

A woman's legs are the central focus, wearing a vibrant red, draped dress and shimmering gold high-heeled shoes. The background is a rich, textured red fabric, possibly silk, with deep folds and highlights. The overall mood is elegant and romantic.

STEP-IN VALENTINE

STEPHANIE AMARAL



MJ ESPINOSA

Contents

[Title Page](#)

[Copyright](#)

[Author's Note](#)

[Content & Trigger warnings](#)

[Blurb](#)

[Playlist](#)

[Epigraph](#)

[Chapter One](#)

[Chapter Two](#)

[Chapter Three](#)

[Chapter Four](#)

[Chapter Five](#)

[Chapter Six](#)

[Chapter Seven](#)

[Chapter Eight](#)

[Chapter Nine](#)

[Chapter Ten](#)

[About the Author](#)

[About the Author](#)

[Acknowledgements](#)

[Acknowledgements](#)

[THANK YOU for reading!](#)

[*OceanofPDF.com*](#)

STEP-IN VALENTINE

Stephanie Amaral

MJ Espinosa



OceanofPDF.com

Copyright © 2022 Stephanie Amaral and MJ Espinosa

Step-In Valentine by Stephanie Amaral and MJ Espinosa.

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

Copyright © 2022 by Stephanie Amaral and MJ Espinosa

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or used in any manner without the written permission of the copyright owner except for the use of quotations in a book review. For more information, address:

iandbpublications@gmail.com

First paperback edition February 2022

Book design by Stephanie Amaral and MJ Espinosa

Editing by Stephanie Amaral and MJ Espinosa

ISBN: 9798409378929 (paperback)

ASIN: B09PHXYWT9 (ebook)

www.stephanie-amaral.com

www.mjespinoza.com

OceanofPDF.com

Author's Note

To all of you who ventured reading a book by two new authors,

Thank You!

This little piece of ourselves only exists if we have willing readers, like you.

We would like to kindly ask, if Rose and James get your pulse racing, to share, recommend and help us spread the word about this story of ours.

We would be eternally grateful and it would allow us to carry on this journey and write more of our kinky words for you to enjoy.

We truly hope that you do.

Join Rose and James' [reader group](#) on facebook.

Love

Steph & MJ

OceanofPDF.com

Content & Trigger warnings

Warning:

This book is intended for those over the age of legal adulthood. All characters depicted are over the age of 18. Sexually graphic scenes are included in a great part of the book, including kinks and BDSM-related activities. Every scene described is fictional and therefore is not intended as a resource for sexual education or as an informational guide to sex, BDSM or any kink depicted.

This book is strictly a work of fiction.

Kinks included are described in the next page, and might ruin some plot points. If you don't them spoiled, skip along.

OceanofPDF.com

***The kinks included in Step-in
Valentine:***

Step-sibling sex, bondage, butt play, use of sex toys,
blowjobs, swallowing, crying, gagging, raw sex/sex without
condom, public play, edging, daddy kink, dirty talk and
spanking.

Reader discretion is advised.

OceanofPDF.com

Blurb

If blood is thicker than water, how much does it weigh against lust and desire?

A fortuitous encounter, roaming eyes, and naked flesh finally set fire to the latent attraction Rose Valentine and James Archer have danced around for years.

To the outside world, they are bickering siblings. Step siblings. They will correct anyone who gets that detail wrong. The byproduct of the all too common blended family.

They met as teens but now, the shy girl is a self-sufficient woman, unaware of her potential and sex appeal, and the once gangly boy, a dominant, kinky man who goes after what and who he wants.

A weekend alone offers Rose and James the perfect opportunity to rediscover who they have become and how very right wrong can feel.

Blood really is thicker than water, but lust? Lust is solid.

OceanofPDF.com

Playlist

Michele Morrone — *Drink Me*
Two Feet — *Twisted*
Two Feet — *I Feel Like I'm Drowning*
Rihanna — *S&M*
Demi Lovato — *Daddy Issues*
Nikki Idol — *Sex in Paris*
Everybody Loves An Outlaw — *I See Red*
Rosenfeld — *Do It For Me*
Kings of Leon — *Sex on Fire*
Cheat Codes x Kris Kross Amsterdam — *SEX*
Jason Derulo Ft. Nicki Minaj — *Swalla*
Ariana Grande ft. Nicki Minaj — *Side To Side*
Aerosmith — *The Grind*
Michele Morrone — *Watch Me Burn*

Listen on [Spotify](#).

[OceanofPDF.com](#)

*“Love looks not with the eyes, but with the mind,
And therefore is winged Cupid painted blind.”*

William Shakespeare

OceanofPDF.com

Chapter One

James

“Home sweet home.”

Shit. As much as I tried to rebel against this suburban, cookie-cutter, white picket fence house back when Mom and I first moved in, now it is home. Usually, it is familiar, even comforting. Not tonight.

Tonight, I can't even park on the damn driveway; a catering, or florist or party planner is taking up the whole thing with their train-sized van.

“Every fucking year.” I fix my sunglasses on my nose as the sun hits the snow just at the right angle, turning the front lawn into a mirror. I hate winter – snow specifically – as a rule. The dire monotony of white. The thick clothes covering arms, shoulders, collarbones, legs. The need to keep the top of my car closed for months at a time. Driving a convertible in winter, it is almost pathetic. Almost. *I* make it work.

I manage to dodge the crew of people that are setting up for tonight, frantically running around, now that the time is getting near. I wonder if Mom got the ten-year plan and gets some sort of discount. It wouldn't surprise me.

“Archie? Oh good, you're here early.” Fuck. Mom's floating head pops into the hallway. I hoped to make it to my bedroom undetected. “Come in here. I could use your opinion. What do you think, honey, should we switch things up a bit and set up the bar over by the fireplace this year? Smokers kept leaving the sliding door open last year, and the poor bartender was as cold as his drinks.”

“Yup. Great idea, Mom.” I keep walking and yell my reply from the stairs. “Sorry, I want to get ready first. I'll come down after, 'kay?”

I hear Mom give the instructions for the bar placement before I close my bedroom door, silence ringing loudly in my ears.

Still looks, even smells, exactly the same. Mom and Dad haven't moved a single thing. Car collectibles and models, posters of all my favorite vintage vehicles, everything exactly as I left it eleven years ago when I moved out for college. Even Nicolas Cage is still hanging behind my door, sitting on his precious Eleanor – a nineteen-sixty-seven Ford Mustang Shelby that held the dreams of a ten-year-old boy, and the reality of a thirty-year-old man. It's always good to be back.

I decide to go ahead and soak for a bit. I love my modern walk-in shower, but a bathtub has its perks. I hang my suit for tonight on the hook behind the door, and put away my clothes for the week.

I don't mind house-sitting while the folks go away on their yearly honeymoon. My eyes roll at the thought. I can't begrudge them the celebration or the trip, those two are head over heels thirteen years in. Yes, they love throwing dinner parties, but they also *actually* want to celebrate another year of being married to each other. I just wish it didn't have to be a themed Valentine's Day party. Year. After. Year.. After damn year.

I strip in my bedroom out of habit. Sharing a bathroom with a sibling as a teenager taught me that much. The Jack and Jill bathroom was always a source of conflict. I loved it, instigated it, really. It was a constant race to lock it from the inside to keep the other one out. I was the undefeated champion. That isn't an issue anymore, the former occupant of the adjoining room only shows up for the actual party. Usually fashionably late.

I check the time on my phone, turn the knob and walk inside. I think the rest of my body registers the sight before my mind can. Fucking heaven on earth, in the shape of a sin so immoral, it will send me straight to hell. But who the fuck cares?

Rose Valentine is leaning over the tub, one hand under the running faucet while the other holds her upper body in a perfect arch, her ass pointing to the Almighty.

“James! Get the fuck out!” Rose is scrambling to grab a towel and cover herself. She’s flustered and fumbles, it takes her a good five seconds to hide her fucking gorgeous body. I’m staring, taking in as much of her as I possibly can and not even trying to hide it. *Fuck*. She is absolutely stunning.

The little unexpected peep-show gets my blood warm and flowing, and it is all going straight to my cock. I’m also not trying to hide *it*. I mean, it is only fair. She showed me hers, albeit unwillingly, so I’ll show her mine. I am still wearing boxers, but the visible tent in them definitely catches her eye.

“James!” She shouts again.

“Relax, would you, Rosy? You have nothing I haven’t seen before.”

“Not on me, you fucking creep!” I smirk at her. It is not easy to pull off wrath in a fluffy pistachio-colored towel, but she is doing it. “What the hell kind of reaction is that to have for your sister?” Rose points at my crotch. I stand on the balls of my feet to swing forward and bring even more attention to it.

Bingo.

She’s staring too. I see the dry gulp of air she swallows as she does.

“Like what you see?” My voice shakes her out of the reverie and I watch as she closes her eyes tightly, regaining composure.

“What? I’m your sister, you pervert!”

“*Step*-sister,” I correct her. “I am a man. I have eyes.”

“That’s not all you have,” she scolds indignantly. One of her perfectly manicured hands is clasp the terry cloth, the other one, pointing at my groin. “And if you want to keep it attached to your body, you will get the hell out!”

She doesn’t wait for me to move, she charges at me and pushes me out, closing the door on my nose. I go for the knob as a reflex, but she’s faster this time. I’m locked out. She won this battle.

I hear her grab her things and storm down the hall. A door slams. Just like the good old days. Teenage Rose slammed doors at least twice a day.

Since she locked me out, I have to access the bathroom from her side. I tuck my hard dick in the waistband of my underwear and walk down the hall, not caring if anybody sees. Let them feast their eyes.

The door to Rose's room is wide open, it also hasn't changed one bit. There is an open suitcase on the bed. Completely out of character for her. She always comes for the party and leaves right after. I make a mental note to get to the bottom of that. No fucking way am I staying in this house with her and her insipid good-for-show boyfriend, sleeping down the hall.

She left the water running when she ran away, I'm just not sure if she's running from me or herself. The half-full tub welcomes me in, soothing tense muscles but doing nothing for my hard cock.

I have definitely wondered what she looks like naked, and jerked off to the idea of her over the years. But it was all innocent... as innocent as getting hard over someone you can't have ever is. Finally seeing her has given all those fantasies a whole different reality to go on. Gasoline on the embers of a budding fire. For the first time I find myself picturing it actually happening.

I can't say it's the first time I've thought about Rose in a way I probably shouldn't have, but it didn't bother me. At the end of the day, we aren't blood-related and I am only a man. The flesh is weak, some bits of flesh *much* weaker than others. There is no real issue besides the imposed societal norms, which I can't give a shit about. Rose though? Social conventions are the air she breathes. She's uptight and strict, leading a beige-on-beige life bound by a fucking book of rules no one but her gives a damn about.

I fist my dick in my hand while my mind dangles on the edge of a precipice of dark lust. I can't help but pump, each stroke harder, fueled by perky pink tits and a taught ass I

wouldn't mind desecrating. She'd flick me all the way back to the city if she could read my mind right now. A part of me wishes she could.

Would she use the pent-up anger behind all these years of fighting and teasing between us as incentive? I know I would. Angry sex is the best and I am an expert at it. I'd make her scream; make her proper, rehearsed, polite little voice reach decibels that would shatter the lies she tells herself about what she really wants.

I pump harder. My head bangs against the side of the tub as I jerk back.

I see her riding me behind my closed lids. Bouncing to the rhythm of my groans. I can feel her hands on my chest as she lifts herself and sinks back onto me. The force of my hand, milking my cock to the very last drop is sending sloshes of water over the glazed edge. I bite my tongue and my lip to keep the sound of pleasure from permeating the walls.

I come. I come hard to the image of a perfect redhead fucking me as if her life depended on it. The pace of my hand decreases until I'm down to gentle strokes, waiting for the 'what the fucks' to torment me. But they never come.

Well, fuck my life! Given the chance, I'd actually do it.

I get dressed in a trance; my mind boggled by the recent realization. No use in mulling over it, though.

I head back down, ready to be hit by an overload of unapologetic Valentine's Day décor. As predicted, arrows and hearts line every wall, an explosion of red has tainted every visible surface. Some of it has even landed on my tie. Dress code. Everyone must wear at least some red.

"Archie!" My mom squeals from behind me. "There you are, my baby. Give your mother some sugar." She practically smothers me with her signature bear hug. Even though she's smaller than me, her love is so big it crushes my bones.

She places a headband with heart antennas on my head and stuffs a red handkerchief in the pocket of my suit jacket,

trying to blend me further into the scenery. “There, much better. Where’s your sister?”

“Rosy’s here already?” I fake surprise. No need to have my mother calling a priest for an exorcism just yet. The doorbell cuts us off, and I get no more information about why my stepsister came early this year.

“Go get that for me, will you, dear? I just have to run upstairs for my pearl necklace. Find your sister, will you?” My mom yells on her way up. Pearl necklace... she’d be clutching those if she knew.

I yank the headband off before I open the door. I do it a couple of times, before someone from the catering company finally takes my place as the door man. The house is quickly filling with friends and family, but sister dearest is nowhere to be seen.

I saw the way she stared at me. Did she uncover the buried need to scratch an itch like I did? That would surely push her over the brink of annoyance. I turn my back to the door and see her standing at the top of the steps.

“Finally, buttercup.” Teasing Rose is a sport I have always excelled at. The annoyed flush on her cheeks never disappoints. It invariably makes me think of all the other supple, dark, hidden places that might be feeling the sudden rush of blood.

She is wearing a red satin dress, conforming to our parents’ ridiculous dress code for this miserable evening. That’s where the conforming stops. The dress is tight as sin with a slit that almost reaches her slit. I can see the outline of her ribs, the outline of her goddamn nipples. And I would bet my twitching cock she is not wearing any panties under it.

I know she can feel the weight of my stare as I peruse her figure where she stands. Fuck. She’s wearing stilettos, or whatever the hell they are called. All I know is they make her legs look like fucking death traps. I’m expecting the standard snarky reply but it doesn’t come. Instead, she’s just standing atop the staircase of the home we grew up in — or whatever is still visible of it underneath the red hearts, arrows and Cupid

decorations my mother happily plastered on to anything that couldn't protest.

"James." Her tone does nothing to hide the contempt she charges my name with.

"That's it, sis? I haven't seen you since last year's anniversary festivities. I deserve more."

"I'm not in the mood today." I'm guessing that's my fault and I can't help but stick my finger into that wound.

"Why? Is what's-his-face acting weird already?" Rose pushes past me, dodging a waiter wearing a headband with heart antennas like the one I tossed. My hand grabs on to her arm, turning her around to face me. "Oh c'mon, it's only fun when you fight back."

"Greg's not here, okay?" She angrily replies. Greg. That's her insipid, joke of a boyfriend's name. That's why she's upset? It's not because of me after all. A tight pang of something hits me unpredictably, I didn't expect to be disappointed, but I am.

She finally fights back by pulling her arm out of my grasp and fielding the crowd, beelining towards the bar. I follow. I always follow. Besides, from two steps behind her, I confirm my suspicions that there is nothing but a thin layer of satin between her skin and the world.

The man-child behind the bar is ogling her. *Fuck that.* I pull her by the shoulders, take a longer step, reaching the bar first, blocking her from the help's view. He can feast his eyes on my back. "She'll have a margarita. A scotch, neat, for me."

Rose clenches her jaw. There it is, the lovely frustration I've been waiting for. "Is that what I wanted, your royal assholeness?"

"A flower for a flower," I muse with a smirk. I think she mumbled 'insufferable', I can't be sure. "I always know what you want, Rosy." My voice drops, catching her attention. Her eyes are finally on mine. Defiant. Sexy as hell. She doesn't even know how sexy she is.

"Your drink, miss."

I pull a bill out of my pocket, a generous tip for free drinks, slide it on the counter and take the margarita before Rose can, together with my glass. “Keep them coming. And keep your eyes to yourself if you don’t want them spinning in the back of your skull.”

With a huff, Rose sticks her hand out, demanding her drink. Instead, I run the cold, salty, glass surface up her arm. Her body rewards me, just like I hoped it would. Her pores raise, goosebumps coat her silky skin and, my ultimate prize — her nipples pebble under her dress. Taut and firm. Mouth-fucking-watering.

God, I love satin.

Placing the margarita in her hand, I can’t help but try and test the waters. The back of my fingers extend just enough to graze the hardened flesh, my stare firmly set on hers, taking in her every reaction. Now that I know exactly what shade of delicious pink they are, the picture is clear and fucking vivid. She doesn’t flinch. Her breath is caught in her throat, her mouth a little ajar. Shock, maybe? She holds it in, her chest immobile in a silent consent her words cannot speak.

“Oops, sorry. It’s a reflex.” Not exactly a lie.

“The reflex of a manwhore.” Her breath finally releases in a huff. She is trying to be mad, her dilated pupils and rising chest tell me a different story.

I dip my finger in her cocktail, then slowly run it over the salt trail I left on her arm. “I prefer rake,” I correct, sucking my finger clean.

“*Vintage* manwhore then.”

“That reminds me. Where is saint Greg? Late as usual?”

“No. I came without him.”

“The story of your life, I imagine,” I reply with a brow wiggle and a chuckle, earning me an eyeroll, but no counter. That’s not the Rosy I know. I bite my tongue and backtrack, she’s truly bothered. Something tells me this is the reason for the full suitcase in her bedroom. “Why’s that?”

“None of your damn business, James.” She downs her drink and turns her back to me. As much as I appreciate the view, I pull her back and I’m met with that pair of piercing blue eyes, sparkling under a layer of unshed tears. But what I see isn’t sadness, it’s resentment and anger.

I can feel my blood boiling, my hands clenching in a rage I don’t think I’ve ever felt before. Rose winces under my grip and I snap back to reality and loosen it.

“Did he hurt you, Rose?” I am dead serious now, my face reflecting the shade of the décor like a mirror, as I wait for her answer.

“No, James he didn’t.” She pulls away from my vice grip, but my gaze still has her pinned down to her spot. Her face starts to shed her defiance, her guard dropping as I pry again.

“Tell me what happened or I’ll go pay him a visit right now and pull it out of him.” She knows me, she knows my threats are never empty. She’s been on the receiving end since she was fifteen, and knows just how deeply carved in stone my promises are. “Rose,” I grunt in another warning.

“We broke up, okay? But you can’t say anything. Not tonight, James.” My hands rush through my hair. I shouldn’t have opinions or feelings about this, but fuck do I. “Promise me, James.”

“Rose—”

“James, please. I don’t want to be explaining myself today. I need time to process and figure out how I’m telling Dad.” She interrupts me, taking away all the bickering ammo I had with her sincere words. “Today, James, all I need is another drink and rebound sex.”

“Rebound sex?” So that’s the deal with the dress. “I’m in shock! What have you done with my by-the-book, innocent Rosy?”

“Shut up. And yes, rebound sex, revenge sex, call it whatever you want, but I’m having it.”

“Bravo, Rose Valentine.” I give her a small ovation. “Now that’s what I’m talking about! I knew you couldn’t be

all pantsuits and button ups.” She swats my shoulder for my mockery but can’t hold her giggle back.

“Maybe the guy behind the bar would be up for it?” She motions towards him for another drink. Her second intentions are clear in the flirty smile she’s sporting.

No, no, no and hell no.

“All that boy behind the bar is good for is getting you a drink, not getting you off.” My voice comes out low and laced with an aggression I couldn’t control. “If you want oblivion, you need a man.” Her eyebrow is raised high in defiance.

“Anyone you recommend?” I chuckle and pull her closer, my hand resting on the small of her back.

“We’re kicking Greg to the curb tonight, buttercup.”

“What?” Her nose is scrunched in disgust, but I know it’s faker than the snake skin on her shoes.

“I know you liked what you saw up there. Don’t you tell me you have never masturbated to the thought of me.”

“No. Never,” she stammers back immediately, almost too eager to deny it. “Wait, have *you*?” I can’t hold the smile back as I see her flustered cheeks when she realizes the truth.

“I am a man. I have eyes!” I echo the words I used earlier. I scan her body over once again, in that tight, sinful dress, and I know now it’s screaming revenge and liberation. She doesn’t curl to hide from my eyes. Instead, she stands straighter, perking those sexy nipples towards me again. “Now I have actually seen you naked. Thanks for providing me with a much more accurate mental picture.”

“I would be ashamed to even say I need that. Can’t you find anyone to satisfy your needs, brother?”

“I have. And you will.”

“Aw, look at the two of you getting along.” My mom cues in, tagging Henry behind her. Dad, as I’ve grown used to calling him. “See? You can play nice when you want to.”

I’d rather play as dirty as I can. I fucking will.

I inwardly chuckle, almost choking on the scotch I drank to keep my mouth busy while Mom and Dad each take turns smothering Rose in hugs and kisses as they always do.

“I always play nice, Mom. Buttercup here is the problem child.” I always made sure the blame for my pranks and tricks landed on her. Come to think of it, I might have a good idea why she was always slamming those doors after all.

“Well, as long as you don’t burn the house down this week, I’m good,” Dad replies, glancing over at the both of us in a silent warning, before pulling me into a hug. Rose is staying for the week. “We’ll be leaving tonight after the party, so you kids be good.” He extends his arm, uncovering his expensive Breitling from under his sleeve. “What time is Greg arriving, Rosy?”

Her eyes dart straight at me, almost popping out of their sockets, just before she grabs my pinky and bends it back. “Hum... he won’t be able to make it tonight, Dad. I’m sorry.” Her smile is faint and not quite as convincing as she’s hoping. If she wants to keep Dad in the dark, she’ll have to put more effort into it.

“Snow’s a bitch this time of the year,” I chime in to save her day.

“Archie! Language, sweetie. We have guests. Speaking of which,” Mom turns around and scans the room, looking for people she hasn’t welcomed yet. It’s the same dance every single year.

I raise my glass to them as they leave us, while Rose finally breathes out in relief, pulling me towards the dining room for some privacy. The table is impeccably set, with more silverware than one could use, and the seats assigned as usual. I don’t even have to look to know I’ll be next to Mom and Rosy next to Dad.

“Thank you for helping.”

I scoff and take another sip of my scotch. “The road to hell is paved with good intentions, Rosy.”

“What is your game, Archer?” She accuses, her arms crossing in front of her chest. She means business. Whenever Rose calls me Archer she’s doing one of two things; either showing me we are opposites on the battlefield or negotiating the terms of her rendition.

“I’ve shown you mine, buttercup. You’re the one who’s all bothered. You need a good rebound to recover and forget. Shake all that vanilla off, it doesn’t suit you.”

“Greg isn’t vanilla!” I couldn’t hold the laugh from rumbling out of my chest.

“Greg couldn’t find your clit with a map and a flashlight,” I reply, watching as my words aggravate the inner nun in her. I walk closer to her until her back hits the wall leaning in to whisper. “You need someone who knows how to read you like Braille. Just. By. Touch.” I slide my finger down her neck making her shiver under my touch. I step back, that’s all confirmation I need.

“Do you mean you?” She manages to speak.

“Why not me? We have cause and opportunity. Just imagine how many times I can make you forget Greg during a whole week.”

“Oh, I don’t know, let me think. Incest?”

“I’m not your brother, Rose. We are not blood related.”

“By marriage is enough. No, James. Hard pass.”

“I can prove to you that you want it too. No hands.”

“No, you can’t.”

“I can, Rose.” I step closer again, before sweeping my surroundings for prying eyes, my lips glued to her ear. “How many times can you come before you pass out, Rose? I can’t wait to taste that sweet ass of yours. I’m betting my balls that it’s uncharted territory. How long will you last before you’re calling me Daddy and begging for more? How long until my balls are hitting your chin as you swallow me whole? I’d say... end of dinner.” I take a step back, appreciating the

flustered mess she's become. I tilt my head with a satisfied grin on my face. 'I told you so' plastered all over my attitude.

"That proves nothing, Archer."

Archer. Surrender or pointing out our differences? Both suit my purposes.

"You want proof?" I chuckle, darting to the table and rearranging the seating cards so that Rose is now sitting next to me. "I'll show you proof, Valentine. Just wait until I step in."

OceanofPDF.com

Chapter Two

Rose

I don't normally drink. I never wear something Elizabeth, Mom, bought for me.

I definitely do not forgo underwear. Today has been a day of many firsts. Up until a few hours ago, for instance, I had never seen James nearly naked and sporting a hard-on. We managed to live together in this house for years without it ever happening. I got sloppy and forgot to lock the door.

Did I ever wonder what was going on down the hall every time he brought the cheerleader *du jour* home? Did I use the plastic cup destined to hold our toothbrushes on the shared vanity to listen to whatever he was doing to them in there that had them grunting and moaning? Maybe. Once or twice. I would never admit that to anyone, least of all him. His ego is so big it needs its own stall when he uses a public bathroom.

My stepbrother has, what I call, a flame personality. When he is in the room, he is the source of light, the source of heat, and he uses up all the oxygen, if allowed. He sets things on fire and revels in watching them burn. He is reveling in watching me burn right now. The cocky asshole pulled out every weapon from his perverted, kinky arsenal and dammit if my treacherous body – at least partly fueled by the alcohol and the previous events of the day – didn't purr for him like a contented kitten.

I am still leaning against the wall where James left me to simmer after his little stunt, while the guests file in and take their seats. He is waiting for me to move, his steely blue eyes hold a dangerous kind of mischief I have seen in them before but never directed at me. It is affecting me more than I am willing to admit.

“What are you two doing still standing there?” Mom mumbles through a forced smile, as she tugs me by the wrists and pulls me toward the table. “Take your seats so our guests will follow.”

“Yes, Rosy, you’re holding everyone else up,” James taunts me. He is both the man who just whispered all those filthy things into my ear, and the jerk who has always loved getting me in trouble. He thinks he is so damn smooth; I wish I could slap his carefully groomed beard off his perfectly angular chin. I hold my own chin parallel to the floor and do my best to stride to the table. By some miracle the heels I am wearing cooperate and hold me up.

“This is you, buttercup,” he pulls my chair for me. Mom is too busy accepting compliments on this year’s tablescape to notice that James has messed with her carefully crafted sitting plan. Hell. That was my last hope to dodge whatever he has up his cufflinked sleeves.

Almost as if he can read my thoughts, he releases his wrists from their confinement and folds them up one by one. Thick arms sprinkled with dark hair and protruding veins are now on full display, my eyes glued to the scene as if it was an erotic dance. James is painfully, naturally handsome, anyone with half a brain and a quarter of a cornea can see that. He knows it and uses it in his favor, always fighting as dirty as he can. The kind of handsome that has mastered the art of putting itself on display. That is what this is. He is putting on a show. I am his reluctant, yet captive audience.

My heart is throbbing against my ribs, and something else is throbbing between my legs as I watch him.

It’s James, Rose! Get a grip. Don’t give him the satisfaction!

“I’m digging into a delicious meal,” he wiggles his fingers for my benefit. “Wouldn’t want to get these dirty,” he says matter-of-factly once he notices me staring.

“Meticulous,” I manage to mumble, my mouth as dry as a desert in the peak of summer.

I take a large sip from my freshly poured wine glass, just before feeling James’ warm, rough, determined hand travel up my leg. I jump out of my skin, managing not to spill the contents of my glass on the unsuspecting table mate to my

right. The friction of his warm skin directly on mine has my mouth releasing a low gasp I couldn't manage to contain.

I try in vain to pull my leg away, only to feel James' foot hooking on to my calf, pulling my leg apart from the other. I keep my eyes fixed on Dad, who has just taken his seat across the table next to Mom, my features as stoic as I can manage. Under no circumstance are our parents to know what is happening literally right under their noses.

"Everyone, dig in," Dad announces, planting a sweet kiss on mom's temple, and James' loaded laughter fills my ears.

"Aye aye, captain."

He's pretending to be immersed in polite conversation with a colleague of Dad's wearing an unfortunate toupee to his left, all the while moving his hand higher up my inner thigh. My skin is burning under his touch, the heat from the contact making its way straight to my cheeks. I should push him away, but I'm too entranced, and quite frankly, curious. The arrival of the appetizers is a welcome distraction.

I venture a look to the side, my eyes screaming 'what the hell are you doing.' Without making a peep he mouths the word 'proof' at me. I don't know what he means, but I know it can't be good. I try to get his hand away but it's no use, it is firmly planted. I can't make it budge without making a scene.

Mom notices James reaching over across his plate to grab the smallest of the forks. "Serves you right, sweetie. You weren't supposed to be sitting there," Elizabeth says to her son. The blue eyes they share accusing him jokingly. "Your cutlery wouldn't all be on the wrong side for you if you did what was expected of you." This sly left-handed bastard sat me to his right, so he could still eat while he tortures me.

"You have me mistaken for Rosy, Mom. I *don't* do the expected thing." With that, his hand inches higher up my leg. "I like to push the envelope."

"Just don't push my nerves while you are at it, Archie." Elizabeth tries to sound stern, but as usual when it comes to

her son, she fails. As far as she is concerned, he hung the moon and half the stars.

“It is perfectly okay to push, Mom, if you know what you are doing.” James squeezes my thigh as he nonchalantly replies. My head whips in his direction, only to discover him grinding his teeth at the feel of my flesh molding around his fingers. I’m entranced by the sight of him, light tingles flow down my spine and lodge exactly where they shouldn’t.

“I don’t know, Liza, darling. I know you like things the way you planned them,” Dad’s voice pulls me out of my stupor, “and Lord knows I love to stare at you from across the table. But being able to see the kids’ faces at dinner is nice. We don’t see nearly enough of either of you.”

“It is nice to see you too, Dad,” James replies. I try to detect insincerity in his tone, there is none. His words are as resolute as his fingers. They have moved from my thigh and are now cupping my bare sex. I can hardly swallow the gasp of surprise. I take it out on my fork instead. I’m holding on to it so tightly, I can feel it digging into my skin. “And I am all for trying new things.” A crooked smile is plastered on his otherwise perfectly composed face, his tongue darting to his lips to leave a trail of moisture too suggestive for my fragile position.

I can’t believe he’s touching me like this. I can’t believe I’m not pushing him away.

James coats his middle finger in my wetness before inflicting his torture just once on my oversensitive clit. He’s hardly done anything, and I’m completely destroyed. I’m not sure reciting the names of all the forty-six presidents in a loop will ease my mind into a more controlled state.

“So, tell me, my Rosy girl, where were you coming from?” Dad asks. I don’t understand the question, though I can’t be sure the reason behind my sudden onset of stupidity isn’t directly related to the fact that my stepbrother has his damn hand between my legs.

“Huh?” My voice is so close to a moan it’s embarrassing.

“I mean, if Greg was snowed in, how come you did make it?” My father clarifies for my benefit, while James flicks his finger again, and I can see his smirk growing wider out of the corner of my eye. Shit. Even if I had a good excuse, I wouldn’t be able to string two words together right now.

My anger flares up enough to recover some of my resolve. I cross my right leg tightly over my left one, making it impossible for James to reach me while I try to have this distinctly awkward conversation with my father. My stepbrother’s victory grin quickly disappears from his face, his palm once again resting open, high on my thigh, as the tip of his fingers sink into my skin in warning. His eyes are murderous, as if I’d taken his most precious possession from him. But I didn’t budge. I couldn’t, right?

“I see what you mean, Dad. You’re right. Where were you coming from Rosy?” His glare is like shards of steel, cutting and sharp, slashing through me with his blackmailing undertone, his hand tugging hard on my leg. I can see his game from a mile away, and for some reason the only thing that’s bothering me right now is why it isn’t bothering me at all.

“I’m not quite sure that’s any of your business,” I reply, squeezing my legs tighter together. The pressure isn’t relieving me of the arousal he managed to build. Dammit, if anything, it was much worse, and his dominating stare alone was enough to have me pulsing.

“Rosy...” My father warns in a low tone.

I glare back at James. I don’t want to lie to my father, but I’m not quite keen on the idea of ruining their anniversary either. I’m drawing a blank, I have no idea how to dodge this, and by the grin plastered on his face, James is enjoying seeing me squirm.

In a split-second decision, I uncross my legs again, spreading them just a little, James’ lips tilting upward at the same pace I give in to his little game.

“Oh, right. You mentioned that old bat with the mansion east of here died.” He tries salvaging his own mess while his

fingers resume their previous spot, the tip of his middle finger lazily circling my clit. “Any hidden treasures you can bring back to the gallery?” All I see on his face is pleasure, I’m not sure I am keeping mine from mirroring his.

“Nothing worth shuffling through.” I try closing my legs again, earning myself a painful pinch on my clit, my voice rising at the end of the sentence as a result. The pain quickly subsides, giving way to a flood of pleasure like I’ve never felt before, my legs fall open wider for him. James doesn’t miss his opportunity, and shifting his body forward, he plunges a finger deep inside me.

This is so incredibly wrong, on so many levels, but fuck does he feel good. I sink my teeth deep into my bottom lip, trying to muffle my pleasure with pain. I’m allowing myself to feel, instead of reversing to my default overly cautious self. That’s what this stupid idea of looking for sex today was about. Knowing and *feeling* that breaking up with Greg was a good, smart decision. I couldn’t let James go on with this if I still had feelings for him. It was clear as day right now that I didn’t, our fire had died long ago. With just a light touch, James had managed to ignite me in a way I think Greg never had. Fuck, if I’m honest, I’d admit he did it without even touching me. Just like he promised he would.

All this is about feeling and following my gut for the first damn time since I can remember.

Besides, I’ve always seen James surrounded by beautiful women, taking his pick as he pleased. Shit, there’s one across the table eyeing him right now, but his eyes are set steadily on me. He chose *me*. Somehow, the look on his face makes me feel empowered. He’s slowly thrusting in and out of me, his plump bottom lip tucked between his teeth, his chest in an overdrive of deep breaths. I grab his hand, this time not interested in stopping him, rather coaching him to go harder, to graze me where I so desperately need him too.

My head is hanging forward, I’m pretending to look at my phone, but in reality, I’m close to becoming undone all around James’ finger in front of everyone sitting at this goddamn table.

Just as I start to feel my pussy clenching, James pulls out and dips his finger deep in the sauce flooding the bottom of his plate, coating it, before sucking it clean with visible satisfaction.

I watch him in a mix of frustration, deep lust, and awe as he carefully licks his finger clean until consuming every last damn drop of me.

“Hmm... So moist. This just might be the best thing I’ve ever tasted.” The fucking bastard! I swallow nothing but air as I hear his words, he is hell bound on humiliating me, leaving no safe ground for me to hold on to.

I’m pissed. He pushed me to the brink of pleasure, only to deny me after. And there is absolutely nothing I can do about it.

I spend the rest of dinner feigning deafness, fighting hard not to react to his enticing words. He is still riling me up, I can’t deny deep down he is affecting me.

“Cake and coffee are served in the other room,” the headwaiter announces. Before he finishes his announcement, I’m on my feet, storming away from the table. I need to get my head straight. This is wrong. No. This is fucked up! And worse than having my stepbrother fingering me at the table, is that I’m frustrated he stopped.

I’m taking long strides. I’d run if these heels wouldn’t kill me. I just can’t get to the bathroom fast enough. I feel like a total fool. As always, he was just messing with me, proving that he is right, and I am wrong.

If he wanted to humiliate me, he could have chosen something that wouldn’t crush me this much. Today of all days. *Self-righteous, arrogant asshole!*

Finally, after dodging guests and staff, never lifting my eyes from the ground, I get to the bathroom, and swing the door shut behind me, but the click never comes. I look back and see James’ hand curled around its edge, walking in, locking it behind him.

“Get. The hell. Out!” My voice doesn’t mask the rage and frustration I’m feeling in the pit of my gut.

James hooks his hand on the nape of my neck, pulls me to him and spins us around, slamming my back on the door.

“Don’t run from me, Valentine.” It’s a warning and a tease all laced up in a defying glance that can melt me right on the spot. I hold my ground and his stare. I’m done with conceding tonight. “Did you come to finish what I started?”

“No.”

His grip tightens as he brings his face impossibly closer to mine, his whole body now pressed up against me. I feel him. I feel all of him. He’s just as affected as I am.

“Liar. I know how hot and bothered you are. I came to fix that,” he whispers in my ear. An explosion of flutters spreads from my head to the tips of my toes. I’m palming the door, in desperate need to fist onto something, to hold on, to squeeze.

His other hand has traveled up my dress, grabbing my bare ass cheek. Nothing sweet or soft about it. On the contrary, there’s a latent, pent-up need that’s raw and primal. Something I’m not sure I’ve ever been on the receiving end of. Still, I fight back. He left me hanging and vulnerable in the worst of scenarios, I’m not caving now.

“Get your hands off me, Archer.” I push him back with my hand on his hard chest, and all he does is smile and doesn’t move an inch.

Despite my words, James starts his feast on my neck. His open mouth kisses devour me, flooding me with deep lust and wet thighs. My head leans on his arm still holding the back of my neck, giving him better access to those spots that turn me on like a million fucking light bulbs.

“James, this is wrong, we need to—”

“Measure your next words wisely, Rose. I’m not playing cat and mouse anymore. Tell me to stop and I will. Right now.” He buries his steely gaze deep within mine, and I’m lost in those pools of blueish silver.

Fuck, he's irresistible! How come I am just realizing this now?

I can't speak. I can't condemn myself with the words I know should be coming out of my mouth. Instead, I place my hand on his arm, holding on for dear life for whatever is to come. I bare my neck in silent permission, but James doesn't kiss me there anymore. He doesn't even move to resume his assault. Maybe I've fucked it up with my doubts.

"Good girl!" He praises me instead. There's a strange sense of pride filling my chest as I hear those words coming out of his mouth completely unprepared for the crudeness of the ones to follow. "Now I'm going to eat your pussy."

Fuck. Me.

James drops to his knees and pulls my dress out of the way, taking his time to appreciate the view before moving. I involuntarily close my legs together and he reaches up to pinch my hard nipple in punishment.

"Don't hide, buttercup, this pussy is mine to have now." He tugs my legs apart and my hand darts to his hair as I steady myself, his first lick almost making me lose my ground. I'm so turned on it's ridiculous.

He hooks my leg over his shoulder, giving him better access to my throbbing pussy. I can feel the wetness sliding down my inner thigh, I'm just waiting for the snarky comment that will assert his victory. His tongue is wide and warm, and perfectly trained. He knows exactly where to lick, where to flick and where to twist.

He thrusts it into me, tasting me from the inside out, taking turns between fucking me with it and licking my lips. He's holding me by my ass, pulling me against his face as he eats me out at will.

"You taste better on my tongue than you did on my fingers," he mumbles. Vibrations from his low-toned voice sending shivers up and down my spine.

"Fuck." I'm panting and beginning to lose control of my moans. James is a fucking expert. I can't remember the last

time I've enjoyed this as much.

Without warning, he stands and picks me up, my leg still hooked over his shoulder, and sits me down on the large vanity, spreading me wider for his delight. His face holds nothing but lust and desire, a mask of pleasure I've never seen him wear for me.

Again, he is on his knees, his mouth latched on to my clit while two fingers slowly poke at my entrance, prying in just a little.

"Oh God!" I moan again before clasping my mouth with my hand.

"I want to hear them all, baby, but right now you have to keep quiet." He latches back on, but this time his lips are on my mound, just above my clit. He sucks on my clear, bare flesh as hard as he can, making me wince just a little. He's marking me with a hickey.

He smiles up at me once he's done, flashing his perfect set of pearly whites between those plump and swollen lips glistening with me all over them. He holds my gaze, watching me attentively as he buries those two fingers deep inside me, my mouth dropping open in a gasp of pleasure.

As soon as he's knuckles deep, his tongue is back on my clit, flicking and licking and rolling and just plain out drawing the life out of me, while his fingers pump in and out. I'm not a prude, I've had sex many times, but this, with him, just feels so different than anything I've ever experienced. Maybe because it's so, so wrong.

Fruit from the forbidden tree.

"Oh fuck, James." I feel myself clenching as all my muscles tighten, anticipating my release. My hands are fisting his hair now, not minding if I'm messing it up, my hips trembling under his unrelenting tongue, trying to meet his thrusts with the urgency of a pending orgasm. I'm on the brink of the precipice for what seems like forever, James purposefully missing his tongue's target to prolong this limbo,

dangling me over insanity. I'm only coming when he's good and ready.

He bites down on my sensitive nerve, holding it between his teeth as he flicks his tongue over it.

Once.

Twice.

It doesn't take a third for me to shudder in ecstasy.

My back is arched as far as it can go, my head pressing against the mirror behind me so hard I'm scared it will break.

I'm pulling on James' thick, dark hair, riding his face as well as my orgasm. I manage to control my moans, but just in volume. They are leaving my mouth hushed between my clenched teeth, my bottom lip stuck between them.

I'm a mess. A panting, shaking, hyperventilating, coming-down-from-my-high, utter mess and James is smiling at me.

"Fuck that was hot," he mutters, and only now do I realize he watched me come, not missing a second of my shameful show.

I know I'm blushing, I can feel the new heat growing under the one he put there with his tongue, fingers and smooth fucking talk.

I can't speak. I wouldn't be coherent if I tried. I just came but I'm still turned on and, dare I say, wanting more, .

"On your knees, buttercup. I have a promise to keep." I look down at his hands, unfastening his belt, his cock hard and straining the fabric of his pants. I'm still rooted to my spot, not moving a muscle, just watching him. "Do I have to push you down, Valentine?"

I hop off the vanity and drop to my knees, new flutters filling my gut. Blowjobs have always felt like a chore to me, I take no pleasure in them. Tonight, though, I can't help but feel anxious to see his cock. I saw its outline earlier and admonished myself for wishing he had walked in as naked as I was. I was curious. I *am* curious.

I fumble with his pants and pull them down, my face just inches and a thin layer away from the huge bulge.

Why is my mouth watering?

I look up at James, he fists my hair just at the base of my neck. The force of it is painful, but fuck does it feel good. I pull his briefs down and this majestic, tall erection springs free, a layer of pre-cum beading at the top.

I haven't seen many dicks in my life, but James' just beats them all at first glance. It's not donkey sized, but he's thick, maybe even bigger than what I'm used to. The bulging veins running its length have my pussy clenching, as if it's asking to map them with my insides.

"Lick it clean." His commanding words connect straight with my clit, and I do as he tells me, my hand holding the thick base as I take his head in my mouth. "Good girl."

For the first time, I want more. I want it all, to the very end. I want every inch and every drop of him.

"Fuck my mouth." The words are out before I can hold them, my eyes flying wide at the sound of my voice.

"I was going to ease you into it, but now that you've said that, there will be no mercy. Just keep those tears in, baby, we can't mess up your makeup. Now, open up."

I take him in slowly first, but James is impatient and guides me down with the hand that's tangled in my hair, pulling out just as he finds resistance. I'm guessing not even half of his hard cock fit in my mouth. Just as he gave it his all to bring me pleasure, I am eager to return the favor.

He thrusts in again, with more force this time, and I open my mouth as wide as I can, my tongue almost darting out of it. He pushes further now, all the way in, making me gag as he does. I fight to contain the tears.

"Fuck!" He cusses in a low hiss, making me look up at him while my mouth is completely full. I'm a drooling mess by the time my nose hits his stomach. "I didn't think you had it in you." Neither did I. I had been trying with Greg, but I guess I was lacking incentive.

He tugs on my hair and pulls me back, his dick escaping my mouth with a loud pop. He doesn't waste time and pushes back in and I'm eager to take him. His deep grunts are fueling my own desire. To my surprise, I'm enjoying this.

"You're such a dirty, hungry girl aren't you, Rosy?" I moan as I suck him, taking his cock down my throat, again and again and again. "You're going to be a good girl and take every drop from me."

James releases my hair, holding my head in place as he takes control. He's tested my limits and now he's done holding back. He's fucking my mouth like I told him to, between my moans and his groans I'm growing hornier by the second.

I let go of all my mental restrictions and allow myself to enjoy this. I've long had the conviction that being submissive is a weakness, having a man take his pleasure from you, something demeaning. Right now, though, all I feel is power and pleasure. With each thrust I feel James' balls tighten further, getting closer. I want him to come in my mouth, I want to give him as much pleasure as I took from him, I want to swallow every drop just like he ordered me to.

"Fuck, Rose!" He grunts as he steadies my head with his cock buried down my throat. I feel the pulses of his orgasm as he releases his load into my mouth. I have drool running down my chin, but no shame or regrets.

James pulls out of my mouth slowly, his expression still a reflection of the heaven he'd reached a minute ago.

"I said every drop!" He wipes a drop of cum that's sliding down my chin back into my mouth with the pad of his thumb and I suck it clean, my eyes glued to his. "That's my beautiful girl." Another praise that sends shivers down my spine and an electric jolt straight to my clit.

James helps me up, and hooks his arm around my waist, pulling me to him until my face is barely an inch away.

"You're fucking amazing, Valentine." I swallow dryly, waiting for his lips to crash on to mine.

“Someone in there?” A strong knock bangs on the door, and James releases me, both of us composing ourselves as best we can.

“Yes. I’ll be right out.” I shout scurrying around the bathroom in a slight panic. James stops me by holding onto my shoulders.

“We’re talking about this later. Don’t run away, Rose.”

OceanofPDF.com

Chapter Three

James

I am standing behind the toasty warm bar mixing two drinks. I do this after every party, it is the very first time I'm holding one drink in each hand.

The house is quiet. Except for the clicking of heels against the floor. I half expected Rose to escape, to retreat to her neutral corner and avoid me. That is what she always does. We've been playing hide-and-seek for years.

"Like a box of fucking chocolates," I whisper to myself. Rose is full of surprises. I *was* trying to prove a point before. I wanted to put her on the spot, to coerce her, maybe even force her. I am not above that. I thrive on control, on revving things up and getting engines running. I guess I shouldn't be surprised, ever since I met her, Rose Valentine has risen to meet me, she's never backed down.

Fuck. If I died tonight, I'd die a happy man. The image of Rose on her knees before me, with her lips puckered around my cock, gagging on it, meeting me thrust for thrust, is seared into my memory. I will revel in it for as long as I live. I knew what I wanted from her, and I took it, I wasn't expecting it to make me feel the way it did. Alive.

"What's the hold up? The bartender was so much faster." This little shit.

"I will drop an ice cube right down your dress like I've done many times in the past, Rose." I walk across the marble foyer into the living room. The furniture is back to its assigned spot. The cleaning crew has this job down pat. The last guest left an hour ago, together with our parents, and we find ourselves in a spotless house, with a damn fire roaring in the fireplace.

"Frozen water in the shape of a cube, how will I ever survive?" She deadpans without looking up while she undoes the strap of her heels. The heels she dug into my back while

my face was buried in her pussy. Of all the things I thought might happen tonight, that was the furthest one from my mind.

I'm staring. Shamelessly. Memories of what happened just down the corridor make it impossible for me to be subtle about it.

"Snap the hell out of it, James. You are creeping. Me. Out." Rose is waving her hand in front of my face. I blink back my recollections and hand her her drink, taking a seat next to her on the oversized couch. I can't read her. The tone, the sass, this is the stepsister I take pleasure in taunting but she's also a fucking temptress whose scent I have been wearing for the last two hours. It is driving me insane.

"Apologies. Thirsty, are we?" I am not above playing to my strengths. I place the crystal tumbler in her hand. Blue irises retreat and focus on her drink. She swirls it twice before letting it moisten her pouty lips. And just like that, I have lost Rose to her thoughts. Her body is here, but her mind has taken her far away.

No way in hell am I going to lose the headway we made tonight. I take the drink from her and set hers and mine on the coffee table.

"Hey! I am actually thirsty," she grunts her frustration at giving me the answer I wanted.

"Oh, sweet Rose, I know you are." I stretch and glide my fingers over the lower part of her calf, her leg jerks in response, so I am quick to secure a hold of her ankle. "Relax, would you? Those shoes are fuck-me hot," Rose hesitates but decides not to look me in the eye, "but I know your feet are hurting. Allow me?" I dig my thumb into the sole of her left foot, earning myself a satisfied sigh.

"Your thoughts are screaming at me, s—" Fuck, force of habit. I catch myself before it's too late. Calling her 'sis' will not help my case right now. Her face scrunches in response and the foot I'm holding gets yanked from my hands. Rose grabs her drink again, taking a long swig, placing it back on the table and returning to her end of the couch. She's looking small on the huge sofa all of a sudden.

“Just tell me what’s in that little head of yours?” I decide to lean into my mistake, it is not like she isn’t thinking about it already. “I am your older, much wiser brother, after all.”

“Ha, ha. Very funny.”

“That too.”

Rose doesn’t dare to look up, she keeps her gaze steady and straight ahead, focused on nothing. The brother wants to tease, the man with a plan knows better. Silence is the way to go. Alcohol will play in my favor one way or the other.

“Are you single, James?” Her question takes me by surprise. Judging by her reaction, she reads it on my features.

“*That’s* what you are thinking about?” I try to reach for her foot again, but she folds her legs and sits on them. “I am always single, Rose,” I admit. A passing thought of the reason behind that statement tries to sneak into my head. My mind is well-trained, the walls I have carefully crafted around it work their magic pulling me away from that dark pit.

Rose grabs one of the seventeen decorative pillows Mom’s littered the couch with and hugs it tight to her chest. “I haven’t been single... I’ve been with Greg since I started as a curator at the gallery. Four years.” Her hand moves to support the weight of her head and her thoughts. “He had just gotten a promotion and was looking for a piece to hang in his new office.”

“I’m not following, Rose.” My remark comes up short on joviality, the mention of her ex always has this effect on me. Fucking good for nothing pretty boy.

“Just that you and I are *very* different, Jay.” Fuck. She hasn’t called me that in a very long time. I can’t decide if it’s good or bad. “What happened tonight,” her pillow is both buoy and shield, “was all sorts of messed up. It can’t happen again. Ever.”

If the thought of Greg warmed up my blood, this thought sends it beyond boiling point. “And why is that, buttercup? Because from where I was standing, and *kneeling*, it sure as fuck looked like you were enjoying yourself.” I don’t give her

a choice, I pull her legs towards me and set her feet on my lap.

The best way to counter her thoughts is to be a literal cock tease. I use her heel and rub it on my crotch. “You wanted rebound sex? I’m fucking providential. In every sense of the word.”

“This between us, it’s wrong... Mom and Dad would, I don’t even fucking know what they would think. They’d think it’s gross!”

Fuck subtle.

“Do *you* think it’s *gross*, Rosy girl?”

“Don’t call me that! You are such an asshole.” She straightens up, facing me head on, nose pointing to the sky. Defiant and sexy as fuck.

“If Dad can call you that, then can’t your aspiring Daddy call you that too?” Rose’s pupils dilate at my words, but there is shock there too. Shock is good. Shock, I can work with.

I lunge across the couch and grab her by the waist. One confident tug and she’s straddling my lap. Her chest is rising at the fast-paced rhythm of her panting. Her nipples begging for attention through the thin layer of her rebellious outfit. She relaxes her muscles and allows her weight to fall onto my lap, I know she can feel me hardening right under her.

“Maybe, this whole look of yours is a front to hide your break-up, *Rosy girl*. You used the occasion to hide right in plain sight with a sexy costume.” I have her by the hips pushing her down, as I begin to rock her on top of me. “It’s a smart move, the folks believed you. But I’m not buying what you are selling.” I can feel the warm moisture her pussy is coating my slacks with.

“This,” I carefully glide a finger under the strap of her dress and pull it from her shoulder, “is a fake.” Rose hasn’t noticed but she is now the one grinding on me. “Isn’t that what you call them in your line of work? I don’t like fakes. When you are with me, I want it real and raw.” My lips are at her ear.

“Completely bare.” My nose traces a path from her collarbone to her jaw. “Just like you, I can spot a fake from miles away.”

“A sex curator?” She scoffs.

“Uh-uh, not sex, Rose,” I correct her in a whisper, “pleasure. I am a specialist in curating pleasure.” She tries to keep her reaction from me, but the goosebumps my words raised are plain to see. She is resting the weight of her body on my now fully erect shaft, still rocking to my pleasure and hers.

“I saw the way you were looking down at me, you loved having my face between your thighs.” My hands are squeezing the heated skin right above her knees. “Not a fake.” A furtive gasp makes it past her open lips. “You know what else wasn’t fake? The way your eyes sparkled with my cock in your mouth.” I know she feels me pulsating under her at that juicy memory.

“You were in it for your pleasure as much as mine, Rosy girl. You swallowed me whole and let me come down your throat because you wanted to.” She is fisting the lapels of my jacket, using them for leverage. “You felt powerful. You felt like the fucking Goddess that you are. You never looked at your bland Ken doll the way you looked at me tonight.”

Rose pulls her full bottom lip into her mouth. She is trying to find the words to contradict me but can’t. Her fiery mane is an ocean of incandescent waves under the orange flickers of the fire. I can’t wait to lace my fingers in it and use it as reins.

“I will not dignify any of that with an answer. You are a stubborn son of a bitch who will twist anything I say to suit his fucking agenda for the week,” she accuses.

“Silence speaks volumes, buttercup. In this case, it’s a firm and resounding ‘no’.” We are caught in a spell, grinding on each other, having a fucking conversation on our parents’ couch.

“I didn’t say that,” Rose barks back.

I lift my back from the couch to bring my face up to level with hers. “You didn’t have to. I told you: I can spot a fake. The tight pencil skirts and crisp white shirts, that’s fake, Rose. You in a fucking sinful dress with no panties, that is the real you. The real you wants to be eaten out on a bathroom vanity, swallowing back her moans so the people having coffee in the next room won’t hear her.”

Again, silence and a sonorous gulp of confirmation. The living room only holds the crackling of the fire and Rose’s shallow breathing.

“Aren’t you the least bit curious, Rosy girl, what else I can do differently, *better* than Greg?” I am only using the fucker for effect.

“James,” her palms press on my chest as she pushes back, “we can’t do this.”

“We can. And we will.” My index finger runs a line from her chin down to her cleavage, nestling in the glorious wedge where her breasts meet.

“Don’t, Archer.” There it is, submission.

“Tell me to stop, Rose. I told you before, tell me to stop and I will.” Her lip is still trapped by her teeth. She is not the only one having trouble holding on to composure. I have gotten myself completely worked up. I need her now. She releases her lip, and I can’t help myself. My mouth is on hers with a hunger that catches me off guard.

Fuck. When my lips touch hers, my whole body feels it. An electric current so strong it makes my chest jolt into hers. Her lips are warm and just as eager as mine. I use my hold on either side of her neck to move her head slightly backwards and bring the kiss to a new level. I dip my tongue into her mouth ravenously. It wants to taste her, to consume her. I want her to swallow my air and use it as her fuel.

“Undo my pants, Rose. Now.” I leave no room for doubt. This is an order she has to obey. I expect to see hesitation, but she surprises me once more, and with perfectly steady fingers, opens my belt, button and zipper. She stops. She is waiting for

me to tell her what to do next. Fuck. She is so perfect, and she has no clue.

“Pull my cock out, baby.” She slides a bit backwards so she can wrap her fingers around me, and she sets me free. Her fingers wrap around my stiff shaft and hold it steadily. Her pools of azure are set on mine, unwavering. “You are such a perfect little girl for Daddy, aren’t you? Doing exactly as you are told.” I am holding on by a thread, my voice comes out deep and raspy.

“Your pretty pussy knows exactly what it wants, Rose. It wants to swallow me whole. You are going to do as your pussy wants. Lift your ass and let it have me.” There is no hesitation. Rose doesn’t say a word, she doesn’t cower, she doesn’t run. She grabs my cock at the base and runs it up and down her slit, coating it with all her desire. I can still taste it on my tongue.

“Fuck, Rose.” My body slumps back into the couch, she looks like a nymph. Her beauty has no place in this world. The tip of my cock is at her entrance, she is grabbing it with her full fist, making sure it stays where she wants it, as she sinks down onto me.

“Jesus Christ.” Religion has no hold on me, but this is a religious experience, so close to heaven I might have just sprouted some damn wings. My imagination did her glorious pussy no fucking justice. Her tight, wet walls offer the perfect amount of resistance as I stretch her and watch her whimper in a mix of pleasure and pain. “Such a good fucking girl.” My palm lifts to slap the side of her thigh. Rose jolts at the light sting, the fire in her eyes burns brighter. She pushes on her knees and lifts her weight off me and drops back, in one move. “Ahh,” I grunt my ecstasy.

“Is this what you want?” She pulls out and drops again, “Or would you rather I did it slowly?” The self-satisfaction on her face tells me mine is full of wonder. Rose’s pussy releases me once more, except this time her descent is painfully slow. She is making me aware of her inch by inch. “Fast or slow, Daddy?”

Fuck. I could hear my restraint snapping the moment she used that five-letter word. I don't reply, my mouth is on hers as her only answer, and my hips begin to lift off the couch. I am topping her from the bottom, holding her firmly in place with my hands on her neck.

Rose matches my rhythm, we are fucking hard, running after our ever-growing desire. On our parents' couch.

I suck her tongue into my mouth and steal a moan from her throat, feeding her my words. "This is who you are, Rose. A fucking sex Goddess." Her head falls back, putting her neck on full display for me. A damn canvas for me to put my mark on just like I did on her bare, silky-smooth pussy. I bring my mouth to it and trail my tongue all the way to her ear. I kiss my way down her jaw and suck her alabaster skin into my mouth. I use my lips, and finally my teeth to mark her.

The motion only makes Rose speed up, she is riding me, fully in control of her pleasure and mine. Fuck.

I settle my hands on her hip bones and help her maintain the pace. "I want you to take me inside, Rose. I want to fill you with my cum." I will pull out if I fucking have to but a part of me will die a little. I know she heard me, her eyes are on me now. "I want you to come on my cock, and then I'm going to coat your pussy with my cum, Rose. Do you want me to?" There is one answer that will make me lose my mind and she knows it.

"Yes, Daddy." That's it. I'm done for.

I hold on tight to her waist and thrust my hips right into her. Rose's body is convulsing on top of mine, she is riding out this magical fucking high she made us reach. The sound of her blissful moans are as melodic as a fucking symphony. *Beethoven who?* We fit together even in this messed up scenario. We are still dressed, holding on to each other for dear life, unable to catch our breaths for a few minutes.

Rose sits up first. "Happy now? You got what you wanted." Her bitter tone makes me hold her in place, still impaled on my cock.

“Where do you think you’re going?”

“We are done here, aren’t we? You proved your point, whatever it was. You made me come.” This makes less sense to me than anything she has said up until now.

“You think we are done? After that?”

“Twice in one night is plenty, Archer. Don’t flatter yourself. Multiple orgasms are a myth.” I have to make a conscious effort to keep my jaw from dropping.

“Unicorns and leprechauns are a myth, Rose. I always knew your ex,” I can’t bring myself to say his name again, “was a fucking selfish prick.”

The need to prove her wrong and best her ex is all my cock needs to come back to life.

“On your knees on the couch, Rosy girl. Grab on to the back.” She does as she’s told. I’m moving fast, before her fucking thoughts thwart my plans. I lift the satin fabric of her dress and bunch it around her waist. Her ass is begging for a spanking, but it’ll have to wait.

Before taking off my jacket, I pull out the handkerchief I reluctantly let Mom stuff in my pocket.

“Pleasure is about relinquishing control, buttercup. It’s about trusting someone else enough to put them in charge of your body.” I slide the corner of the handkerchief over her shoulder, making her shiver. “You will trust that I will read your body and respect your boundaries.”

I ball up the fabric with my fingers and push inside her mouth. Rose’s eyes are wide but there is nothing but expectation in them. “You trust me to do that, baby?” She nods yes.

“As far as I’m concerned,” I take my jacket off, and undo my tie. If I was home, I wouldn’t have to improvise, but this will work just fine, “your pleasure is my fucking duty. Your pussy is capable of so much more.” I hold the red tie above her back and let it tickle her as I graze her skin with it.

“Your body is the means to our end, Rose. We are going to put it to the test, okay?” I wrap my tie around her neck and pull. The amount of pressure is only meant to enhance. “I will not hurt you. Do you trust me?” Another nod.

“You are fucking perfect,” I compliment her and see her react to it. Her ass perks up for me in response almost inviting me in with fucking neon signs. Fuck.

Her pussy is wet and glistening, both our releases mixing and making her more than ready to take me. In one go I’m back inside her, balls deep. Rose arches her back, but my makeshift gag stops her scream. She pushes into me, setting the pace and I let her. My hands are fisting the tie around her neck and her ginger locks, I’m fucking her with all I have.

“Just like that, that’s my dirty little slut,” the word was out before I could filter it, Rose’s only reaction is to slam her ass into my thighs. “Fuck, Rose. Ahh.”

Her knuckles on the back of the couch are white, it is not taking either one of us long to reach our climax. I have never felt anything like this before, I’ve never been able to get hard so fast after coming, never mind come twice in a row like this. I don’t know who is in control. I think on some level we both are.

I can feel her walls fluttering around me, sucking me in and milking me tight. “Oh my God, Rosy, so fucking good.” I let go of her hair and bring my hand to rub her clit as I slightly tighten the fabric around her neck. Her face is turning red, but she is meeting my intensity at every step. “Are you ready to come, for Daddy?” Her face drops and hides into the couch. I pinch her clit.

“I want you to come for Daddy, Rose. Now.” I pull on my tie and thrust into her as deeply as I can. She spits out the handkerchief in a scream of rapture that will forever be my pride and joy. I let go of the tie as she lets go of her inhibitions, moaning in waves in sync with each spasm of her orgasm.

“Fucking perfect, baby.”

I am right there with her. This time I pull out, I want to cover her perfect ass with my cum. “Aahhhh, fuck!” White spurts of my release land on her. My grunting is primal while I continue to jerk my cock with my hand.

I let go of my hold on her neck and then spread my cum over her butt-cheeks, watching it slide towards her swollen pussy lips. We are both visibly shaking, but I have a point to make. “Not a myth, Rose. Pleasure is not a myth.”

OceanofPDF.com

Chapter Four

Rose

I'm sore.

I feel a constant ache between my legs but the mere recall of why I'm aching, has me throbbing and moistening again.

I caved with little to no resistance last night, but I'm blaming that on the naked, dark and handsome stud laying behind me.

James has his arm around my naked waist, pulling me to him every time I try to move away. He's sleeping deeply, yet still very much aware that he's not alone. In this tiny bed, a badly calculated turn could send one of us flying to the ground.

He must have brought me up because I don't remember leaving the couch. I'm naked and clean down there, so he must have done that too. I'm surprised. All of that isn't lust driven, it's not a hot-headed spur of the moment thing. It shows something more than I'm willing to admit James is capable of.

He grips me tighter, and rests his leg over mine, snuggling his soft cock further between my butt-cheeks, caging me in his warm embrace in the process. He's bigger than I am; I'm cocooned in an unlikely blanket of muscles, sun-kissed tattooed skin, and dark hair.

I blame him.

My conscience needs an outlet, so I'm blaming him. His possessive, dominant assault on my reluctance. His truthful words and unshakable reasoning had me at *Rosy girl*.

My conscience is clear because I found a scapegoat.

My soul? I might as well have sold it to the devil. My body on the other hand? It willingly stayed behind to reap all the benefits.

James played it like an instrument he had total control over. As if he had been doing it for years. I have never, *never*, come more than once, sometimes, even that is an achievement. I am still astounded by how, on his first try, he managed to pull all of those orgasms from me. I was sure that kind of thing only happened in books.

But here it is, that dull, pleasurable ache between my legs, begging to differ.

I'm not quite sure why I'm wrapped in him, sleeping in his teenage-sized bed, in a bedroom I've hardly ever been in. It's a mirror image of mine, so different and yet so familiar.

I see him in every detail, in every vintage car poster, in every car model he spent hours painstakingly building and painting, only to have it locked up in his room for no one else to see. I see him in the features of a man staring at me through a picture frame strategically positioned on his bookshelf to watch over his bed. His father.

Archer versus Valentine. We aren't the same. Our history is different, but the pain is probably equal.

His father died at war. A Purple Heart recipient who, like so many others, never came back. He was James' hero, and it took him a great deal of time to understand that my father wasn't bidding on taking his place.

I know this because I felt the same way, even if my mother was less than stellar. Less of a hero. Less of a good memory. I had always nurtured the idea of seeing her coming back, running up the front lawn to hug me and beg for forgiveness. It never happened. Even with me changing myself into the image of the perfect daughter I thought she wanted. The one that could have made her stay. The one James called fake.

I feel his lips pressing against my bare shoulder's skin, sending goosebumps all over my extremely sensitive body. "Good morning, beautiful."

His rough and raspy morning voice is a sexy tune I find myself wanting to hear more often. My mind is clear and at

ease and somehow all this feels right. *He* feels so goddamn right it hurts to think about.

“Good morning, Archer.” I turn my face back to look at him, earning myself a little peck on the nose. “What am I doing in your room?”

James squeezes me tighter, stretching at the same time. His hips push forward while his cock responds to its cushioned nook. I feel him grow there, the pressure and hardness making me tingle in all the right places.

“I wouldn’t let you sleep on the couch after last night, buttercup.” His smirk is wide and proud. There’s always confidence in his eyes, but today I see much more than the cocky, asstwat attitude he normally displays.

If I recall correctly, it was his confidence that drew me to him all those years ago when I saw him strutting into school as if he owned the place, even though it was the first time he ever sat foot in it. In the middle of the school year on top of all things.

James was the new kid on the block. The too-sexy-for-my-shirt, I-own-this-high-horse, you-should-all-kiss-the-ground-I-walk-on, new kid.

I noticed him as soon as he was on school grounds. Fuck, it was hard not to. James Archer is the kind of man who turns heads everywhere he goes, for his looks *and* for his strong, unapologetic presence.

He noticed me too, for a couple of days there we danced around our mutual attraction from afar. It was a blossoming fire that grew hotter with each passing day. One of those days, he cornered me against my locker, just like they do in movies – the big bad boy and the innocent little girl.

His deep, already manly voice melted me right on the spot. “*Here’s the deal, buttercup. I see you walking around pretending not to notice me. It isn’t working for me. So, I can pretend all I want is for you to let me carry your ridiculously large bag, or I tell you exactly what I’m after and you tell me if you’re interested.*”

That was the first time he called me that, and it stuck, only because he knew, just as well as I did, what it represented, not to mention how much it got under my skin.

I mean, I was fifteen and full of dreams. James starred in all of them back then. I felt powerful to be the one who held the attention of the most wanted guy at school. But too soon, the power trip was over, smashed to smithereens together with any cordiality between James and me – my father introduced me to his new girlfriend and her SON.

Talk about a cold shower.

After that, it was nothing but drought season until late in college. An ugly duckling in a sea poised, perfect, sexy teenage swans. It didn't quite help in the sexual development department.

“What have I lost you to?” Again, that same sultry voice pulls me back to the present. He's the same guy, but I'm seeing him in a whole new, different light. It terrifies me.

“Nothing. I'm right here.”

“Hmm, I can feel you are.” His warm, calloused hand trails up my arm and sets on my shoulder, massaging vigorously, descending all the way to my lower back before following the path of my curves, down my hip, finally settling between my legs, just above my knees. It's suggestive enough, not that his now hard shaft didn't give away his intentions.

“James, I think my body needs to rest. Last night was intense. I'm not used to so much.”

“Well, by now we've established that selfish fuck didn't know what he was doing.” His lips are on my ear now, injecting his next words straight into my brain, while his fingers push them into my pussy, “but you must have tried with toys. I would kill to get the *only* front row seat to that show.”

I fall silent again, not quite ready to admit to anything that I know he'll hang onto and taunt me with.

“Seriously?” He almost chuckles, but disbelief is clear in his undertone. “You've *never* tried it? Do you at least own

one?”

My almost imperceptible gestured ‘no’ is enough of an answer.

“I can’t say I’m surprised you never used a toy with Greg. It takes a self-assured man to truly distinguish enemies from allies and not be threatened by their power. That just makes my point. Selfish fuck.” James is out of bed before I can blink.

“Where are you going?”

“Get dressed. We’re starting your education today.”

“And you intend to go like that?” I point at his erection as I eye him over. It’s the first time I’ve seen him fully naked. His tattooed, bronze skin is perfect and smooth. A trail of dark hair leads the path to temptation, and it’s standing tall just for me. His muscles are tight and toned, the prominent v-line is enough for a visual orgasm.

He’s eye candy of the finest kind. If eye diabetes was a thing, you could catch it just by staring for too long.

“You can make it up to me later. Now get that sexy ass out of bed, Valentine.”



I’m holding something in my hand I never, in a million years, thought I would. I’m blushing and tingling between my legs as I twist it around, pretending to analyze the package when in reality I’m imagining how it would fit. Three different size butt plugs, with a tacky diamond on the flared bottom.

“Would you like to try that?” I can sense the arousal in James’ deep-toned voice. He’s been lightly but suggestively touching me since we entered the sex shop. He’s pressed against me now, lips on my neck, delivering torturous pecks with a bit of tongue right below my ear. I can feel the whole length of his toned body fitting perfectly behind mine.

He’s allowing me to roam the place without pressure, letting me choose what catches my eye and interest. I give him

a small smile and place the package back on the shelf. James snatches it right back. “No shaming, *Rosy girl*. We’re taking this.”

“Archer...” That was supposed to come out as a caveat, instead it was a breathy exclamation holding nothing but expectation. The truth, if we want to keep it simple.

“I can’t wait to fuck that perfect ass of yours, Valentine. Will you be a good girl and let me?” His hips are grinding into me, his semi-clear on my butt, while his earlier hard-on is even clearer in my mind.

Fuck me. Ass play has never featured in my fantasies, I’m not even sure Greg was into that. Now though, as it’s less of a fantasy and more of an upcoming reality, I can’t help but feel the excitement straight on my clit.

James’ hand connects hard with my ass. The sting of his smack intensifies the flood in my panties, making me release a low gasp that neither my lips nor my shock could contain.

“You didn’t answer me, *Rosy girl*.”

“Yes, Daddy.”

“Mr. Archer.” A lady, probably in her late forties, calls from behind us. I bet she just saw the whole show. “So glad to see you here again. What can I help you with today?” I look at James in disbelief. This woman knows who he is!

“Good morning, Miss Angeline. We’re shopping for a beginner. Any good recommendations?” There’s no hesitation or shame in his voice, grandly contrasting with the blush I’ve been sporting since I realized where he was taking me. *That* just turned fifty shades darker.

“Apart from the normal, vibrators, dildos,” she replied while ushering us to follow her, “I would definitely get this. It will make your soul leave your body, honey.” She placed a box in my hand, with an image of a silicone, hand-sized red rose. It looks like a candle of some sort. “It doesn’t look like much, but it will have you screaming out for Jesus before you can say Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious. The rain will not stay in the plane, if you know what I mean.”

My reaction is to stare at nothing. I'm dumbfounded. James's handsome face comes into focus, eyebrows raised in question. "I just... a Disney reference in a sex shop. Top of the list of things I thought I'd never get to experience."

He snickers. "It's a whole new world for you and me, Rose." I have to snort out a laugh. James is back to educated shopper mode.

"Miss Angeline, the rose? Done. Can we get the 'Discover gift box' as well?"

"What's that?" I whisper into James' ear, pulling on his shirt like a little girl.

"It just has a little bit of everything in it. Oh, and Miss Angeline, whatever is missing, just throw it in there and put it on my tab."

"You have a tab?"

"I like being prepared." Images of other women being pleased by his tongue, his cock, his smooth, pussy-teasing words, and these toys, flood my sight and make me feel uneasy. What did I expect? Chastity? Restraint? That's not James Archer. But I damn well didn't expect him to have a tab at a fucking sex shop.

It's just sex. Enjoy it and move on.

I talk myself out of the pit and plaster a smile on my face, mentally listing how different James is from Greg, and how much that is exactly what I need right now as a distraction. The trunk of his precious Mustang is full of them too. James went all out on this shopping spree. I'll pay him back every dime once he gets billed.

We grab some lunch, before leaving the city. Thankfully, James keeps his hands to himself while we are out, probably knowing whatever this was between us, had no place out in the world.

To my surprise, he takes the long way home. Smaller and more deserted roads.

“Fucking snow.” James snorts in a low exasperated exhale. I’ve never understood why he hates it so much. Probably because he can’t speed like a maniac.

I’m lost in my thoughts as I watch the snowflakes slowly falling on the wintry landscape as we pass it by, painting it a lighter shade of white. I’m concentrating on my box ticking game, starting to come down from my heated breakup yesterday. It’s hard to find a man who checks them all. Greg did. On paper.

Sex was just sex, right? After a couple of months, the fire dies. Even if paired with a sex God, I’d be right back to where I was with Greg in no time.

All this with James doesn’t account for real life in the equation. There’s a bubble of fantasy around it, or maybe even a wall that splits whatever it is from reality.

That’s what makes it so appealing.

“How many pearls is fuckface clutching in that little head of yours right now?” James’ hand lands on my thigh, gripping possessively.

“All of them.” I chuckle, not restraining the honesty. “I am too, a little. I’m a late bloomer, if we put it politely.”

“Or maybe the stick up Greg’s ass gets in the way of your wild spirit” His hand moves up, tucking his pinky in the crease between my thigh and my hip.

“Wild spirit? Have you met me, James?”

“I have. And it’s been my pleasure to get to know you more... intimately.” Smooth bastard. “You are different when you let yourself go. When you ditch the fake, straight act and actually are yourself.”

“Oh, is that right?”

“For damn sure. Uptight Rose who tries to be accommodating of everyone else’s opinion, who lives by a fucking book of rules no one gives a fuck about, wouldn’t suck me off while I drive us home.” I raise my eyebrow in

contempt. He just straight up insulted me to my face, and all I retained was ‘suck me off’. “But *Rosy girl* will, won’t she?”

He grips my thigh tighter, waiting for my reply, but I’m waiting for that dominating tone and the command to go with it. As expected, it soon follows.

“Pull my cock out, Rose. Now. I want those lips wrapped around me.”

I do as I’m told, he is hard as a rock. I’m surprised to, yet again, find myself throbbing in anticipation. I’ve never taken as much pleasure in this as I do with him. I eagerly take him deep into my mouth, moaning as his hard shaft connects with my tongue.

“Oh goddamn, Rosy.” He’s pressing my head down, knotting his fingers in my hair as I bob up and down his glorious dick. “That dirty mouth of yours is just so hungry for me, isn’t it?”

His fist is full of fire-colored locks, the slight pain drawing another cock-filled-mouth moan as he coaches me to his will. I’m going faster now as James pulls and pushes, just before he holds me down.

“You’re going to swallow me again, Rosy.”

I’m pulsing just as much as he is, desperate to get home and have him all over me again. Fuck the soreness. Fuck the restriction and conventions. I want him to have me. I can almost feel him sinking inside me.

I moan again and take him deeper and down my throat. James groans as I gag, but I’m so turned on it’s not even an issue.

“Fuck, Rose. Deeper. Just like that.” I gag again when I bring him out and in once more. “Oh fuck... yes. I’m coming down your throat.” My pussy is clenching on nothing, my hand is pressing down on my clit before I notice. “That’s it. Drink me down, I’m coming now. Fuckkkk.”

He holds my head in place as he comes down my throat, and I take it until the last damn drop. James tugs on my hair and pulls me up before pulling me to him, kissing me like he

never has before. His tongue swirls around mine, possessively taking my breath away.

“Jesus fucking Christ, Rose. That was incredible,” James praises me, and I swell with pride. “Got you turned on too.” He motions to my fingers still firmly planted on my sex.

He speeds the last couple of miles, despite the snow, but I feel safe with him behind the wheel. He makes me feel safe. He parks on the driveway and darts out the car, taking our bags from the trunk and hurrying me inside.

“Run upstairs, I want you naked, and on your bed before I get there. It’s about time that frigid cove of yours got some action.” He sends me off with a smack on my ass, and I eagerly do as I’m told.

Soon after, James walks in my room to find me exactly as he demanded. He’s wearing nothing but his tight briefs, just like a God-sent gift. The tie he wore yesterday tangled around his hands. He’s sinful all around, and I’m feeling eager to dabble in profanity. I spread my legs to him, anxious to have him exactly where I need him.

“That’s about the best view I’ve ever seen,” he praises me while getting on his knees. He grabs me by the butt, and yanks me to the edge of the bed, licking me from bottom to top as soon as my ass is dangling off the edge.

“Oh God,” I moan my appreciation. His tongue is flat on my lips, making me feel every little erected taste bud on it. I fist the sheet beside me as he continues his oral-genius assault, the build up since the sex-shop proving to be more enticing than I had initially thought.

To my dismay, James stops and pulls back. He’s shuffling through the bag he brought with him, when he finds what he was looking for, he takes my hand and places the red rose in my palm.

“A rose for a Rose.” He smiles devilishly and presses the ‘on’ button. “Put it on your clit, Rosy girl. Show Daddy how you like it.”

I place the top opening on my clit and I'm immediately thrust into a different dimension. Fuck, this is a small, soul-sucking, powerful toy. My heart is racing in my ears so hard I think it's going to burst free from my chest. It's there for just a couple of seconds and I can't even manage to open my eyes anymore.

"Easy, baby." I'm a panting, moaning mess. If James hadn't pulled the rose back, I would have come already. "Such a greedy little girl. Leave some for me too."

He ducks his head between my thighs again, and eats me away, alternating between his tongue and the rose. I've lost all coherent thoughts or words. I can't steady my breathing or stop my hips from thrusting into him. I'm more than ready to come, but James is adamant on denying me each time I'm close.

"What makes it easy to deepthroat, Rosy?" Fuck if I know. He could call me Sharon right now and I wouldn't be able to tell the difference.

"What? I huh, I..."

"Turn around, get on your hands and knees." I huff and roll my eyes in frustration, but comply. My body is literally quivering with pleasure denial, and he's still not caving.

James lands a hard smack on my ass, my pussy contracting upon impact. "That's what you get for being a brat. Now sit back on your feet until you feel my cock on your dripping pussy."

James is sitting behind me, back leaning against the headboard, pulling my ass cheeks until my lips are snuggling his hard shaft.

"It's arousal, Rosy. That's what makes it easy to deepthroat. Just like it will make it easy for you to take this plug in this sexy as fuck ass of yours." James is spreading my wetness all over my pussy and ass with his dick. His tip is threatening to enter me, but never does. It glides straight past and smears my arousal all around. He has his hand flat on my

ass, his thumb drawing circles on my virgin hole, preparing me for what's to come.

“This is about letting go, Rosy girl. Do you trust me?” I know the answer he's searching for, but more than that, I know the answer I want to give him.

“Yes, Daddy.” He holds me on him and places the red tie over my eyes.

“Relax, baby. Tell me to stop if you want me to, and I will without questions.” The chill of the lube he's spreading hits me right as the smell of strawberries does. Again, he uses his dick to spread it, penetrating me with just enough to drive me insane, following suit with the tip of his thumb. It feels strange but not bad. At all.

I hear him squeezing the lube tube again, but don't feel anything. James runs the cold hard tip of what I can only imagine to be the butt plugs he insisted on buying, up and down my anus, teasing me with it too. I'm thrusting up and down his shaft now, the feel of it grazing my pussy and clit is damn near heavenly.

“Are you horny enough? Hum? Can you take this in your sexy ass?”

“Oh God, yes Daddy!” I hear my voice, surprised by the conviction and desire in it.

He applies light pressure, and slowly starts inserting it into me. I wince at the intrusion but don't stop him. It's a strange, slightly burning sensation, but I actually find myself liking it. He flicks my clit with his other hand, helping me to relax again, my arousal working as the perfect anesthetic.

“You're such a good girl, aren't you. So eager to please Daddy.”

I'm humming in contentment, and soon enough the plug is in, just that little sparkling, diamond tail peeping.

“That's so fucking hot, Rosy girl. How do you feel?”

“Good. It's strange but it's okay.”

“Do you think you can take me in your pussy too?” I’m high on the imagery of it all. I don’t hesitate to nod in confirmation.

James gets up on his knees and grabs the rose again and places it in my hand. It’s already turned on and ready to go. Just. Like. Me.

“You know where to put that. Let’s see how many you can take.” He challenges me. I’m overflowing with lust and unadulterated pleasure. I can’t wait to feel James inside me too. How good will that feel?

James inches inside me, slowly but steadily, filling me to the hilt. I’ve never known such pleasure and bliss. James is gifting me bright new colors to offset my monochromatic life. My heart is in a frenzy, unstably beating against my ribcage. I hear myself and doubt those sounds are mine.

“Fuck you’re even tighter like this. Put that rose on your pussy, Rosy girl. Come on my cock like I know you want to.”

“Oh God!”

“I’m not him, but I’m just as inevitable.”

I place the petaled devil back on my clit, my sky is raining shooting stars almost immediately.

James fiddles with the plug on my ass, and thrusts in, as deep as he can go. My moan is caught in my throat, and there’s nothing but silence as all my muscles clench in spasm. I need a trigger to tip over the edge, and when James pulls out and buries himself balls deep in me again, pressing and releasing the diamond end of the plug, my moan vocalizes my pleasure. A long throaty scream of bliss that lasts forever leaves my lips until I’m breathless.

I fall on the bed with James on top of me, my knees and arms giving out from the intensity of my orgasm.

I am in delirium.

My eyes are still closed shut, despite the blindfold, reveling in the aftermath of the most intense orgasm I’ve ever

had. I can just feel the grin on James lips, his labored breaths fanning my face as he clears my hair away from my cheeks.

“That’s Daddy’s little girl. Now let me fuck you to oblivion again.”

OceanofPDF.com

Chapter Five

James

“You little cheat!” Rose turns around sporting a smile worthy of the Cheshire Cat.

“Am not!” She lands her hand on her chest in mock outrage. “You just suck.” Fuck if her sassy attitude doesn’t go straight to my crotch. I am having to try harder than I should to keep my cock soft after an entire afternoon of toys, games and divine debauchery.

We have been at the local watering hole for close to an hour. They have truly outdone themselves with the decorations ahead of the holiday. It is an awful yet comical display of over the top, bad taste.

Heart-shaped helium balloons aimlessly drift against the ceiling. Pink, red and white streamers line the walls, a Cupid and arrow banner hangs above the bar. All the normal lightbulbs have been switched out for the occasion. The stand-ins provide a lovely red hue that is forcing every single attendee to embrace their inner Rudolph, whether they want to or not.

Originally, I planned to get Rose away from here. Somewhere fancier, with the sole purpose of getting her in a dress as sexy as the one we so thoroughly enjoyed last night.

Karmically enough, my fib on snow disrupting transportation came back to bite me and ruin that idea, leaving me with the bar we used to come to as kids as the only alternative.

I came here often. Theoretically, I needed ID to get served, but not having one never kept me from trying. And succeeding. I could grow a very decent beard at seventeen, and perfected the cheeky smile to go alongside it.

Even as a teenager, I was unapologetic about my aspirations, big or small. Now or then, when I want something, I make it happen. Being the new kid — the army brat — in

every school I ever went to, taught me to use my innate charm to navigate new surroundings and make them work for me.

‘Honey, not vinegar, son.’ My father kept his advice on fitting in nice and simple, he was a master in the art of ‘bite-sized wisdom’.

Honey, not vinegar. It’s worked very well for me.

“You can’t smooth-talk the dart, Jay. This is about aim and skill.” Rose is glowing, she has that well-fucked aura going for her. As much as I wanted to see her in another skin-tight dress that left nothing to the imagination, the leggings and off the shoulder sweater she is casually wearing are working a similar kind of magic. Not by what they are showing, it is what I know they are hiding that has me on fucking edge.

“I think you’ll agree that my aim and skill are on point, Valentine.” I make sure to keep my eyes on her. “Can you even keep track of how many times I’ve made you come in the last twenty-four hours?”

I am sure she is blushing, but since we are all looking permanently cherry-faced, I miss out on the spoils of my teasing.

“Cut that out,” she reprimands me, “not here, not in public.” Rose yanks the dart I am holding out of my hand, whipping around, and heading over to the board to pull out the three she landed on triple twenty.

I have a perfect view of her tight, round ass. Fuck, images of this afternoon come flooding in. I walk after her. My hand acts on its own, who can blame it. It lands a hard smack on her bottom. Despite the shocked gasp that escapes her, Rose ignores me, she doesn’t even turn around. Unacceptable.

I stand behind her, set my hands on her hips, and pull her backwards, slamming her ass into my crotch. The music is loud enough only I hear the breathy moan she can’t keep contained. We are facing the dartboard, which conveniently hangs on the back wall of the bar.

I move my right hand from her hip and grab a firm hold of her neck, tight enough I can feel her pulse raising beneath my fingers. My lips graze her ear. Rose fights my hold, inadvertently pressing her ass into me. I make sure she knows I am once again hard for her.

“You do *not* walk away from me, Rose.” My hand slides down her chest, between her tits, palm open as I explore further, sinking my fingers right into her black leggings.

“Not here, Jay,” she counters but stops moving. Her words sting. She’s ruled by other people’s opinions and expectations.

Honey, not vinegar.

“If your sassy little mouth won’t agree with me, I am fucking sure this wet pussy of yours will.”

I slide my fingers under her panties, ready to dive right into the—

“Jimmy? Jimmy Archer?”

Fuck. I recognize the voice. Only people from high school call me that. I pull my hand out, thanking the tacky asshole who decided on the red lightbulbs, which will hopefully help me conceal my hard-on. I wipe the frustration off my face and plaster on a smile before greeting my old classmate.

“It is you!”

“Yeah, it is.” I give Andrew Palmer a hand, he pulls me in for an awkward bro hug. I make sure to keep my hips completely out of the equation. We don’t want to get reacquainted quite so intimately. Rose stays back. She knows who Andrew is, but back in school we didn’t exactly hang out with the same crowd.

“In town for the weekend?” Andrew wonders, shamelessly trying to steal a glance at the redhead behind me.

“The whole week. House-sitting for the folks. How’ve you been, man?” I hit him with a standard question, which he completely ignores.

“Hey there, Rose. Nice to see you.” He accompanies his greeting with a lame finger wave.

“Hi, Palmer. Yeah, nice to see you too.” Her tone is polite but disinterested.

“I haven’t seen you around here in years. You also staying at your parents’?” He asks Rose. *Is this dick flirting with her? I don’t fucking think so.* I answer for her.

“Yes, we both are.” I nip this whole line of questioning in the bud. “How’s Milly and the kids?” That’s right, Andy, what’s your ball and chain up to?

“Oh, she should be getting here any minute. She just took the kids to her mother’s, so we could have the weekend off. Valentine’s and all.” Andrew’s face lights up at the mention of his wife, and the prospect of date night with her. I guess I read his intentions wrong. I never talk to an attractive woman without an ulterior motive...

“Milly’ll be happy to see you, Jimmy.”

I give him one nod in response. Andrew doesn’t need to know that I fucked his wife back in the day before they got together senior year.

Rose snorts next to me. “I’m going to get another beer. Do you gentlemen,” she makes a point to look at me when she says that, “want anything?”

“Nothing for me, thanks, I’ll wait till Milly gets here.”
Fucking pussy-whipped much?

“James?” Back to James it is.

“Another beer.”

“Please,” she corrects me.

“Please, *Rosy girl.*” She doesn’t acknowledge my taunt, simply stomps off in silent protest. I’ll get her back. She’ll be the one yelling please later at the top of her lungs. I watch her reach the bar and take a seat.

“So what’s her status, Jimmy? She single?” Andrew gets my attention.

“Isn’t your *wife* almost here, Palmer?” I answer him in the same hushed tone infused with a lot more aggression.

“What? No! Not for me, for Derek.” Fuck, that’s even worse. Andrew’s younger brother is a good-for-nothing, freeloader, basement-dweller with gaming problems.

“No. Fucking. Way. Rose is *off-limits*, you know that.” If he forgot, I’ll gladly remind him. I drink the rest of my beer in one go, turning my back on him and throwing the darts at the board, one after the other.

“Some things never change, huh? Still cock-blocking her any chance you get?”

“Shut it, Andy.” I don’t look at him, I go to retrieve my darts.

“Rose is not a shy, little freshman anymore, James. She’s a grown-ass woman. Pretty sure she can take care of herself.” Andrew grabs the other set of darts from the table. Two twenties and a one.

“The Rose ban includes talking about her ass, Palmer.” My voice gets so low, it’s a growl. My darts fly like javelins towards their destination. Fuck. Only two stay on the board, one hits the rim and flies in the opposite direction upon impact. Two threes? Crap.

Andrew shows me his raised palms in defeat. “The Rose ban. I forgot you even had a name for it.” He’s keeping his face neutral, the condescending smile in his voice is plain to hear, though. His turn. Two double twenties and bullseye.

“Easier to remember that way. It worked like a fucking charm, too,” I reply. I am smiling at the memory, even though Palmer is killing me at the game.

I had fucking good reasons to keep the fuckers we went to high school with in line. There was no way in hell I was going to suffer through any of them bragging about ‘hitting that’ in the locker rooms. They were going to keep their tiny teenage dicks away from Rose or lose them.

I look over at the bar, she’s taking a long time for just two beers.

Pain I am not expecting makes me wince. The darts I am holding in my hand jab into it. Rose is talking to some fucking loser in a red silk shirt. She playfully swats at him with a smile, then pulls her hair to one side of her neck, leaving it exposed. The jackass leans in and says something close to her ear.

I walk past Andy, leaving him to stare at my back as I stalk over to the bar. I have a good mind to grab the asshole from his greasy locks and send him flying against the nearest wall. Fuck, I probably wouldn't be able to grab a hold of him with the amount of gunk in his hair.

Honey, not vinegar.

I stop on the spot, taking a deep breath in an effort to cool my hot head. I come to the conclusion that it is better to play it smart. I stay within earshot, behind the corner of the bar, with Rose facing the other way.

I will use this to accommodate my plans for the evening — whatever intel I gather I can use *against* her once we get home. We still have plenty of toys we haven't broken in yet.

“Wow, coulda fool me. You two seemed really *close*,” Greaseball McFakeTan tells Rose.

“The guy in the black shirt? Hell no! No, he's *not* my boyfriend. He's just my annoying older brother,” Rose tells him in a tone dripping with aversion. It's a fucking gut punch. I'm not sure why I am feeling it in my chest. “He's touchy-feely, is all.” She lays her hand on his to bring her point home.

“I'll say.” He leans in again as he replies. My heart stops pumping blood, replacing it with bitter, irrational rage. “Not that I'm mad about it. This way, I can buy you that beer.” Rose is taking a sip as he drops his fucking lame pick-up line. The bastard is staring right at her lips.

I have heard enough. I have fucking had enough. I go back to our table, grab Rose's shit, and leave Andrew with his mouth hanging open. I don't even say goodbye. I reach the bar in seconds, this time I make fucking sure they see me coming.

“We are leaving,” I announce, leaving absolutely no wiggle room for argument. Rose and lover boy both turn to look at me. He looks intimidated. Fucking right, squirm away Jersey Shore, or I’ll rip that fake fucking diamond earring clear off.

Sister dearest knows better than to try me right now, I shove her coat and purse in her hands and walk out. She better be in the car in five seconds if she doesn’t feel like trekking home in the goddamn snow.

I am already revving the engine when Rose opens the car door. The instant her ass hits the leather, I hit the gas, slamming her back into the seat. She scrambles to get her seatbelt on.

Good idea, buttercup. Buckle the fuck up.

I hate feeling like this. I hate recognizing what this feeling is. Fuck. Seven years, seven fucking years, I managed to dodge this shit. Only to have Rose hit me with it out of the fucking blue. Rejection.

I break the speed limit and run a couple of lights. The redheaded brat next to me doesn’t even flinch. I took her to the racetrack when we were younger, to mess with her, to push her. If she was afraid of my driving then, she made damn sure to keep it under lock and key. Just like she’s doing right now. She doesn’t say a word, neither do I.

We skid up the driveway and jolt to a stop. I am barely aware of pulling up the hand break. I leave the keys in the ignition. If I stay sitting next to her for a second longer...

I punch in the key code, walk in and slam the front door shut behind me. I’m halfway up the stairs when the door opens and slams a second time.

“Wait a goddamn second, Archer. What the fuck is your problem?”

I stop dead in my tracks. “What the fuck is *my* problem?” I seethe, turning around to face her. “Good. Fucking. Hearing.” Rose’s features let go of her hostility, displaying

confusion instead. I let my feet pound on the stairs as I go back down.

“God. I knew it!” Her voice travels across the foyer as she slams my car keys into the round, mahogany table. “I am such an idiot! The second I lower my guard with you, you are back to being the entitled, arrogant, cryptic asshole you’ve always been.” Rose is pissed, but there is a new edge to her voice. Disappointment.

“No, no. I am just ‘your annoying older brother’.” Rose blanches but recovers quickly. She knows exactly what I mean, but doesn’t give me a fucking inch. She holds her ground. “So what? I can spend the whole fucking afternoon making you come, drenching the sheets on your childhood bed, but when a loser gives you the time of day at the bar, I’m back to being your annoying brother? What gives, buttercup?”

“You think I owe you an explanation? That’s fucking rich. After everything you—” She leaves the sentence hanging in the air, finally dropping her eyes to the ground. “It’s just as well,” she relents. “This sick, twisted thing between us had a shelf-life of twenty-four hours. We’re fucking done!” Her words hit me like a slap.

Rose tries to escape to her room. I’m not even thinking, just like before, my hand’s reflexes one-up my brain and grab a hold of her upper arm. Dry, cynical laughter bubbles up in my throat. “I don’t fucking think so, Valentine. I told you, you do *not* walk away from me.”

“Let. Go. Of. Me.”

I grip her jaw. “I am not fucking done with you!”

She looks me straight in the eye, the fire behind them is still burning, but there is deep hurt there too.

“Why would you do that to me, James?” Rose spits back at me. I have no clue what she means. “Do you realize I grew up thinking I was undesirable? That nobody wanted me?”

“What the fuck are you talking about?”

“The Rose ban?” Fuck. “That’s right, asshole, you’re not the only one with good fucking hearing. So excuse me, if after

I learn you are behind all the shit I went through in high school, it soothes my ego when a man wants to buy me a beer and finds me attractive!”

“Every fucking man finds you attractive, Rose!” I blurt out. I can’t find it in myself to feel any remorse for my past behavior. “That’s the fucking problem!” I grab her by the shoulders, I can feel her agitated breathing on my face.

She scoffs at me, trying to shrug my hands off.

I am a raw wire, pulsing with unstoppable lust, fueled by my need to show Rose how wrong she is about herself. “You want proof?” I hiss at her, grabbing her hand and pushing it into my erection. “Is this fucking proof enough for you?”

The last thing Rose wants is to give in to me, but her body shivers, betraying her. I flip her around to face the table, lace my fingers through her thick hair, and tug, bending her back and her resolve to my will.

I bring my mouth to her ear, making sure to speak clearly despite the desire consuming me. I need Rose Valentine to remember what I’m about to tell her forever.

“I couldn’t bear the thought of those fuckboys laying their filthy hands on you.” I pull on her fiery locks, making her cry out a moan. I know now she likes pain mixed with her pleasure. Rose slams her ass hard into my cock. I groan in response. I like pain mixed with my pleasure too.

“Why?” She gets out through clenched teeth.

“Because!”

“Because why, Archer!”

My need to consume her whole is stronger than even my wrath. I let go of her hair, fist her leggings and pull them down in one go. “Because *I* couldn’t!” I kick her feet open and sink two fingers into her dripping wet pussy and my thumb in her ass. Fuck.

“Ahhh! James, oh my God!” Rose’s upper body falls on the wooden table.

“This is why, Rose! Because I wanted you to scream *my* name, not theirs.” I keep my thumb from moving, feeling her clench around it while my fingers pump in and out of her without mercy. She’s fucking dripping.

“Because *I* wanted to pound into you, *I* wanted to see my cock disappear into you. Feel it spreading you.” Rose’s pussy is already fluttering around my fingers. “Because *I* wanted to ruin you for every other man.” I remove my hand, I don’t want her to come like this. She whimpers at the loss.

Seeing my fingers glistening, coated with her arousal drives me insane. I undo my pants, not even bothering to pull them down. My cock’s so fucking hard it hurts.

“Because, Rose Valentine, because *I* wanted to own you.” I plant my hand between her shoulder blades and hold her down on the table. “Because I wanted, fuck, because I *want* to make you mine.” I make my teenage dreams come true and bury myself inside Rose’s pussy, and it’s like nothing I’ve ever felt before. She rewards me with a scream that resonates and settles in my chest.

I have never admitted the truth I just told her. Fuck. Not even to myself.

Rose holds her bottom lip between her teeth, she’s holding back. “No, Rose. I gave you what you wanted, I told you why, now you give me what *I* want. Let me hear you scream my name. Let me hear that you know how fucking desirable you are.” I don’t stop pounding into her. The foyer table is screeching against the floor with every thrust of my hips.

“Fuck, James!” My name from her lips is a drug. I am fucking high on Rose Valentine. I grab a fistful of her hair and tug firmly with one hand, while the other one leaves finger imprints on her ass.

“Are you ready to come for me, Rosy girl?” I prompt her. She doesn’t reply, so I tighten my grasp and pull again.

“Oh God,” she moans, followed by a string of words that make no sense. Rose lost in pleasure is the fucking most

beautiful thing I have ever seen.

“Are you ready to come, Rose?”

“Fuck, ahhh, yes.”

“Good girl.” I can see her eyes rolling into the back of her head as my balls tighten. I lean my chest into her back, resting my weight on her. “I want you to come with me, Rose, I need you to come with me.” My order is a plea, I need this right now.

“Ahhh, why?” She manages to get out as we both reach our climax with a symphony of moaning and slapping flesh. A mix between a grunt and growl rumbles in my chest as I come inside her perfect pussy.

“Because I need you to be *mine*, Rose. That’s fucking why.”

OceanofPDF.com

Chapter Six

Rose

“Fuck.” I hear James mess with his buckle, his voice amped up by regret. I am splayed over the table in the foyer.

I need you to be mine.

I straighten up, pulling up my leggings. The ache I should be feeling all over my body has burrowed itself deep in my chest.

My breathing hasn't even returned to normal, when I find myself losing my footing. James has me cradled in his strong arms, his heart so close to my ear, I can hear its pace competing with my own. He carries me upstairs without a word, without a look.

The house, that just minutes ago was alive with our panting, moaning and forbidden confessions, has fallen into an uncomfortable, unnatural silence.

We make a left turn at the top of the stairs, I am mentally preparing for the conversation that must follow. James will bring me into his room, and we will hash it out, like we always do.

If nothing else, we can always count on our willingness to fight each other. I keep my eyes closed, gathering all my reasons and building my defense.

A door opens, and I am met with the familiar scent of my room. The smell of detergent from the fresh sheets James put on my bed hours earlier has me opening my eyes.

“James? What—” I can't get out a complete sentence. I am feeling an unfamiliar sense of dread at the thought of him leaving me alone here.

Again, nothing. Not a word, not a glance. He gently sets me on the bed, almost too gently, like he is afraid I will break upon impact. I lie down, I thought we'd go to his room, but

mine will do just fine. I move to the side, making room for him, extending a silent invitation for him to join me, to stay.

A kiss on the forehead, that's it. I see his figure disappear into the bathroom, immediately followed by the sound of a closing door.

The sting of rejection coils around my heart, squeezing it, making it physically hard to breathe.

He left me. He laid his heart out on the line, only to leave me right after.

The darkness of my room is the perfect backdrop for the memories of this evening.

After everything that happened, after admitting he needs me, wants me, after owning my body in the most primal way, James left. This makes no sense, he never backs away from a confrontation.

Did we finally cross a line?

I cling to my covers, trying to find the comfort this room usually brings me. It is familiar, safe, my refuge. All I find are images of James. James coaching me, pushing me, filling me with confidence and desire. I hide under the blankets, trying to escape from the truth staring me in the face — James Archer opened a door, and now he has shut it in my face.

I try to find the anger I should be feeling about what I learned tonight, coming up empty. I *should* be mad at him for being a controlling, sneaky jackass. High school is hard enough without being boycotted. For four years I was looked over, ignored, no matter what I did. It messed with my confidence, with how I saw myself. At some point, I simply told myself it didn't matter. Maybe it started as a defense mechanism, over time, though, it became who I was. I made my peace with being the one girl in school nobody wanted to touch and threw myself into my passion for art.

What would my life have been like if James weren't in it?

I don't like that question. I fucking hate it. I was thinking about what happened thirteen years ago, but the intensity, the

life-altering discoveries of the last two days are front and center.

There is a growing feeling of emptiness spreading through my body. Even the deception in my heart is coming to a stop — is this it? Is this all?

Finally, there it is. Anger.

How dare he? He is just going to leave me here alone to deal with his fucked up confessions? Does he really think he can say all of that, awaken my body like this and walk away?

Rage is a much more familiar emotion when it comes to James, one I know what to do with. I kick off the covers and march towards his room. I don't know what I want to say, I do know I cannot leave things like this. Whatever *this* is.

I turn the doorknob and yank the door open. I am ready to lay into him, to yell at him, but I can't. James is sitting up, his broad, naked back resting against his tufted headboard. He looks lost. It disarms me. Dismantles my anger and has me swallowing my recriminations.

His steely blue irises settle on mine for the space of a second, long enough for me to read confusion and hurt in them.

I walk over to the bed, stopping next to James. The rhythm of his breathing acknowledges my proximity. I don't think, I can't. My fingers look for the bottom hem of my sweater and I pull slowly upwards, taking it off. The small thud of it landing on the carpet has him looking up. I bend my arms behind my back, unclasping my bra, letting it fall at my feet. My leggings follow.

James meets my gaze now, there is an unspoken question in his features.

What are you doing, Rose?

I don't have an answer for him, I just know that tonight, the only place for me to be is in his arms. The same unspoken truth dawns on him. He moves to the side, making room for me on his single bed. I take my place next to him, curl into my

side, pulling his strong arm over me like a blanket. A gentle kiss on the top of my head quiets my thoughts.

I can feel the oppressing burden of questions and doubts lifting, making way for much-needed rest. We will deal with them tomorrow. Together.



Sleep is still heavy on my eyelids, by the speed of my thoughts, it's still weighing down the rest of me too. All thoughts but one get bogged down.

“James?” The bed is small enough I don't need to turn to know I am on it alone. “James?” I'm trying to keep my voice calm.

I'm up before my head is ready for it, the accompanying head rush confirms it. My brain is holding on to logic, my heart is firmly in the opposite camp.

“Archer?” I find myself yelling down the hall. If he is downstairs, he will hear me.

No answer. The chill that makes its way up my spine has nothing to do with my nakedness.

“He wouldn't just leave. He wouldn't just leave,” I mutter to myself in an effort to keep oxygen flowing. I run back into his room and peek out the window.

My brain jumps ship — his car is gone.

I hold on to the windowsill, my ragged breaths fogging up the panes. I grab the first thing I find on his desk, suddenly feeling the need to cover myself, to put a layer between me and the outside world as shame takes hold of me. It takes me a while before I can move, before I can untangle the web of emotions I'm trapped in.

I feel so ridiculous. So stupid. The way I came in here last night and laid myself on a fucking silver platter for him, and now he's gone?

My first thought is to take it out on one of his model cars. However, I *will* be the bigger person. He will not get to pin

this on me like he has done since he entered my life.

I storm out of his room, without realizing it, I am making my way to the kitchen. I need tea and chocolate. Not necessarily in that order.

I stand on the bottom step, taking note of several things. The damn foyer table is none the wiser. It is exactly where it always is, mocking me. There is a fire going in the living room, the distinct aroma of coffee permeates the air.

“James?” I try my luck one more time, cursing my idiotic need to give him the fucking benefit of the doubt. Nothing. Only silence and the crackling of the fire.

My dad has the coffee machine on a timer, that’s all it is. The reach of my gullibility never ceases to amaze me. I let my body sink into the stairs, falling unceremoniously on Elizabeth’s pristine beige runner, thankful that my sore muscles landed on something softer than wood.

With my head hung low, I grab on to one of the spindles for support. I don’t mope. “Valentines get up, and get going.”

“Fuck. Don’t go far, though, Valentine. You in my school sweatshirt is the fucking hottest thing I’ve seen in my pitiful life.” Whatever headway I made in resuming a vertical position, is lost. I slump on the step once more.

“I love it when you talk to yourself like a crazy person.” James’ smirk is self-satisfaction at its finest. “Are you planning on keeping that ass of yours on that step, or are you coming to join me for breakfast?”

All the words I know are fighting for pole position, not one of them making it out my lips. I watch him disappear into the kitchen, coat still on, a light dusting of snow on his dark, always-perfectly-groomed hair.

“Come on, buttercup,” he calls. “I know breakfast is your least favorite meal of the day, but you must be hungry after—” He doesn’t finish his sentence, trying to disguise it by digging in one of the bags he set on the counter. “Look, I even brought you tea.”

“We have tea in the house.” Not my smoothest comeback.

“This is a special chocolate tea with some berry. And the appropriate answer, brat, is ‘thank you’.”

I still don’t trust this. I decide to push my luck. “I have nothing against breakfast.” I move closer, choosing to stay on the opposite side of the kitchen island.

Without looking up, James hands me the take-out cup. “Then you can’t have anything against joining me.” His commanding eyes make an appearance, there is a dare and a threat gleaming in them. I hate it’s all it takes to get me more than a little bothered. Again, I say nothing, moving in the direction of the breakfast nook.

“Cat got your tongue?” He sits on the bench on the opposite side of the little table while he empties the brown paper bags containing our food.

“It’s been a strange morning,” is all I venture to say.

“You thought I bailed.” There is no question, it’s a casual remark he makes as he takes out several food containers.

I feel shame for the second time today.

“Here, I got you this. Don’t make a big deal of it, the card came with the breakfast.” He hands me a dark pink envelope. I try to keep him from noticing the slight tremble in my hands as I take it from him and pull out the contents. Shit. It’s a card with a cute little drawing of an owl, the phrase ‘Owl be your Valentine’ in glittery red letters. There is an addition in blue pen. A small arrow between ‘yours’ and ‘valentine’ points to the words ‘step-in.’ “Owl be your step-in Valentine?” I find myself reading out loud.

“I have never been in a relationship for Valentine’s Day, but I figured you must’ve had some plans today, and since I refuse to put up with your whining and moping—”

“I don—” I start to protest. James reaches across the table and sucks my bottom lip into his mouth. Fuck. My whole body ignites.

“Shut the fuck up and eat, Valentine. You haven’t got a damn leg to stand on.”

It takes me a couple of seconds to recover. Once I can put two words together, I blurt out the first thing that pops into my head. “You have *never* been in a relationship on Valentine’s Day?”

“That’s what you held on to?” He takes a bite out of his muffin.

“Yeah,” I accuse. “That’s just not normal.” I open the take-out container lid. Double shit. Chocolate chip pancakes. My favorite.

“No, never.” He uses a very final tone, letting me know the case is closed. I take away his muffin. James and food. I know it’s the best way to get to him right now. We’ve played this dumb game many times before over the years.

James huffs out his frustration, nostrils flaring. “I just don’t believe in— Romantic love is, let’s just say, not for me.”

“Bullshit.” I hand him back his muffin and take a bite out of my food, stifling back a moan. Fuck, these are good.

“Excuse me?” His forehead creases in surprise.

“You heard me: *bull-shit*. I have it on good authority you were about to bring some girl back in college, and it was right around winter break.” I actually manage to catch him off guard, thanking my lucky stars for his Mom’s tendency to overshare. “Claudia, something or other.” James pales.

“Well, fuck, Rose. With all your experience with hearts and Cupid’s day, I’d have thought you knew better than to bring up an ex.”

“Well, fuck, James, then don’t lie to me.” He is looking at me with something besides annoyance. I think I genuinely threw him off his game. My chest is tight with a feeling I haven’t had since I saw James prancing around school, his arm hooked around a random girl’s waist, hand dipped in her back pocket. It became frequent enough to dull the sharpness of the feeling, but here it is again.

Compressing, squeezing, burning.

“Mom must have told you I never actually brought anyone. That’s your answer. We broke up just in time for the love holiday. End of story.” He is being purposefully dismissive, but there is hurt there too.

“Sorry.”

“I am not.” He sips his coffee in silence.

The quiet extends for a couple of minutes until I can’t take it anymore.

“Archer?” He looks up at me, head tilted, expectant. “How’d you know I don’t like breakfast?”

“C’mon, Rose. We lived together for three years, we have shared many meals after that. I think this is probably the second time I see you sitting here.” I lower my eyes, pretending to find the tea most intriguing. “I also know why,” he boasts, making my heart sink.

“No, you don’t.”

“Oh, but I do, buttercup.”

“Not even Dad does.”

“I’ll prove it to you. If I’m right, you’ll answer the question I have for you.” James does smug and petulant like no one else.

“Fine. If you’re wrong, you tell me what happened with —” I don’t say his ex’s name again.

“Deal.”

“Amaze me with your keen powers of observation,” I taunt.

He studies me first, choosing his words. “You don’t like breakfast because it reminds you of your mother.” Fuck. I’m frozen in my spot. James is not cruel, his tone is kind, his right hand squeezes my left one over the table.

“She worked a lot, right? Breakfast was the only meal you got to share with her, and when she left—” All I can do is nod. I can’t believe he knows this, I think that fact is getting to me more than the actual memory of my mother.

“I’m sorry, Rose.”

“It’s okay. We had a deal,” I reason.

“No,” he shakes his head, lowering it to find my eyes, “I’m *sorry*.”

“Yeah.” What else is there to say? I’m sorry too. “I guess you pay attention, huh?”

“I do.” There is no arrogance in his voice, it’s an odd blend of sincerity and empathy. It is doing weird things to me.

“Your turn, then,” I deflect. “What’s this burning question you have for me?”

“It can wait.”

“So you can catch me off guard with it later? No, no. Let’s get it over with.” I attempt to infuse our chat with a bit of levity.

“It’s about fuckface.” The rest of his muffin disappears inside his mouth, almost as if he had to stuff it to keep himself from saying anything else.

“I figured.” I bring my tea to my mouth — it really is delicious — giving James a chance to swallow.

“Why didn’t you tell Henry you broke up? Don’t give me the ‘you didn’t want to ruin the party’ crap.”

I sigh. Fine. “That *is* part of the reason.” He crosses his perfect hands over the table, making a show of his patience. “I didn’t want to— Dad and Elizabeth, they make it look easy.”

“It?”

“Yes, *it*. Love, marriage, the whole fucking thing. I couldn’t bear to disappoint them. They have set a fucking unattainable example! I have *the* guy. He crosses all the ‘t’s’ and dots all the damn ‘i’s’. He fucking got me a job working at an art gallery in Paris!”

“He what?” One of James’ fists lands on the table.

“Yeah, a pretty damn good one, too. He got a job there and—” I haven’t actually processed any of this. I start hastily

clearing the table just to have something to do.

James remains seated. “You broke up with him because he wanted to take you to Paris?”

“Not just that. Things got complicated. I don’t have a good reason.”

“Not wanting to be with someone is a good enough reason, Rose,” he scoffs, talking over me.

“Plus, Dad loves him like the son he nev—” Fuck. I can’t believe I said that. It isn’t even true. It’s something Greg always says, and I just spouted it like a fucking trained parrot. “Oh my God, I’m so sorry, Archer, that is not at all—”

“Right, yeah.” James gets up from the table, walking towards the stairs without stopping. “I made reservations in the city for lunch, so I’m going to hop in the shower. If you want to come along, you better get ready too.”

“Fuck!” I dump everything in the trash, not bothering to sort anything out. My hands are on my temples. “Great going, Valentine.”

I don’t know what to do, but whatever it is, I can’t do it from here. This is not the kind of thing you should let simmer. I run up the stairs, down the hallway and burst into the bathroom. Steaming water is filling the bathtub. James’ taut torso is naked, he is leaning on the vanity, looking like a perfectly carved statue. His face in the mirror, just as stony.

“I forgot to lock the door?” He mumbles at me.

“Archer, I’m sorry.” I walk towards him, meeting only the reflection of his icy stare. “That was such a stupid thing to say, and *not at all* true.” I place my hand on the small of his back. Knowing he’s hurting because of something I said is more than I can handle.

“It’s really not.” I duck slightly, squeezing myself into the small space between his body and the edge of the vanity, willingly caging myself between his strong arms. “Archer?” I grab his chin, making him look at me. What I find at the bottom of his eyes disarms me. His trademark self-assurance has been replaced by insecurity. Shit.

A need to offer him comfort, to ease his pain, overwhelms me. I cup his bearded face, and pull him towards me. I softly kiss his top lip, then the bottom one, enjoying the feeling of the plump, soft flesh. I glide my hands down his chest, letting the tips of my fingers feel every ripple of his abs. James' muscles tense under my touch, but his hands stay put.

"I think it's time we share this bathroom once and for all, don't you?" I place my hand over his, pulling him over to the bathtub. I let the water run. We both stand on the fluffy green bath rug. James hasn't said a word, keeping his jaw tightly clenched. His body is responding to me just fine, egging me on.

I cross my arms in front of my body, reach the fabric and pull his hoodie off. My nipples already peaked for him to feast his eyes on. The grunt he can't contain emboldens me further. I trace his marked v-line, loving the feel of the muscles and the trail of dark hair leading me right into temptation.

His sweatpants are hanging deliciously low on his hips, the fabric doing nothing to conceal the wonders he's hiding underneath it. My mouth waters at the thought alone. I untie the waistband and pull down. Fuck. He's wearing nothing underneath.

I place James' hands on my hips, lacing his fingers with mine, sliding them downwards until I too am standing completely naked before him. I bend over, turning off the tap. I feel his fingers trace down my back, the curve of my ass, the top of my legs.

The air is heavy, steam mixed with lust whirling around us.

I get in first, taking a seat. Normally, I would hesitate to take the lead. Somehow this feels safe, there is power in being vulnerable with James. I extend my hand towards him, letting my eyes roam across all the hard planes of his body.

The water rises as he sinks into the tub, his back against the opposite end. His cocky demeanor doesn't make an appearance. He is far from innocent, but there isn't any gloating coming from him.

Our legs tangle underneath the surface. Carefully, I let my feet slide up his legs, his thighs, finally reaching his cock. It immediately jumps for me.

“Fuck, Rose. This is literally a fantasy of mine.”

I move my feet to the outside of his legs. Holding on to the edge of the tub for leverage. I pull up and slide forward. I am kneeling before James, my breasts so close to his face, my nipples bud in response to his exhales.

“What, Archer? Tell me.”

“You and me in this tub, you— Fuck.” I drop my hips onto his, nestling his length along my pussy. I am so ready for him. I want to tease him, but I won’t be able to resist him much longer.

“Me what?” I let my fingers trail up his torso, grabbing a hold of his shoulders, lifting my body upwards once more.

“What are you doing, Rosy?”

“Apparently, making both our fantasies come true,” I confess. There is an unspoken complicity between us. We are communicating without words. I lower myself onto James, he holds my hips, guiding me.

“Archer,” I barely whisper as I sink back into the water, and he sinks into me. My head falls backwards. I feel his hand run the length of my neck, down my chest, leaving hot water droplets which he eagerly sucks dry with his lips and tongue.

I set the pace, water rippling softly around us. The sloshing sound it makes against the tub, providing an erotic soundtrack, the perfect accompaniment to our labored breathing.

I need to feel as much of James as possible, I wrap my arms around his neck, pulling his naked chest against mine. He hugs my waist, helping me keep our rhythm going. I am consumed by this experience. I need James more in this moment than I have ever needed anyone before.

I look for his lips, maybe to share this truth I just discovered with him. Our kiss is sultry, passionate, and eager.

There is a hunger, a deeper yearning between us.

James breaks away, leaning his forehead against mine. I can't take my eyes off him. Fuck. My hips are moving faster, completely at the mercy of this spell we have cast around each other. His pants fan my face. He is climbing to new heights just like me, ready to jump off with me once we reach the summit.

“Ahh. Fuck, Rose. Fuck.” James' movements miss a beat as he sinks into me one more time. His hips jerk forward, pushing me into him. I kiss James once more, as my muscles clench around him, moaning straight into his parted lips. My body contorts, splashing water over the edge of the tub.

If we hadn't crossed a line yet. I know we crossed one now.

The embrace we share as our bodies settle is intimate, raw, real. No fakes. I let my body rest on his completely, hiding my face in the crook of his neck to confess.

“No one can take your spot, Archer. You're one of a kind.”

OceanofPDF.com

Chapter Seven

James

“How come we both live here, and we’ve never bumped into each other?” I watch as Rose sips on her pink champagne and nibbles on her deep-dish pizza. She is once again surprised I knew what her favorite food was.

Her perfect, just-fucked halo is glowing brighter than a dying star. She looks exquisite. Red, cock-teasing lipstick has me hypnotized, in an endless daydream, staring at her mouth. “James?”

“Huh?” She did something to me earlier. I can’t pinpoint what, but it’s fucking with my brain. I didn’t comment on it, but I saw how desolate she looked when she thought I had bailed on her. It was a fucked up night. I confessed to something I had been repressing for a long time. Maybe I shouldn’t have.

“How come I’ve never seen you around here?”

“I’ve seen you, buttercup. Just made sure you didn’t see me.” I went out of my way to get out of hers. It was enough to be at each other’s throats every Christmas, birthday and fucking Valentine’s Day.

“What? Why?”

“Because, first, this ‘us’ didn’t exist back then, have you forgotten how much you hate my guts?” She wants to deny it, but wisely chooses to let it go. “Second, because you weren’t alone. Fuckface isn’t exactly my favorite person on earth, and I wasn’t looking for jail time.” Rose laughs and her whole face lights up. I unexpectedly feel her giggles, front and fucking center, right in my chest.

She’s never laughed because of me. I was the motive behind her pubescent rage, I purposefully poked my thorn in deeper every chance I got. I loved riling her up. I thrived on hearing her grunt and growl.

Turns out, all that doesn't hold a damn candle to her contagious laughter.

I'm starting to see that what I enjoyed in it all, was knowing how much I could affect her.

Joke's on me. I never knew, up until last night, just how much *she* affected me.

It was obvious that years of denial and repression fueled most of what has happened this weekend. I wasn't expecting to tell her the unspeakable truth though.

It's fucked up, sure, and still, I'm not ready to have this weekend end just yet. I'm not ready to set her free.

I have a full book of ideas of how I want to ruin that hungry pussy of hers. That's the easy, uncomplicated version. I'll stick with that for the sake of my immediate sanity.

"Greg didn't go to school with us, Archer. He doesn't know about your Rose ban."

Is that why I hate him with a fucking passion?

Maybe she's right. Seeing him with his manicured, polished hands all over Rose always had bile swimming back to my mouth. Fuck, the mental image is enough to have me fisting the fork and bending it, my skin paling and protesting under the pressure.

That's not it.

There's something else about that bland, corporate asswipe that pisses me off.

"Fuck Greg." Saying his name feels like saw dust filled with splinters against my tongue. "I'm your step-in Valentine today, remember? I'd appreciate it if we kept other men that have seen you naked off the table."

Rose giggles and snakes her foot up my calf, "Yes, Daddy." My little fucking tease.

Something has changed for Rose too. She's not hiding or holding back.

She laced her fingers with mine as we made our way from the car to this small, hole in the wall restaurant, kissed me while we waited for our table and even fucking played with my beard.

But then again, here, there's no exposure. The risk of running into someone we both know is close to none. She doesn't have to worry about the two worlds colliding and having her pristine reputation smeared by a depraved and reprobable connection.

"I'm surprised, James. I was expecting exorbitantly flashy. This place is... It's unassuming." She's drawing circles on the back of my hand with the tip of her finger. It's a soothing gesture, even so, there's this unsettling feeling slowly creeping into my chest.

"Would you have preferred, exorbitantly flashy?" She has a point. I would normally go for something over the top like that, but somehow, with her, I didn't think it was suitable. Luxury and flashing the green was normally what girls expect on Valentine's Day, with Rose though, there was just no point.

"No, no. Not at all. It's just... It doesn't go with the super polished, luxury persona you put on." She links her fingers with mine again and my heart pounds harder in my chest. There's panic mixed with completion. This is starting to feel too much like a real date. One that actually matters.

"Love looks not with the eyes, but with the mind, And therefore is winged Cupid painted blind."

I had never let Rose close enough to know me, the real me, so it's only normal she would go with assumptions. She, like the rest of the world, sees the luxury car expert. The one with the glitzy watches and tailored suits. I'm fucking good at what I do, but it's not all I am.

"Quoting Shakespeare? Okay, who are you and what have you done with James Archer?"

I laugh at her little fake outburst.

"What I mean is, appearances can be deceiving. I prefer this to those high profile, Michelin star restaurants. Under the

flashy suits you normally see me in, is just a normal guy who likes to get his hands dirty.” I need to dig myself out of the emotional hole I am falling into, so I resort to sordid. Hopefully she’ll get the hint.

“I know. You and your cars.” She gives me a compassionate smile, the touch of her hand reaching beyond skin-deep. “It’s something you did with your father, right?” Rose shoves me right back into the pit with her innocent question. I try to keep my emotions at bay as best I can, but my heart has already lost its rhythm. There’s a reason I don’t talk about my father. Even after all these years it still chokes me up.

I don’t answer, instead, I give her a small nod in confirmation.

“I know how much it means to you. How happy it makes you.” I look at her in confusion, how could she possibly infer that? “Oh c’mon Archer, I can read beyond the obvious too. I might not have gotten your restaurant choices right, but I do know that every time you have your head under the hood of a car, it’s like a high of happiness.” Rose’s gaze is set on me now, making me feel like a piece of worthless art she is appraising.

“You would quit calling me buttercup, or even Valentine. It was just Rosy. I would have peace for a couple of days, until your work was done and there was nothing left to repair. Not to mention the slight smile you always sported.” I can’t believe she noticed all that. I can’t believe she spared me, or it, any thought. She hated me with such conviction, I never thought she would give me a second glance.

“I–” My voice comes out unstable, so I clear my throat before resuming, hoping that the word drenched in emotion made it under her radar. By the way she’s looking at me, it didn’t. “I feel like he’s right there, standing next to me again. When I fix them, when I start that engine and hear it roar to life again, when I drive at high speed on an empty road. Just like you with art, that is my passion. That’s where I feel like I’m myself.”

Just like I feel when I'm with you. I leave those last words to myself. They don't belong out in the real world. They shouldn't even be in my head for Christ's sake.

"You should never stop doing it. It lights up your life. I've seen it." I lost the only woman I thought I loved because of it. Claudia thought it was degrading and demeaning. 'It's a waste of your business degree and your time.' Yet, I would hold onto it until my last breath. As long as it was a part of my life, so was he. "Why isn't that what you do for a living? Why sell fancy cars when you can fix them, restore them, bring them back to life?"

"Stability? I don't know." Half-truths, full lies? I don't know anymore.

"Who cares about that when you could be doing what makes you happy?"

"You do, Rose."

"No, I don't." She immediately counters.

"Yes, you do. Why aren't you following *your* passion? Why do you sell other people's paintings instead of your own?"

"It's not that simple."

"That's hypocritical. Even your choice in men shows me you do care." Her hand is nowhere near mine anymore. "What is it about Greg that made you date him? I'm damn sure it wasn't his passion for finance. Fuck, it's not even the way he fucks you!" I scoff, my wounds from the past bleeding again. These, though, these somehow feel newly inflicted.

"It's security, stability, and the prospect of a good and stable life. That's just the fucking circle of life, baby. You choose what brings you the best chance to succeed. What keeps you at the top of the damn food chain. It's called evolution, buttercup."

I don't mean for bitterness to infuse my voice, but it's too heavy to miss. I catch Rose's light flinch at my accusation. The small veil of hurt in her face trespassing my heart, as I finally realize why it is that I dislike that fucker with so much

conviction. He's the perfect match for her. That's fucking why. She was right, he does tick off all the fucking boxes. Dots all the 'i's', crosses all the 't's'.

Unlike me. I have warning signs everywhere you look. I'm like radioactive fucking material.

We haven't moved, we are still sitting in the same spot, but the distance is palpable between us. Rose lets her body slump back into her chair. I lost her to her thoughts again while I kick myself for being such a jerk.

"That's why she left you?"

"What?" I heard her, but she caught me off guard again. She's been doing that a lot today.

"That's why Claudia left you." No longer a question. "Do you still love her?" Rose's face is both filled with expectation and dread, as she waits for my answer. Why? Why did she burst into my room last night with the fire of a fight in her eyes only to back down and snuggle with me instead? Why did she try to mend me, to comfort me, when her words mirrored nothing but the truth. Why does she care? She never did, I made damn sure of it.

"It doesn't matter. I learn from my past mistakes and make sure not to repeat them." Dread wins. Hers and mine. Apparently that isn't the right answer in her book.

"That's wise." Rose's voice was small, as was she, curled in her seat, her food long forgotten. "But I can prove you wrong."

"Ha! Really?" Sarcasm and skepticism. I very much doubt she can prove that her life choices don't revolve around what is expected of a good girl like her. I'm sure she has her wedding planned in her head, her kids' names picked out, complete with the large white picket fence house they would all live in, thriving in the prosperity of Greg's proper, bland and passionless job.

"Don't be a dick, Archer." She cuts through my shit. "Yes, really. I thought of showing you something when you said we were coming into the city. But if you're going to act

like this, I'm not so sure I should." Rose stands from her seat, grabs her stuff and darts out the restaurant. I grab a couple of bills from my wallet, throwing them on the table before I follow her out into the damn cold.

Just fucking perfect. It's snowing again!

Rose has her back to me, but it doesn't take a genius to know that she's holding on by a thread. Whatever it was, it's important to her. I immediately regret not being able to keep my temper at bay, there's just something about Rose that just takes everything in me to the extreme.

"I'm sorry. I didn't mean to be such an asshole. It's just a touchy subject." She hears me but doesn't acknowledge my words. I step close and hug her from behind. "Some step-in Valentine I am. Please show me?"

I turn her to me and kiss her. She doesn't melt into it like all the other times, but she doesn't push me away. I pull back and hold her face in my hand, burying my gaze deep in her hypnotic sapphires. "Please?" I give her a playful peck on the nose. "Pretty please?" Another on her neck. I keep kissing and tickling her until she relents and gives me a genuine smile. It's small but I'll take it.

"God, Jay. You can be such an ass!"

"I know. It's one of my finest qualities. Come on. Lead the way."

We walk in silence, further aided by the small snowflakes coating the streets, and muffling our steps. I make a point to hold her hand while we make our way to wherever she's taking us.

Rose doesn't speak for what seems like eternity, her face showing me she is still lost in deep thought. Her hair is filled with little white flecks that shine under the cold winter sun. It's fire and ice, literally.

I grunt and snort as I wipe my hair from them. But the fuckers are relentless. "Fucking snow."

"It's so beautiful. Why is it that you hate snow so much?" I want to retreat into a corner and not tell her. I don't want to

go there again. She senses my hesitation, mercifully, deciding against pushing the matter further. “Come, it’s right up ahead.”

Within a couple of minutes, I’m staring at a gigantic mural. A soldier down on one knee, his head bowed down, resting his rifle on his thigh. There’s a red rose down its barrel. Flowers, not bullets.

The American flag behind him has small inscriptions on the red stripes, and there’s a large inscription on top. ‘Names that matter.’ I look down to the right bottom corner and see it. Another rose before the initials RV.

“You did this? This is amazing, Rose!”

“I did. In collaboration with an artist friend of mine. There’s another name you should recognize on here. Look closer, James.”

I inspect it for less than two seconds before it hits me like a freight train. I can’t hold the tears back the same way I’m holding my breath. On the barrel of the rifle there’s a name. ‘Lt. Col. Jeremy Archer’.

Rose looks at me, expectant, but I don’t know what to say. My simple words are lost in the enormity of this gesture of hers. It hurts, but for the first time ever, it’s not a pain that burns. It’s a pain that fills me with pride. It fills me with... Love.

I’m fueled by something out of this world as I walk to her in long, hurried strides. I take her face in my hands and kiss her. There’s passion in our kiss, but this time it’s different. There’s understanding, a deep connection, and something unspoken.

I’ve never kissed anyone like this before. I let my soul consume hers as I pour everything I have into her lips, even my tears invade our mouths. I stop fighting to contain it. It’s wrong under the eyes of the world, but it’s the only thing that’s ever felt right for me. *She* is right for me.

I’m not ready to say it. I’m scared that if I do, she’ll take it and run away with it. Leave me bleeding out here in the middle of the snow.

I pull back, still holding her face in my hands, and lean my forehead on hers.

“Thank you.” I say just above a whisper. I can’t get myself to say what I really want to, but I can show her.

I tug on her hand and pull her all the way to the car. I can’t wait until we get home. I don’t want to. I push her into the back seat of our parents’ SUV, step in behind her, and take her into my arms again.

“James...” It’s a plea. A question. A song of fire under the winter snow.

I kiss her again, the same passion and emotion I had charged it with before. Unrestrained, unspoken feelings.

“I want you, Rose,” I pant into her mouth. It’s ambiguous enough not to splay my heart into vulnerability. I tug on the buttons of her jeans, but Rose does the rest. She pulls them down, taking just one leg out, while I undo my pants and pull my cock out.

She’s straddling me before I know it, slowly sinking onto me. Her eyes never leave mine as she takes me into the place where I belong.

The silence around us is thick with meaning, with emotions my heart feels but my mouth can’t voice.

I can’t put her on the spot like that.

I hold her down on me and hug her still. She wraps her arms around me and laces her fingers in my hair, as I bury my nose in the crook of her neck. I breathe her in, she’s more than oxygen, she’s life.

She smells divine. Roses and heaven. Snow and peace.

“It was the first time I saw it.” I am not sure I meant to say it out loud, but I want Rose to know. “It was the first time I ever saw snow. They knocked at our door and gave mom a damn folded flag. That’s what we got as consolation. That’s why I hate it.”

“Oh, James!” She pulls my head from her neck and kisses me again. It’s not hungry or lustful, even though I’m buried

inside her. It's more. It's what I had promised seven years ago I wouldn't let myself feel again, only ten times stronger.

Rose starts to slowly move. Small circles. Little thrusts. But her eyes never leave mine.

"This is wrong, Rose." It's not what I want to say, but I know she needs a way out, I'm pulling her down with me and I can't allow that to happen.

"It's not. It's perfect." She's looking straight at me, and I feel truly seen for the first time in my life. "It's the rightest thing I've ever done. Don't shut me out again, Archer."

Perfect. She's right. This is as close to perfection as I have ever gotten. We have conjured up magic, we are the only two people in the city. Snow is my ally now, allowing me to keep Rose all to myself, helping me shield her. It coats the windows, providing us with shelter and cover.

This is the least naked we've been all weekend, we are wearing coats, scarfs, boots, yet we are completely bare to each other. "I won't Rose. I couldn't if I wanted to. You know my truth now. You are my truth now." The pleasure we are both experiencing is coming from somewhere deeper. We are being quiet, it's a steady, intimate, cathartic ascent.

We are making love for the second time. I know exactly what to call it now. It's all about the journey, our journey together, the destination is far from my mind again. Our bodies seem to be in communion with our souls when we reach our peak together. Soul-fucking-baring. I will never be the same again.

"James," Rose utters before collapsing into my body.

"My Rosy girl."

A deep happiness fills my chest, bringing along an unwanted friend. Why can't I shake off the sense of dread it brings with it? It feels like goodbye. Fuck.

No. It can't be.

I never intended to hurt her, and I definitely didn't expect to fall and break either.

I swallow the lump in my throat. I've rolled the dice. I decide to enjoy this, us, before they stop rolling and determine our fate. I will enjoy us, enjoy having Rose like this, come what may.

We stay in the car, lost in one another, waiting for the weather to clear before heading back home. Rose is asleep on my lap. Her red, fire strands are sprawled all over my legs as I deliver slow, soothing caresses to her head. My mind is running a thousand miles an hour, and I figure that all roads do fucking lead to Rome. I met my destiny on the path I took to avoid it.

Fucked up as it is, I can't overlook this. I can't let this go without a fight.

I decide to tell her what I feel as soon as we get home. I'll make love to her again, tell her exactly how I feel about her, and how much I want her to be mine. Mind, body and soul.

We drive home in silence. It's heavy and drenched with unspoken words. Rose has been staring out the window ever since we left the city.

I look over to her and see the wheels turning in her head too. What's going through that pretty head of hers? She catches me staring and gives me a small smile before turning to the window again.

Her eyes don't harbor pity, filling me with hope. Maybe she's thinking about the logistics. About how we should tell our parents. About their reaction. It didn't faze me, but I know it's something that would worry her.

We drive into our home town, like we've done countless times before. When we get home, this is it. This is when I bare my heart and tell her that I can't let her go. That she's mine to keep.

Chapter Eight

Rose

The day I came home, and Dad told me my mother had left. The day of Dad and Elizabeth's wedding. The day I got my acceptance letter to art school. The day I got my first real job.

We don't often realize which days will stay with us forever when they are happening. These are the only ones I manage to fish out from a sea of memories as we make the drive back 'home'. And today. I am keenly aware of the fact that I will remember this day forever.

No matter what happens, there will always be a before and after today.

The walls that crumbled all around us today? I could practically hear them falling. I felt seen, wanted, desired. Just like Dorothy, I landed somewhere new and unexpected. My world turned technicolor, and I will never be able to go back to black and white. I had been choosing gray for so long, I forgot how much I love every color, how much I love to color outside the lines.

"Crawl out of your head, buttercup. We're almost there." Shit. I haven't said a word since he started the car. He is right about me getting lost in my thoughts. He has been right about so much. "Do you want to stop for hot chocolate or something?" James offers me a shy smile. Fuck. It's even more disarming than his flirty ones.

"No. The only thing I want is to go home with you." My simple statement freezes the air in my lungs. It is a simple truth, a short little sentence that tells me everything I need to know. Simple truth, complicated reality.

James' eyes are glued to the road ahead, I wonder if he even heard me until I see the tight, white-knuckle grasp he has on the steering wheel.

In the next minute we are making a right on the all-too-familiar road. The snow has done its job coating away imperfections, differences, singularities. From the outside it all looks perfect, pristine, exactly as it should be. But snow melts, muddy slush always follows.

I look to my left, the usually overconfident driver is looking mousy. It is so out of character it makes me laugh.

“What?” He asks without looking at me.

“Nothing. You just look like you’re taking your driving exam, or something.” James drops his head and laughs at himself. “Hands at ten and two at all times,” I tease him some more. “Relax, would you?” I turn his usual comeback on him.

“Fuck you, Valentine.”

“Here’s hoping, Archer.” I stretch out my arm, grab the short hairs at the back of his head, and give a firm tug. James sucks air through his teeth.

He finally settles his dominant, unmistakably intimidating gaze on me. “You’ve done it now, little girl.” He licks his bottom lip before carrying on. “Here’s what’s going to happen. I will park at the bottom of the driveway. When I pull up the handbrake, your three second head start begins. You better run and pray you make it inside the house before I get to you. Otherwise, I am fucking you right on the front lawn. Understood?”

Fuck. Dirty talk is new to me, but I am a willing convert. James’ words cut through flesh and bone, settling right into my core. I know what I’m supposed to say. I know what I want to say. “Yes, Daddy.” I am not backing away from this.

He revs up the engine, a wolfy grin on his lips. The wolf ate the mouse, and he will eat me next.

I already unfasten my seatbelt, I am ready to jump out the door and sprint towards the house the second the car stops. I thank my lucky stars I wore sensible footwear today. The house sits on a slope, the driveway is at an incline, I don’t

want to fall flat on my face and ruin whatever wonderful plans James has for me tonight.

The engine stops and I'm off. I don't even bother with closing the car door. Hopefully it gets me an extra second. I keep my eyes on the ground, I still don't trust my grip with all this snow. I'm almost at the house, I hear car doors slamming and swearing. Shit, James' stride is much bigger than mine. I'm giddy with excitement as I reach the porch steps. Yes! Victory! I'm at the door!

“Rose!”

Fuck. I stop so abruptly I slip on the ice on the top step and fall flat on my ass. I hear James calling out for me when he sees me go down. Double fuck. I get up as quickly as possible, the pain I should be feeling doesn't hold a candle to the shock I'm in. I give James an apologetic look, his answering grimace tells me he's about to be bulldozed and I can't do anything to stop it.

“Rose! What is wrong with you? Aren't you two a bit old to be playing tag?”

I think I accidentally swallowed my tongue upon impact.

“Aren't you two a bit broken up for you to show up unannounced?” James' voice thunders over me. He comes up to me taking a protective stance. “Are you OK?” He whispers, harnessing the rage he must be feeling to make sure I'm not hurt.

All I can manage is a small nod.

“Always a pleasure, James. However, I fail to see how our relationship status is any of your business. You don't have what it takes to pull off ‘caring older brother’.”

I feel James jerk in response to the taunt, but he keeps himself in check. His jaw is clenching in rhythmic pulses, on beat with my thundering heart.

“Besides, it is Valentine's Day. Of course, I would come here to see Rose, regardless of... We have been together for four years, that's not something you just casually cast aside.” The haughtiness in Greg's tone finally snaps me out of it.

I open my mouth to speak, but he cuts me off. “Aren’t you going to invite me in, darling? I’ve been waiting outside in the cold all this time.” He lifts the collar of his coat to make his point.

“It’s not like I kept you waiting, Gregory. You chose to come.”

“A little romance never hurt anybody, especially today. I wanted to surprise you,” he defends with a smug shrug.

“You succeeded.” I turn my back on him and go towards the front door. James follows, acting as a barrier between me and my ex.

“Say the word, Rose, and I’ll gladly kick *Romeo* to the curb.” His offer is riddled with menace. Greg wouldn’t hesitate to press charges.

“It’s alright, Archer, I can handle him.”

“Handle me?” Greg claps back.

“Better her than me, lover boy. I’ll be in the kitchen.” If I need him. That is what James is telling me.

“And *we* will be in the living room. Thanks for the geo tracking, *Archer*.” Fuck, Greg. Big mistake.

“*You* don’t get to call me that.” James enunciates every word with purpose and venom. His body tilts forward, his index pointing sharply like a loaded gun. There’s a threat behind it, and Greg knows better than to help press the trigger.

He squints his eyes condescendingly, before making his way to the living room without saying another word.

“I’ll be quick, I promise,” I try to placate James. He spins on his heels and disappears to the right of the foyer, shoes, coat and all.

Fuck. Okay. I can do this.

I stall for an extra ten seconds while I remove my snow gear, and head to the living room. Greg has neatly folded his long black coat and draped it over the back of the couch. He waits by the fireplace, hands behind his back, in an effort to

look imposing. To me he just looks like a pompous Regency debutante straight out of an Austen novel. It hits me that I haven't actually seen him for him in a very long time.

"What is this about, darling?" I have never liked him calling me that, I am almost one hundred percent sure he only does it because that's what Dad calls Elizabeth.

"What is what about, Greg?"

"This," he explains, "you running away instead of facing our 'situation' head on."

"Situation? I didn't run away. I *left* because we broke up. It is fairly standard breakup procedure."

He moves to the couch, patting the spot next to him. I don't budge.

"Darling, all I want is to take you home."

"Home? What home, Greg? We don't have a home! You terminated our lease without even talking to me first!"

"First of all, a home is made by the people in it. Second, it has been taken care of. The apartment is ours." His smile is genuine, but I don't like the complacency behind it.

"Again, without asking me!" I yell out, the frustration from two days ago finding an outlet through my voice.

"I heard what you said, Rose. I can even understand your reluctance to move to Paris."

"What I want, Gregory, is for you to stop thinking of how you will placate me when I'm talking to you." He keeps himself from rolling his eyes. "You don't listen to half of what I say because you are thinking of what you will say next to get me to see things your way."

"I admit, I might have skipped a step or two, but that's just because I was excited about our new adventure," he defends.

"How long have you known about the possibility of being transferred to Paris?" On Friday I was too dazed to ask. Greg knows I won't like the answer, so he says nothing. "I mean if

you had enough time to contact our landlord, job hunt for me, find us an apartment in Paris—”

“I didn’t do that, the company has expat apartm—”

“How long, Greg?” My voice reaches a higher volume.

“Since Thanksgiving.”

“Right.” I wish I only felt anger, but goddammit, hurt sneaks its way in too.

“I am sorry.” I look up to discover the face of the man who bought three large pieces of art when he only had one wall, so he’d have an excuse to see me again. The man who had a name plate made with my name on when I got promoted and finally got a door. “I was working under the assumption that ‘my’ way was ‘our way’.”

“You can’t decide my life for me, Greg.”

“People like us, darling, we have a path we follow. A certain order in which we do things. The opportunity of a lifetime presented itself. You’d have to be an idiot to pass up a VP position heading the new division for Western Europe!” This is as close to yelling as I’ve ever seen Greg get. He keeps his teeth clenched throughout though.

“And I would be a bigger idiot if I blindly agreed to something you hid from me for months!” I shout. I don’t give a fuck. I’m pissed.

“Do not take that tone with me, Rose,” Greg admonishes, looking around the empty room, offering a silent apology to the furniture for my outburst. “What has gotten into you?” Shit, if he only knew.

“I know what happens to a person when they agree to a life they didn’t actually want!” They leave! They pack their shit, abandon their kid and husband and fucking leave.

“What are you talking about?”

“Exactly! You don’t even know what I’m talking about!”

“Lower your voice,” he repeats. This time, his raises as well. “There is no point in having this conversation anymore,

Rose. You wanted out of Paris, I got us out. I turned down the job. We can stay and revisit later.” He looks so pleased with himself.

“What are you doing here, Greg?” I cut straight to the chase. I am tired of this carousel conversation. I want off.

“What do you mean what am I doing here? I solved our problem. We don’t have to go to Paris.” He abandons his comfortable spot on the couch, coming to stand, then kneel before me. “And I came to give you this again, darling. Put it on and keep it on this time.” He grabs my left hand.

“You’re marrying fuckface?” Greg gives me a triumphant look. He knew James was standing there before he made his move.

“Oh God, James!” I turn around so fast I knock the engagement ring out of Greg’s hand.

The look on his face is a hammer digging a chisel into my heart. It’s not anger, it’s pain and betrayal. I watch as it contorts, emotions piling on his features, layer upon layer of deception. I’m paralyzed in horror. His strong, confident image crumbles – after this afternoon he has no armor, no mask to wear. “You two fucking deserve each other. I wish you a lifetime of boredom and mediocrity together.”

Before I can move my feet to stop him, James Archer shuts the door in my face. This time I’m sure it’s firmly locked.

Chapter Nine

James

Muscle memory is doing the driving, my brain can't engage, my heart stayed behind in that fucking house that will never be home to me again.

I'm blinded by rage, sustained by adrenaline and pain. I want to lie to myself, to pretend this weekend meant nothing, that I was just fulfilling some fucked up teenage wet dream. That Rose's tempting tail just happened to be there, so I chased it. But I can't. I can't fucking do that.

Some things you can't unsee, this I can't unfeel.

It's like a fucking demonic genie that just won't fit back in his bottle. *Whole new world my ass*. I wanted her so badly I couldn't see the forest for the fucking trees, and now I'm left falling down a bottomless pit.

I grip the wheel with excessive strength, wondering where the hell I went wrong in my life to deserve this. I saw its ugly tip seven years ago with Claudia, but fuck does the iceberg run deep with Rose.

Since I was a kid, I'd look at the stars and think I'd give my life for another moment with my father. I find myself doing the same with her. Wishing upon a fucking deaf star she was mine. Mine to have, mine to choose, mine to keep.

"I have no more honey in me, Dad! I'm nothing but fucking vinegar."

She ran out after he proposed. She came to hide, to lick her wounds so she could hop on her perfect conveyor belt life right after. Perfect fucking Greg ticking one more box so they can fly off into the fucking sunset. In Paris! Fuck!

"What are you doing out here, Jimmy?" Andrew Palmer knocks twice on my car window. It takes me a second to realize where I am. Apparently, I drove to the bar. He raises his voice so I can hear him through the glass. "You comin' in

bud? That flashy car of yours can't be comfortable to sit in for too long.”

I quickly go over my choices. All I know is I need a fucking drink – or seventeen. I have nowhere else to go in this goddamn town. I'll have to book a hotel room for the night. Fuck. That is for drunk James to figure out later. Bar it is.

I step out of the car, cursing the fucking flakes that have begun falling again. The fact that I left without even grabbing a coat hits me with as much strength as the freezing wind. I briefly considered giving snow a reprieve. That ship has sailed and sunk.

I hug myself in a futile effort to retain some body heat. Andrew gives me a sideways once-over. He decides against questioning my lack of winter wear, choosing for casual chit-chat instead. “You here for the V-Day special?” No Palmer, I fucking certainly am not.

“Just for a drink.” He accepts my grunt of an answer and pulls the door open for me.

“Took you long enough, Andy,” his wife Milly complains but gives him a peck anyway, “I was coming to check on you. Did you get my phone from the car? Hello, James.” The way she talks has always made me think of a morse code machine. Rhythmic clicking, no pauses.

“Mrs. Palmer.” I dig my hands as far as they will go in my pockets. Looking around for more familiar faces. I see none. Thank fuck. The decorations that just yesterday seemed oddly fitting, are a fucking mockery today.

“Don't be weird, James. Name's Milly. You know me more than well enough to use my first name.”

“Shit, babe. Sorry, I got sidetracked. I walked out and saw James just sitting in his car,” Palmer explains. “I'll go back and get it.” Milly flattens him with a look that clearly says ‘yeah, you bet your ass you will.’ She's always been a feisty one. Andrew gives her a knowing grin before heading to the parking lot. The gust of wind he lets in makes me shiver.

“Okay, James. Why on God’s green earth are you out in the middle of a blizzard without a coat? Got a hankering for pneumonia?”

“Fuck, Mills, you sure have ‘stern mom’ down.” I wink at her in a weak effort to direct the conversation as far away from me as fucking possible.

“You know it. Drink?”

“Fuck, yes.”

“A beer here, please,” she calls out to the bartender.

“Double scotch, neat,” I correct. Beer wouldn’t even scratch the surface on the iceberg I’m trying to hide.

“That bad, huh?”

The door swivels open and in comes Andy, proudly brandishing a bright pink cellphone like it’s some sort of accomplishment. Milly chuckles at the sight, going to meet him at the door. I see her go up on her toes and whisper something in his ear. He nods in response. The complicity they share is plain to see. It fucking feels like somebody shoved their arm down my throat and squeezed. Fuck.

“Your drink,” the man behind the bar gets my attention.

“Thanks. Open up a tap for me.”

“I’m afraid to ask, Jimmy. Where’s Rose?” Andrew takes a seat on the barstool next to mine.

“Home, with her fiancé.” I blurt out the words, they feel like glass shards in my mouth. I down the contents of my tumbler in two gulps to soothe the pain that truth brings. I welcome the burn. It feels like I should be burning. A snort of realization escapes me. Here I am, nothing more than a fucking cliché in a bar, realizing that the last seven years of my ‘always single’ mentality were never a choice. It wasn’t action, it was a fucking reaction. A fucking coward’s way out.

“Another double,” I call out to the bartender without sparing him a look.

“Shit. That’s a tough break, man. I’m sorry.” I turn to look at him, his tone would be much more appropriate at a funeral than at a bar.

“What the fuck do you mean, Palmer?” His damn pity shocks me enough for me to do a credible job at acting offended. “Rose is my stepsister.” Fuck. Saying it out loud knowing that that’s all she will ever be has the shards sinking further down my throat.

“You must think we’re real dumb.” Andrew hits me with a knowing look. “It has always been plain to see that Rose is much more than your stepsister. You left like a bat out of hell last night, just because she was talking to some guy.”

Fuck. Friday I would’ve been able to deny it with a completely straight face and a clear conscience.

“Fucking gold star for you, Andy.” Shit. “Fuck... Sorry.” Palmer is a good guy, he doesn’t deserve me taking out my hurt on him. “Whatever my... misguided intentions were, it doesn’t change things one fucking bit. Rose has been making her perfect bed for years, there is absolutely no place in it for me.” There it is again – pity. I wash it down with another mouthful of the cold amber liquid.

“She’s engaged? She wasn’t wearing a ring yesterday.”
Fuck, Palmer, do you want lemon to go with the salt in my wound?

The image of fuckface on one knee, makes me wince, it fucking makes my stomach turn. I try to pass it off as the effect of the scotch going down. However, much I hate him, Greg fits the fucking bill. He fits next to her. He is the fucking picture-perfect wedding cake topper. Me? I am all kinds of wrong.

“I have a bone to pick with you.” Someone taps me on the shoulder.

Motherfucker. If it isn’t fucking red silk shirt, Jersey boy. Except tonight, it’s black silk shirt. “Get. Lost.” I don’t even make an effort to look at him. He taps me on the shoulder again.

“Where’s ginger?”

“Ginger?” I’m seething. This time I make a point to look at him. “Listen, *Jersey*, where she is, is none of your fucking business.” I sit a little taller. I can feel my jaw tensing as I try to keep my anger at bay.

“What the hell is your problem, man? She came and sat next to *me*, trying to escape her creepy, grabby brother.” He flashes me his veneers. “She couldn’t get away from you fast enough.”

“Bobby, just go, okay?” Andy stands up next to me. He knows my short temper all too well.

“Why should I go? Besides, his tasty treat of a sister might show up and –”

Next thing I know, Bobby is flying in the opposite direction, with a split lip.

“You will stay the fuck away from her, you understand me! She is too goddamn good for you!” I spit at him.

“She didn’t think so, city boy! She would’ve gone home with me too, if you–” I bring back my left arm again, but Palmer is there to stop me.

“That’s enough!” The barman thunders before jumping over the counter. “Andy, get your friend out of here, before I call the cops.”

“Sure thing, Ray.” Palmer jumps in front of me. Bobby crawls away while he can.

“Fuck. I’m sorry, Andy. Look, here, have my keys. I’ll just call a cab. Milly will have my balls if you bail out on her because of me.” Palmer looks conflicted, his wife is already shooting daggers at us from the back.

“Well, she’ll have mine if I send you off like this too.” He smiles sheepishly at her. “Let me just go talk to her. Wait by your car.” He goes over to a nearby table and grabs a coat. “Put this on and wait for me. I will have to grovel first, but I’ll drive you.” The barman hasn’t moved, he is waiting for me to leave.

Fuck. “Sorry for the trouble.” I toss a fifty on the bar and leave.

“Fuck! Fuck! Fuck!” I yell at the empty parking lot while I take long strides to my car.

“Archer?” Rose’s voice comes from behind me. My blood turns to ice, then the memories of the day roll in like a fucking stampede, taking it back to boiling point.

“What are you doing here, Rose? Aren’t you supposed to be halfway back to your perfect penthouse apartment?” I bark at her, without turning.

“What? No! I’m not going.”

“You are, buttercup. You are. You just don’t know it yet!” I turn around to look at her. Her nose is red from the cold. She looks like she’s been crying. She has my fucking coat in her arms.

“Fuck, James! I am not going.” I walk away from her. I hear her feet shuffling in the snow as she follows me to my car. Fuck, Andy kept my keys.

“You fucking coward! You do not walk away from me again!” The anger in her voice is familiar, the hurt underneath is what makes me face her. She looks like a damn fairy against the snowy backdrop.

“Rose, this weekend was... that was all it was, a weekend.” She lowers her eyes. “You will go back to your fucking perfect little life with the lake views and the beige furniture eventually. That’s your life and fuckface fits right in it.” It physically hurts me to say that. “He completes the damn set.”

“Maybe he does!” She agrees. “But it’s not what I want.” She’s pure fire, her eyes are shining bright with emotion.

“Look at me, Archer.” I do. She disarms me. I can’t help myself, I grab her by the waist and push her against my car. Her lips fall open. My hands fist her hair, tilting her head upwards, our lips mere inches away.

“Don’t play with me, Rose.” I can’t tell if it’s a warning or a plea.

“I don’t want mediocre and boring, Archer.” Rose swallows, before closing the distance between us. I can smell sweet tea in her breath. “All I want, is you.” Her cold lips meet mine in a kiss so intense it feels we will combust. Our heated breaths mix as I whisper her name into her mouth. Fuck. I’m spellbound by whatever magic this damn Rose holds. I want it all, every petal and every thorn.

“Are you sure, Rosy?” I need to hear it again.

“Fucking sure.” Her lips meet mine again. “The only thing I want is to go home with you, *Archer*.” Fuck. Heart melted, cock hard. Her voice holds a new intensity, mingled with naughty playfulness that sobers me right up. She dangles car keys in front of me.

“Slight change of plans. I’ll drive. But when we get home. You take the wheel, Daddy.”

Chapter Ten

Rose

It's not by chance that Cupid is the son of Venus, Goddess of love, and Mars, the God of war.

Turns out love and hate are divided by a thin, very blurred line. One that I can't see anymore. It takes just a small flip to have heads mixing with tails, right with wrong, lust with love.

Saying I hated James' guts seems harsh. I can't say I didn't, on occasion, wish he'd fall off his high horse, and break his perfect, straight nose in the process. I realize now I was simply stuck in the opposite pole of this magnet.

The lies we tell ourselves.

'Hating' him was easier, less painful than admitting to myself how I really felt. I want him. I've always wanted him. I never factored in the possibility of actually having him.

Now, I can see clearer. Now, I know I would be there to help him back up whenever he fell.

Because, in fact, he fell. I fell. Hard.

He was there to catch me. Whereas I let him hit the ground. James broke before my very eyes. I hate it took his pain for me to realize how much I couldn't let him go.

Outside the bar in the snow, his whole being pleaded for deliverance. The learning curve might be steep, but I know I can piece him together, if he just lets me.

The rest of the world will have to learn how to deal with it. I can't lose him over a reputation and stupid expectations, which, at the end of the day, no one gives a rat's ass about.

To Claudia, and all the other faceless, nameless, and brainless ones I don't want to think about, who had him before I did – thank you. Thank you for not being 'the one' and depriving me of the wonderful, fucking life-changing revelation that is James Archer.

Sure, he is a jackass. A foulmouthed, short-tempered, controlling asshole, who has dipped my world in neon, while obliterating all the careful lines I had drawn with his splash of flashy, messy, irreverent color. He squeezes the paint tube right in the middle and drives me crazy — I bet he still does that to toothpaste.

I learned something from him this weekend. I learned the importance of a well applied ‘fuck it’. Diving head first into what makes you happy, conventions and opinions be damned. Squeeze the damn tube wherever you want.

This Valentine’s Day, Cupid hit the bullseye. He might just be the best damn archer amongst the Gods. Second to James, of course. I know I’ll feel his wrath when we get to the house, and I can’t help but to be excited to get there.

James is finally taking me home. He’s holding my hand under his, on top of the gearshift, not giving me the slightest chance to pull it away. He trusts my driving, but he needs the control. There’s a peaceful but still devilish grin on his face as he keeps his eyes on the frosty road. I can’t wait to see just where those turning wheels inside his head are taking him.

He hasn’t spoken the whole ride, yet somehow the silence isn’t heavy or loaded with unspoken words. Very much the opposite. It’s building on my eagerness.

I smirk at him in return, while he keeps his eyes steadily ahead, not noticing. Without hesitation, I take my chance and yank my hand from his, holding a wicked grin on my lips.

“What the hell do you think you’re doing, Valentine?”

My response is to giggle, holding my hand to my chest. I’ve done it now. James reaches over, unclamps my hand and brings it to rest on his thigh.

“Do you know what happens to brats, Rose? They get punished.” James’ voice is low, dripping with a certainty that always gets to me. “You’ve just earned yourself a good spanking, Rosy girl. If that hand leaves its place for anything besides gear shifting, it’s gonna get a lot worse. Do you understand?”

I'm flooded. Pussy throbbing, toes curling, hips grinding. A spanking? I must be insane to be looking forward to it, but fuck I am.

James looks over, finding me hot and severely bothered just as we enter our street.

"Stay in the car." He commands, stepping out. I'm confused, but soon enough he is over on my side opening my door for me. He's gone from a dominating prick to a gentleman in a blink of an eye.

Before I'm even completely out, my center of gravity shifts, my ass pulsing with the sting of a smack. Forget the gentleman, he's full-on Dom now.

"James!" I squeal, "what are you doing?"

He threw me over his shoulder and is carefully making his way towards the house.

"I'm not risking any damage but mine to that sexy ass of yours." He ends that statement with another hard smack, and I find myself clenching my pussy at the slight pain, feeling every pulse as I release.

"You wanna play, Rosy girl?" James sets my feet back on the floor, caging me against the front door. He's holding my jaw in his hand, his lips brushing against mine. "I'm game. What's your head start, baby?"

"Three seconds." My voice is a moan, a plea, a pleasure-filled song.

"Good girl." James kisses me with a hunger I've never felt. He tastes like scotch and the promise of sin. He's inhaling me, taking my lip into his mouth, before painfully releasing me. "Go."

The command is clear and final. I run inside, taking my clothes off, leaving a trail behind me, managing everything but my pants and bra. I want to be found, I want to be punished. With James, I want it all.

With a right turn, I'm heading over to the kitchen. The house is submerged in a silence so deep it's almost eerie. I

steady my breathing, but all I hear is my racing heart as I hide behind the island. I hold my breath, trying to make out James' footsteps.

Nothing. Just the clock.

I'm his willing prey but adrenaline is still pumping hard through my veins, settling its rush deep within my core.

Tick tock. I've never heard it before, but damn it's loud now.

Tick tock.

Tick—

“Too easy, Valentine.” I'm in the air before his voice hits my ears, as James sits me on the counter and unbuttons my jeans. I'm smiling wider than the Cheshire cat, but who I really want to be is Alice. I want to fall into the wonderland only James can take me to. “I haven't had dinner. I'm starving, baby.”

He pulls my ass to the edge of the marble counter and gets down on his knee. I feel the tip of his nose running along my wet underwear, James' sharp inhale being followed by a guttural groan. “Fuck, you smell good.”

He bites down on me, making me gasp at the unexpected feeling. His mouth is full of me, but I can still make out his demands. “Who owns this?”

I'm fisting his hair now, desperate to feel his tongue where it belongs, completely surrendered to his possessiveness. “You do.”

He bites down harder, making me both gasp and realize my mistake. “You do, Daddy.” I quickly correct myself.

My underwear is pushed to the side, James' tongue burying inside me the next second. My head falls back in bliss, my eyes shut as tight as they go. James feasts on me like a starving lion, flicking his expert tongue on my clit, running it up each of my lips and tasting me from the inside.

“Oh fuck, James.”

I'm rocking against him, riding his face at will, searching for my ultimate release. James stops and stands, bringing his face just an inch away from mine, his hand taking his place between my legs. Torturous and slow.

"You're being punished tonight, remember? You will not come until I say you may, Rosy girl." His tone is resolute, final and unwavering, punctuated by a painfully slow thrust of the fingers he's buried inside. "I told you at the party you'd be begging. Are you gonna beg your Daddy to let you come?"

Fuck. His dirty talk is hot as hell's fire and brimstone. How can I control it when his words alone are making my pussy throb?

James pinches my clit hard for my hesitation. Even though it's painful it doesn't help calm my arousal one bit. It does just the opposite. The gates of this dam are now wide open, and I can't control the despair in my voice.

"Oh God, yes. I am, Daddy." He notices my body's response to the pain he's inflicting, his lips tilting up in a knowing smirk.

"Does my good girl like pain?" He slides my panties down my legs and unhooks them from my bare feet before setting me back on the floor. "Turn around."

I hear the sound of his belt buckle. This is it. This is when he fucks me, finally. I'm aching to feel him inside me. I'm empty and clenching on nothing but air. When did I become this horny, desperate, mess?

I jump at the crack of his leather belt, snapping like a whip. Not an ounce of my body is tight in fear. I trust him.

"Hands behind your back, Valentine." I do as I'm told, James ties my wrists with his leather belt. He presses himself against my back, both hands squeezing my breasts, his fingers pinching my hardened nipples. I can feel his erect shaft pressed against my ass, but his jeans are still in the damn way.

"Remember, you are not allowed to come, Rosy girl. Tell me you understand." He whispers straight into my ear.

"I understand, Daddy." Reluctantly, but I do.

He spins us to the other side, right in front of the sink, kicks my legs apart and places his hand flat between my shoulder blades, pushing me forward.

His breath is fanning my butt cheeks, and soon both his hands are swatting my butt's bare skin, making me arch my back, thrusting my pussy into his face. "Mmm, that's my good girl."

James is lost between my legs, eating me from slit to crack, not missing a spot, occasionally landing a sharp smack on my ass. I clench every time he does, the pain intensifies his relentless assault. He captures my clit between his teeth, gently sucking it into his mouth, making me writhe with every pull.

"Oh fuck, that feels good." My moans are bouncing off the kitchen walls, and every time he feels my walls start to clench around his tongue, James stops to let me recover. He spreads me wider with his hands and sets his attention on my butthole, his tongue teasing, licking and breaching just a little. I should resist but I can't, I'm lost in this real reverie.

James goes back to my pussy, burying his face in my ass cheeks while his tongue is expertly working my clit in a speed that means nothing but trouble.

I'm so close I can see stars behind my closed lids.

"Daddy..." I moan, in a plea. "I'm gonna come."

My breath is cut from my lungs as James splashes cold water on my chest. It takes a while to breathe again, but at least my arousal has settled. I didn't come, he pulled me out just in time. Fuck.

"Bad girl, Rosy." James lands a hard smack on my ass before dipping a finger inside me. "I said no coming. Now I'm gonna have to fuck your mouth for not begging." Hot fucking damn. I'm going to self-combust any minute now.

He spins me back to him and captures my lips. His tongue is possessive and demanding. This time he tastes like me and depravity. I love it. "On your knees, Valentine. Open your mouth for me."

He's painfully hard, precum sliding off the edge off his glistening head. He's fisting his shaft, pumping it at leisure right in front of my eyes.

"Lick it." He commands again. I stick my tongue out and he swipes his dick on it, cleaning himself on me.

Fuck! I want him to fuck my mouth. I want to taste him again. He's teasing me, sliding his tip around my mouth, my cheeks, under my chin. "How badly do you want it, baby? Enough to beg for it?"

Fuck, yes. "Please, Daddy. Let me taste you."

James' smooth head rests right at the entrance of my mouth. He fists both hands in my hair, gripping it at the base of my neck and pulls me forward.

"I want your tears today. You gonna gag around me like a good girl?" This should be about pleasuring him, but the way he's speaking to me has me all bothered again. I'm burning to have him stretch me.

He pushes a little more and I do gag, and smile at him right after with my mouth full of his cock. I don't fight the tears and let them run down my cheeks. "You're fucking beautiful, Rose."

He wipes my tears away with his thumbs each time they fall, as he fucks my mouth, using my hair as his reins.

"Goddamn, Rose. That mouth will be the death of me. Fuuuck." This is doing a lot more for me than I ever thought. I'm fluttering, pumping, clenching, pulsing... James is unrestrained today, yet somehow, he finds the will to stop. "I need to eat you while you suck me."

He pulls me to my feet and releases my restraints. My hands fly to his hair the second they are free, and I kiss him with all the pent-up arousal that's pumping through my veins. I'm desperate to come, this little game is driving me insane.

"Go to the living room. Wait for me there. Go." I turn and get another smack on my ass, pleasurable jolts of electricity hitting my clit like thunder.

I'm impatiently waiting for James, pacing along the center carpet in front of the fireplace. Back and forth, back and forth.

I let my hand fall between my thighs, circle my oversensitive nub and resist the need to push a finger inside myself.

Fuck, what has he done to me?

Soon enough James is emerging under the wide threshold, his hard cock bouncing as he walks towards me. His hands are full of stuff. The whole arsenal we bought yesterday. He lies down on the plush carpet and lures me to meet him.

"Pussy on my face, Valentine."

I get in place, legs wide, straddling his face, my clit right in his mouth. I take his perfect cock in my hand before taking it into my mouth. It goes deep but I can barely feel it passing my throat, I'm so turned on my body is humming to his tune.

"Tap my leg if you want me to stop, but my cock stays in that pretty mouth at all times. I'm going to use some of these toys on you. Do you trust me, Rosy girl?"

"I do, Daddy."

"Perfect." He places two fingers in my mouth, and I eagerly suck on them, coating them with spit. "Now, suck my cock, baby."

I take him into my mouth again, deep down, while he's licking my clit in a rhythm that will soon have me thrusting over the moon. Those two fingers slowly invade my needy pussy. Just two thrusts and they are out again.

He keeps his mouth on my pussy while he spreads that strawberry lube all over my ass.

First thing in is the butt plug, he teases me with it before inching it inside me. It feels a little bigger than the first, and it burns too, but his heavenly pussy eating is numbing it all away in seconds.

A low hum takes over my senses and soon James is stretching me with a vibrator. I picture it again, it's veiny and

wide just like him and I love the feeling.

I'm full. Every hole in my body is overtaken and owned by him. I can't hold the moans anymore. It feels even better with his cock deeply buried in my mouth.

He eats me out while thrusting with the vibrator, and I suck harder on his cock. I'm as eager as ever to swallow him. Talk about a fucking incentive.

"Oh God, Daddy." I manage to moan even with my mouth full of him. "Please, Daddy, let me come. Oh God, please." He smacks my ass with his free hand but I can't help it anymore. He doesn't stop either, he increases his assault on my pussy, fucking me with the toy as he eats every inch on me, sucking hard on my clit. I've stopped bobbing, but his hips are thrusting into my mouth and fuck it's hot.

I'm so full. So turned on. So going to come. Right. Now.

"Ahhh," I moan still impaled, my body convulsing in a powerful ecstasy I've never experienced before.

I'm so sensitive his licks become painful. I can't take it anymore and tap on his leg. James stops and pulls the vibrator from my pussy, helping me as I collapse to the side.

"That wasn't following the rules, Rosy girl." His grin is wide and wicked as he removes the toys. He did it on purpose, but I can't accuse him, I can't talk or even open my eyes for that matter. My body is still shuddering in small aftershocks, just like a freaking earthquake.

James' fingers are brushing up my stomach, between my breasts and back down again, soothing and calming, helping me ride off the high he took me to. His slow kisses are borderline sinful, if only they weren't heavenly.

He allows me time to recover, but soon enough his touch is not so innocent and his kisses not so soothing.

"You were a bad, bad girl, Rosy. I'll need to punish you for coming without permission." James grunts in my ear. His fingers have found their way back to my clit, circling and flicking before dipping down into my pussy. "What am I going to do with you, huh?"

“James...” I moan as I start to respond to his new assault.

“I’m going to spank that sassy ass of yours and you are going to count for me, Rosy girl.”

James sends all seventeen pillows Elizabeth keeps on the couch flying to the floor, takes a seat on the couch, and taps his legs.

This is my chance for a little taunting, and I take it without hesitation. I lean on my hands to stand, feet on the ground, ass high up in the air, and slowly rise, giving James a perfect vision of my pussy as I do. I unclasp my bra and ditch it towards the pile of pillows, turning around to meet James’ hungry eyes.

He grabs my wrist and pulls me onto him. “You fucking tease. You’ve just earned yourself another smack.”

I’m bending over his legs, ass at his mercy. The cool breeze brushing against my pussy is doing nothing to ease the tension.

“I’m going easy on you today, buttercup. I’m sure this is your first time.” He caresses my butt cheeks, purposefully grazing my aching lips in the process. “But you are going to count out, loud and clear. You will not hold back any moan. Do you hear me? Those are mine. I want to hear you, baby. Let’s start.”

A sharp sting runs through my skin and settles between my legs. I’m tingling in all the right places, my skin burning just a little.

“I didn’t hear you, Rosy girl.”

“One.” I manage to exhale.

Two, comes with a little more force, followed by soothing strokes on my skin.

“Three.” I moan louder, my pussy feeling it just as much as my ass.

“That’s my good girl. Maybe you’ll be rewarded with my cock after you take your spanking.”

Another smack, and James' cock is now poking my side, hard and ready to take me. "Four."

I'm throbbing, probably dripping too. Another sharp smack. I can barely think, as a rush of lust, adrenaline, and anticipation flood my body, overflowing through every pore.

James rubs my skin again before his hand lands on the same spot he was soothing.

"Five." Another smack that burns my skin, spreading its fire straight to my pussy, like an unstoppable wildfire born in my core. "Oh God, Daddy. Please."

"Begging now, are we? What do you want, Rosy girl?"

"I want you to fuck me."

"Fuck, you're dripping wet." James' fingers slide through my exposed sex, his touch almost unbearable. I shiver under it, I can't help the thrilling sparks from igniting all over my skin erupting into millions of goosebumps. Everywhere he touches. Everywhere I want him to touch.

"Fuck it." He's had enough of his own games. James is just as turned on as I am. He turns me onto the couch, stomach up and presses my legs back. He's fisting his cock in his strong hand, pumping up and down, smacking my swollen clit with his gland.

He's teasing us both, coating his shaft with my dripping arousal.

"Beg for it, Rosy girl."

"Oh God, James."

"Beg, baby."

"Fuck me. Fuck me hard. Drive me into the damn couch and coat me with your cum. Please, Daddy. I need you."

That's all it takes.

James buries himself in me in one thrust, grunting loudly once he's inside me to the hilt. He stills, reveling in the feeling of my tightness, waiting for my muscles to stop clenching around him.

“This pussy is perfect for me. Whose is it, Rose? Who does this hungry pussy belong to?”

“Ahh, fuck. You, James, only you.”

“Damn fucking right, it does.” He moves in slow circles, grinding his hips into me, grazing my nub every time. I hadn’t noticed him grabbing anything, but suddenly the rose toy is humming again, held against me by James’ big hand.

“I won’t be able to stop with that, Daddy.”

“Come for me, baby girl. You’ve earned it.” He pulls out and thrusts back in again, shallow thrusts with just his head, completely out to probe back in again. The feeling is amazing. Deep is good, but this is just fucking heavenly.

With the toy compressed on my clit, and the sight of James above me, I’m so close I can touch the sky. He releases my legs and holds my throat, compressing just enough to make it a little hard to breathe. The lack of oxygen and those shallow thrusts quickly take me over the edge, and tip me into the abyss.

“Scream my name, Rosy girl. Eyes on me when you come.”

“Oh God, fuck James. I’m coming. Ohhhh.” I can’t hear, I can’t see. I’m lost in this feeling of pure ecstasy.

James slams back into me, for just a couple of strokes and pulls out, fisting his cock in his hand and pumping hard. Thick ropes of white cum land on my pussy, as I watch James come in delight.

“Mine. Mine. Mine. Fucking. Miiiiineee.” He grunts with each final pump.

He’s beautiful. He’s so damn beautiful I still can’t believe he’s chosen me. He leans down and kisses me. There’s more than lust in it. More than a thank you for a good fuck. So much more. He lets his eyes trail over me, nobody has ever looked at me the way James does.

“I’m going to get a towel to clean you up.”

How? How did my bland insipid life get to this? How the hell have I never known this even existed?

James is a dream I never even knew I had, and now he's mine. We haven't spoken about it, but I know he is. And me? In owning myself, I finally have enough. I can keep enough of myself while willingly giving myself to him. I have never belonged to someone the way I choose to belong to him. *With* him.

Soon I'm clean, and drifting off to sleep on the couch, wrapped naked in James' arms. I'm deep in a restful sleep, dreaming of my man, my valentine, and thankfully, blissfully, when I wake up with the sun shining through the curtains, he's still there. Cradling me in his warm embrace.

"Good morning, buttercup." James captures my lips, in a tender, loving kiss. "How are you feeling?"

"Hmm." I moan as I stretch my aching muscles. "Happy. Can we wake up like this more often?"

"You took the words out of my mouth." He chuckles and kisses me again. "What about here?" He presses his hips into mine. "Are you okay?"

"Damaged. So well damaged. When can we do it again?" James meets my words with a wide smile that fills my chest with warmth, and just as quick, it's transformed into a wicked grin.

"What's your head start, Valentine?" I'm on my feet before he can finish the question. I run behind the couch, this time it's tag, not hide and seek. I challenge him from the other side, his cock growing hard before my eyes.

"You'll have to catch me, Daddy. I feel naughty today." I laugh and James' eyes go as wide as saucers, worrying the shit out of me.

I cut my laughter that very second. There's a noise. Fuck it's the door!

James throws me the only two pillows next to him and I place them in front of myself, just as the door opens wide.

Our parents are stuck under the threshold, paralyzed at the sight.

James is covering his cock with his hands, and I'm so dumbstruck I don't even think to duck.

That's it. We are caught red fucking handed.

There're only seconds, but it sure feels like long hours, the damn clock taunting me again.

Dad and Elizabeth are staring at us, mouths ajar.

Holy fucking shit on a stick!

Elizabeth is stuck in a loop, shaking her head in disapproval, while Dad's eyes are close to popping out of their sockets.

"I..." I try to speak, but words are failing me.

"Mom, Dad?" James tries, his voice sounding just as horrified as mine.

"Well, Liza, I told you we should have kept calling." They both turn around to leave, but I'm still shaking to my core. "You owe me ten bucks, darling."

"I was right too!" She protests. "I just thought it would happen a lot sooner."

THE END

For now...

OceanofPDF.com

About the Author

Stephanie Amaral

Hi. I'm Stephanie, big dreamer and self-confessed accidental writer. This corner of the internet is where my big dreams and my "accident" meet.

Welcome!

Fall of 2020. There was nowhere to go, and little to do. I was going stir-crazy, so, I decided to use my imagination and take myself to a world where the men are confident, dangerous, powerful—and, yes, gorgeous—and the women are strong, fierce, daring, and beautiful.

What started as a way to push my boundaries and keep myself busy, turned into something I never expected when I clicked on a button with the word "publish".

Fast-forward a year and I have three books to my name: Beyond Temptation, Beyond Deception and Beyond Redemption.

The Beyond Series.

What can you expect? Stories that are fast-paced and engaging, love that is intense, passionate, and bold. And the sex? Hot. Hot. Hot. (I have been blamed for higher water bills due to the need of cold showers.)

Thank you for stopping by and joining this new dream of mine. My hope is that it will make you dream too.

OceanofPDF.com

Follow me

on social media.

I don't post much, but I can promise to stalk you back.

[Facebook](#)

[Instagram](#)

[TikTok](#)

[Goodreads](#)

[BookBub](#)

[Amazon](#)

[Website](#)

[*OceanofPDF.com*](#)

Other Books by *Stephanie Amaral*:

Beyond Redemption Duet:

[Angel of Darkness](#) - Book 1

[Angel of Light](#)- Book 2

Releases June 12th

(available for pre-order)

[*OceanofPDF.com*](#)

About the Author

MJ Espinosa

Hello. You made it this far, and apparently it's customary for me to tell you stuff about myself. I'll keep it short, promise.

The truth is, I fell into writing by accident. I didn't set out to write for anyone other than myself, and I definitely didn't write with the idea of ever publishing.

In many ways, my writing is a surprising side effect of me trying to escape the monotony of pandemic life through books. Mostly of the naughty kind.

I read —some would say too much, but they'd be wrong— discovered a new love, a new passion, and one night I got a little push, and began to write. The rest sort of followed. I don't claim to know much, but I put my heart and soul where my proverbial pen is. My hope is that it shows.

I live in Belgium, my chosen home away from my first and second homes — Ecuador and Canada.

I have two daughters, one husband, collect book ideas, sleep too little and stress too much.

There, you know enough. That wasn't too bad, was it?

OceanofPDF.com

Follow me

on social media.

[Facebook](#)

[Instagram](#)

-

[BookBub](#)

[Amazon](#)

[Website](#)

[*OceanofPDF.com*](#)

Other Books by *MJ Espinosa*:

[Mine by Choice](#) - @ inkitt

[OceanofPDF.com](#)

Acknowledgements

Stephanie Amaral

This book is an ode to friendship. It's about putting your words where your mouth is – or is it the other way round?

Thank you MJ, if it weren't for you, fanning my flames and jumping aboard of this sinking ship, my madness wouldn't have gone past opening credits.

I'm still an erotic novel author in the closet, so no family member of mine is reading this. Except for my sister Vania. But she brought this upon herself, by pushing me to carry on when I was still thinking in Portuguese and badly wording my thoughts in a direct mental translation of a whole lot of crappy words. You believed and said I could, and I believed you. I love you.

Mom... don't you even dare. This is not for your eyes. EVER! But there's just no way I could let this opportunity go by without telling the world how proud I am of you and your strength. Half way through, tough days do come, but you can beat this.

To Sonia and Sandra, big sisters, role models, pains in my ass, bullies of my life - I adore you.

To my two baby girls, who now make books with their own drawings and a ton of sticky tape, that's all I want. To be an inspiration to you, to follow your dreams, known or unknown. Write, draw, dance, be a princess or a dinosaur, a vet or a doctor, as long as it's your chosen path, I'll be there for it all. My chest is too small to hold the love I have for you.

To my husband, for your full support, setting up extra screens, bringing me wine on release days, and being my inspirational muse as you call yourself. What would I do without you? Life would be boring and without color without you by my side. I. Love. You.

OceanofPDF.com

Acknowledgements

MJ Espinosa

To my beautiful, smart monkey girls. You don't get why Mama is on the computer every night, my hope is that when you do, you'll be proud. Thank you for being little drivers in my life even if sometimes you drive me nuts in the process. Mama amo a ti.

To my husband. You pick up the slack, give me time, support without always getting it. I appreciate it so much. Thank you for setting an example of passion and dedication. I see you.

To my Mom, Dad, Sister and Aunt. Thank you for being excited and proud, even when I won't let you read any of this.

Les quiero.

To my "baby" cousins for their expertise and help in getting this little dream of mine off the ground. Gracias, son lo máximo.

And last by not least, to my partner in crime, Stephanie. Meeting you has changed my life in ways I couldn't have expected. We often joke we live in each other's phones, but you live in my heart too. Thank you for the endless words we share.

OceanofPDF.com

THANK YOU for reading!

OceanofPDF.com