OBSESSED with my assistant CASSIE CASSELL

OBSESSED WITH MY ASSISTANT

SUGAR & SILK, BOOK 2

CASSIE CASSELL

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Also by Cassie Cassell

Amy

I'm ready to make the most of this experience in the big city.

But a crush on my boss is making my head spin.

He's simply the hottest man I've ever met, but I can't have him.

He's older, more experienced. And little small-town me? I'm way out of his league.

When I have this crazy idea and ask for his help, I can't believe he agrees.

I tell myself that spending time with him without handing him my V-card is a challenge I can handle.

But when we start to kiss... all bets are off.

Grant

This should be easy. Temporary assistant.

The rules are simple.

Four weeks.

Don't make prolonged eye contact, don't think about her in the shower.

And certainly don't accept her dare to show her the wonders of naughty intimacy without going all the way. This is the one that'll finish me off.

A my

"How's YOUR SALAD?" my coworker Crystal asks, pointing at the bowl of mixed greens in front of me.

"Not that exciting," I say, picking on the leaves with a plastic fork. I could have gone out for delicious chicken tacos, but today, there was no time. I was late coming in, and didn't want to go too far from the office in case Grant needed me.

Grant Lewis, my temporary boss while my cousin Terri is on vacation. When she offered me her place in Dallas for four weeks so she could finally go on a Christian led mission trip to Africa with her longtime husband, I said yes immediately.

You mean I have weeks away from my dead-end job as a grocery store cashier in my itty-bitty East Texas town? Hell yes. This could be the most exciting opportunity in my twenty-one years alive.

I started a week ago.

Grant is the head of the technology department at Sugar & Silk, a high-end sugar baby agency that pairs rich men with trophy girlfriends. The website and the app have been mentioned in different media outlets and even though the idea seems a bit transgressive for some, Sugar & Silk has been known for its curated process and high quality. They do

background checks and don't accept just anyone—hoping the practice will make it safer for everyone.

I sigh.

Grant is a tall, muscly wall of a man whose good looks and sexy smile should be criminal. If that was the case, I wouldn't mind a day or two at the big house. Forty-three years old and with the body of a thirty-something personal trainer, it's the streaks of gray in his otherwise brown hair that give him the sexy daddy energy. My mom would call him a silver fox. I mean, seriously, the man is—

"Have you heard about your boss?" Crystal asks.

"No, what?" I lean closer. Whenever I hear anything related to Grant, my body comes alive. The mention of his name sends thrills down my spine, goose bumps on my arms. Sad, but true.

"He broke up with his sugar baby."

"Oh," I say, and a small part of me rejoices. I know I'm not woman enough for him, that he probably never looked at me that way... but knowing that he's available is like the petty measure of happiness I get when a hot celebrity returns to the dating pool.

"Yeah I saw her posts online."

"I'm sure he'll find another one soon enough," I say, making my best effort to act like I don't give a shit. I enjoy Crystal, but if I tell her that I have a forbidden crush on Grant, she'll spread that gossip quicker than a wildfire on a dry summer day.

Crystal fixes her curtain bangs. "Yeah. I wish he looked at me. But so far, he doesn't date anyone from the company. Probably because we aren't allowed to join the website."

"Yes," I say. I remember Terri telling me one of the reasons why she recommended me was because she knew an experience in the big city would be good for me—and also it's not like I'd ever be able to be anyone's sugar baby, as per company policy. Not that that's what I wanted... I'd like to be Grant's sugar *anything* though. I sigh.

But a man like him probably wouldn't want a woman like me. I'm a virgin, and plan on staying that way until marriage. Yes, old fashioned and lame, I know. That's really one of the few things my conservative parents ingrained in me that really stuck. I don't know... I want my first time with a man to be special. No one in my town ever made me want to break that promise, so that certainly helped.

Doesn't mean, of course, that I can't date and learn other things. Other dirty, sinful things.

During these weeks in Dallas, I'd love to go on dates. No one in my town would know—there would be no pressure from family or friends. Just fun. But how would I find a guy willing to date me for a while without fucking?

Since I can't have Grant, I'd like to date at least someone else. Someone who could show me a world different than the one I come from. I give Crystal a look, then straighten my shoulders. "Crystal... how's the dating scene here in Dallas? I mean, you go out a lot, right?"

Crystal rolls her eyes. "Oh girl. A nightmare. Guys can be such assholes."

My shoulders slump a notch. Oh, great. "How do you meet them? Don't these dating apps help?" I downloaded an app once, back home, but ended up being matched to my secondcousin Anthony, who was using a picture so different from what he really looked like, I didn't recognize him until we Facetimed. Needless to say, I deleted the app instantly.

"I'm on every dating app there is... but most of them are just good for a lay."

"Oh." That'd go against my wishes. I don't want to be a cock tease, but how can I build a relationship in which I trust the other person enough to tell him what my boundaries are? If I announce I'm a virgin to some rando online, that could be dangerous.

Crystal leans in, interested. "Why?"

I wave her off, feigning casualness, in another Emma Stone worthy performance. "No reason... just wondering how

the dating life here in Dallas is compared to my hometown."

Shit. How am I going to find someone to have fun and not go all the way?

G rant

"So you're working from home today?" I ask my longtime buddy and business partner Brooks over the phone.

I hear a feminine laugh at the other end of the line.

I shake my head. The other day, Brooks was talking about a breakup with his new wife Sarah, and now it's safe to say they've mended fences. Annoyance creeps under my skin. Brooks has turned into a mush ever since he married Sarah, even if he won't admit it.

"Yeah, man. Can't make it in today," Brook says, then the sound of a swish of sheets filters in our conversation.

"I wonder why," I say dryly.

"Don't be a lemon, Grant. Why are you grumpy—weren't you going out with someone?"

"Didn't work out," I say.

"I wonder why," he says, using the same tone I did a couple of instants earlier.

Touché, asshole. "Okay, I'll talk to you later," I say, then hang up the call—but not before registering a soft moan on the other end of the line. A woman's moan. Were they really fucking with me on the line? Probably just foreplay.

I sit the phone on the desk, and thread my fingers through my hair. I have shit to do. A meeting later, I need to contact the technology team about some software update, and call a few people back.

All of this would have happened already if it weren't for her. Amy St. Claire.

A saint in name, the devil in flesh.

For the past week, she's been working for me while her cousin is on vacation. I've had to deal with a few inconveniences—how she's always a few minutes late, or how I had to repeat to her how I like my coffee... but the worst of all, is me having to deal with her prancing around with that sexy body and those big tits that won't quit.

Just thinking about it makes my body stir.

Brandi, my last sugar baby, left me because I called her Amy in bed, a few days ago.

An honest mistake, since this hot brat hasn't left my mind. I can't fuck her, of course... I respect Terri, who has worked alongside me for almost twenty years now—much before Sugar & Silk was created, back when I sold software for startups.

Not being able to fuck her though doesn't mean I don't fantasize about it every waking hour of the goddamn day.

It's starting to affect me. Fuck.

A soft knock at the door announces her entry.

Like a sad puppy who's left alone all day, I look forward to when she pops in my office. "Yeah?"

"You have that meeting in an hour. I printed all the talking points like you've asked," she says, then hands me a folder.

"Thanks."

She smiles. "It's cute how you like to print everything."

A wave of embarrassment washes over me. "Well, not everything," I say, unsure if I'm insulted because she implied I'm old, or if I'm flattered she learned something about me

already. I use a lot of digital notes, but for important shit, yes, I like having a paper in front of me. "Though I should do better. For the trees."

She shifts her weight from one foot to another. "I'm not judging."

"Good."

She worries her bottom lip, then closes the door behind her, and pulls a chair in front of me. She sits on the edge of it, all nervous energy. "Can I ask you something?" she blushes.

My entire body is on high alert. My shoulders tense up, and moisture leaves my throat. Her blush does something to me.

"I know this sounds silly, but where would a woman my age meet guys?"

I clear my now parched throat. My collar feels tighter, but I put on my best poker face. "I don't know... bars, clubs, apps?"

"I'm not much of a drinker, and I heard most apps are for people meeting for sex," she says, and even though her cheeks are red, her voice is casual, like she's asking me for movie recommendations.

The word sex coming out of her mouth unlocks the most savage part of me, and my internal temperature increases substantially.

"I also know as employees of Sugar & Silk, we aren't allowed to be part of the roster," she continues.

We included that policy to make sure the employees would feel safe and respected, but also to avoid liability problems. We do a very curated process of matching sugar daddies and babies, and if we allowed employees to be on it, then the line of people wanting to work here to be automatically accepted would be endless. "Yes," I say, unsure of where she's going with it.

"Well, I only have three more weeks here in Dallas, before my cousin returns and I have to go back home. I wanted to meet someone, you know, and have some fun."

I swallow.

The idea of any man touching her is like a sharp blade twisting in my chest. She provokes a part of me that's possessive, jealous and downright obsessive. I can't let her be on our site or *any* other site. "What do you want from me, Amy?" I ask, fully aware I may not like the answer. But beating around the bush isn't my style.

"Well. Since you're so well connected, maybe you can introduce me to someone?"

"Introduce you," I repeat.

"Yes. I thought since you know Terri and you seem to be a nice guy, I could come to you with a question. The problem is, and I don't mean to blurb this out, but needs to be said—I am saving myself for marriage. So I can't have sex with a man, but I'd like to have company to go out and... other things."

Other. Things. The words echo in my ears, my heart beating staccato.

The image of her hot body naked in my bed, coated with my cum, unfurls in my mind and refuses to go away. Then, another realization jolts at me. *Virgin*. She's a virgin. Holy fuck. It's like someone shoved me inside a scorching sauna room and I can't escape.

She crossed her shapely legs. "I know this is inappropriate for me to ask, but I don't know anyone else in the city. I didn't want to tell Crystal I'm a virgin and have the entire office know."

I cough, my throat parched. No we definitely don't need anyone else knowing. "Hmmm... I'm happy to help. So you're looking for a good time?"

"Yes. It'd be great to have someone to go out with, and maybe learn a thing or two about, you know, intimacy, without going all the way. I'd never have that option where I live because it's a small town and I know everyone. But then again, maybe most guys here won't want to waste their time with someone like me."

What is she saying?

I look at her, at her impossibly blue eyes.

I told myself I wouldn't sleep with her. But this isn't sleeping, right? She came to me with a problem, and well, what can I say? Excitement stirs my cock. I'm a helpful guy. Besides, I'll be damned if she fools around with some other guy. Not under my watch. "I know the perfect person for what you're asking."

She crossed her legs, then uncrosses. "Who?"

A smile spreads across my face. Grant, you bastard, you should know better. But knowing better has no place in a deal like this. "Me."

A my

I RUN my hand down my blue dress when the driver circles into a luxury neighborhood in one of the finest areas in Dallas. I haven't lived here long enough to get acquainted with the rich zip codes, but a look at the carefully manicured lawns, long driveways leading to imposing homes, and the amount of expensive cars parked along the long, wide streets, are a dead giveaway.

This is where rich people live.

When Grant offered to help me, I agreed quickly, not believing my luck.

He suggested I have dinner with him at his home, and I don't need to be a rocket scientist to know why. He wants to keep this hook up private, hidden like a dirty little secret.

Fine by me. What if he's photographed with me somewhere, and Terri catches wind of it? I don't want her to think I'm disrespecting her or taking this opportunity for granted.

Or for the world to think I'm Grant's latest fuckbuddy.

When the driver stops in front of a stunning property, excitement flutters in my stomach. When I asked for his help, I didn't know he'd offer himself for it. Now, it makes sense—maybe I'm new blood, and he wants to break me in, so to

speak. Or maybe he feels some loyalty to Terri and doesn't want a creepy guy to put his hands all over me. Which works well.

Because I want Grant's hands all over me, even if I'm not letting him fuck me. Not that I don't want to—but he's not the marrying kind, and I have to cling to one thing so I don't completely lose myself with this man.

And trust me... losing myself could be so easy with Grant.

I open the door and of the car service Grant arranged and paid for. Then, I slide out and walk to the sumptuous entrance. This house speaks of old money. Big tall Cedar trees outline the path to the property, classical in its style with red bricks, several tripartite windows and ceilings so high I can picture them even without having stepped inside.

Sucking in a breath, I knock on the heavy wood of the tall, double doors, and after my third knock, it's swung open.

A zing of awareness courses through me. There he is.

Grant, with his easy charm, looking hot wearing a V neck black shirt, and denim jeans. Barefoot. I tell myself not to look at his feet. I don't want to get any silly ideas about their size— I will not be looking at his dick tonight. Though thinking about it is fine, right?

"Look who Uber dragged in," he says.

"Am I at the wrong address?" I ask with a witty expression. "I'll be happy to ask him to come back and get out of your hair," I say, pointing at the long driveway.

He pulls me inside, and the moment he touches my elbow, a shiver runs through me. My nipples get hard, fighting against the restriction of my cotton bra and dress. God. I want him to kiss me so bad I'm almost lightheaded.

"You're not going anywhere tonight," he says in a low growly voice that prickles the little hairs behind my neck.

Holy shit.

He shows me into his lovely home. The living area is roomy and luxurious, with heavy drapes, a vaulted ceiling and comfortable but still elegant sectional couches amongst the accents and coffee and side tables.

Pieces of realistic nature art hangs on the wall.

"What would you like to drink?" he asks.

"I'm good for now. Maybe just water."

"Right. Not a drinker," he says, and I appreciate he remembers what I said earlier in his office.

I realize I must have come off as prudish. My father drinks beer, and I hate the taste. I have sipped a couple of different types of wine before, but none caught my interest. "I don't have anything against alcohol, I just haven't tried any I enjoyed."

"And you're all about trying new things, aren't you?" he says with a mocking smile.

I shrug. "Some."

He smiles, a flicker of amusement touching his deep brown eyes. "I got us some appetizers and stuff."

He cocks his head in the direction of the coffee table, and I see a charcuterie board filled with cheese whose names I can't pronounce, fresh fruit, expensive slices of European cold cuts.

"That's really sweet. Did you buy this?"

He shakes his head. "I bought the cheese and meat, and put them together."

"What? Yourself?"

"My mother gave me the wooden board set as a gift. She's always trying to domesticate me... and sometimes it works. I was thinking we could order some food, but wanted to see what you liked first."

"This is actually great," I say, and sit on the couch. *Don't read too much into this, Amy.* I do enjoy that he put it together himself, and waited until I came to ask what kind of food I liked. In a small way, that shows he cares a bit about making me feel comfortable.

I grab a piece of cheese and take it to my mouth.

He brings a glass of red wine and takes it to his lips, and watches me in silence.

Silence stretches between us, and even though he's sitting on the same couch as me, it feels strange. There's a small gap between us, and I want him to erase it. I want him to jump my bones and kiss me until my heart goes back to its normal pace. Though a kiss would probably have the opposite effect.

I lean over and pop a cherry in my mouth, enjoying the sweet taste. A hint of desire glints in his brown eyes, and it's like his gaze tracks my movements, following the cherry in my mouth, then how I slowly lick the corner of my lips. A shiver of awareness travels through me. Say something, Amy. "What do you usually do?" I ask. "When you're out with... sugar babies?" I ask, then regret it. I have to block images of him with other women from my mind, unless I want to go craycray. Women he's done a whole lot more with than what I'll let him do with me.

A part of me still wonders why he's volunteered himself as a tribute. What does he gain from this deal?

"Whatever we want," he says, his voice yanking me to the present. "We go out, sometimes shopping, parties, go to events... that kind of stuff."

"That's interesting. I'm familiar with the concept, but I can't picture you having to give someone gifts for their company," I say. As far as I know, at Sugar & Silk there isn't a rate that the sugar babies ask their daddies for their time. They get compensated with gifts, niceties, and maybe money, but not in the straightforward money-for-sex fashion. It's more like when the girls ask their daddies for help with a car payment, or to fund their college semester.

"I don't have to. I just appreciate the honesty of the situation. And so do they." His answer is effortless, like he's not thinking too much about it.

"But not your mother, right?" No mother who gifts wooden board sets to their sons wants them not to get married,

or at least settled. His mother has an agenda, I bet.

He chuckles. "No. My mother doesn't approve much of Sugar & Silk. She always mentions a friend's daughter she wants to set me up with."

I smile, and enjoy knowing this nugget of information. It's almost like we have more in common. "Do you have any siblings?" I grab a slice of Italian meat from the board, and pop it in my mouth.

"No."

I take a drink of water. "Ah. So she wants grandkids."

He looks down at his wine before saying, "Has my mother sent you? You seem to know a lot about her."

I laugh. "Sorry, I don't mean to snoop. I come from a small town, it's easy to read into these motherly type manipulations." Especially if he's the only child.

"I bet. Well, enough about me and what my mother wants me to do... what do *you* want to do?" he asks, his gaze connecting with me in a way that twists my insides.

Fuck. He wants me to say it. Even though I made it clear what I was looking for in his office, this is his way of making sure I haven't changed my mind... that I know what I want. That I want him.

But... does he want me? A kernel of insecurity pinches me. Or does he feel bad because I'm so inexperienced? It's not like he complimented me tonight. Maybe I'm reading the situation wrong. I mean, I want him, very much so... but don't want to be charity.

"Grant... I need you to answer. Do you want to spend time with me, or are you just being nice?"

"You think I'm being nice."

"Well, you know, maybe I was too forward earlier, and you meant well. I'm sure you've kissed and made out with so many women, what's one more, right?" I try to inject some humor in my voice, but my nervousness seeps through.

Suddenly, the space between us is gone, as he slides over next to me. Heat surges through me, air in short supply. He stares at me, his eyes a shade darker. God.

"Amy," he calls me, and the way my name sounds in his deep voice... "I'm not *nice*. If I were nice, I wouldn't have you here. I wouldn't be fantasizing about your hot naked body in my bed."

For a long moment, it's like my entire body contracts, life comes to a halt inside me, then it returns again in full force, my heart thrumming in my blood, in my ears. The idea of this sexy man fantasizing about me does things I can't even explain.

I believe him, though.

The intensity in his chestnut eyes, the way specks of gold flicker in the depths of his gaze.

He lifts my chin up, and breathing becomes harder and harder. Lust sweeps over me, my pussy already drenching wet for him. God. He hasn't even kissed me yet, and I'm already hurting for him. Can I handle this man?

"What are you thinking?" he asks.

I lick my lips, unsure if I should tell him. "Well, you're so experienced... and I'm hyperventilating inside just by being close to you."

"Just breathe," he says, then strokes my cheek. The chaste caress sets a raging fire in me. "I won't do anything you don't want me to, I promise. Do you trust me?"

"Yes." I shouldn't, but I do. I know he doesn't promise what he can't deliver, but he also doesn't lie. "Also, just so you know, even though we're not going to, hm, go all the way, I've been on the pill for the past year for other reasons. And I'm safe."

"Me too. Though I doubt I'll ever be safe around you." He dips his head, and catches my lips with his. *Omg. Omg. Omg!*

I feel like I'm about to explode. Excitement is about to burst out of me. He swipes his tongue against mine, and I turn to mush, leaning into him, enjoying every bit of this kiss.

He puts his arm around me, pulling me close and it's like I step into a world of warmth and glow. It's like I'm plastered against a wall of muscles, but the wall moves and hugs me back. And feels so good.

So. Good.

I barely notice when he pulls my shirt over my head, and all of a sudden, he's cupping the lace over my bra. Whoa, that didn't take long... I want to protest, to strengthen the boundaries, but the fire coiling at the pit of my belly is my boss right now.

"You are so fucking sexy," he says, his voice deep and hoarse.

I've always wondered if my boobs aren't too big. Too heavy. But now, he acts like they're the best thing he's ever seen.

"Let me see more," he says, and reaches for the clasp of my bra.

I hesitate for a moment. A part of me wants to hold back, but another part wants to dive head-first into this sea of lust. "Grant..."

"No dick action, baby," he says. "I'll just make you feel good tonight."

I worry my lower lip. I'm trying to think straight, but there is so much blood pounding in my ears, it's impossible.

"I'll eat your pussy, but not fuck it. It's a promise," he says, his voice even deeper than before.

My tits feel even heavier, like there is a hot stir behind my breasts sending zings of awareness, little shocks charged with longing, through the rest of me. Did he just say he's going to eat my pussy? I'm sure my cheeks and neck are red at this point, but then again, my whole body is on fire.

I nod, my head bobbling forward slowly like I'm in an erotic trance.

He unclasps my bra then it slides down my arms, and falls to the sofa. I take a long deep breath, so desperate to catch hold of my emotions. A twinkle of intense lust crosses his eyes, and I quiver like he just touched me somewhere no one else has ever touched before.

Well, he is. He will.

But this is so much more than that. This is—

"God help me, Amy. Your tits are unbelievable."

He dips his head, and takes one of my breasts in his mouth. I drop back on the couch, unable to handle all his weight on me. He flicks his tongue at my nipple with hunger, then touches my other breast with his free hand.

Blood throbs in all my pulsing points, my internal organs about to short circuit. Every part of me is begging for his touch, his mouth, his dick if I'm being honest. Turns out my pussy is the part of myself I can trust the least. Because right now, it's drenching wet and tender, achy, and ready to be taken.

He drags his mouth down, kissing my tummy, then he scoots me to the edge of the couch, and peels off my jeans and underwear.

I'm trembling, burning up, and knowing he's seeing me in the nude doesn't help the case. But he doesn't let up, and he lowers himself to the couch. What is he doing? Before I can make up my mind, he pulls me down, swiftly, and I realize that now I'm straddling his face, as he lays on the floor. I'm sitting on him, looking down on his body, mesmerized.

Heat floods my face—and my pussy.

"Yeah baby... slap my face with this tight, pink pussy. I'll eat you like my last fucking meal."

His words chip at my inhibitions, as I straddle his face.

He swipes his tongue at my folds, greedily, and I gasp, instantly quivering from top to bottom. I try to stay still, but his motions on the most intimate part of me leave me unsettled. Restless.

He hooks his hands onto the sides of my legs, anchoring me in a position that deepens the thrust of his tongue in my sex. Tendrils of arousal flutter in my tummy, heat leaving a path of sweat slicked skin on my forehead and neck. Feels... so good. He sucks my clit, and the moment he grazes his teeth gently over my tender flesh, I gasp.

My body contracts, the motion almost painful, then it lets go, and I come, a fresh coat of cream spilling into his mouth, and he laps it up, licking me, and never, not even for a second, stopping.

Air swooshes from my lungs, and the release I thought I got quickly fades. The urgency, that toe-curling sensation of needing more, needing again, needing him assails me. Dots blur my vision, and my body tingles.

I'm about to come again... but what about him?

I lower myself on his body, and reach for his jeans. Why not? He's entitled to some fun too, right? Anticipation sets a path of goosebumps up my arms. I've never done this before, and now is a good time to start as any.

The moment I undo his zipper, he trembles, and I hear a muffled groan from between my legs. The tips of my fingers shake as I let his cock out, and when I pull down his pants and boxers—with some minimal help from him, who lifts his hips a little to facilitate my mission... whoa.

His cock springs out, proud and hard. Big and girthy.

I dart out the tip of my tongue, excitement spiraling inside me, and I lick the tip first, earning a deep growl that fills the air around us and spikes my heartrate. His flesh is hot and soft, but his cock is hard and ready. I like how he quivers under me when I become bolder and lick all his length from root to tip.

He swats my ass as response, taking me back, and for a moment I shriek, surprised. Then, he kneads my cheek, massaging it vigorously, also sucking my clit. I could melt right now—instead, I choose to give him a taste of his medicine, and slide his cock in my mouth. I love the feel of it, and quickly find a good pace as I suck him in and out, while stroking the rest of his dick with my hands. He swats my other cheek, harder than the other time, and my ass tingles. His hand is big and strong, so it aches a little—in a way that elevates my desire even higher.

I cup his balls, rolling them between my fingers. They're heavy and I love their texture.

He grazes his teeth gently on my clit, then for good measure, he squeezes it—and that does it. An internal

explosion takes over me, claiming every organ in my body. I've never felt this way, so attuned to every part of my body. The sweat glistening my limbs. The heartbeats about to gallop from my chest. The warmth spreading from top to bottom.

It's all so new, yet so achingly familiar. Like I just finally met a person I've been meaning to meet for my whole life.

I want him to experience this delicious madness, so I gather my strength and suck him harder, deeper until I feel him against my throat muscles. It's hard to breathe, and I don't want to gag, so I squeezed his balls gently—one of my girlfriends back home mentioned that's a surefire way to get guys to come faster. Never thought that tidbit of information would be valuable until now.

I increase the intensity, until he moves under me, then his body goes rigid for a second. I don't know what else to do, but his thighs are trembling—a sign I must be doing it right. He growls, then comes, and I don't think for a moment as I swallow his hot load until he's done.

I roll off of him, and take a long deep breath.

At last, my heartrate is slowing down, and satisfaction still weaves through me. I know that even if he won't be my "official" first... there's no way I'll ever forget this man. He's become my first in all ways that matter.

G rant

"What have you been up to?" Brooks asks.

Brooks, Beck and I have been hanging out in Beck's office after the quarterly meeting. I like these guys, they're like family. Ben and Julian are also partners, but they have been away representing Sugar & Silk globally in some events overseas.

"Not a whole lot," I say, obviously hiding the fact I've been hooking up with my sexy assistant for the past week.

Brooks glances down at his iPad, then looks at us. "Hey, I meant to ask you... there's a fundraising party I RSVPed yes to but turns out I can't make it. I was hoping one of you might. It's hosted by the Stanton's, they've been dropping lots of money advertising on our site. It'd be good to show our faces."

"When is it?" Beck asks.

"In a couple weeks."

Beck clucks his tongue, rocking back in the leather chair. "No can do. That's when I'll be out of town for my grandma's 80th birthday party. She just finished her cancer treatment and beat it again... I can't say no."

Beck's grandma is a force to be reckoned with... a selfmade woman who started from nothing, and a twice cancersurvivor. Saying no to her is unheard of, I think with a small smile.

Brooks nods, then lifts his eyebrow at me. "That's right. Okay so since Ben and Julian are out of town, all that leaves is you buddy."

Ah. These kind of events have become a nuisance, but it comes with the territory. "Ok. I'll do it."

"Thanks," Brooks said. "Hey Beck, is your ex-wife going to that party too?"

Beck's jaw clenches, and he squares his shoulders. "Eliza is attending... Mimi doesn't know we're separated."

"You're kidding me. You still haven't told her?" I ask. I remember they parted ways at least a year ago, but back then his grandma had just been diagnosed with breast cancer and he didn't have the heart to tell her.

Beck picks up a pen and flicks it relentlessly. There's an edge to him whenever we ask about his ex-wife, or I guess, his estranged wife. That's why we normally keep out of it. "No. I agreed to sign the divorce papers if Eliza went with me to this party and pretends we're still married."

"Wouldn't it be easier to just tell them the truth?" I ask.

"Yes," Beck said, impatience sifting through his voice. "Haven't you ever been in a situation you had to massage the truth for a little while?"

Suddenly my collar feels tighter, like the irony of my situation is suffocating me. If any of these two found out I've been spending time naked with my assistant, they would not be happy. It's messy, unethical and we don't want any negative press.

What they don't know is... I can't stop. Also, technically, I'm not fucking her if there's no penetration, correct? A chilly sensation spreads through me. God, I can't even fool myself. My dick hasn't been in her pussy, but I've fucked her mouth. Licked her pussy clean. Touched her in the least professional way a boss should touch an employee.

But damn it, didn't it feel amazing. Every fucking time.

My throat feels thick and dry by the time I answer, "Yes."

"Really?" Brooks puts his iPad aside. "I've always thought you were too honest... blunt sometimes. Are you keeping something from us?"

I shake my head. "Nope. Nothing worth mentioning," I say, which is ironically, a big lie. Everything about Amy is worth mentioning.

Worth living.

Worth... everything.

G rant

LATER THAT DAY, I watch her do laps in my pool.

Naked.

"You know, for a virgin, you're pretty naughty," I say as I approach the edge.

"Not fair. I didn't have a swimsuit, and this was your idea," she says, biting her lip.

I should have joined her, but instead I slipped on some jeans and shirt after work and stayed dry as I waited for an important email to drop in my inbox. But every other second my gaze strayed to her, so I put my laptop aside and sat at the edge. Now my body is tight, tension stiffening my shoulder blades.

She's swimming from one side to the other, and I'm already about to burst from my pants. *Jesus Christ, man. Keep it cool.*

"By the way, I RSVPed yes to that party," she says. "I forgot to tell you earlier."

Oh, right. The Stanton fundraiser. "Thanks."

"Must be nice having to attend these cool parties for work," she says, splashing some water my way playfully.

"Why don't you come with me?" I ask, my mouth working faster than my brain. Before I withdraw my offer, her eyes light up, and she splashes me again, this time in a clumsier way, like she's too excited to keep still.

"Wow really?"

"Yes," I say, the idea unfurling in my head. "You're my assistant, after all. Won't be weird or anything having you with me since this is us representing the company," I add. Besides, poor thing has been here in Dallas and I haven't really showed her a whole lot yet... mostly because we're always making out or too careful not to go places where someone I know could see us.

"I'd love to go."

"Good. It'll be a good time."

"It's always a good time with you," she says, and there's something achingly genuine in her voice. Something clicks inside. I haven't been taking her to places, or bought her jewelry or given her money. We've just been enjoying each other's company. And that has been enough for her. She likes me... for me.

I groan. This kind of thinking can really land me in trouble

I need some distraction.

Without taking my eyes off her, I make quick work of peeling off my shirt and jeans, and jumping in the infinity pool in my birthday suit. She gasps, then chuckles, and I swim to her.

"Needed to cool off?" she asks.

"I still do," I say, kissing her shoulder. "Being close to you heats me up no matter what the temperature is outside."

"I'm sure you say that to everyone," she says playfully, but I sense the emotion in her voice. The fear that she too is about to lose control. She can't do it—can't let me fuck her all the way, because that's not what she wants. She wants marriage. Commitment.

As a son of divorce, I never really banked on steady relationships. I always believed honesty was the best way, and it was more honorable to keep relationships short and sweet than going through the cumbersome parts. Though I must admit, I wonder sometimes what it would be like to be in a long relationship with someone like Amy.

To dispel my intrusive thoughts, I pull her close to me, the skin-on-skin contact sending thrills down my spine. "I guarantee you that you're nothing like anyone else I've dated."

She lifts an eyebrow. "Because of my invisible yet sturdy chastity belt?"

That too. I chuckle. "You're just... different. You don't require much, if I'm honest. Then at the same time, there's a lot of restraint I need to exercise to be around you."

She narrows her eyes, probably trying to make sense of my poor attempt at explaining. But it's so hard to grasp these emotions menacing my mind. Emotions I can't quite explain yet. Maybe it's best this way.

"So I'm a lot?" she asks.

"You are a lot. All the time. Everywhere," I say, my voice hoarse.

I kiss her, a kiss that starts slow and languid, but then it grows, it builds, it explores. My cock is getting hard, red hot lust stirring inside, my gut clenching. I have to remind myself to not take this too far.

I take her in my arms, and she yelps, surprised. I bring both of us out of the pool and give her a towel. We dry each other, and when my eyes met hers, I notice the silver flecks flickering in her deep blue irises, and can't resist. I kiss her again—this time, no slow languid affair.

We fall on an oversized tanning bed, and I intensify the kiss, my tongue sweeping hers with relentless determination. We're also still naked, towels sliding off our bodies. Awareness surges through me, and I make a mental note to take things slow. But it's so fucking hard.

"Oh baby... this is so good," she whispers, her voice throaty. "Can I ask you something?"

"Anything."

She lowers her hand to my cock. "Can you bring your cock closer to me... just without going all the way in?"

My breath catches in my throat. Rubbing my dick against her walls and not fucking her may just finish me off, and not in the good way. Sweat slicks on my forehead. I want to do it, but damn, this will put my self-control through the ultimate test. "You want to kill me, don't you?"

She lets out a strangled chuckle, and I catch the gleam of anticipation in her eyes. "No, I mean it."

I can't say no to her. "Come here." I lay her on the chaise lounge, drooping my body over hers, carefully, my heartrate ascending several notches.

I rub the thick head of my cock in her folds, and she quivers, moaning, and my dick gets harder. It's like our bodies know what we need. She wraps her legs around me, and damn, she's so fucking wet I'm about to explode. "You like that, huh?"

She moans. "Ooooh yes. I feel like you're even closer to me."

"God, woman," I say between gritted teeth.

I move around a little, between her folds, to make sure I don't thrust my cock all the way in and finish this charade. She whimpers, thrashing her head from side to side, and when I squeeze her clit, she contracts her whole body. I have to withdraw from her to resist the urge to fuck her the way we both need.

I watch her intently as she closes her eyes in pleasure, and I can feel the tension radiating from her body as her orgasm builds to its crescendo.

She's quivering, her eyes tightly shut and her mouth wide open in a silent scream.

When she opens her eyes, the mix of affection and hope I see in them cuts me straight to my soul. I desperately need a release, an escape, a way out of this mess. I stroke my cock a few times, and without breaking eye contact, I soon come, and spill my seed on her tits.

A fiery energy bounces between us, with an undercurrent of apprehension. We both know we're in way over our heads... but there's no way we can stop now.

\mathbf{A} my

"ARE YOU READY?" Grant asks from the other side of the door.

I look at my reflection in the mirror. He's bought me this beautiful dress that we picked out online, even though I was reluctant after seeing the price. But he insisted, and now, as I smooth my hand down the stunning V-neck silky hunter green gown that whispers above my knee, I know why. The fabric is seductively soft, each time I do the slightest movement it hugs me back. There are no big patterns, but the simplicity of it, the richness of the color really helps and I look like a goddess, and feel like one too.

I hope my smokey eye makeup and nude lipstick color complement the look well.

"Amy?"

He pulls me from my thoughts, and I open the door to see the most handsome man I've ever seen. I mean, he's usually hot, but with this more formal suit and tie, he's breathtaking. I can see he approves of me too, because he eyes me intently.

"Ready," I say, gesturing with my hands for effect.

"I better get you out of here fast otherwise I'm tempted to skip the whole thing," he says, his voice hoarse. I lift my hand. "No touching then. I really wanna go," I say. After all, especially after what we shared in the pool several nights ago, I can't risk it. When I had his cock teasing my pussy... I wanted to break the rule so much. A self-imposed, silly rule.

He smiles. "Oh. You'll go places tonight," he says in a playful tone, but there's an undercurrent of tension.

During the drive to the opulent party, he small talks about current events and the news, and I go through the motions and look out the window as we leave one exclusive neighborhood and drive to another. In a bit over one week, I'll have to go home. Terri will return, and there won't be a place for me in Dallas. Anxiety creeps into my stomach, my nerves jittery. *Get it together, girl*.

I've been avoiding talking about it, but the idea of not seeing him anymore lingers in the back of my mind. Still... I'm afraid to bring it up and lose whatever days we have left by sounding needy. I try to focus on the present, and mentally slap myself, and focus on the view.

Gated community, huge homes, lavish front yards...

What would it be like to live in one of those houses?

"What's on your mind?" he asks.

I can't really tell him about my leaving. Not now, anyway, when we're on the way to a fancy party. "I don't know... seeing all these mansions gets me thinking. What do these people do for a living?"

"Some were born into money, some found the right field and connections."

"Seems like it. Was Sugar & Silk always your endgame?"

He continues relaxed, manning the steering wheel with the cool confidence he usually displays. "Did I think back then people would pay top dollar to be matched? The right clientele, yes. But I was skeptical at first, just because I wasn't sure it'd work in the long run... and thankfully it's been outstanding."

"Do you think your experience being a sugar daddy comes in handy?" I say, biting my inner cheek afterward and hoping jealousy didn't seep into my voice. I know I have no claim over Grant, and he has a past. Still, the image of him with any other woman makes me see red.

He gives me a long layered glance. "Why do I detect a sense of judgment?"

"Oh. I didn't mean to... it's just... you're super-hot, rich and not entirely unredeemable. I thought you'd have no problem finding a girlfriend."

He snorts. "I've had girlfriends before."

"And also sugar babies. What's the draw?"

"I don't like surprises," he says, then fixes his attention back on the road, his silent way to tell me the subject is closed.

A pang of disappointment stabs at me. I should have known this man had issues, but his ridiculous response is a turnoff. How can anyone go through life with transactional relationships just so they feel like they're always in control? I look out the window, but this time I'm just pretending to look at the scenery.

I probably am sounding stupid and naïve right now, but a part of me hurts inside. Like... I want better for him. I want more for him. I want him to experience all the wonderful things about non-transactional relationships... though I guess that's hypocritical of me to think this way.

After all, he's giving me sex lessons and I'm giving him access to my virgin body. It's not a financial transaction, but doesn't it count? No surprises there.

We arrive at the party, and for the next hour, we're walking around, shaking some hands. Even though he introduces me as a member of the Sugar & Silk team, I feel like some people assume I'm one of his sugar babies.

Why does it bother me?

Why am I trying to convince myself what we have is more than what we actually have?

"Come," he says, then puts his hand on the small of my back and leads me through the backyard. It's an extensive space with an Olympic size pool, and an endless number of trimmed bushes and colorful plants in the background.

We reach an empty area, where I can still hear the buzzing of the party but it no longer reverberates through me.

"Is the party everything you thought it'd be?" he breaks the silence.

I shrug. I wanted to come so much, but now as I think about giving him up, the glitz and glam of the party falls in the background. Is life also going to lose its color when I go back home? "It's great. I mean... it's tons of extravagant food and overdressed good looking people."

He gives me a small smile. "Why do you seem so sad then?"

"Oh. It's nothing—"

He shakes his head. "Don't lie to me."

I swallow a lump in my throat. Damn him. "How do you know I'm lying?"

"Are you?" He leans close, and I catch the whiff of his fresh, minty scent.

"I guess I wanted to come because this isn't the kind of place I usually go to... then being here... I realize most of these people must assume you're having sex with me—ironic given that's the one thing not really happening for real."

"I wouldn't say that. You've shared your body with me. You've shared yourself. What difference does it make if there's one tiny part of you I haven't entered?"

I bite the inside of my cheek. Oh my God, let him not say all the right things tonight. There's only so much I can resist...

"It doesn't diminish what we're sharing. And if anyone made you feel less than, just let me know who and—"

I chuckle, my body relaxing. "No one said anything. It's just me reflecting... I mean, you could be here with someone

else. Someone much more experienced than me... someone who'd do anything to please you, including offer that tiny part I haven't... why me?"

"Because you're the one I want, Amy. I'm so obsessed with you I will take whatever you'll give me," he says, his voice wavering, a flick of pain moving through his eyes.

My heart lurches.

And now, a revelation bolts through me... I want to give all of myself to him. More than I've ever wanted anything else in my life. And it'll happen tonight.

G rant

God. I want all her tiny parts and then some. No other woman ever consumed me like this, and the sad thing is—I don't need to fuck her. I'd love to, obviously, but being with her just does visceral things to me I can no longer deny.

In a bit over a week, she'll go home. Terri will return, and Amy will have no other reason to stay in Dallas.

The thought of losing her is like the sharp end of an arrow poking at my heart.

I stroke her cheek, and dip my head. Of course I introduced her as a Sugar & Silk employee, but now we're away from the crowd. Also I don't give a fuck.

"Amy."

"Yes"

"I was thinking... you don't have to go home."

"I don't?"

"If you want to stay, of course... We can find you a position at Sugar & Silk."

"Oh."

"You can try a few different departments to see which will suit you better. It'd be a good experience for you—an

opportunity to try new fields, and see what you prefer. Much more freedom than just working for me."

Why are her eyes teary? Did I say something wrong?

"Thank you," she says in a strangled voice.

Maybe she's overcome with emotion. That has to be it... "You know, I was thinking about a way for you to stay."

"I bet," she says, and this time, the bitterness in her voice doesn't go unnoticed.

"What's wrong?"

A tear rolls down her cheek. "Nothing. It's fine."

"No. It's not nothing. I've upset you, and I need to know why."

"Well, I'm mad at myself and not at you. I thought I'd be able to do this whole thing and be rational about it. I thought not having sex would not blur the lines. But being with you these past weeks... changed everything. And now you suggest I stay and float between departments... which means I'd still be accessible to you, but I wouldn't be your assistant anymore. You'd have it pretty convenient."

"That's not what I meant at all. I was thinking of you, I swear."

"I was thinking of us too earlier. Just in a different way. We're just not on the same page."

"Where did this come from?"

"I'm sorry... I need a breather. I... I need to go," she says, walking away from me.

\mathbf{A} my

I SHOULD HAVE RETURNED to the house to make a beeline to the door and order a ride-share, but I don't want anyone to see me crying. I don't know these people, but I don't want them to see Grant's date leaving in a rush, with tears coming down her face. He doesn't need that drama, and yes, he's still my boss.

I just need to breathe.

I march deeper into the garden, leaving him behind, and nearly get lost in a maze of beautifully manicured bushes and plants. My heart is about to leap from my throat, my thoughts jumbled.

I was about to give him all of me, well I wanted to, but then he reminded me that he's not giving me all of him. I don't mean marriage, but to suggest I stay in his office without adding the girlfriend title, and acting like he's doing that for me?

Is he that rational and good at separating things?

Removing me from being his assistant also means less liability for him. He doesn't need to see me every day, deal with me more regularly, and having an affair with someone from the office is different than his own assistant. I touch my forehead, lightheaded. Is it?

All of a sudden I'm an expert in office affairs?

God, this whole thing is so confusing...

"Amy," I hear his voice behind me.

I circle to face him, still unsure, my stomach twisting into tight knots.

"I didn't explain myself well. I don't mean for you to stay and be hidden in my company and out of the way."

I inhale. "It sounded that way."

"No. Maybe working at Sugar & Silk isn't what you want and I respect that. Honestly I don't care. I want you, Amy. I want you to be with me, and I want to be with you. Grow together, build together, everything."

A hint of happiness crosses his expression, and the knots in my stomach are gone. His words melt any of my concerns, and a warm energy travels through me. "Are you serious?"

He pulls me into an embrace. "I am. Trust me, even though a part of me wants to keep you for myself at all times, I'm not hiding you from anyone. I'm falling for you, Amy." He hooks his index finger under my chin, lifting it until my gaze connects with his.

"Say it again," I say, desperate to make sure I heard him correctly.

"I'm falling for you," he says evenly, in a tone that leaves no room for misunderstanding.

I nuzzle his nose, feeling ridiculously silly, but can't stop myself. Bubbles of joy expand inside of me, threatening to burst. "Again."

He chuckles, and pulls me closer until my body is plastered against his. "I'm falling for you."

"Me too," I say, and hold his face between my hands. I look at him square in the eye, butterflies making a crazy stampede in my stomach.

He touches my hand on his face. "Really?"

I nod. "I want you to be my first."

He disengages from me, and steps back, a concerned expression on his face. "Amy, this isn't about sex. I'm ready to wait as long as needed."

"I don't want to wait anymore," I say, emotion welling up inside. "I made that decision earlier. I want to give you every part of me, no questions asked."

He holds my hands in his. "Are you sure?"

"More than anything," I say, before leaning closer. Then, when my lips are within a breath of his, I whisper, "Let's get out of here."

A my

WE KISS as we tumble into the bedroom, in a rush, our limbs brushing one another as we attempt to take each other's clothes off.

I'm sure there's a more finessed way to do this, but I don't care... I've been waiting for him forever, even when I didn't know there was a guy for me out there. A guy like him.

And now, that we're finally together, I don't want to waste another second.

"Grant..." I hiss out.

"Tell me what you want, Amy."

"I want you to fuck me."

"Until my last breath, baby," he says, then slams me against the wall and crushes his lips on mine in a kiss that puts my lungs to the test. His tongue swipes over mine, our teeth grazing, as he lowers his hands, kneading my ass with so much ownership I melt.

He drags his mouth down on me, nips my neck, then flips me around so I face the wall, and takes off my dress over my head.

I'm naked.

He kisses my bare shoulder, and the little hairs on the back of my neck stand up, tingles working their way to my core. My pussy is soaking wet.

"You have no idea how much I dreamed of slamming your virgin pussy," he says, his voice so freaking deep I need a second or two to process his words.

I turn around, my eyes connecting with his. "Then what are you waiting for?"

A smug smile curls his lips.

He sweeps me off my feet, and carries me in his arms, shortening the gap to his bed. My heart is thrumming in my veins, my nipples so hard they ache. There is an animalistic energy brewing within me I can't control...

When we fall onto the mattress, he embraces me, kissing me until my lips are swollen and tender. I roll on top of him, nipping his neck, and helping him out of his clothes. All the heavy make-out sessions we shared until now have made me more confident around him, less inhibited.

At last, he's naked, laying on the bed, his cock hung and sprung.

"I'm having the best view," I whisper.

"I disagree," he says, then flips me on my back.

Excitement sears through me as he drags his mouth to my breasts, then picks a nipple between his teeth and lightly grazes it. I moan, a long-winded sound even I can barely recognize. It's raw, loud, and perfect for the occasion.

He ventures lower on my body, giving open mouthed kisses and leaving a path of goosebumps behind.

I know what he's about to do, my thighs trembling in anticipation. But I'm also desperate to have his cock inside me. "You don't have to do that now," I say, my voice shaky.

"I'm not eating you just for you. I'm eating you for me," he says in a husky voice before he lowers his head in between my legs, and his words send me on a mini-spiral already.

He fires up his tongue, sweeping it greedily across my folds, then diving in, licking at first. I thrash my head from side to side, adrenaline flowing through my veins. He intensifies this sweet agony by sucking me, vigorously, while flicking my clit with his thumb.

Pressure building in my core turns into red hot pleasure, and spills through my body. I come, calling his name, my body trembling, my heart racing like it's desperately looking for a way out of my chest. My vision is still dotted when he covers me with his body, positioning his cock at my entrance.

I spread my thighs a bit more, signaling I'm so fucking ready for him. To my relief, he doesn't play games; at last, he thrusts his cock inside me. I suck in a deep breath, a pinchy, achy feeling stabbing my sex for a moment. He lowers himself on me, drooping over me in all his hot masculinity.

"Relax," he says, and I realize my shoulders are tight, my body stiff for a moment.

I follow his command, still experiencing this stabbing throb in my pussy. He peppers kisses on my cheek, my chin, my nose. Little by little, lust re-ignites and the discomfort takes a backseat. I search for his mouth with mine, and when our lips meet, it's dynamite.

We kiss like we haven't kissed in ages. We kiss like this is the last one we'll ever share.

Swiftly, he takes advantage of how enthralled I am, and starts to move inside me. My walls contract for a moment, but I quickly tell myself to relax. He's big and super hard, and I can feel his veins pulsing against my flesh. A type of intimacy I never experienced before.

I get it now. I've waited for him... for this, and damn was it worth it.

"I knew your pussy was delicious before... but now, fucking you... it's next level," he whispers in my ear with the sexiest drawl I've ever heard. It's like he's dragging each word from the depths of his lungs with great effort.

He withdraws his cock halfway then slams back into me, and repeats the motion again and again. His hands gripping my hips, his lips on my neck, all leading to a steady, intoxicating motion that sends pleasure coursing through my veins. His breath comes in heavier and heavier, and I feel his muscles tightening and contracting from the effort.

I'm nearing the brink of an orgasm, fire igniting and spreading through my entire body. When he undulates his hips in a certain way, somehow the slight shift of the angle hits me harder, and he plunges even deeper into me, and that does it—I come apart, I come undone.

Pleasure rockets through me, and I am overwhelmed by a world of sensations, my muscles tensing and then releasing in wave after wave of powerful rapture.

I feel his upper body move, and he's still slamming inside me, until a deep growl slices the air, announcing his own release. He quivers, filling me up with his load. I touched it, and tasted it before. Now it's deep in my pussy, and I love it.

He rolls off me, and I sigh, willing my heartrate down. He looks at me, then wipes a couple of strands of hair from my face. "My first and last virgin."

"Was I everything you expected?" I ask, in a playful tone.

"You're stealing my line." He chuckles. "I should be asking you that."

"You were beyond," I say.

He plants a kiss on my shoulder. "Again, stealing my line. I am so thankful we didn't have sex that first night. It feels like waiting was the right thing to do... to get us here."

"And where do we go from here?"

"We go to forever, my love," he says, spooning me against him. "There's no way I'll ever let you out of my sight."

I smile. Well, that's just what I've asked for...

Guess what? Beck's story is next!

Beck

"Where's Eliza?" Aunt Lillian asks, after a quick air kiss. "I thought she'd be flying in with you."

I swallow the lump in my throat. Coming to Costa Rica together was what I suggested, what I insisted on, but Eliza, my sexy estranged wife, was adamant about needing to go to an important meeting and catching a later flight. So here I am, at the villa my family rented to celebrate my grandma's 80th birthday for the long weekend.

No shit, it'll be a long, long weekend.

Four nights sharing a room with Eliza, who I haven't seen in months.

"She'll be here in two hours. Had a meeting she couldn't postpone."

"I can imagine. I see her jewelry line everywhere," she says, patting my arm. "You did really well, dear. I only wish we saw more of you two."

So do I. Besides my sister Jessie and my business partners, I haven't told anyone else about our breakup nine months ago. I wanted to, but back then my grandma told us that she found out her breast cancer returned, and I didn't want to give her any bad news and jeopardize her health. Especially if she found out about the miscarriage. I know for how long she's been wanting me to settle down and have my own family.

Both my parents died in a car crash when I was ten. Mimi raised me and Jessie. Thanks to her, I have some of my best childhood memories.

"Hey everyone," Jessie says, walking into the living room. "We'll have some cocktails out on the terrace later, and then dinner."

Aunt Lillian touches her puffy hair. "Oh darlin', I'd better go freshen up."

A few of the guests—including Lillian's two daughters and Uncle John, plus a couple of longtime friends of grandma's walk around. She told me this celebration would be a very small affair, by grandma's standards, that means about fifteen people.

Jessie erases the distance between us. "She is coming, right?"

"Yes. She texted me this morning."

Jessie touches my arm. "How are you doing?" she asks, and does that thing she's always done, that big sister sympathy look, even though she's only eighteen months older than me. How would she act if she knew the real reason that drove us apart? Even more pandering, no doubt.

"I'm good," I say, then square my shoulders. "I'm good," I repeat, louder.

A small smile dances on her lips. "Have you thought about what will happen? I mean, you can't be separated and not signing divorce papers forever."

"Why not?" I ask, regressing to a freaking bratty sevenyear-old kid. Deep down, I know that my thinking about Eliza, my missing Eliza, my chastising myself for my mistake won't fix the situation if I don't take action.

She tosses her blonde hair to the side. "Eliza is twenty-six. What if she meets someone else and wants to marry them?"

"Thanks," I say dryly. The idea of Eliza moving on with any man is a punch to my gut. I can't picture her with anyone else, nor want to. Just because I screwed up after she lost the baby, doesn't mean I never considered winning her over again. Or at least talking about it. I suck at that, that's for sure.

Though I was a shitty husband for the brief period of two months. When she had the miscarriage, before we even told people she was pregnant, I withdrew. I wasn't the supportive spouse I should have been. And that came with a price. I lost

the only woman I've ever wanted to have a family with. The only one I've ever loved.

"Are you ready to see her again?" Jessie asks, poking like she loves to do whenever she senses a particular subject makes me uncomfortable.

"Yes," I lie. "Seeing her won't be a problem."

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Cassie Cassell writes short dirty romance about characters who can't keep their hands off each other. She favors stories with low angst, high steam, and fun times—the type to give you a delicious rush of adrenaline on your commute to work or late at night in bed.

She lives in Central Texas with her family.

When she's not writing, she's reading thrillers or books that definitely make you blush.

If petting random dogs was a sport, she'd be an Olympic Gold Medalist.





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Obsessed

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