”

“Too late. Once the press picks up on you, it’s a never-ending story—until someone else does something crazy,” Ray said.

“I knew this would happen,” I muttered. “I have clients, and a business to run.”

“The best thing for you to do is go away for a few days,” Claudette informed me.

I threw my hands in the air in frustration.

“This could have been avoided,” Claudette said.

“How?” I asked.

“You think Sebastian has the power, but it’s really you,” Claudette said.



Chapter 5: Laila



THE CAR PULLED INTO the private air strip, and I saw two black SUVs parked there. Tony stopped, and, a few minutes later, he opened the door for me to get out.

“Tell me the truth: Am I crazy for this?” I asked him.

He chuckled. “I can’t answer that, ma’am.”

“He won’t know, Tony.”

“I’ll know, ma’am.” Tony escorted me to the plane.

I smiled at the crew that was standing along the private jet. They nodded at me, and I walked up the stairs. I looked from the left to the right and saw two men wearing all black, sitting in the rear of the plane.

Then I heard the voice I'd been trying to get out of my head for that last several months. "Come here."

I strolled to the middle seat across from him and sat down. I put my seatbelt on. "We couldn't fly on Air Force One?" I joked.

He smirked. "It's being cleaned, and I thought this would be more discreet," Sebastian said.

The door closed at the rear of the plane, and I saw Tony talking with the other gentleman in the back.

"How long are we going to be there?" I asked, looking out the window as the plane started to rev up.

The flight attendant came down the aisle with a tray of drinks. "Mr. President, would you like anything to drink?"

"A shot of Hennessy, please," he answered.

She looked over at me. "Anything for you, ma'am?"

"A bottle of water, please."

"Coming right up." The flight attendant grabbed a bottle of water and poured it into a cup.

"Thank you," I said and took a sip.

She smiled and walked off to check with the security men in the back.

Sebastian stared at me. “I apologize for forcing myself into your life.”

I turned my head at his comment and swallowed the lump in my throat. “Do you regret what happened?” I wondered.

“Honestly?”

“Yes.”

“I regret not finding you earlier,” he answered.

My stomach fluttered at his words. “Sebastian, I don’t know if I’m right for you.”

“Who says what’s right for me?” he questioned and changed seats to sit next to me. The flight attendant came over with his drink. He grasped my hand and stroked my palm.

“I don’t regret my choices, but this could bring on too much in my life,” I said.

“I ache for you when we’re not together,” Sebastian announced. “At the end of the day, all I want is to hear your voice.” He lifted my hand to kiss my palm.

“You’re the most powerful man in the world, and you’re skipping work to take me on a vacation.”

“I’m not skipping out. I still have work I’m going to do.”

“Yeah, right.” I giggled.

He squeezed my thigh and kissed my cheek. We continued to talk and joke around for the next two hours. It didn’t take long to get to Maryland, and I was glad they’d packed up some clothes for me to change into, since I was still wearing the same clothes from earlier.



I SAT IN THE BACKSEAT of the black SUV as we drove up to the gated compound of Camp David. The car stopped, and both doors opened. We stepped out, and Sebastian came around to grab my hand and walk me inside.

I looked around the cabin. It was rustic but modern at the same time. Tony brought in our luggage, and I dropped my purse on the couch, then went to the kitchen. Then I went to the bedroom. It was large, with a king-sized bed, a sofa in the corner, and a TV mounted over the fireplace.

“Are you hungry?” Sebastian came up behind me and wrapped his arms around my waist, nuzzling his face against my neck.

“I am, but I want to shower first.”

“Take a shower, and I’ll get some food started.”

I turned around and stared at him. “You’re cooking?” I asked.

“Yes, I can cook,” Sebastian said.

“Baby, you can barely boil water,” I teased, rolling my eyes at him.

“Well, you feed me, then.” He closed the space between us.

“Let me shower and check the kitchen out. Give me a few minutes.”

“Perfect. I have some calls to make.” Sebastian lifted my chin, pecked my lips, and patted me on the ass.

I went to the bathroom and turned the shower on. I removed my clothes and checked the cabinets for a face towel and shampoo. I hopped in the shower and let the water run down my face and hair as I picked up the strawberry soap and cleaned the day away.

30 minutes later, I strolled out and wrapped my hair in a towel. I dried off, and when I came out of the bathroom and into the bedroom, I saw clothes laid out for me. They were new with the tags still on—jeans, shirts, dresses, and boots. I

slipped on a shirt and pajama pants, picked the brush out of the bag, and fixed my hair in a tight bun.

I came out of the bedroom and walked into the kitchen, then opened the fully-stocked fridge. I picked up chicken and a bag of kale and broccoli. I looked under the cabinets to find the pots and pans. Finally getting things situated, I washed my hands and started to cook smothered chicken and steamed vegetables. While I opened a bottle of white wine, I saw a small radio sitting in the corner of the kitchen. I turned it on to an old-school R&B station. The Temptations were playing. It was nice to be away from the world—even under the circumstances.

“Something smells good enough to eat,” Sebastian said.

“I made smothered chicken and steamed veggies,” I replied.

Sebastian kissed the side of my face. “I wasn’t talking about the food,” Sebastian mumbled against my neck. He gently bit the side of my neck.

I giggled and tried to push him back. “Stop playing. You did enough earlier today,” I said and turned the temperature up on the pan of steamed vegetables.

“How much longer?” he inquired.

I checked the time. “About 20 minutes.”

“Good, I have a call I need to check about.”

“Okay, don’t be long,” I replied, tossing the pan gently to get the seasoning spread around it.

Sebastian walked out of the room to finish working. I put the spatula down and decided to call my parents to check in with them. I headed out of the kitchen and to the bedroom. I was passing his office when I heard him on the phone.

“Mr. Daniels, again, I want to apologize for the mess this caused you,” Sebastian said. I leaned against the closed door to listen. “I’d like that very much. Dinner would be great,” Sebastian responded, and my eyes grew wide in shock. “I will have her call you. Talk soon,” Sebastian said and hung up.

I went to the bedroom and looked for my cell phone. I called Cristin to let her know what was going on.

“I was wondering when you would call,” Cristin said loudly.

I jumped up to close the bedroom door. “I’m out of town,” I whispered. I walked to the window and saw the security detail, standing around and talking.

“Where?” she questioned.

“Camp David.”

“I’m sorry, *where?*” Cristin asked.

“Shush... Camp David.”

“Damn, you have the president flying you out of town? I can barely get a good dinner out of my dates,” Cristin joked.

I sucked my teeth. “Cristin, focus, please.”

“Sorry, but it’s really not a bad way to end up,” Cristin joked.

“Tell me I’m crazy for this.”

“I never sugarcoat anything for you, and I won’t start now.”

“This is unbelievable.”

“I think you need to decide what you want to do, because he’s not letting you go,” Cristin said.

“I’m cooking dinner for us,” I whispered, like a teenager trying to hide that they were on the phone.

“Hoo, then it must be serious, because you barely cook when you’re home.”

“Ugh, don’t remind me.”

A knock on the door startled me. I closed the curtain fast and hung up.

“I smelled something burning,” Sebastian said.

I rushed past him to check on the food. “The chicken.” I hurriedly got to the stove and turned it off, removing the chicken from the oven.

“It’s not too bad,” Sebastian said.

“No, it’s ruined.” I started to tear up, thinking about the stress and pressure of being the president’s girlfriend, and the amount of my life that I’d have to give up to if I wanted to be with him.

“Hey, what’s going on with you? Talk to me.”

“I can’t do this.”

“You won’t *allow* yourself to do this,” Sebastian replied.

“Sebastian, you can’t bring me home to your parents and expect them to like me.”

“Why not? They already love you,” he said, wiping a tear from my cheek.

“Since when? They don’t even know me.”

“They’ve known about you since I laid eyes on you for the first time.”

“I heard you talking to my parents,” I replied.

“Let’s eat and talk.” He moved around me and opened the top cabinet next to the radio. He grabbed two plates.

I picked the burnt parts off the chicken and filled our plates full. He took the opened bottle of wine and poured a glass for us. We stepped into the dining room and sat down to eat.

“Tell me about your parents,” I said.

“They’re your typical political family. My Dad used to be the governor, and my mom was a teacher, who gave up her career to raise me,” Sebastian told me.

“So, they’re okay with this?” I pointed between the both of us.

He chuckled and lifted the fork to take a bite of chicken. “This isn’t bad.” Sebastian cut into the vegetables, feeding me a piece.

“If I wasn’t so distracted, I could have done more.”

“Stop worrying. We’ll be fine.”

“What did you talk to my parents about?” I questioned again.

“I’m planning a dinner with both of our parents,” he said nonchalantly.

I grabbed the glass of wine and gulped it down. “When?” I questioned.

“When we get back.”

“Are you sure about this?” I needed to know, so my self-doubt wouldn’t creep in.

“Positive, baby. But I have to say, your friendship with Penelope has to end.”

“I know. I plan on meeting with her when I get back home.”

“I think Carlton leaked the news,” Sebastian said, bringing me out of my thoughts.

“Claudette said the same thing.”

“He’s testing me and waiting to see how I respond.”

“My practice is going to be ruined over this.”

“I won’t let that happen.” Sebastian kissed my forehead.

“You can’t promise that, Sebastian. All this over some high school ego bullshit,” I fussed.

“No more talking about Carlton. This is about us tonight.” Sebastian sat back in his chair.

“Claudette hates me.”

“She doesn’t hate you. I do want to talk to you about the loft, though.”

I moved the food around on the plate. “What about the loft?” I dropped the fork on the plate and gave him my full attention.

“You are moving into the loft.”

“No, I’m not. You’re barely going to be there.”

“I’ll make time to be there.”

“Let me be clear: I’m not uprooting my life for you, so you can have a live-in sex toy.”

“Did I say I wanted you just for sex? Because I can get that anytime,” I argued back.

I dropped the fork and jumped up.

He grabbed my hand and pulled me back down into my seat. “Stop running from me.”

“Stop giving me a reason to run!” I spat back and tossed the napkin on the table.

He leaned back against the chair and peered at me. “You’re scared.”

“Sebastian, my life was simple before you came in and uprooted things.”

“I’m not the only one who feels this strong connection, and you’re afraid.”

“I think you need to deal with your own insecurities.”

“I can admit that when I walk into the Oval Office, I feel the weight of the world on my shoulders.”

“Not the same,” I mumbled.

“You’re right, because if I disappoint you, I know I can earn your trust back. If I disappoint the country I lead, I get no second chances,” he said.

I relaxed my shoulders at his statement. “Life is only going to get more complicated,” I reminded him.

“Then we can uncomplicate it together, but I’m not going to be a man walking into this half-assed.”

“I love you,” I blurted out, waiting on pins and needles to see if he would reply.

He reached over and grabbed my hand to pull me into his lap. He extended his arms around my waist. “I love you, too, and I’m not going anywhere. It was meant to be for us to meet,” Sebastian explained.

I kissed him on the lips. “Mmmm...” I gripped his shoulders and turned in his lap to straddle him.

“I thought you were hungry,” Sebastian mumbled.

I helped him out of his shirt. “Not for food,” I said.

He lifted me by my thighs and carried me out of the room. I slid my tongue into his mouth and secured my arms around his n



Chapter 6: Sebastian

BEING AT CAMP DAVID gave us some privacy, without everyone trying to tell me what I should be doing as the president. I was probably wrong for bringing her, but I needed to be near her. I could admit that I wasn’t thinking clearly when I

made the contract. I saw an opportunity to make her mine, and she was feeling the same thing about me. I called her parents to apologize earlier, and I hoped they would be willing to sit down with my parents because I was planning on making her my wife one day.

I brought her into the living room and placed her on the couch. I grabbed a blanket and placed it on the floor, then turned the fireplace on. I removed my pants and watched as she took off her shirt and black tights. She only had a thong on underneath. Her hair was flowing down her back as sweat glistened off her skin. I bit my bottom lip, knowing I was going to get to taste the sweet nectar between her thighs. I dropped onto the floor and extended a hand for her to come to me. "Sit on my face, baby."

"I have another idea," she said and turned with her back to me in a 69 position, then slid her hands into my boxers.

I ripped her panties off and slid a hand across her ass, then dipped a finger inside her soaking wet pussy. I felt her lips wrap around my dick, causing my head to fall back in bliss. I licked her asshole, thrusting fast strokes into her slippery core with my finger. Her moans grew louder as we pleased each other. I palmed her ass and spanked each cheek as she grinded on my tongue. "Laila... shit," I groaned. She lifted herself off me. I pushed a piece of hair behind her ear. "Baby... you're so beautiful," I whispered, massaging her shoulders while she pleased me, taking me to the edge of the cliff like always. I needed to be inside her. I craved her touch. Her thoughts and dreams filled something inside me that was empty.

She released my dick and kissed the insides of my thighs, then trailed her kisses up to my stomach. Laila licked her lips, smiled, and sat in my lap. Her breasts were angled right at my

mouth, and I grasped both of them and brought them to my lips. "Ah... baby!" Laila cried out, stretching her arms around my neck. I gripped my dick and slid her down it. She rotated her

hips. Her warm pussy fit me like a glove. I pumped upward as she gasped in shock. “You feel so good!” Laila cried out, breathing heavily as sweat beads dripped down her face.

I rolled us over and pushed her legs back to her shoulders, then delved deeper into her core. “Fuck!” I yelled, trying to erase every orgasm she’d ever had before me from her memory.

“Oh... right there; I’m coming!” Laila screamed. I leaned down as she squirted, and I pulled out fast, sucked on her pussy as she came. “Baby, wait... oh, shit. I can’t breathe.” She started shaking.

I slapped her pussy gently a few times as she came. I slid back inside and thrust two more times until I had my own orgasm. I’d never pulled out before whenever I wore a condom, and this time, I didn’t pull out without wearing one. I wondered if she would say something.

“That was...” she began.

“...amazing,” I responded, lying on the floor and trying to catch my breath.

She crawled over to me, and I kissed her forehead. “How long are we hiding out?” she asked.

I sighed and picked up her hand to entwine our fingers. “Not long, but let’s just enjoy this moment.”

For the rest of the night, we talked and promised to communicate better going forward. We watched TV in bed, and I stayed up a little longer to go over my upcoming work. I wanted to get ahead for my speech at a convention.



THE NEXT MORNING, I smelled coffee and bacon. My stomach growled, and I felt around the bed. It was empty. I

checked the time, and it said five o'clock. I sat up and ran a hand down my face to gather my thoughts about the day ahead. I picked up my cell and saw a few missed calls from Claudette, Ray, and my parents. I took a shower and brushed my teeth to get ready to take Laila on a hike through the area.

20 minutes later, I walked into the kitchen. She was sitting at the table, reading the paper, dressed casually in jeans and a hoodie. "Morning," I said, picked up the cup, and poured some coffee and cream. I sat across from her at the table and started to fill my stomach with the pancakes, bacon, eggs, and fruit she had laid out.

"Morning. How did you sleep?" she questioned.

"Good."

"That's nice. What are your plans for today?" "I wanted to go on a hike and explore." "That can be fun."

"You seem a little off. What's up with you?"

"I can't hide it from you." She pushed the paper forward.

I grabbed it to read the headline: *Presidential Girlfriend, Paid Escort*. "I'm sorry, about this."

"Are you surprised?"

"No, but I did expect some type of respect. I'll get my people on this to get it retracted."

“My goals haven’t changed, and I won’t apologize for the lifestyle that helped save my mother’s life.”

“I’m not asking you to, Laila.”

“I plan on using these trash blogs to my benefit, since they are trying to delve into my personal business.”

“Let’s finish eating, and I can put in some calls.”

“I’m not hungry.”

“Laila, this won’t stop us.”

“Sebastian, this will only get worse.”

“The truth is that Carlton is probably not the only one behind this leak on our relationship.”

“What do you mean?”

“He wants me to cut the increase on funding for infrastructure, and he’s using our relationship to do it.”

“He wouldn’t do all this just over me.”

“Yes, he would. This paper is owned by one of his mutual business partners. I can bet a dollar he gave them information on you,” I told her.

“I’m going to kill him.” She jumped up.

I grabbed her wrist to stop her from leaving. “Let me handle it,” I said.

“No, this is my life he’s ruining because I turned him down! This was before you and I got together.” she explained and went to leave.

“Where are you going?” I questioned, walking behind her as she went to the bedroom. She mumbled under her breath as she grabbed her bags and started packing up her things. “Laila.”

“No, I don’t want this to hurt what your building, I was too foolish to see this would never work.”

“This can work if you stop and listen to me.”

“You can’t fix this, Sebastian, and I’m not going to let you ruin your career.”

“I’ll step down.”

“No.”

“Baby.”

“I refuse to be a pawn in some sick game with Carlton and you. Let me go,” she said. She slid on her shoes, walked to the front door and opened it. Tony looked at her, then at me. “I’m leaving; can you take me back home?” she said to him.

Tony glanced at me for confirmation.

“Let me grab my things, and we can go,” I told her. I headed back in and packed up my things.

Carlton was making the wrong choice to see me as an enemy. Everyone thought I played it safe in politics and didn’t ruffle any feathers, but for him to use Laila against me was the last straw.

The plane started up, and we flew back in silence. She didn’t even want to sit near me when we boarded, and I couldn’t blame her because this was technically my fault.

As soon as we landed, a car was waiting to take her back home and take me to the White House. I had thought we would

be making plans to move into the loft together, but that would have to be put on hold until I could get a handle on Carlton.

I stepped out of the car once we pulled up to the residence and saw Ray and Claudette standing by. “Welcome back, Mr. President,” Claudette said and passed me the binder.

I removed my jacket and tossed it on the couch. I paced back and forth, trying to manage my thoughts.

“Sir,” Ray said.

I held my hand up to stop them from speaking. “I want the budget for the infrastructure finalized today.”

“About that, sir—” Claudette started to speak.

“We need to go over the latest news,” I interrupted.

“I saw the newspaper headline. All the caucus and your supporters are wondering what you’re going to do.” Claudette showed me the list of text messages on her phone.

“I think Carlton’s not the only one behind this,” Ray commented.

I nodded in confirmation. “He’s pissed that she didn’t want him, and he’s still hurt that he lost to me two years ago.”

“We need to approach this delicately,” Claudette said.

“I want the deal signed; we’ve come too far not to get this bill done,” I said.

“I agree, but if we make even bigger headlines—”

“That’s it; make bigger headlines.”

“What are you thinking?” Claudette questioned.

“Call a conference and get the press to make the announcement about the deal.”

“Are you saying we should make it seem like Carlton’s on our side with the bill?” Claudette asked.

I grinned and sat down at my desk. I picked up the phone. “Get the media a new story—and fast. In the meantime, let’s go about our day as usual.”

“What about Laila?” Ray asked.

“She needs space,” I responded and waited for the phone to ring.

They left, and I got to work on a plan to get Carlton under control before he could do even more damage to my career and Laila’s.

A few seconds later, I got a text message from Tony.

Tony: She’s home, sir.

Me: At the loft?

Tony: Her place.

Me: Keep her under watch in case something happens.

Tony: Yes, sir.

Me: Whatever she needs, give it to her.

Tony: Yes, sir.

I closed my phone and sighed, then closed my eyes. Our little trip had been well needed, and I’d wanted to stay even longer, but the way my life was set up, I might be fighting for my job before

I have a chance to make real changes. I never thought I would have to choose between my career and my love life.

I started to read the notes from the legislation that they wanted me to sign when my cell phone rang with my mother's name across the screen. "Hello," I answered.

"I was wondering when my son would have time for me," my mother said.

"Mara Hunter, you know I always have time for you," I joked.

"Sebastian, you're not too old that I can't whip your butt," my mother told me.

"Ma, I'm Thirty-eight."

"And?" she said.

I laughed at her response. "What can I do for you?" I questioned, signing the documents on my desk.

"I wanted to know if we're still doing dinner with Laila," she said.

I groaned. I'd forgotten to call and cancel the dinner plans. "Dinner's off for right now."

"Why?"

"She needs space, after the news broke, and the newspapers' blasting her."

"Tell her to call me if she wants to talk."

"Can I ask you a question?" "Of course, you can, honey."

“Are you upset about what she does for a living?”

“No, she had to do what she thought she needed to do to help her family.”

“What about Dad?”

“Your father loves you, and we raised you to be a good man with integrity and not to be judgmental. Life happens, baby. We can’t choose who we love.”

“Is that what happened with you and Pops?”

“Honey, your father was a playboy, and I was ready to give up on him—until he changed his ways.” She laughed, and I chuckled, remembering the stories my father had told me

when I was growing up. “Keep me updated if the dinner is going to happen or not,” she said.

“I will, and I love you.”

“Love you, too, baby.”

I ended the call and continued working and finding other contacts that could help me get any dirt on Carlton, anything to get him off our backs and make sure that Laila was protected. I picked up my phone and tried to dial her number, but it went straight to voicemail.

“She’s not answering,” Claudette said, stepping into my office.

“Maybe I went too far,” I said.

“Maybe.” Claudette took a seat across from me.

“You’re giving me that look.”

She shrugged her shoulders. “I just want my friend to be happy.”



Chapter 7: Sebastian

Two Days Later

THE TEACHERS FILLED the West Wing as we held the annual Teacher of the Year celebration. I watched on the side as Kaitlin led the introductions. I hadn't heard from Laila since we got back from our trip. I pushed myself into work to keep my head off other things.

Loud claps and cheers brought me out of my thoughts.

“The President of the United States,” Kaitlin said.

I clapped my hands and moved in front of the podium. “Thank you, Kaitlin. Amazing to see so many wonderful teachers here.” The cheers continued. “I want to thank you all for being here, and I want you to enjoy yourselves,” I said and moved to the side for Kaitlin to continue.

“Thank you, Mr. President.” Kaitlin called out a teacher's name, and I stood to the side, as they walked up to the podium. We shook hands and did a photo op for the press room.

30 minutes later, I headed back into my office.

“Mr. President, here's your morning messages,” Joanne said, handing me a stack of notes.

I thanked her. “Joanne, can you get Ray on the phone?” I asked, lowering my glasses down my nose.

“Right away, sir.” Joanne walked away.

I sorted through the messages, and one popped out from an old friend whom I hadn’t heard from in a while. “Delilah,” I muttered to myself when my phone rang. I answered and waited for the call to be transferred through.

“Mr. President,” Ray said.

“Any updates on Carlton?” I crumpled up Delilah’s number and tossed it in the trash.

“The bill is still in negotiations right now,” Ray said.

I pinched the bridge of my nose. Carlton was up to something, and I needed to find out exactly what it was before everything went up in smoke. I’d run my campaign on building support for bringing jobs back to workers, and already, two years in, things had stalled. “You remember Delilah?” I asked.

“Your ex?” Ray commented.

I scoffed through the phone. “Delilah was never my ex; she and I had a casual fling, with no commitment on either end.”

“So, why is she contacting you two years later?” Ray asked.

I tapped my finger on the desk. “Good question. We left things fine. She knew my career was important, and I didn’t see myself getting involved with her fully.”

“Well, handle it soon, because Carlton might be a bigger problem than we need.”

“I’m not budging, and we need this win.”

“Yes, sir.””

“I hate when you call me that.”

He chuckled at my statement. “You’re the president.” “I’m your friend—when it’s just the two of us, anyway.”

“Fine, let me finish dealing with my main headache right now—my wife,” Ray stated.

I tossed the messages into the trash. Delilah would have to get the point that I was too busy to respond. “She still hasn’t warmed up to Laila,” I said, reading over the marketing trends of the day.

“Can you blame her?” Ray replied. I heard him mutter something to his assistant about the new copy machine.

“She’s your wife!” I blurted out in a huff.

“Yep, and *your* Chief of State and friend from college,” Ray responded.

“That’s true; I can’t get away from her if I tried.” I laughed.

“I’ll tell her you said that. But I do advise you to try to make nice with Carlton,” Ray hinted.

I released a harsh breath. “We’ll see.”

“Try to keep the secret meetups with Laila to a minimum,” Ray explained.

“Is this coming from my friend, or the Congressman?” I questioned, sitting up in my chair. I leaned over the desk as Joanne walked inside with lunch. She placed it on the table. I nodded at her, and she stepped out of the room.

“Both,” Ray answered.

I said goodbye, then ended the call. I stood and walked around the desk, then lifted the meal that had been brought up to me. The White House staff had prepared my favorite: a burger and fries, with extra cheese and avocados on top. I started to take a bite out of the sandwich, then abruptly stood and headed back to the trash can. I grabbed Delilah's number out of it. Whatever she had been calling about hopefully wouldn't interfere with my career, or Laila.



Chapter 8: Laila

I HAD JUST FINISHED thanking a client for coming in and letting them know to make another appointment, when I heard a loud commotion coming from outside my office door.

“I need to see her now!” I heard a voice yelling, and then the door burst open. My client, Delilah Jones, stomped toward me.

I jumped out of my seat. “Delilah, what’s going on?”

She pointed in my face. “You’re fucking Sebastian behind my back,” she hissed, slamming her hand down on my desk.

“What are you talking about?”

“The guy I told you about, the one who left me. Sebastian Hunter.”

My eyes widened in shock. She’d come to me months ago, talking about a love that was rekindling that she thought would move toward marriage and kids. But Sebastian told me they hadn’t been in contact for over two years. I held my hands up to

get her to calm down and walked around my desk. “Delilah, sit down, so we can talk.”

“No, I want to know what you’re doing with my fiancé.” Delilah narrowed her eyes, clenching and unclenching her fists.

“Laila, do you want me to call the police?” Joyce asked.

“No, we’ll be fine. Right, Delilah?”

Delilah rolled her eyes. “Yes.” Joyce closed the door, and I waited for Delilah to speak. “I saw the newspaper about you and Sebastian. You need to stay away from him.”

“First off, I’m an adult, and second, Sebastian never spoke about you specifically.”

“We were engaged.”

“From what he told me; it was just sex.”

“That’s a lie!” She gnawed on her lip.

“Delilah, whatever you had with Sebastian, you need to take it up with him.”

“So, you admit to fooling around with a man who’s taken?” she inquired.

“I’m no longer seeing Sebastian, but even if I were, you were never mentioned by name.”

“This isn’t over,” Delilah said, then stalked out of my office and slammed the door.

I ran a hand through my hair in shock at what just happened. I made a note to tell Sebastian later to see what exactly was going on with those two.



LATER THAT NIGHT, CRISTIN called me to hang out with some friends at dinner. I still hadn't spoken with my father about everything that went on, and I hoped they were still keeping the press away from him. I walked in the door and spotted Cristin and Katherine, another close friend from Bayview. She was the secretary of another doctor in the building.

"I thought you'd never show up," Cristin said.

I hugged Katherine, then Cristin and pulled out my chair to sit. I picked up the menu and looked around the restaurant. "Thanks for getting a table in the back."

"I did notice a few people glancing at you when you walked over." Cristin motioned toward the older couple sitting near the bar.

"Have you spoken to him?" Katherine took a sip of water as the waitress headed toward our table.

"No, and I have to tell you about my patient," I said.

"Hello, I'm Taylor," the waitress introduced herself. "I'll be your waitress today."

"Hi, can we get another bottle of white wine?" Cristin said.

"Sure. Would you like to order now?" Taylor asked.

"We can start with appetizers—or do you want to just order a meal?" Cristin asked us.

"Are we still going to the club later?" Katherine queried.

I already knew Cristin was planning to pull me out of my funk.

“I think we should just order our food now,” Cristin decided.

“What are you having?” Taylor held up an iPad and started to take our order.

“I’d like the spaghetti,” Cristin said and passed her menu over.

“A salad for me, please.” I wasn’t really hungry. Delilah had caused me to lose my appetite earlier. If what she said was true, then Sebastian had been seeing me and her at the same time.

“Bring me a salad, as well. Thank you.” Katherine lifted her menu.

Taylor thanked us, then walked away. I grabbed a glass of water and gulped it down.

“You look too cute to seem so stressed out.” Cristin gestured up and down my body with her hand. “What happened?”

“I had the weirdest thing happen at work today.” I scratched the top of my forehead and blew out a breath.

“What happened? Tell us.” Katherine placed her elbows on the table and leaned in close.

“I think I met Sebastian’s ex-girlfriend today.”

“What do you mean?” Cristin picked her cell phone out of her purse and turned it on silent.

“I can’t give out patient information, but let’s just say I met a woman who claims to be his girlfriend—or ex-girlfriend.”

“But you told me Sebastian never had a relationship until you,” Cristin replied

I lifted my arms in a shrug. “I thought so, too, but after today, who knows?”

“Wait, tell us what she said exactly,” Katherine insisted.

“She said I stole her fiancé.”

“Since when has Sebastian been engaged?” Cristin commented.

I pushed my hands out in a wave. “That’s what I said. He’s never lied to me before, so I need to talk with him first.”

“You don’t believe her, do you?” Katherine said.

Taylor arrived back at our table with our food. She called out each meal and placed them in front of us, and a second waitress refilled our drinks.

“Thank you,” Cristin said to Taylor after she finished.

“I don’t know what to believe at this point,” I continued.

“Don’t retreat from love, Laila. I know you never expected this to happen,” Katherine said.

“It’s in Sebastian’s court now. If he lied to me, then we’ll have bigger problems,” I stated.

We continued to talk and eat for the rest of the afternoon.



LATER THAT EVENING, I was home in bed. I was avoiding Sebastian's calls because I needed to think and focus on work. Plus, his ex-girlfriend popping up out of the blue really had me rethinking what we'd been doing for the past year. I tossed and turned in bed, dreaming of the time I went out to a fashion gala to support the arts. Everyone in politics showed up, and I was there with another date.



“ARE YOU HAVING A GOOD time?” Decklon asked. He was a stock broker and flew into town just to attend this event. We went way back from my days of escorting, and we'd grown a real friendship over time. I never slept with him, but if I ever wanted to settle down, he would have been the ideal man to do it with. He was tall, with broad shoulders, an athletic build, a square jaw, and a trimmed beard.

“I am. And thank you for inviting me,” I responded, smiling and pulling away from his hold when the music stopped playing.

The banquet hall was full of musicians, celebrities, and the press, along with senators and other congressman whom I knew very well. Carlton winked at me, and I nodded, aware of his presence. We'd ended badly, and I wouldn't speak to him in public.

“You're welcome. I haven't seen you in a few months, so I thought this would be the best time to call you up,” Decklon said, trailing his finger down my bare arm. I wore a long red turtleneck dress that curved to my figure.

“Decklon Mitchell, I didn't know you'd be here.” The last voice I expected to hear was right behind me.

I could feel his dark gaze upon me. I turned around with my back to Decklon as he wrapped a hand around my waist. I lifted

my eyes to peer over and caught a quick glare in Sebastian's eyes.

"Mr. President, I didn't think you'd know me, sir," Decklon responded, extending his free hand for a shake.

"I know more than you think," Sebastian said, gazing into my eyes. I looked off into the crowd, licking my dry lips after the cold stare he'd given me. "Miss Daniels, I'd like to speak to you for a moment if Decklon doesn't mind," Sebastian said.

"Um..." I stammered.

"That's fine; I'll go grab another drink for us." Decklon pressed a kiss on my cheek and walked away.

I tried to turn and walk away from Sebastian, but he gripped my elbow and pulled me close to whisper in my ear,

"Go to the bathroom and wait for me."

"Sebastian, we're in a room full of people. If the president goes missing, I think they'll notice," I mumbled lowly while looking around the room.

"Go, and Claudette will walk with you to check your makeup," Sebastian insisted.

I continued to smile as Claudette approached us.

"Claudette, you look beautiful tonight," I said.

"Thank you. I need to double my makeup; do you mind walking with me to the bathroom?" she replied. I grabbed my clutch and followed her down the hall to the bathroom. "Sorry about this," Claudette muttered and looked behind us to see if anyone was following.

“He’s insane,” I said. I pushed the bathroom door open and checked the stalls.

“I’ll stay by the door on watch. You have at least five minutes before anyone comes looking,” Claudette mentioned.

Sebastian walked in with a hard glare on his face.

“Explain to me why I was summoned into the bathroom right now,” I demanded, folding my arms across my chest.

“Why are you here with him?” Sebastian reached out to pull me against his chest and kiss the side of my chin. He pulled a handkerchief from his pocket and wiped the other side of my face, where Decklon had kissed me.

“You’re so jealous.” I chuckled and tried to push him back.

“No, I’m a man who doesn’t like being ignored when I ask you to be my date.”

“I told you, Decklon and I are just friends.”

“Friends?”

“Yes, friends.”

“From the look in his eyes he wants more than friendship... and you belong to me.” Sebastian lifted my chin and peered into my eyes.

I licked my lips, waiting for him to press a kiss to them, but he placed it on my forehead instead. “I was going to call you after this was over.”

“We’ve been doing this dance for a while, Laila. I want more.”

*A knock on the door startled us, and Claudette peeked inside.
“Sir, time to go,” Claudette said.*

I stepped out of Sebastian’s arms, cleared my throat, and walked out of the bathroom. I could feel his eyes on me as we went back into the hall. Decklon presented me with a glass of wine, and I smiled at him. Sebastian smirked as he walked onstage to give a speech.



I JERKED OUT OF SLEEP at the ringing of my phone. I grabbed it off the nightstand and saw a text message from Sebastian.

Sebastian: Are you still ignoring me?

Me: Sorry, I had a bad day.

Sebastian: Can I call you?

Me: Sure.

The phone rang a few seconds later. “I couldn’t sleep,” he said.

“I had a bad dream.”

“What was it about?”

“You and your jealousy.” I chuckled.

He laughed at me. “We all have a little jealousy in us somewhere.”

“You might be right.”

“What was the dream about?”

“The art gala, and you being pissed that I was there with Decklon.”

“Your wannabe-boyfriend.”

I laughed at his comment. “Decklon’s a sweetheart.”

“...who wanted to be more.”

“What about you and your ex—or should I say, ‘fiancé’?”

“What?!”

I bit my nails nervously, trying to figure out the best way to approach the subject. “Delilah Jones.”

“She was a woman who I briefly had a casual thing with two years ago.”

“So, you weren’t engaged? And you aren’t engaged now?” I asked.

“Laila, where is this coming from?” he asked.

“My client is Delilah Jones, and she stormed into my office, demanding to know why I was dating her fiancé.”

“For one thing, I haven’t seen her in almost two years, and for another, all my time is spent with you.”

“But were you two close? Like, ready to commit and in love?” I investigated, pulling the covers tight under my chin.

“No, I was still running a campaign, while I was trying to transition from being a lawyer.”

“She has a very different idea of what you two were.”

“That doesn’t matter to me. It matters to you, though, so get it out of your head.”

“Okay.”

“I’m serious, Laila. It’s in the past, and we didn’t have anything beyond sex.”

“Like us?”

He groaned at my comment. “What we have is nothing like what I had with Delilah,” he argued.

I felt deep in my heart that it was true, but my head was telling me differently. “I trust you.”

“Do you? Because I can come over there and show you how much you mean to me,” he said.

I giggled. “No, that’s okay.”

“Fine, but I want to see you soon.”

“I have work, and then I’m hanging out with my parents tomorrow night. I’ll call you when I get a chance,” I said.

He grunted like a big baby who wasn’t getting his way, and I laughed. “Don’t keep me waiting too long, or Tony will bring you to me,” Sebastian demanded.

I rolled my eyes. Whenever he got in this mood, I just let him talk, because nothing I said would have convinced him to keep his distance from me. “Of course, Mr. President.”

He moaned at my words. “I’m picturing you wearing panties, and a large t-shirt right now. Am I right?” he asked.

I lifted the covers and laughed. I was wearing exactly that.

“How did you know?” I asked.

“I know my woman,” Sebastian answered.

I scoffed. “Anyway, go to sleep. You have to continue saving the world.”

He chortled. “Goodbye, beautiful.” He hung up.

I placed the phone back on the charger and pulled the covers tight in my arms. I closed my eyes, drifting off to sleep while thinking of our last sexual encounter.



Chapter 9: Laila

I WAS AT MY PARENTS’ house, helping them clean the garage and hanging out with them since I’d finished work early that day. I didn’t feel up to a repeat of Delilah showing up, so I wrapped up most of my clients early and rescheduled the others. My mother made lunch, and we worked on her garden, and then packed up some old items to donate to charity. My father had been piling up so much junk in the garage that they had to park both of their cars on the street.

“Dad, what do you want me to do with your old records?” I held them up.

“I *know* your mother isn’t throwing those away.” He approached me and checked through the box. It was a large array of vinyl records that had been sitting in the garage for years. Most of them had dust on them, and he barely listened to them.

“Tim, you never listen to those records.” My mother wiped her brow with the back of her hand. The garage door was open while we separated things, but the humidity outside was still high.

“Because I couldn’t *find* them, dear,” Dad replied, taking the box out of my hands.

“Dad, the point of this cleaning is to make room in the garage.”

“I will when I find something that isn’t as valuable as my records,” he replied, and my mom waved him off.

“That’s the guy you married,” I joked.

“A hoarder,” Mom said.

“Laila, don’t get your mother started. I’m still not over your little boyfriend situation,” Dad said.

“I apologized about that, Daddy. It wasn’t Sebastian’s fault.”

“He’s a grown man. Let him apologize for himself.” Dad picked up his toolbox and pushed it back on top of the cabinet.

“Leave her alone, Tim.” Mom passed me a glass of lemonade.

“Thanks.”

“When am I meeting this boyfriend of yours, anyway?” he asked.

“Hopefully, soon.”

“Make it *very* soon—as in this week,” Dad said and grabbed a cup of lemonade off the table.

We continued packing and labeling boxes for the next two hours, until I left and headed home to run a hot bath. I was walking out of the bathroom with a towel wrapped around my waist when my phone vibrated. I picked it up and scrolled through a group text message between Cristin, Katherine, and me.

Cristin: We're almost at your place. Get dressed.

Me: Why?

Katherine: Cristin needs to unwind and wants to go to the club.

Me: I had a long day with my parents.

Katherine: Which means you need this.

Me: I'm not staying out late.

Cristin: Get dressed and stop complaining.

Me: I hate you.

Cristin: You know you love me.

Sebastian would still be pissed that I hadn't talked to him yet about coming over, but tonight I needed to feel like a regular girl, and not the president's girlfriend.

I dropped the phone on the bed and strolled to the closet to find something to wear for tonight. My hair was still decent from earlier when I had it in a bun. So, I grabbed a black jumpsuit out of the closet and gold heels to hurry up and put

on before they got there. I applied minimal makeup and sprayed a little perfume.

I heard a car horn honking, and I looked out the bedroom window and saw Cristin's Audi, blaring throughout the neighborhood. Mostly younger couples lived around here, and noise wasn't a big deal. I grabbed my purse, bracelet, keys, and phone and headed out of my bedroom. I turned all the lights out and went to Cristin's car. I opened the back door, and they squealed in excitement.

"Sexy! Somebody's trying to get laid tonight," Cristin teased.

"This is not sexy. You think I need to change?" I questioned, hesitating to go out in public and have blogs and the press talk about me.

"It's fine; there's only a little breast showing," Katherine said.

I looked down at my cleavage. "Just hurry up, so we can get this night over with."

"Buckle up, buttercup," Cristin said, backing out of the driveway and turning at the stop sign to head toward the city.

Cristin drove like a manic, and we arrived at Club Onyx, an upscale club that most people in the political circle went to hang out and meet other people in the same business. It was the kind of place that they could go to without feeling like they had to pretend to be something they weren't.

Cristin parked, and we jumped out and went inside. We went toward the bar first and ordered drinks. The bass from the music had the whole place vibrating. Strobe lights moved throughout the venue. It was a two-story building with a VIP area on top. The waitresses wore black tights and crop tops with fanny packs to hold their tips in.

"What can I get you ladies?" the bartender asked.

“I want a Long Island Iced Tea, and a shot of patron on the side,” Cristin said.

“I’ll have a Jack and Coke, and a shot of patron, please,” Katherine explained.

He turned toward me for my order.

“Can I get a Long Island Iced Tea, as well, please?” I asked.

“That’s my girl!” Cristin yelled over the loud crowd as they started waving their hands in the air.

“No men tonight!” Katherine shouted excitedly. I smirked, and she stuck her tongue out and pushed her ass in the air to twerk.

“Speak for yourself. Mama’s looking to take somebody home,” Cristin said.

“Boo, you’re no fun.” Katherine grabbed her shot and passed the other one to me.

“I didn’t order this,” I said.

“On the house,” the bartender told me and walked off.

“Oh, he is cute,” Cristin remarked and blew a kiss at him.

“Let’s go see who’s in VIP,” Katherine said.

“We can’t just go walking up there.” I blocked her from walking up the stairs.

“It’ll be fine. Besides, I know one of the guys who’s here tonight,” Katherine mentioned.

I sucked my teeth, having known this was a setup all along. “You lied to me about being out front.”

“Stop worrying; it’ll be fine, no one will notice you,” Cristin said.

“Not if the newspapers get a hold of this,” I complained, putting my hand on my hip.

Cristin booty-bumped me, and I smacked her on the ass. “Hey, you know I like that shit. Let’s go; we’ll be fine.” Cristin grasped my palm.

I followed as Katherine led us through the crowd. The DJ started yelling for people to throw their hands in the air. I

bumped into a hard body, and they grabbed me around the waist to keep me from falling. “Sorry, sexy,” the guy said.

“It’s fine,” I responded.

He grabbed my hand to stop me from leaving. I jerked my hand away before he could place a kiss atop it. “Damn, are you spoken for or something?” he asked.

“Yes,” I said and ignored him as he grinned, looking at me as a challenge.

We made it upstairs, and Katherine hugged a guy who was sitting and talking to another man. He had short dreads, a gold chain around his neck, and an expensive watch that I’d seen too many times on Sebastian’s wrist.

“Laila, I want you to meet Keon,” Katherine said. “He works in the White House, in the Communications Department.”

I gave him a wave and sat next to Cristin and two other girls in the corner. There were about seven other people there: four guys, and two girls, not including us. I took a sip of my drink.

“You look just as bored as me,” a deep voice muttered in my ear.

I looked to my left, and a guy with a trimmed beard, full lips, and a wide grin winked at me. “Is it that obvious?”

“I understand; I just got out of a thing, and my friends forced me here tonight.”

I nodded, crossing my legs as I smiled at the dimple in his chin. He looked younger than me.

“Whoever the guy is, he’s foolish to have you walking around with no light in your eyes,” he added.

“What if it’s me who’s doing the heartbreaking?” I challenged, reaching over to grab a glass of champagne after finishing my Long Island Iced Tea.

He held his chest in shock. “Don’t tell me it was you. That will hurt my feelings.”

“What’s your name?” I asked.

“Moses. What’s yours?” He extended a hand for me.

I took it to shake. “Laila.”

“Well, Laila, we’re both in the same boat, so let’s have fun and forget about our problems,” Moses said, lifting his glass for a toast.

“To forgetting about relationships,” I said and took a gulp, then grabbed the bottle to refill my glass.

After 30 minutes, I’d found out that Moses worked at a local political blog and had just broken up with his girlfriend. It was probably stupid to be talking with him, but I wasn’t feeling like

myself. I got up and started dancing with my friends, then Moses came over to dance with me. The club was blasting “Obsessed” by Mariah Carey, and I lip-synched along with it as I twirled my hips and raised my hands in the air. I was feeling good, with no cares in the world, when I felt a tap on my shoulder. I looked behind me, and my face fell flat. “What are you are doing here?” I questioned, glancing from left to right.

“He sent me to get you,” Tony said.

“Is everything all right?” Moses asked, placing his arm around my shoulders.

I stepped out of his reach. “I need to go. Thanks for dancing with me, Moses.” I tried to step away and look for Cristin and Katherine.

Moses gripped my elbow. “Wait! Can I get your number?” Moses asked.

Tony looked down at his hand.

I yanked my arm out of his hold and shook my head. “No, sorry. It was nice meeting you, though.” I headed over to Katherine, who was talking with her friends.

“I was looking for you,” Katherine slurred and tried to stand.

“I’m leaving; are you coming with me?”

“Why? It’s so early.” Katherine wrapped her arms around my neck and pulled me in close.

“You’re drunk, and I need to get going.” I motioned to Tony.

Her eyes lit up. “Oh... shit,” Katherine quipped and removed her arm. She put her drink down and tried to stand straight.

“Yeah, so, are you coming with me or not?”

“Yes, because I don’t need the Secret Service coming in here and blowing up my high,” Katherine fussed, glaring at Tony.

Cristin met us at the door as we left, and I drove home in the back of the car with Tony. I closed the door when I stepped into my place a few minutes later, and my phone vibrated with a message.

Sebastian: I hope you enjoyed yourself.

Me: You didn’t need to send Tony.

Sebastian: What else am I supposed to do when you ignore me?

Me: I said I needed space, but I’ll see you soon.

Sebastian: Good because I’m done with this back and forth.

I closed the text messages and turned my phone off. I went to my bedroom and grabbed some clothes to take a shower and head to bed. It had been a long day and night. Plus, having Tony pop up at the club was the biggest thing Sebastian had done next to Camp David. He wouldn’t let me keep running any longer.



Chapter 10: Laila



One Week Later

I'D GONE A WEEK WITHOUT seeing him, and it was unbearable. I'd done nothing but go to work and go back home, spending time with my family and friends.

Staying off social media had been the best therapy for me. The press was hounding me every second, trying to get me to talk or agree to an interview for a magazine. That was never my style.

I got out of the car and walked into Southern Charm Restaurant, wearing shades and a wig. Penelope had asked me to meet her there for lunch, and at first, I refused, but I needed to start living my life for me.

I told the hostess that I was meeting someone, and I gave Penelope's name. She motioned to the private booth in the back corner.

"Thank you," I said and headed to the back. The restaurant wasn't as busy at this time of day, so we'd have more privacy than usual.

"You finally made the leap out of the hole," Penelope teased and stood to hug me.

I put my purse down on the table and grabbed a menu. "I had no other options, since someone threatened to come to my house and pick me up."

"Really? I wonder who that was," she joked.

"How are you?" I asked.

"I should be asking *you* that question."

"Hello, I'm Carol, your waitress. Would you like to start with drinks?" she asked.

“Can I get a cup of tea, please?” I said, flipping the menu over to check the specials.

“A glass of wine, please,” Penelope said.

“Coming right up,” Carol responded and strolled to the bar.

“So, tell me how you feel,” Penelope urged.

“Paranoid, empty, pissed, and missing him,” I muttered lowly and crossed my arms over my chest.

“That’s love.”

“Ugh... and I hate it,” I groaned, feeling like a lovesick woman.

“I preached to all you girls about not getting involved with a man seriously.”

“I don’t just blame him; it’s Carlton’s fault, too.”

“Have you talked to Carlton?” she asked.

I thought about when I’d burst in on Carlton a week ago and cursed him out.



One Week Earlier

“JIMMY, GET THIS OVER to the committee; I want it filed immediately,” Carlton said

“Sir, I tried to stop her,” his secretary said.

I marched inside, not caring if anyone saw me.

“It’s all right, Samantha. Jimmy, give me a few minutes,” Carlton said. The door closed, and I glared at him. “You still look gorgeous, Laila,” Carlton said.

“Why did you do it? What would possess you to throw my name out like that?”

“I didn’t do anything. Your boyfriend was the one who made the announcement.” He smirked.

“You’re jealous. Is that what this is about?”

He rolled his eyes. “Jealous of what? I had you first—and plenty of other women, too,” he fussed.

“Then why would you throw me under the bus to get back at him?”

“Before you made that decision, you should have given me a chance.’

“All we had was a business transaction. Nothing more.”

“Says who?” Carlton argued.

My eyes grew wide at his question. “Carlton, I never felt that way about you. I don’t know what you and Sebastian have going on but keep me out of it,” I snapped.

“That bastard is jealous of me and takes everything that was mine first,” he remarked.

I stood there, watching a deranged and confused man confess. “I want you to fix this now,” I said, closing the space between us.

“Come home with me, and I’ll make sure it goes away.” Carlton caressed my cheek.

I moved out of his hold. “The way I figure it, it’s in your best interest to make this right, or I’ll spill a lot more in a tell-all book,” I lied, just to make sure that he knew I was serious about getting my name out of the press.

“Are you threatening me?” Carlton narrowed his eyes into slits.

“I think you can take it how you want. Just fix this now,” I said and turned to walk out of his office.



Present Day

“I TALKED TO HIM AND hopefully things will get cleared up soon,” I said.

“If you need me to give you any information, let me know,” Penelope replied.

Carol came back with our drinks. “Are you two ready to order?” Carol asked.

“Yes. I’ll have the salad-and-soup special, please,” I answered, handing her my menu.

“What about you, ma’am?” she asked Penelope.

“Bring me a salad and the baked fish filet, please,” Penelope replied.

Carol picked up the menus and left. “Have you heard from Carlton?” I asked. “No, but he won’t be a problem for long.”

“What do you have on him?” I investigated, leaning forward with my elbows on the table.

“Carlton isn’t stupid; he knows I can have him dead in the water if he doesn’t fix this,” Penelope said.

“I appreciate you, Penelope. I know you weren’t expecting this to happen.”

Penelope lifted an eyebrow and took a sip of her wine glass. “I’ll do anything for my girls.” She squeezed my hand, and I covered it with mine. We laughed and caught up on business, and the possibility of her retiring from the business soon.



ONCE LUNCH WAS OVER, I met up with Cristin at her place for drinks and relaxation. I knocked on her door, and the last person I expected to see was standing in front of me.

“Don’t be mad at me,” Cristin said, with Sebastian standing behind her.

“What is he doing here? Don’t you have a country to run?” I asked. She stepped aside for me to come in, and I hesitated.

“Laila, I need to talk to you.” Sebastian reached a hand out for me to take.

“Fine.” I placed my palm in his and let him walk me inside.

Cristin started to leave. “Call me if you need anything,” Cristin said.

“Where are you going?” I questioned.

“Out with a friend for drinks.” She winked and walked out.

I looked around her apartment and didn’t see anything set up for our movie night. This had all been a setup to get me there.

“How have you been?” he asked.

“Fine.”

“I heard you went to see Carlton.”

“I did.”

He stepped forward and pulled me against his chest. “We’re better than this, Laila.”

“We no longer have an agreement, Sebastian.”

“That doesn’t stop how I feel about you.” He bent over and kissed the side of my neck.

I moaned at the touch of his lips against my neck. I pushed him off me and put distance between us. “We’re not good for each other.”

“Baby, stop lying to yourself.”

“Sebastian, are you sure you want to throw your career away for some pussy?”

“I’m not with you for sex!” he shouted.

“I forgot; you bought me for my glowing personality,” I snapped and sat on the couch, rubbing the right side of my neck.

“You’re angry with me, and I understand, but I gave you space. I gave you a week.”

“That’s not enough.” I jumped up.

He raised his hands to his head and rubbed his temples. “Please come here.” He reached out a large, soft hand, and I placed my palm in it. He pulled me in close, captured my lips, and slid his tongue into my mouth. I melted into his arms. I clung to his jacket and whimpered at his touch when he groped my ass. “I want to meet your parents,” he said, pulling back from the kiss.

“Why?” I lifted my head and stared into his eyes.

“I need to meet my future in-laws, and I want you to meet mine,” Sebastian said.

“I hate you.”

“You can’t hate the President.”

“Sebastian,” I whined, gliding my hands up his chest.

He kissed the left side of my cheek, kneading my waist. I felt his arousal against my stomach. “Dinner tonight,” Sebastian stated and stepped back to give me space.

“Okay,” I responded and ran my palm across my mouth, feeling my swollen lips. Sebastian extended a hand for me to take, and I followed him out of Cristin’s house, toward the car parked outside. “What about Carlton?” I asked.

“He’s going to be tied up with a few meetings from the Judiciary Committee,” Sebastian said.

“What did you do?”

Tony stood with the door open, and I got inside.

He came up behind me. “I had some people look into his finances, and why he really wanted to keep the percentage low.”

“What was it?”

“He had part-ownership in the company through an offshore dummy account,” Sebastian explained. Sebastian took his phone out of his pocket, scrolled through, and held up an article that showed Carlton being investigated for misuse of funds, and corruption.

The car pulled away, heading down the road into traffic.

“Did Penelope send you this?” I asked, thinking back on what she’d said earlier at lunch.

“I can’t give out my sources.”

“All right. Where are we having this dinner, anyway?” I asked.

“Our loft,” he replied.

“You never got rid of it?”

He shook his head. “I made some mistakes about us and bombarded you with demands, and I want to make up for that.”

“How?”

“If you agree to dinner tonight and to take us seriously, then I’ll draw up a new contract.”

“What do I get out of this?” I stared out the window.

He laid a hand on my thigh. “The old agreement is null and void from the first time we met.”

“Okay, I agree to dinner with your parents. But don’t take risks with your career for me.” I was never a selfish person and seeing him throw away everything he’d worked hard for because of Carlton’s lies and deceit wasn’t right.

“I promise to always protect you—even if it’s from me,” Sebastian answered, caressing my cheek.

The car arrived at the loft he’d rented, and I stepped up to the front door and slid my key inside. I already had clothes there that he bought for me whenever I came over. I opened the door and looked around the room. It was still freshly clean from the maid service he’d had coming over to clean up twice a week.

“The food is being delivered from a personal chef. Your parents and mine will be here soon,” Sebastian explained.

“Let me hurry up and shower before they get here.” I went to his bedroom at the back of the loft and opened the closet to find a casual jumpsuit to wear. I picked out a spaghetti-strap jumpsuit in blue, Sebastian’s favorite color. I saw the same shampoo that was at Camp David, so I turned on the shower and put my outfit on the back of the door. I stripped out of my clothes and thought

about making sure that I got back to work after taking the week off. Things would be getting crazy busy. I stepped into the shower and let the water run down my face, then grabbed the sponge and soap to clean up.



30 MINUTES LATER, I stepped out of the bedroom to the sounds of conversation. I walked out with minimal makeup on and my hair in a high ponytail. My parents were talking with Sebastian, and I noticed another couple talking to the chef.

“There she is,” Mom said.

“Hey, sorry it took me so long.” I hugged my mom and dad. Sebastian placed his hand on my lower back and pulled me in close to kiss the side of my forehead.

“How are you feeling?” Dad asked.

“Good. I see you’ve met Sebastian.”

“You mean the president? Yes, we have,” Dad responded, taking a sip of his whiskey.

“I wasn’t planning on introducing you two under these circumstances,” I replied.

“Your mother told me about your other job, and I wasn’t happy about it,” Dad explained. “But I understand why you wanted to help.”

I stood on my toes to place a kiss on his cheek. I never wanted to disappoint my family because of something I’d done, and I was grateful to hear that they still loved me even after I’d embarrassed the family this way.

“Food is ready,” Chef Joseph said as he came out of the kitchen and placed the stuffed mushrooms, artichokes, stuffed lobster, and steak on the table.

“Laila, I want you to meet my parents,” Sebastian said. “Mara and Stephen Hunter.”

I extended my hand for a shake.

“Honey, we hug in this family,” his mom said. “Finally, Sebastian let us meet you.” She put her arms out, and I stepped into her hug.

Then his Dad came over for a hug. He and Sebastian looked exactly alike: tall, with wide shoulders, a muscular build, and deep-set brown eyes.

“Sorry, that’s my fault; I kept putting it off,” I said.

“We understand; being in the public life can bring more stress than good,” Stephen stated.

“So, Sebastian told us you’re in school to be a therapist,” Mara said.

Sebastian pulled my seat out for me, and I sat next to him. His parents sat at the head of the table, and my parents were across from me.

“I went to school for psychology, and I work at Bayview Medical as a therapist,” I corrected her.

“I used to be a teacher, before Stephen went into public office.” Mara pushed a piece of hair behind her ear.

The chef opened a bottle of red wine and filled my glass.

“Thank you,” I told him, and he nodded.

“We understand you were hesitant to get involved with Sebastian,” Stephen said.

“As you know from being a public figure, peoples’ opinions can be overwhelming, and I tend to march to the beat of my own drum,” I explained.

“She ran away from me,” Sebastian joked, and I slapped him on the chest.

“You can’t blame her. You’re the president, and I bet it was hard to even get over here without a big mountain of press following you,” his mom said.

“I have a great team that sets things up whenever I want to meet with her,” he explained. “We have codes and logs to cover the bases.” He covered my hand on the table.

I took a bite of the stuffed lobster and asparagus. The chef had set multiple items on the table that I often craved and loved. Sebastian must have told him that I loved seafood.

“Have you had any backlash from anyone else?” Mara questioned, drinking her wine.

“I made a public statement that my private life is private, and I pay for everything from my personal funds,” Sebastian explained.

“I saw that your infrastructure bill got passed,” Stephen said.

“Enough votes came through, and it was passed with the 5% increase,” Sebastian explained.

Sebastian, my father, and his father continued to talk politics all through dinner, and I sat with his mother and mine, talking

about having a girls' day at the spa and brunch one day in the future. I liked his parents; they were down to earth.

Once the night ended, we snuggled up in bed after another round of sex. My leg was lying across his thigh, and I watched him as his eyes closed while he rubbed circles over my back.

"I like your parents," I said.

"They like you, too," Sebastian replied, sliding his hand down my back and palming my ass.

"I'm going back to work," I informed, waiting to hear his response.

"Are you ready for that?"

"Yes, I need to focus on what I love." I kissed his chest and rubbed my hand across the top of his head.

"I'll support whatever you want to do, baby," he said and turned out the lights on the nightstand. He leaned his head on my chest and fell asleep. I continued to stroke the top of his head while we both dozed off.



Chapter 11: Sebastian



I'D AGREED TO A TV interview with GNN news to discuss my administration, and how things are going in my third year in office. Claudette and my assistant had tagged along to keep the talking points running smoothly.

The lights from the brightly as the sound microphone was set up.

camera dipped forward and shined technician made sure that my

“Mr. President, you’re all set,” Dena Lambert, the Anchor of GNN, said.

“I’m ready.”

“Thank you again for agreeing to sit down with us, Mr. President,” Dena said as the cameras rolled.

“I appreciate the chance to speak to the American people.”

“So, you’re in your third year of the Hunter Administration. Can you tell us how things are going?”

“Things are going as well as can be expected.”

“The poll numbers are showing you’re leading as the top choice for a second term. Is that something you’re interested in doing?” Dena questioned.

“I’m taking it one day at a time.”

“That’s not a no.”

I chuckled at her commitment. “My Chief of Staff would be ready to cut this interview short if I answered that question.”

“Lately, you’ve been in the media and blogs because of your relationship.”

“I tend to keep my personal life private.”

“I understand, but as the president, you signed up for this type of invasion.”

“I did, but my family did not.” I answered.

“Is it true that you’re in love with Laila Daniels?” she asked.

“My administration is working hard to get this infrastructure bill passed, along with other education issues,” I said, ignoring the question.

“Laila Daniels is a subject that I know the American people want to hear about from you. Is Carlton Stewart using this as a distraction?”

I clasped my hands together in my lap. “Congressman Stewart and I have many disagreements, but we’re working together for this bill.”

“What can you tell the American people when it comes to bringing back jobs?” Dena brought up.

“Everyone in Washington needs to take responsibility and come to the table with a plan.”

Dena flipped through the papers of the bill in front of her. “Your name is in a lot of gossip blogs, first from dating Delilah Jones, and now Laila. Is this what our tax money is going toward?” she inquired.

I gritted my teeth in frustration. I was exhausted by these same questions coming back about my love life, and not the about work we were doing. “Dena, as you know, I’ve been in

politics for a while, and anything you do can end up in the media. I won't comment on my private life beyond saying that my family is healthy and happy," I said.

"Thank you again, Mr. President, for sitting with us today."

"Thank you, Dena."

"Ladies and gentlemen, you heard it here first, on GNN news. I'm Dena Adams, getting the news for you," Dena said to the camera.

They called cut, and I removed the microphone from my jacket and passed it to the sound technician. Claudette stepped toward me.

Dena smirked mischievously. "Mr. President, good job.

You held your own," Dena remarked.

"Was that a 'gotcha moment' type of interview?" Claudette asked.

"Claudette, I was just doing my job," Dena said.

"You were trying to do some type of celebrity gossip news."

"I didn't bring up her past as an escort. You should be thanking me, Mr. President," Dena muttered and started to walk offstage.

"That's enough, Dena," Claudette seethed. "You crossed the line today."

I stepped in front of them to defuse the situation. "Dena, thank you again for the interview."

Claudette trailed me out of the studio and into the waiting car. I let her jump in first, and I followed. The door closed, and I sighed, unbuttoning my suit jacket as Claudette stared at me.

“She was just doing her job,” I said.

“No, she was being vindictive and trying to start something, Sebastian,” Claudette huffed and peeked out the window as the car drove out of the parking lot.

Claudette was the one who handled any issues before they came to me, and she kept all the drama away. But it wasn't a great look if Dena got an exclusive interview and tried to turn it into something that it wasn't. Our numbers were low right now, and if we didn't get anything passed, and the press kept talking about my personal life, then I was afraid that any chances of running again would be slim. In these types of areas, it was mostly frowned upon or forbidden for a man with as much power as I had to not divulge anything and everything.

“Call Ray, and let's meet for dinner.” I said.

“Why?”

“We need to come up with a strategy, in case things get ugly.”

“Let us do that on our own, and we'll keep you out of the difficult situations, sir.”

“I'm already deep in this, Claudette.”

“I understand you care about her, but this isn't helping you — or me.”

“I know.”

“Once this airs, I can't keep the press from digging even more into her life.”

“She’s aware.”

“Talk to her.”

“She thinks you hate her.”

Claudette’s eyes widened in surprise. “I don’t hate her; I just wish you would have gone about this differently.”

“Are we doing dinner or what?”

“I guess.”

“Good. We’ll do dinner, and I want to figure out how we can get this squared away without any more drama.”

“Is it wrong to use the presidency to ship your enemies away?” Claudette snickered.

I laughed at her. The car pulled back up to the White House, and we stepped out. The place was slammed with employees, rushing back and forth in the hallway nonstop.

“I wonder what’s going on?” Claudette mentioned.

We walked to my office. “What are you doing here?” I asked Ray as he walked in with Charles next to him.

“You haven’t seen it?” Ray asked.

“Seen what?”

He slid a newspaper over to me. The front page had Delilah on the front page in tears, talking about how I’d cheated on her when we dated two years ago and made her get rid of our lovechild. “Get her on the phone now.”

“We tried. She’s not taking calls right now,” Charles stated.

I tensed at his words. She was playing a dangerous game, and anyone who interfered with my relationship with Laila and hurt her would answer to me. “Keep trying her number. Ray, follow me.” Shaking my head, I thought about Delilah, and how we were back then. She’d never seemed like the type to be so vindictive to get back at someone else like this. I thought we’d ended things amicably, but obviously she held some type of resentment towards me.

“All the news stations are running this story,” Claudette said.

The press secretary burst through the door.

“I know, Kaitlin,” I assured her.

“They’re even picking this up out of the country, sir,” Kaitlin said.

I turned to Ray. “How many votes are we off on this bill?”

“Three—and one being Carlton.”

“Okay, push harder on the other two and let me think of something with Carlton.”

Ray nodded in response. He kissed Claudette on the cheek and walked out.

“Kaitlin, put out a statement saying that my time with Miss Jones was just that, a moment in the past,” I instructed her.

“Yes, sir,” Kaitlin replied.

“Also, that we are looking forward to getting back to the work that the American people voted for us to do.”

“What are you thinking?” Claudette took a seat on the couch.

“I’m thinking it’s time to stop playing Mr. Nice Guy.”



Chapter 12: Sebastian

“MR. PRESIDENT, WE HAVE to stop meeting like this,” Penelope said as she slid into the back of the presidential limo.

“Thank you for meeting me, Penelope.”

“Of course.”

“You have what I need?”

“I do, and I hope you stick to keeping my business away from the prying eyes of your colleagues.”

“That won’t be a problem.”

“I gave you information last time, but this is a little deeper,” Penelope explained and pulled out a yellow manila envelope.

“What do you have?”

“Enough that you won’t have to keep dealing with your ex or Carlton for much longer.”

“Did you tell Laila that we were meeting?” I questioned.

Her head cocked to the side. “No, should I have?”

“I just want to make sure we keep this from her to protect her as much as possible.”

“I agree,” Penelope said. I scanned over the documents, and my eyes narrowed in confusion. “When I got them, I was just as shocked as you,” she said.

“They’ve been working together?”

“For some time—and probably sleeping together.”

“This was all a setup from the beginning?” “It looks that way.”

“This goes back to before I became president.” The photos showed me out with Delilah for drinks, and her meeting up with Carlton. There were even photos of Deliah and Carlton together, and time stamps of phone calls and transcripts.

“What do you plan on doing?” Penelope queried.

“Nothing, right now.”

“Don’t wait too long. Obviously, they want you out of office and are using Laila to bring you down.”

I tossed the photos aside. I leaned back and ran a hand over my head.

“Have you talked to her today?” Penelope brought me out of my daze.

“No. I had an interview, and then this blew up.”

“Prepare her, before someone else does.”

“I will.” I tapped on the partition, and the door opened to let Penelope out. I glanced back at the stack of photos. Delilah had probably been lying to Laila during her therapy sessions this whole time, as well. The car started, and I called to check in on Laila.

“Hello,” she said.

“Where are you?” I asked.

“At the gym,” she responded, sounding out of breath.

“How was work?” I questioned.

“It was quiet. Why do you sound like that?” “I sound like myself.” “Mmmm...”

“I want to see you.”

“Meet me at the loft,” she stated.

“Okay,” I said and hung up. I pressed the button to lower the partition, and Tony glanced through the rearview mirror. “Tony, run by the loft.”

“Yes, sir.”

I checked the time on my watch. I needed to be back at the White House in an hour to make some phone calls and see the progress that the team had made on drumming up votes.

30 minutes later, we pulled up to the loft that I’d rented, and I stepped out and ran inside. I spotted Laila walking out of the shower with a towel wrapped around her body. I hooked my arms around her waist and pulled her close. I kicked the door closed and took her mouth with mine, devouring her sweet lips. I clamored to get us onto the couch. She pushed me back, and I was surprised by the force. She dropped to her knees in front of me.

“What are you doing?” I asked.

She unbuckled my pants, gripped my dick, spat on the top, and started to jerk it.

“Fuck!” I cried out as I felt her warm mouth take me down to my base. My head dipped back, and I almost fell over onto the couch, but I gripped her shoulders to keep myself upright as she caressed my balls. There was something about Laila that I couldn’t explain, but she had me wrapped around her finger, and I couldn’t believe how fast I had fallen in love. My chest rose and fell as I tried to catch my breath. The tingling in my dick told me that I was close, and I needed to be inside of her. “Baby, hold up.” I tapped her on the shoulder, not wanting to spill my seed in her mouth.

She shook her head. “This is about you.” Laila popped my dick out of her mouth and leaned up to kiss me on the lips.

I removed the towel from around her naked body and squeezed her soft melons. “You’re gonna drive me crazy.”

“Good. That’s my job,” she said and went back to stroking my dick. Precum seeped out, and she licked across the head. Suddenly, her head bobbed up and down as she gripped me around my thighs and pulled me in tight. She sucked every last drop, and I spilled down her throat, then fell back against the couch. “Feel better?” she asked.

All I could do was nod as my eyes started to drift closed. “Where have you been all my life?”

She smiled and bent down to kiss me on the lips. “Waiting for you,” she responded, lifted herself off the couch, and walked out of the living room. I started to stand, but she came

back with a towel and wiped me off. I pulled my pants back up and kissed the top of her forehead. She stood on her tiptoes and lifted her arms around my neck, staring into my eyes. “Whatever’s bothering you, I hope you figure it out.”

“I just did,” I answered and brushed a kiss against her lips and cheek. I stepped out of her arms and went back to the White House.

They may have started this game, but I would be the one to finish it.



Chapter 13: Laila

I OPENED THE DOOR OF my office and dropped the 20 file-folders on my desk. I heard a knock at my door. I glanced up and saw Dr. Broderick, one of the leading therapists at Bayview Medical Center. He was an older gentleman in his late 50s, and he reminded me of my Dad: straightforward and never sugar-coating things.

“Dr. Broderick, what are you doing here?”

“Dr. Daniels, I wanted to talk with you for a moment.”

“Please, have a seat.”

“A few of the doctors here are worried about the privacy of our clients.”

“I’m sorry, what are you talking about?” I questioned. I sat in my chair and leaned forward with my arms on the desk.

“We’ve noticed your relationship with the president all over the media.”

“I’m sorry, but that’s not my fault.”

“Technically, your past is the problem, and we’ve wondered if you’re going to address it at some point.”

“Dr. Broderick, I’m going to stop you right there, and let’s end this conversation.”

“I didn’t want to do this, but you’re impeding the work that we do here.”

“I never asked to be hounded and prodded in the media.”

“You should have thought about that before you slept with the president.”

“I’d like you to leave my office, please.”

“All we ask is that you take into consideration how this is interrupting everyone’s work,” he argued and left.

I flopped down in my chair in a huff and ran a hand through my hair. “*Your past is the problem,*” I repeated his words. I opened my phone and called my parents.

“Hi, sweetie,” Mom said.

“Hi,” I answered dryly.

“What’s the matter?”

“I just had a heated conversation with one of the doctors at my job.”

“About what?” she asked.

“I guess they’ve been getting complaints and hearing gossip about me and Sebastian.”

“What does he want you to do about it?” “I think I’ll leave.”

“You’ve been wanting to open your own practice.”

“I know, but what if I’m not good enough to handle the load like that?”

“You’re good at what you do. Remember that and never let someone dictate how you see yourself.”

“I guess you’re right.”

“I *know* I’m right.”

“What are you cooking for dinner?” I asked.

“Pork chops, greens, cabbage, and cheesecake.”

“That sounds amazing.”

“It will be, so if you want to feel better, come to dinner tonight.”

“I wish, but I have too much work to do. Raincheck for next time,” I said and ended the call.

I logged into my bank account and checked over my business expenses, then made a few notes for myself. I wanted to take the leap and put in the research and time. Dr. Broderick was giving me the push that I needed, because he wasn’t just talking about himself. About 10 doctors used Bayview for clients, plus nurses, secretaries, and a handful of cleaning staff.

I wondered if anyone had sold me out to the press for a quick buck.

I continued to handle paperwork and see clients for the rest of the day, until I had to head out to meet up with my friends for

dinner. Sebastian was having dinner with his father, so I'd stay at my place tonight instead.



Chapter 14: Sebastian

I CALLED MY PARENTS over to hang out today since my time has been limited with distractions from traveling back and forth dealing with political rivals, events at the White House, and keeping things with Laila on track. As time went on, I didn't want her feeling like she was last on my list of priorities. I didn't fight this long to prove that I wanted her in my life and by my side to have her thinking she wasn't a priority in my life.

My father and I just had dinner, and we were sitting and talking about my plans for Carlton and Delilah. My mother was home and wasn't up to coming to the residence.

“You want another shot, Pops?” I asked him.

“Sure.”

“What do you think?”

“I think you're set; just be careful. Carlton is sneaky.” “I know; that's why I wanted to run it by you first.”

“He used all his cards up in Congress; there's no telling how many bridges he burned.”

“Once I take him down, I can breathe a little better.”

“I agree—and maybe settle down and have some grandbabies for your mother,” he joked.

I smirked at his comment. "I'm working on it."

"Your mother and I are going on vacation for a little while. Everything in the media is getting to her."

"You need me to prepare everything for you?" I asked.

"No, you're good, son. Just take care of yourself." "Laila doesn't know about this."

Don't keep secrets from her; it never works out for either party."

"I'll tell her in due time."

"Son, if she's the one for you, then she'll understand what steps you had to take to protect her."

I sat back in my chair, thinking over his words as I swirled the glass of liquor in my hand.

"Be honest with me. Do you think I made a mistake with bringing her into my world, I mean this?" I waved my hand around the room.

"What do you mean?"

"We come from different worlds, but I can't let her go."

"Then you have your answer. When your mother and I met, I knew I could never see my life without her. I did everything to always keep her in my presence."

"Like what?"

He sighed, took another sip of his drink.

“I used to purposely forget things like keys, or my wallet, a sweater in her car or place just to talk to her and be around her.” he chuckled with a far-off look in his eye.

“Did she figure out what you were doing?” I questioned.

He shrugged his shoulders.

“Probably, but by that time, I was fully invested in making her my wife.”

“What about other women or men that she dated?”

He grunted, waved off my comment.

“Your mother took my breath away when I first saw her, and no other woman could compare. I’d be damned if I’d let her slip through my fingers.”

“Yeah, I’m the same way with Laila. I had to have her in my life, and seeing Carlton with his arms around her for the first time, triggered something in me.

“Like what?”

“I can’t explain it, but she was meant for me, and no one else could compare. Over time, I’d see her again, and I knew it was fate telling me to make her mine.”

“Then you have your answer.”

We clinked glasses. I drained my scotch, and we continued to discuss Laila and talk over the policies I had in mind to propose to Congress.

Later that evening, after he left, I stayed up in bed, going through paperwork to keep my mind off of my love life and the craziness. By the second paragraph, I needed to hear her voice. I thought about what Dad said about leaving things around my

mom to get her attention and remembered how I would call Laila sometimes to talk about random things like her in college and her favorite foods growing up. Just hearing the laugh in her voice or her taunting me when she discussed some random guy asking her out during that time. I always complained that I didn't want to hear about some motherfucker from her past. But we both knew it was about me needing to keep her on the phone as long as possible because it brought me peace during a hectic day of running the world. She's my peace.



Chapter 15: Laila



One Month Later

I WAS BACK AT THE OFFICE, filing paperwork and making notes that I needed to type up. I was close to having the money saved up for my own practice, away from Bayview, and soon, I could hire more staff and officially be away from the building's gossip and drama. Everyone knew my business, and I hated to be the laughingstock of anyone's joke. The low mutters and smirks whenever I walked past were starting to get to me and becoming a distraction. I even found myself limiting my time with my clients.

The Lincoln Town Car pulled up to the back of the mall, and I stepped out, wearing black shades, an off-the-shoulder black jumpsuit, and normal heels. Tony shut the passenger door, and I followed as he opened the door to the mall, and I stepped inside. I felt so out of place, having a security team around me, following everywhere I went. But our relationship had brought out so much interest that people kept wanting to know more about me and my family.

I glanced around at the perfume displays, reaching over and picking up the Ralph Lauren cologne for men. It smelled woody, sexy, and outrageously expensive. I peeked over at the price, and it read \$55. I picked up the bottle and headed to the register.

“Hello, will this be all?” the cashier asked, picking up the cologne and keying in the price.

“This is it.” I pulled out my credit card and passed it to her. As she bagged my item, my cell phone vibrated, and I saw a text from Cristin.

Cristin: Here in front of Victoria's Secret.

Me: In the perfume department. Coming soon.

I took the receipt from the cashier, thanked her, and grabbed my bag. When I got to Victoria's Secret, I saw Cristin on the phone. I approached and reached over to give her a hug.

“What did you get?” she asked.

“Something for a friend,” I said.

“A friend or a *man*?”

“What are you getting from here?” I questioned, changing the subject and gesturing to Victoria's Secret. Tony stood outside the

store as we strolled inside. The store wasn't crowded, so it was easy to talk and maneuver without being interrupted.

Cristin held a dress up to her neck and stared at her reflection in the mirror, checking each angle from left to right.

I lifted the sleeve, checking the price. "It's cute; get it." I turned to pick up a pair of t-shirts to sleep in, and a few bras.

Cristin shoved another dress in a different color in front of me. I glanced over and nodded that it was cute, then turned to walk over to the display for a wrap dress. That was when I noticed Carlton and Delilah, standing together and talking. My brows dipped in confusion; I'd never expected that they would know each other.

"What do you think of this?" Cristin asked.

"Take it," I mumbled, ignoring whatever the question was as I tried to move closer to the front without being seen to hear what Delilah and Carlton were talking about.

Delilah's hands were waving in Carlton's face.

"What are you looking at?" Cristin asked.

"Shush," I said, turning my head and pushing her away, so they wouldn't catch on.

"Who are you hiding from?" Cristin asked.

"That's Carlton and Sebastian's ex, Delilah, talking."

"Wait—where?" She tried to look around me. I pushed her head back. "Stop staring."

“I want to see.” She dipped her head low, pretending to scratch the side of her face. I giggled at her attempt to be incognito. “He stormed off. Oh, shit!”

“What?” I asked. I turned right when Delilah’s hard glare caught us, and she stomped toward us. “I’m not in the mood for her shit,” I said.

“Look at the slut, shopping for new clothes to try and steal more men!” Delilah barked.

“Who are you talking to?” Cristin said.

“Not *you*,” Delilah spat, getting in my face.

“Girl, you need to find something better to do with your life,” Cristin said.

“That’s what you should be telling your friend. Sebastian could have been married with kids if she would have kept her legs closed,” Delilah replied.

“Delilah, your delusional ass needs to find a new therapist, because you need more help than I can give you,” I said.

“Repeat that—she’s your client, and Sebastian’s ex-girlfriend?” Cristin said with wide eyes.

“*Fiance*,” Delilah spat.

“No, you two had a casual fling two years ago; I’ve been seeing her for a few months as a client, and I didn’t know it was him that she was talking about,” I explained.

“Is there a problem?” A store employee walked over to us. Our loud voices probably had the entire store glued in and ready to blast it all over the gossip blogs and news media.

“No, we’re leaving.” I grabbed Cristin’s hand and marched out of the store.

Tony was talking into his cell phone.

“I think you should really look into a restraining order,” Cristin told me.

We hopped back into the car and left the mall. I peered out the window, thinking about Carlton and Delilah at the mall

together. As far as I knew, they had never met; maybe I was thinking too hard about it, or something bigger was going on, and they were trying to destroy Sebastian by using me. The car dipped in and out of traffic as Tony took us back home.

“I just want this to be over,” I muttered.

“Are you regretting everything with Sebastian?” Cristin asked.

I felt a splitting headache coming on, and I wasn’t in the mood to carry on a conversation about my love again. “I need a drink.”

“You want to come back to my place?”

“No. I’ll be fine.” My phone buzzed, and I answered without looking.

“Laila Daniels, would you like to make a statement on your relationship with the president?” the caller asked.

“Who is this?” I asked.

“This is Jacob Livingston with *Political Beat News* magazine,” he said.

“No, I don’t! And lose my number!” I shouted, ending the call.

“News outlet?” Cristin asked.

“*Political Beat News*. Ugh...” I groaned and tossed my phone back into my purse as we pulled up to her place. She leaned over for a hug, then stepped out of the car.

“I’ll call you later,” I said.

“Don’t think too hard on this, Laila. Sebastian loves you,” Cristin remarked, tapping the car door handle as it pulled away.

I sat back in my seat, staring at the ceiling and thinking over her words. Sebastian and I were getting to a better place, but if I let Delilah or Carlton continue to manipulate the situation, I’d never be happy.



ONCE I GOT HOME, I showered and ate, then took a nap. When I woke up, I decided to get some work done and watch a movie.

Sebastian walked inside and removed his suit coat. “What’s this?”

A pile of papers was spread across the bed. I was wearing my reading glasses and hair bonnet since I hadn’t been expecting him to come over. “Work. I didn’t know you were coming over.”

“Tony told me you had a busy day.” He kicked off his shoes and sat on the edge of the bed. He grabbed my legs and placed them in his lap.

“It’s nothing.”

“You want talk to about it?” Sebastian massaged my feet.

“No.” I moved the papers off my lap and crawled over to him. I sat in his lap. “How was saving the world today?” I rubbed a hand over his head.

He pulled my bottom lip into his mouth. “I forgot you’re good at changing the subject.”

I crashed my lips against his, and he gripped my warm body against his hard chest. He ran a hand across my butt and smacked it, then gripped each cheek. I hooked my legs around his waist.

“What are you working on?” he asked. “Client files and getting things organized.”

“Have you eaten?” Sebastian moved me to the bed and stood, removing his shirt and pants.

I stared as he got undressed, admiring the man before me. “I did when I first got home.”

“I brought some food with me. Let me eat, and then you can tell me about your day.”

He never went a day without wanting to know if something was upsetting me, and now I felt the urge to keep what I’d seen a secret. My life had brought enough harm to his career, and if leaving out what I’d seen today would help avoid any more drama, then I’d do it.

Sebastian left the room, and I stayed back, gathering my paperwork to put it away and prepare for bed once he was finished eating.



Chapter 16: Laila

I'D STAYED AT THE LOFT last night and decided to head to work from there. I hadn't intended to have a last-minute sex session in the limo beforehand, but we couldn't keep our eyes off each other while we got dressed. I was wearing an off-the-shoulder, low-cut dress with a split down the side.

I couldn't believe he was having me in the back of a limo. We were driving to an event, where he would give a speech on civic duty, and there we were, pulling off each other's clothes.

His hands trailed down my arms and across my stomach, causing a shiver up my spine. Sebastian hovered over my sex with his mouth and lifted his eyes to me. A mischievous look fell on his face. "Is she ready?" he asked, sinking his tongue into my entrance.

"Sebastian!" I reached out to grab the back of his head and push him away. He yanked my hand away and twirled his tongue in circles around his favorite place. The warmth from his touch against my body, cause a spark of arousal to my clit as I clung to his forearms. Sebastian squeezed my hips as the car continued to drive around the block.

"We're going to be late," I whispered.

He growled and started to unbuckle his pants. I pulled back and gazed down as his hands pushed my panties to the side. "I don't care," Sebastian told me, lining his erection up with my entrance and pushing the tip of his dick into my sex. I lifted my left leg around his hip and arched off the seat as we both trembled from the electricity between us. Sebastian started to

move in and out at a slow pace, causing a soft gasp to leave my lips.

He was everything I needed and wanted. “This is insane....”

“You’re so beautiful, baby,” Sebastian mumbled, capturing my lips.

I closed my eyes and tried to control my moaning. A few seconds later, I was lost in the bliss that only he could give me. “Yes... shit, Sebastian.”

“Fuck!” Sebastian groaned, thrusting harder and faster.

I felt his balls hitting my ass. I reached out and grabbed the back of his neck. I cried out in ecstasy, “I feel you, baby!”

“Shit, you’re wet as fuck, Laila.” He grabbed my dress and pulled it down, popping my tits out and grasping them both. He sucked from right to left. His penetration was so deep, I could barely catch my breath.

His phone rang, interrupting us.

“The phone, Sebastian,” I moaned, massaging the back of his neck.

“Damn it, it’s probably Claudette.” Sebastian kissed up my chest to my lips. His thrusts increased as my climax came, and I released my juices on the car seat and his pants.

I giggled, knowing we would not make the event tonight. “Answer, because we need to go back and change.” I watched as he zipped his pants and pecked me on the lips. I grabbed my purse and pulled out a package of wet wipes to clean myself up. “Here.” I passed him a few wipes.

“Sorry, Claudette; we’re going to be late,” Sebastian said into the phone. “I spilled something on my tuxedo.” He winked at me.

A few seconds later, the call dropped, and I looked over at him. “What did she say?” I asked.

“She’s going to keep the reporters at bay for another 30 minutes.” Sebastian pushed the partition down. “Tony, take us back to the loft, so we can change.”

“Copy that, sir,” Tony responded and put on his turn signal at the corner to head back home.



AN HOUR LATER, WE ARRIVED at the Hand-Holding Civic Fundraiser. The photographers on the red carpet were taking pictures. Flashes went off, and I smiled, trying to stay in the back, while Sebastian answered questions from the reporters. I still felt awkward—even though I had given an interview a few weeks ago.

He thanked them and walked back over to me. He grasped my hand, and we headed inside. “You okay?” Sebastian questioned, placing his hand on my lower back.

“I’m fine; don’t worry.”

Claudette showed us to our table. Everything was decorated with the purple-and-gold colors of the organization. They helped support civic engagement at the state and federal levels. The owner and founder was giving Sebastian an award tonight for his continued support in getting people involved. Ray was there, shaking hands with other members of Congress and state government.

I wasn’t looking forward to seeing Carlton tonight if he showed up. We hadn’t ended things well the last time we talked

because of the fallout he'd set up with Delilah. Sebastian was still pissed about her coming to see me at my office.

"You look nervous." Claudette laughed and gave me a glass of champagne.

"Thanks. I am."

"Just remember, it won't be forever," Claudette reminded me.

The announcer came onstage, and the music from the band stopped. The stage was made of glass, and there was a backdrop with a large picture of Sebastian from another event with a microphone in his hand.

"Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for coming to our third annual celebration," said Michelle Lofton, the founder of the organization. The crowd started clapping, and she began to introduce the event.

"Are his parents coming tonight?" I inquired.

"No, they flew out of town on vacation. It was preplanned," Claudette remarked.

"Everything okay over here?" Sebastian asked, walking up to our table.

"Everything's fine. I don't bite, Sebastian," Claudette told him.

"Just checking," Sebastian mentioned.

"We might have trouble," Ray said, motioning with his head toward the back of the room. I noticed Delilah, glaring at us.

"How did she get invited?" Claudette asked.

“I don’t know, but she needs to be thrown out if she can’t control herself,” Sebastian replied.

I took another sip of champagne. “I can control myself if she can,” I responded and sat back in the chair, rubbing up and down my arms.

“We are here today to celebrate the accomplishments of our president, Sebastian Hunter,” Michelle said, reading off the teleprompter.

“I’ll go talk to her,” Claudette said, standing.

Sebastian caught her by the elbow. “Ignore her for now.

Reporters are here,” Sebastian said.

“Yes, sir,” Claudette answered and sat back down.

I shifted and crossed my arms, sitting back and listening as Michelle read off everything that Sebastian had done in the community to help organize voter registration.

“Next to come to the stage is Kelly Louis.” Michelle stepped to the side as Kelly stepped out in her ballgown, about to sing her latest song. She was a famous older jazz musician who Sebastian told me about.

The band started up, and the waiters came around and placed meals at everyone’s table as she performed. I continued to talk with Ray and Claudette, as Sebastian talked across the table to the other senators sitting with us.

“Thank you,” I said to the waitstaff. The menu was baked salmon with steamed vegetables. I wasn’t really hungry because we’d eaten before we left tonight.

Kelly finished singing, and I clapped as Sebastian stood, and Tony and his security detail followed him toward the stage. Kelly shook hands with Sebastian, then Michelle introduced him on stage.

“Thank you, everyone,” Sebastian said.

“We love you, Mr. President!” someone screamed from the back. The crowd laughed.

“Thank you. And I want to say thank you to Michelle and the organization for all you do. This means a lot, and I want to encourage everyone to continue their support,” Sebastian mentioned.

“I see you sucked your way to the top,” Delilah said.

The table went silent. I turned in my seat.

“Delilah, this is not the place,” Claudette replied.

“Claudette, I expected better from you!” Delilah spat, interrupting Sebastian’s speech.

“Delilah, like I said last time, I didn’t know he was the guy you were talking about,” I explained for the millionth time.

“That’s a lie!”

“Ma’am, we need you to come with us,” a security guard told her.

“I’m not leaving; I have an invite,” she argued.

“We need you to come with us,” he told her, grabbing her by the arm and walking her out as flashbulbs from the photographers went off. I shook my head, knowing the drama this would bring, and that it would make Sebastian the bad guy again.

He continued his speech for another five minutes, and then stepped down and came back to sit at the table. Another performer got onstage, and we listened as they performed an old-school Sam Cooke song.



AN HOUR LATER, WE MADE it back to the loft. I went to the bathroom to remove my dress and turn the shower on as Sebastian stood at the door, watching me. “What?” I removed one earring and put it on the counter.

“Thank you for taking this leap with me. I know it wasn’t easy.” Sebastian stepped into the bathroom and wrapped his arms around my waist. He stared at our reflection in the mirror.

I leaned my head against his chest. “You’re welcome.” I pulled the other earring out and removed my necklace.

“You looked beautiful tonight—even when you tried to hide from the reporters,” he joked.

“I’ll never get used to the spotlight.” I placed my hands atop his.

He pressed a kiss on my shoulder. “Take your shower before I ravish you here on the counter,” Sebastian said.

“I could use some company.” I turned around in his arms and stood on my tiptoes. I sucked on his bottom lip.

He palmed my ass and loudly slapped both cheeks. “I have a few calls to make first. Take your shower.”

I nodded and released him as he walked out of the room and smiled at me.

An hour later, I was snuggled up on his chest as I fell asleep after a long day of being an official couple in public.

Chapter 17: Sebastian

THE NEXT DAY, I HAD Carlton come to the White House. He didn't know I had Delilah waiting for me in another office. After her little interruption at the dinner the other night, I needed to finally remind them why I was the president.

Joanne stepped in with Carlton behind her, and I nodded for her to let him inside. I stood up and extended a hand to shake.

"You summoned me?" Carlton asked.

"I did."

"What's this about?" he questioned.

"This is about you, thinking you're invisible."

"I don't know what you mean," Carlton remarked. I chuckled, reaching down to grab a stack of pictures. I pushed them into his hands. They had been taken by a reporter, and they showed him meeting with Delilah.

"So?" Carlton complained and tossed them on the table.

"Carlton, do you think I'm stupid?"

"Sebastian," Carlton said.

"I suggest you rethink how you address me."

"*Mr. President*, I was meeting with a friend for lunch," Carlton said.

“A friend whom I happened to have spent time with.” I lifted the photos off the table and scanned them with my eyes, staring at how long they’d been meeting together.

“You’re dating my ex,” Carlton told me.

“First off, she was never yours. Second, this has to do with you trying to destroy the great work our administration is doing.”

“How big of an ego do you have that you think I would waste my time on you?” Carlton spat.

“The same size ego that you have. Penelope didn’t want to give me your name, but when you went after her friend, things changed.” I dropped the pictures on my desk and stood behind my chair with my hands on the back.

“What do you want?” he asked, glaring at me.

“End things with Delilah and push the bill I put forth.”

“If I don’t?” he questioned.

“I can make the investigation on your involvement with the company disappear.”

“Just like that?”

“I’m the president; you help me, and I’ll help you,” I said.

“Laila,” Carlton mentioned.

I clenched the top of the chair, biting down on my bottom lip.
“She’s off-limits.”

“You win again, basically,” Carlton said.

“It’s not a competition, Carlton.”

“Fine, but I want it done today, and I want the community to make a statement,” Carlton announced.

“As soon as you give a yes vote, I can have them put out a statement.”

He rose from the couch, holding his jacket. I extended my hand for a shake. Carlton nodded, grabbed my hand, and left.

I stalked to Claudette’s office and opened the door to see Delilah, waiting with Claudette. “Can you give us a minute?” I asked Claudette.

She jumped up and walked out of the room.

“I knew you’d change your mind,” Delilah said and tried to wrap her arms around my waist.

I stepped back, putting space between us. “Delilah, we’ve been over for two years.”

“No, you wanted to end things, and I never agreed.”

“That’s not true. I don’t understand why you’re back.”

“Sebastian, we were good together,” Delilah argued.

“All we had was sex.”

“Because you wouldn’t try for more.” Delilah rolled her eyes.

“I’m sorry, but I’ve moved on.”

“Yeah, with a slut. How do you think this will play out for reelection?” Delilah smirked, lifting her brow.

“These games won’t work. I’ve already talked to Carlton.”

“Who?”

“Stop playing stupid. I know you’ve been meeting up with him.”

“He’s a friend,” she replied and took a seat on the couch.

“I’d rather you stand; you won’t be here long.”

She opened then closed her mouth. “What happened to you?” Delilah asked.

“Here’s what you’re going to do: Pretend you don’t know me—I don’t care—but you will stop spreading lies to the papers about Laila.”

“She’s putting you up to this.”

“All we had was sex, and that wasn’t a regular thing. I’m trying to not get out of character with you, Delilah.”

“She’s the one who was a fucking escort, and you deem *me* not worthy of your love?!” she yelled.

I blew out a breath in frustration. “I don’t need to explain my reasons for anything. If you continue trying to hurt her, I will make it my business to end you,” I snapped, pointing in her face.

A knock came on the door, and Claudette stepped in with security.

Delilah chuckled and stood. “Son of a bitch!” She tried to smack me across the face.

I grabbed her hand before she could. “Please escort Miss Jones off the property,” I said.

“This isn’t over!” Delilah screamed, storming out.

“What do you think her next move will be?” Claudette leaned against the edge of her desk.

“Keep someone on her.”

“I don’t trust her—or Carlton.”

“Carlton knows we have too much on him. He’ll go along with what we say,” I said.

“What did you ever see in her?” Claudette joked.

“I was single and didn’t want anything serious.” I shrugged and walked out of her office. I went back to the Oval Office and finished working.



LATER IN THE DAY, I had Tony drive me over to Laila’s office. I got out of the car and went through the back of the building, so as to not disturb anyone, and I headed down the hallway toward her office. I noticed her talking to her assistant, Joanne, at the receptionist desk.

“Mr. President,” Joanne said.

“How are you, Joanne?” I asked and reached over to give her a hug.

“I’m great, sir,” Joanne responded.

I smiled at her.

“What are you doing here?” Laila checked her watch; it was going on one in the afternoon.

“I wanted to take you out to lunch,” I said.

“You’re lucky; you came at the right time. I just finished with a client.” Laila locked our arms together, and we went back into her office.

“This is the first time I’ve ever really gotten to see you at work,” I said.

“It’s smaller than the White House, for sure.” She grabbed her purse and coat.

“We can go to your choice of restaurant.”

“How about we go to the loft for lunch?” she replied.

“Are you really hungry for food?” I teased, pinching her ass.

“Ouch!” she giggled.

I chuckled at her. “I take that laugh as a no.” “How was saving the world today?” Laila queried.

I held the door open to let her walk out to the car.

“Boring,” I said, not bringing up the Carlton situation.

“Well, maybe I can do something about that.” She patted me on the chest.

I winked at her and pulled her into my arms. I kissed her chin, and she gripped my dick. “Are you trying to get fucked in the car again?” I asked.

“Mr. President, I’m here to serve at your pleasure,” she said.

My shaft twitched at her statement. “Get in,” I demanded, closing the door as we left to go home.

I was happy that she'd finally agreed to move into the loft. Even though I would have preferred to stay with her all the time, I knew she wouldn't want to make the leap to move into the White House after the way our relationship had begun.

Tony took us back to the loft. I had arranged to have lunch delivered, so we could spend some time talking before I went back to the White House.

The car pulled up, and we jumped out. I grabbed the keys to the front door and walked in behind her while the chef was packing things up.

"Mr. President, you're set, sir," Jeffrey said.

I thanked him with a nod.

"You ordered lunch?" Laila asked.

"I did, but we could skip it if you have other plans." I gripped the side of her waist while we stood at the table.

"This looks good. Baked mac and cheese, salad, and pot roast." Laila bent down and lifted the lid off the pot roast.

"Relax. I have an hour, and then I need to be back at the White House."

"Thank you, baby." Laila leaned back and stared into my eyes.

"What are you looking at?"

"You. I know I gave you hell early on, but I'm happy."

"Me, too."

"Even though it was rocky."

“It makes it more worthwhile when you have to fight for it, Laila.”

“Delilah tried to make it seem like a sex thing only.”

“Never listen to Delilah. This is bigger than her. I love you.”

“I love you, too, Sebastian,” Laila said and kissed me on the lips.

“All right, time to eat before I fuck you on the table,” I stated, pulling a chair out for her to sit.

She chuckled, and we laughed and ate for the next hour. We talked about work and possibly setting up a vacation together.

That night, I was back at the residence, talking to her on the phone before she went to bed. Carlton had done as we asked and voted on the terms we’d set up. I’d signed the bill into law. Delilah had gone public and said there was never a relationship between us, and some gossip blogs wanted to know why she’d lied. I was grateful to move forward without

any more drama in our lives and focus on the country as a whole—not my love life.

The phone rang.

“Hello,” I answered.

“Mr. President, we have a situation that needs your attention,” Claudette said.

“I’ll be there in a second,” I said and hung up. I jumped out of bed and went to the bathroom to shower and head back to work.

I made it to the Oval Office with my team, where I was briefed on an overseas operation. I went to the situation room to get briefed by my senior advisors. Everyone stood when I walked

inside, and I held my hand up for them to take a seat. “Update me.”

“Mr. President, we have the Prime Ministers of France and England,” Declan Sims, the Secretary of Defense stated, and the video monitor clicked on.

“Mr. Prime Ministers, what can you tell us?” I asked.

“Mr. President, thank you for joining us in getting this situation under control,” Raphael Aspen, the Prime Minister of France, said.

“What can we do to make sure everyone is safe?”

Our call lasted for a few hours before we came up with a solution to let their team negotiate before we sent in backup. I still approved to have a few troops on standby and sent along our diplomats to help negotiate peace overall. That’s what I ran my campaign based on, and I intended to keep any talk of war at a minimum.



Chapter 18: Sebastian

One Day Later

THE DOOR TO THE PRESS room opened, and I marched inside to the flashes of cameras, and reporters calling out my name. Last night, Claudette had called about a hostage situation overseas in France, with American citizens holed up in a hotel that had been overtaken by a militia group called Falcon. The hostages were released without being harmed in the middle of the night after negotiating with the government of France to remove certain

restrictions on healthcare, improve wages, and abolish unjust violence by the police. I decided to give updates to the American public to keep the narrative focused on the safety and security of our people.

“Thank you. Please have a seat.”

All the reporters sat, and I read off a prepared statement and answered a few questions.

“Mark Stanley from the *Washington Post*,” a reporter said. “Mr. President, have you spoken to the families?”

“I have briefed the families and spoken with the prime minister about getting them home safely.”

“Jamie Brewers from the *Boston Globe*,” another reporter said. “Mr. President, is it true that Congressman Carlton Stewart teamed up with your ex, Delilah Jones, to interfere with your relationship?”

“The only thing we’re commenting about is the families being reunited,” I said and waved. “Thank you.”

“That’s all for the president,” Kaitlin said and continued answering questions.

I walked off and went back to the office. My phone vibrated in my pocket. I checked the message from Laila.

My Love: You slipped out early this morning.

Me: You were sleeping, and I didn’t want to disturb you.

My Love: Will I see you today?

Me: Probably not, baby.

She sent me an emoji with a frown, and I chortled, strolling back to the Oval Office.

Me: I love you.

My Love: Love you, too.

Me: Dinner at the residence?

My Love: If that's the only way.

Me: Today is pretty hectic.

My Love: The life of the presidency.

Me: Indeed.

I closed the message thread and put my phone on the desk. Joanne was setting down a fresh cup of coffee. “Do you need anything else, Mr. President?” Joanne asked.

“This is fine, Joanne. Thank you.”

“Claudette and Charles are ready for you,” she said and left.

“Thank you. Send them in for me.”

Claudette and Charles stepped in and took a seat on the couch. I stayed at my desk and stretched my arms behind my head.

“Sir, we got word that the hostages are on their way back to the U.S.,” Charles said.

“Good. Make sure we get our people to talk with them after they’re checked out.”

Claudette flipped through my schedule for the day. “You have a luncheon with the governors, and then a call with the small-business administrators.”

“What do you think about Laila moving in here?”

Silence filled the room.

“You mean in the White House?” Claudette asked.

“Yeah.”

Charles cleared his throat. “Do you think it’s wise to do that right now, sir? I mean, the public is just getting used to you having a girlfriend,” Charles explained.

“Am I supposed to be single for the rest of my life?” I questioned and jumped up.

“Mr. President, I believe what Charles is saying is that maybe you should give the people a little more time to get used to you as a couple,” Claudette stated.

“She’s going to be in my life forever.”

“We understand,” Charles replied and left, leaving Claudette and me alone.

“Back in college, you said you’d always be a single man because you thought finding that one person would never happen,” Claudette recalled.

I clasped my hands in front of me. “I also said I could live off cheeseburgers for a month, and we saw how that ended up.”

She laughed at my comment. “I’m happy for you,” Claudette said.

“In the beginning, I thought you were about to quit.”

She sighed. “The two of you drove me crazy with your back-and-forth.”

“Ray would agree with you.”

“Do you get along with her parents?” Claudette asked.

“You know, I’m good with her parents; they love me.”

“Sebastian Hunter, President of the United States,” Claudette muttered to herself.

“...which means anything can happen,” I commented and took the schedule out of her hand. We left the Oval Office to handle the governors’ lunch for the day.



AFTER NOT TALKING TO Laila since our text message, I’d had Tony arrange to bring her to the residence for dinner, and I asked to bring her parents. The residence was filled with laughter and conversation. Laila sat opposite me, and her parents sat next to her. I was planning on asking her to move in with me, and I wanted their blessing, in case she objected. My parents were still out of town, but Claudette, Ray, and Charles took up the rest of the seats for dinner.

“More wine, anyone?” I asked and lifted the bottle.

“I’ll take some,” Brooklyn answered, and I filled her glass.

“When are your parents coming back, Sebastian?” Timothy asked.

“Next week, sir.”

“Where did they go?” Brooklyn asked.

“Italy, for a month.”

“I’d love to travel like that one day,” Brooklyn said.

“I can make it happen,” I said.

“We saw what happened with the hostages. Have you talked with them yet?” Timothy inquired, cutting into his steak.

“We spoke with them on the phone earlier, but not in person.”

“I’m happy everyone is reunited,” Laila said.

“Me, too.” I rested my hand atop hers and squeezed. She was wearing a long-sleeved burgundy sweater with her hair pinned up in a bun. Her fire-red lipstick made me shift in my seat to calm my growing erection. I hadn’t been inside her in two days because of work, and I was hoping she’d stay the night.

“Mr. and Mrs. Daniels, have you had a chance to tour the White House?” Claudette asked.

“No, but hopefully we can before we leave,” Brooklyn said.

“Charles can arrange that,” I said.

“You sure?” Laila questioned.

I nodded that it was okay. “I wanted to ask you something.”

Laila stared at me as the table went quiet. “What is it?” Laila queried, leaned over the table and stealing a piece of steak off my plate.

I laughed, and she kissed me on the lips. “I want you to move into the residence here.”

It was dead silent except for the gasps around the table.

“The White House?” Laila motioned around the room.

“Yes, the White House.”

“But I just moved into the loft,” Laila replied.

“I know, but it would be easier to have you near me, now that everything is out in the open.”

“Sebastian, we should talk about this later, when we’re alone,” Laila whispered.

“Mr. and Mrs. Daniels, what do you think?”

Laila rolled her eyes, and I lifted her hand to kiss her knuckles.

“To be honest, when this all started, I wasn’t happy about my daughter being involved with you,” Timothy remarked.

I understood; having the constant media attention bringing up all their family secrets was an issue. They were a regular family, living modestly and trying to survive, and there I was, sweeping their daughter up into a whirlwind relationship.

“If it makes Laila happy, we’re fine. Just take care of our daughter, Sebastian,” Brooklyn said.

“I plan on doing just that, ma’am.”

“Can I talk to you in the other room?” Laila tugged on my hand.

I stood and followed her into my office. She turned around with her arms crossed over her chest, tapping her foot.

“I like when you pout,” I joked. “You look even sexier.”

She sucked her teeth. “That’s not funny, Sebastian. What is this business about me moving in here?”

I bent down, making eye contact with her and grabbing her by the waist. “Are we in a relationship, Laila Daniels?”

“Yes.”

“Are you committed to me, and only me?” I pulled her close to my chest.

“Yes.” She giggled and wrapped her arms around my shoulders.

“Then please move in with me.” I started trailing kisses along the back of her ear, then ran my hand up and down her back.

“Just because you’re president doesn’t mean you get your way all the time,” Laila moaned in my ear.

“I like sleeping next to you at night and waking up to you in the morning.”

“That’s the only reason?”

“Plus, hearing your soft moans when my tongue is deep in your pussy.” I started to back her up to my desk.

“Tell me more,” Laila said.

“When we’re living together, I can make sure you’re given a proper shower in the morning with my tongue lashing on your full breasts and ass.” I started sucking on her ear, lifting her up onto my desk.

“We have guests, baby,” Laila groaned when my hands slid between her legs.

“You’re already wet for me.” I slid her panties to the side and ran a finger across her lower lips. She arched her back, and I pulled back to see her eyes closed in arousal. “Will you

move in here with me?” I covered her mouth as my finger slipped into her sex.

She moaned in pleasure. Her leg lifted around my waist, and I pulled back, removing my finger and tasting her sweet juices. “Why did you stop?” She was flustered.

“We have guests in the other room,” I teased.

She smacked me on the chest, and I helped her down from the desk. “You’re not slick.”

“Come on; let’s finish dinner, and we can finish talking over dessert.”

“What are we having for the dessert?” she asked.

“I’m having you; not sure what you’ll have,” I joked.

She shook her head. I went to open the door, and she stopped me. “Okay,” Laila said.

“Okay... what?”

“I’ll move in with you,” Laila said and pecked me on the lips, then walked ahead of me back into the dining room.

I stood back in awe at the woman who I would spend the rest of my life with and cherish. We’d gone through a lot over the past year, but she had managed to be what I needed, and she’d supported me in ways that I’d never imagined were possible.

I sat back down at the head of the table and poured another glass of wine. I put my hand on her thigh and squeezed. She looked over at me and smiled. I mouthed, *I love you*, and she replied, *I love you, too*.

We listened to her parents talk about her growing up, and her high school years. Once dinner was finished, I had Tony make sure that her parents got home safe. Then I brought her up to the

bedroom. We showered together and lay down in bed. I massaged her head as she lay on my chest.

“Sebastian.”

“Huh?”

“Nothing.”

“Talk to me.”

“I know you said Delilah wasn’t the one for you.”

“Delilah was there when I was still fresh out of law school. I didn’t want to be tied down.”

“I understand; I just want to make sure we’re doing this for the right reasons,” Laila said.

I switched our positions and hovered over her body. “What are your reasons for doing this?”

“I love you is the main one.”

“My reason is because I loved you from the moment you told me you didn’t vote for me.”

“Wait—what?” She cracked a grin at my comment.

“When you said you didn’t vote for me, it made me wonder how this incredibly cute, sexy woman did not vote for me and was on a date with Carlton. I needed to find out everything about you,” I explained.

She laughed. “Men and their egos.”

“I want to make sure I can earn your vote,” I teased and positioned myself between her legs. I pushed my dick against her entrance, and she moaned in approval.

“How are you going to do that effectively?” she asked and bit her bottom lip.

“I have my ways to get a yes vote from you.”

“Then show me, Mr. President.”

I lined my head up with her pussy and eased into her warmth. We both grunted at the snug fit. I pecked her lips as I slowly moved in and out at a steady pace.

“I think you got my vote... sir!” Laila screamed and dug her nails into my back.



Chapter 19: Laila



One Month Later

I WAS PACKING UP MY things from the loft and moving them into the White House. I'd called Cristin and Katherine to come help, while Sebastian was on a trip out of state. He was supposed to come back the next day, and I wanted to plan a dinner for just the two of us.

“Where do you want this one?” Cristin asked, holding up a box of kitchen supplies.

“I need to get it ready for donation. I doubt I’ll need to take a lot with me.”

“Have you talked to Sebastian in Las Vegas?” Katherine questioned.

“We spoke two days ago, but I’ve been busy with work and packing.”

“Do you plan on still working while living at the White House?” Cristin questioned, taping up a box of plates.

“I told him I wasn’t quitting my job.” I lifted a small box of books from the table to put it on the floor. It knocked over my purse, and a pregnancy test spilled out.

“OH, MY GOD!” Cristin squealed and picked it up.

“Shush...”

“When are you taking it? Are you feeling nauseous ?” Cristin threw out questions.

“Will you calm down?”

“Sorry, but this is exciting.” Cristin clapped her hands in excitement and reached over to hug me.

I pulled away. “I haven’t taken the test yet.”

“Your breasts look a little bigger lately, and I didn’t want to say anything,” Cristin blurted out and opened the box.

I snatched it out of her hands. “You’re more excited than I am,” I said.

“This is huge, Laila. What if you are pregnant?” Katherine asked and grabbed the box out of my hands.

“Can you two calm down for a second, please?”

“Don’t you want to know?” Cristin asked.

“I was planning on taking the test when I finish moving in a few days.”

Cristin shook her head and placed her hands on her hips. “I can’t wait that long.”

“When did this become about you?” I questioned and took a seat on the couch.

“What are you worried about?” Katherine sat on the arm of the couch next to me and pulled my hair out of my face.

“We’ve never talked about kids. What if he doesn’t want any?”

“The only way to know is to take the test,” Cristin said, taking the box out of Kristin’s hands and opening it.

“You’re just excited to be a godmother if I am.” “Can you blame us?” Katherine bent over in laughter.

I grabbed it out of her hands and went to the bathroom. I looked at myself in the mirror and thought over the past couple of years with Sebastian. Was I ready for this type of responsibility? Was Sebastian? These were the questions flooding my mind as I put the box down on the counter and washed my face.

“Just do it,” I mumbled to myself. I blew out a breath and lifted the toilet lid. I pulled my pants down and peed on the stick. “Take a leap of faith,” I muttered to myself. I finished and wiped myself, then flushed the toilet. I placed the stick atop a piece of tissue and washed my hands, then sat on the counter to wait.

“Do you need anything?” Cristin called out.

“No.” I closed my eyes, inhaled, and exhaled. I stared at my watch as the time went by slowly, thinking that if I called Sebastian, he would drop everything and come home. Finally, I slid off the counter and stepped out of the bathroom.

“What happened?” Cristin asked.

“Nothing. I needed to take a second.” I sat on the edge of the bed.

“Well, I want to know now,” Cristin said and went inside the bathroom. It was silent for a few minutes, then she appeared at the door.

“So?” Katherine asked.

“Congratulations!” Cristin screamed and came over to hug me.

I opened and closed my mouth, speechless at what she’d just said.

“How do you feel?” she asked.

“I wonder if Sebastian is ready to put a nursery in the west wing,” I teased. I took the test out of her hand and admired the two blue lines.



A WEEK LATER.

I had all of his favorite foods delivered and set the mood for his return. He was out of the country on a foreign trip, so I had to

wait a week before I told him about the pregnancy. I knew the second it came out in public, everyone would make judgment calls, but the only opinion I cared about was Sebastian's. I heard the key in the door, slipped the robe off my body, and stood next to the table wearing the new red slip lingerie.

“Claudette, tell Ambassador Lee, we will have a meeting with Italy tomorrow.”

I cleared my throat, and Sebastian stood frozen at the door.

“Claudette, let me call you back,” Sebastian says, as he dropped his bag on the floor, and ended the call.

He bit, down on his bottom lip and lifted a brow.

“What's all this for?” Sebastian waved his hand around the room.

I sauntered over into his arms.

“Welcome home, Mr. President.”

“I like this type of greeting.” he ran a hand down my back and grabbed my ass.

“I have a surprise for you.”

“I love it so far.” Sebastian buried his head in the crook of my neck. I giggled and pulled back, gripped his hand, and walked him to the table, and motioned for him to take a seat.

“What's with all my favorite foods?”

“Lift the lid.”

I had grilled chicken, mac, and cheese, greens, potatoes, salad, and cornbread. All the food was sitting, waiting to be devoured.

Sebastian grabbed the top of the silver food lid, and a long square black box sat underneath it.

“Baby, I don’t wear jewelry besides a watch,” Sebastian picked the box up and opened it with his eyes wide in surprise.

“I’m pregnant.”

“Are you for real?” he questioned.

“Yes. A little one is baking in the oven. I found out a week ago.”

“Why didn’t you call me?”

“I didn’t want to interrupt your trip, plus I was still getting settled into my new normal.” I sat down on his lap, and he ran a hand around my waist to rub my stomach.

“So you’re having my baby?”

“I am. How do you feel about that?”

“Shocked, surprised, but more than anything, love.”

“Me too.”

“Are you sure about this? Once the public is aware, I’ll do my best to keep you protected at all times.”

“I know you will, but for tonight, let’s enjoy this moment, and tomorrow we can figure everything else out.” I started to get out of my seat, and he pulled me back and turned my head to plant a kiss on my lips. For the rest of the evening, we talked about what if we had a boy or girl and then called our parents to tell them the good news.





Epilogue: Sebastian

One Year Later

THE PUBLIC'S REACTION to Laila being pregnant came with mixed reviews from every side, and they tried to start a campaign against her about being unwed. Right out of the gate, I had my team stop the childish games and put out a statement that we were both happy and in love and were planning our future together as an engaged couple. I had Claudette set up interviews with us as a couple and talked about what this means for my career. Eventually the press moved on and started to turn our situation into something positive. It was no longer a scandal and Laila proved to be a fierce, and bold woman with her own ideas and goals in life and not a woman looking for clout. Our little boy Sebastian Jr, came out looking just like me and there was no denying me as the father, I loved having those stolen moments with just the two of us early in the morning while Laila slept. Now at almost forty I was content in my life and happy with the choices I've made. I waved to the crowd as we headed up the steps of the Liberty Bell. My team wanted to make sure that I connected with the people and showed throughout this process that I would always be accessible and honest about the road ahead if we won reelection. My Vice President was off to the side as the introduction continued, and I gripped Laila's hand, making sure that she was near and not afraid of what the next steps would be when I began to run for reelection.

“How are you feeling?” I asked, lifting her hand and kissing her palm.

“Nervous, like I’m running for public office.”

“This is the easy part.”

“So, I can’t bail out. Is that what you’re saying?” Laila joked, squeezing my hand.

I stretched an arm around her shoulder and kissed her cheek. “You look beautiful,” I told her.

She smiled. “This probably has something to do with it, don’t you think?” she asked, holding up her engagement ring.

“Are your parents here?” I asked and looked behind us at the bus we’d rode in on with our team. I asked her to marry me before she had the baby and before I took on another ride in politics.

“No, my dad had to work, and my mom has been traveling with her friends out of the country to Italy and France, since the doctor gave her the all-clear to travel,” Laila said, pushing a piece of hair behind her ear.

“We can fly next time.”

“Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome President Sebastian Hunter,” said Scott Johnson, the Secretary of State and former Governor of New York.

I kissed Laila one more time, then stalked to the stage and waved at the crowd as they screamed my name. “Thank you, Scott! And hello, Philadelphia!” I yelled.

“Four more years! Four more years!” the crowd screamed.

“I’m beyond grateful for your trust and support, and I want to say that, because of you, I’m announcing my run for a second term as President of the United States,” I said into the microphone.

Everyone continued to chant and roar, “Four more years!”

I looked back at Laila and motioned for her to come to the stage. “Also, I want to let the world know that not only will I run for president again, but the love of my life has accepted my proposal to be my wife and your First Lady of the United States when we win again.”

The crowd grew wild with screams and cheers when I held up our entwined hands.

Laila smiled, and I pulled her close to my side. I whispered in her ear, “The ride only gets crazier from here.”

“I’m ready,” she said.

I felt a hand on my shoulder and turned around to see my team, my parents, and Laila’s friends. Everybody waved, and I shook hands with Tony, Claudette, and Ray for supporting me.

“We should go out to celebrate,” Claudette said.

“I have plans tonight,” I said, staring at Laila as she stared back at me.

“This is huge, Sebastian; our numbers are up,” Claudette mentioned.

I nodded. I stretched my arm around Laila’s neck, and we walked out and headed to the caravan of cars. “Welcome to the White House, baby.”

“You still have a chance to back out,” she said.

“Baby, that will never happen.”

“Good, because I’d hate to have to sign a new contract,” she teased, then kissed me on the mouth and smiled.

The End.



Playlist: Mutual Agreement

1. ALICIA KEYS-UNTHINKABLE
2. Atlantic Starr-Secret Lovers
3. Xscape-My Little Secret
4. Cassie-Me & U
5. The Drifters-This Magic Moment
6. Minnie Riperton-Lovin’ You
7. Jazmine Sullivan-Need You Bad
8. Janet Jackson and Busta Rhymes-What’s it Gonna Be
9. Arianna Grande-Positions



About The Author

CHIQUITA DENNIE IS an author of Contemporary, Romantic Suspense, Erotic and Women's Fiction.

Chiquita lives in Los Angeles, CA. Before she started writing contemporary romance, she worked in the entertainment industry on notable TV shows such as the Dr Phil show, Tyra Banks show, American Idol, and Deal or No Deal. But her favorite job is the one she's now doing, full time writing romance.

A Best-Selling Author and Award-winning Filmmaker, her first short film "Invisible" was released in Summer 2017 and screened in multiple festivals and won for Best Short Film. She also hosts a podcast that showcases the latest in Beauty, Business and Community called "Moscatto and Tea." Her debut release of Antonio and Sabrina Struck in Love has opened a new avenue of writing that she loves.

If you want to know when the next book will come out, please visit my website at where you can sign up to receive an email for my next release.



What's Next?

WANT TO KNOW WHAT HAPPENS next?

Follow me on this website to catch the next release.

Reviews are the lifeblood of the publishing world. They're read, appreciated, and needed.

Please consider taking the time to leave a few words on your review platform of choice.

Sign up for updates and sneak peaks at the site below.



304 Publishing Company

WE SHOWCASE AUTHORS writing African American, Interracial, Women's Fiction, Urban Romance, Erotic, and Contemporary Romance novels. Along with Thriller, Suspense, Poetry, Beauty, and Style Books. Thank you for taking the time out to visit. Join our mailing list to stay updated with new releases and blog posts.

Thank you so much for reading and if you enjoyed the crazy ride and decide to leave a review we'd truly appreciate the support.



Catalogue of Releases

CATALOG RELEASES

By Chiquita Dennie:

Temptation

The Early Years-A Prequel Short Story

Antonio & Sabrina: Struck in Love, Books 1, 2, 3,4

Janice & Carlo: Captivated by His Love

Heart of Stone, Book 1: Emery & Jackson

Heart of Stone, Book 1.5: Emery & Jackson, A Valentine's Day Short Story

Heart of Stone, Book 2: Jordan & Damon

Heart of Stone, Book 3: Angela & Brent

Heart of Stone, Book 3.5 Jessica & Joseph Bottoms Up

Joaquin Fuertes (The Fuertes Cartel Book 1) Cocky Catcher(A Hero Club Novel)

Bossy Billionaire(A Hero Club Novel) Love

Shorts-A Collection of Short Stories Joaquin

Fuertes (The Fuertes Cartel Book 1) Exposed

(Salvation Society Novel)

Joaquin Fuertes (The Fuertes Cartel Book 2)

Antonio and Sabrina: Struck in Love 5

Refuel(A Driven World Novel) Pressure(A
Driven World Novel)

Heart of Stone, Book 4 Jessica & Joseph



Acknowledgments

I WANT TO DEDICATE this to my team that helps me behind the scenes, from my editors, test readers, graphic designers, and the list goes on. Truly appreciate each of you for keeping me on my toes.