



THEIR EASTER

Bunny

A DAD'S BEST FRIEND, SURPRISE TRIPLETS, REVERSE HAREM ROMANCE

AJME WILLIAMS

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CONTENTS

[Also by Ajme Williams](#)

[Description](#)

[Chapter 1](#)

[Chapter 2](#)

[Chapter 3](#)

[Chapter 4](#)

[Chapter 5](#)

[Chapter 6](#)

[Chapter 7](#)

[Chapter 8](#)

[Chapter 9](#)

[Chapter 10](#)

[Chapter 11](#)

[Chapter 12](#)

[Chapter 13](#)

[Chapter 14](#)

[Chapter 15](#)

[Chapter 16](#)

[Epilogue](#)

[Protecting Their Princess \(Preview\)](#)

[Ready to Read ALL books in The Why Choose HaremLand Series?](#)

[About the Author](#)

[Want more Ajme Williams?](#)

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All characters are 18+ years of age and all sexual acts are consensual.

ALSO BY AJME WILLIAMS

Ajme Williams writes emotional, angsty contemporary romance. All her books can be enjoyed as full length, standalone romances and are FREE to read in Kindle Unlimited.

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DESCRIPTION

Three gorgeous men rescued me from my worst nightmare,
but that was just the beginning.

My dad's best friends were completely off-limits.

I wasn't thinking straight when I let Mateo kiss my lips the
night I was devastated about my ex's betrayal.

And then he invited two of his friends to join us and make my
night even better.

Mateo... He's two decades older, and the kind of silver fox I
didn't know I wanted.

Eric is unpredictably ruthless but that doesn't scare me. His
protective arms allow me to sleep in peace.

And **Lucas** adds all the spice I need in the bedroom while
craving for more.

Ending up in this *position* and being their easter bunny has its
consequences.

My blackmailing ex has gotten these men... angry.

They are shielding me from him.

But none of us know how to save my dad's career if word gets
out.

**Especially now that I'm pregnant with triplets... *with no
idea who the baby daddy is.***

Renn

“Will you be back home by eight tonight? I feel like we haven’t spent time together for far too long!”

“Well, that’s business, baby. If I were home loving on you all the time, who’d take care of our accounts?”

I sighed. Tyson had been like this for an entire year.

Not that I didn’t appreciate the work he was doing for *Bunny Up*, our little lingerie boutique in Soho. He’d been sitting idle at home for the entire length of our marriage before I got him this job.

At least he was of some use.

Not that I was complaining. Our life in New York was the stuff of dreams. Tyson and I shared a two-bedroom unit overlooking the East River and the Empire State Building. There were few who could claim to be lucky enough to live in the sky.

That’s what The Copper was, a twisting marvel of two adjoining towers held by a whimsical, astronomically long sky bridge. The apartment was my shelter, but more than that, it appealed to my aesthetic sense.

It came with warm European oak flooring, Nest temperature control, and custom-designed light fixtures highlighting various nuances of the Manhattan skyline.

Plus, the ambient natural light, courtesy of high ceilings and glass walls, brought with it a sense of escape amid an ocean of chaos.

I looked around me, snuggling into the warmth of my pashmina shawl, for it was a chilly spring. Every little fixture and oddity in this space was my own, made with what I had earned from pulling long hours and sleepless nights.

Yes, my father was a town mayor, and our family came from old money. But me? I was meant to make it on my own.

I knew with my first visit to a modest lingerie store, which quickly turned into an interlude of soft fabrics and delicious curves, scents, and delights, a whole history in the making. This was my calling.

Of course, Tyson was the more reticent one. He liked to take things slow . . . but that was our vibe ever since we were teenagers. He brought me down when I tried flying too high. Some could look at it as clipping my wings. I chose to believe he was helping me.

I sighed and stretched out on the divan. I'd definitely have to do something about the sex, though. Funny that someone who was surrounded by bras and panties all day and night hadn't slept with her SO in . . . forever?

The terrain between my legs had become so foreign, I felt like I'd need a Visa renewal just to know what the hell was going on in there. For starters, maybe it did need some upkeep. Perhaps that's what turned Tyson off.

"You should always look pretty," Veronica would chide me whenever she came to the store dressed in her colors, each garment befitting of her uptown style. I, for one, had always prioritized comfort.

My go-to getup involved a messy bun, sweats, my Celine glasses, a cup of coffee, and a look of murderous rage on my face. The last was an in-house special for anyone who tried to get on my nerves before I got caffeine in my system.

Maybe my best friend was on to something, though. Men were supposed to crave physical appeal.

I snorted into my cup of affogato at the thought of Tyson drooling over my freshly-waxed nether regions. Somehow, the image of his goofy face looking all sexy with intent did not get me hot.

We were married, though. This was normal.

Romance couldn't last forever, but we did have a stable companionship to get us going. Veronica would roll her eyes so hard. She'd tell me I was too young to be talking like a grandma on her next crocheting project.

True enough. I was twenty-three. We'd married at nineteen, fresh out of school, the world in our rear-view vision. Dad had never been fond of Tyson, but he loved me too dearly to cast me out.

So, he sent me to NYC from my far-off home in the little town of Lockwood. This was my fresh start, and boy, when business hit, I began making enough to live like a queen on my own terms.

Tyson was . . . he just happened to be there.

You know, like when you have a great piece of toast, but you need a little something to elevate it to that perfect bite, say, a smidge of golden butter. That's what he was—the butter to my toast.

Sighing, I dialed the number of the posh parlor two streets over. I hated visiting parlors and the suspicious stares I'd incur each time. God knows what they were thinking.

That hairy bitch is back again.

Look at her brows! They look like they belong in the jungle!

I'll go see if Jen is available. I'm not doing her today.

Then again, they had reasons to hate me. It stemmed from my first Brazilian experience there. I'd aimed a straight kick at the face of a hapless Mari as she pulled the wax strip off.

I'd knocked over the tub of hot wax, and it fell on the floor, on valuable appliances . . . pretty much everywhere. In

my defense, the pain? Why the fuck would we do that to ourselves again and again? But here I was.

“Hello,” the singsong voice of the receptionist, clad with fake sincerity, greeted me. “Delicate Beauty, how may we help you?”

I rubbed my eyes wearily. “Can I book an appointment for a Brazilian in the next half-hour?”

“Of course, madam.”

“Great, thanks.”

Hanging up, I looked down at my lap for a brief second. Call it a mental preparation of sorts because nobody willingly goes to show her privates to a bunch of strangers and have them slather said parts with hot wax and strip them raw. Ugh.

A messy bun and a bowl of granola later, I stepped out of the apartment.

New York had been home for a while now, yet it never ceased to fascinate me.

There was so much underlying power in the beauty of this city. It took you in, yes, and if you were too vulnerable, it would spit you out with equal gusto. But it had life, tenacity, the stuff of strength.

I took a winding road down from Murray Hill and eventually stopped near Delicate Beauty, the poshest parlor in town. I wanted to run in the opposite direction.

“Fucking hell, calm your tits, Renn,” I muttered to myself. “You’re doing this.”

Before my legs could act of their own volition, the sliding doors opened and a gust of cold wind gave way to Madame Liana, or so she liked to call herself. Rotund and fiercely cheerful, she ran the business like it was her baby.

“Renn Sophia-Grace.” She beamed. “How long has it been? Look at you! You look like you’ve become a wolf cub.”

“Ah, always a pleasure to see you too, Liana.”

“Come in, come in.” She pulled me indoors toward rows of fancy white front desks offset by expensive orchids juxtaposed against French windows. “What can we do for you today?”

“I . . . is Mari in?” I blushed furiously because even with my last experience, both of us knew Mari was best when it came to stripping the privates without causing too much anguish.

Liana’s perfectly micro-bladed brows came together. “Sure, sure, you would like a downstairs trim, correct?”

I nodded, unwilling to say any more. From the corner of my eyes, I could have sworn I saw two girls wink and giggle. Man, I wanted to get out of there.

“Good, good.” Liana was already pulling me toward one of the inner chambers. “Wait in there. Put the gown on, and we’ll send someone shortly.”

“Thanks.” I handed her my card. “A full Brazilian.”

The room was almost medical. It reminded me of being in a hospital, gowns and nakedness and all. I lay down on the station, fully prepared for the worst. This was what Hannibal’s victims probably felt like before he cooked them.

“For fuck’s sake.” I closed my eyes, squirming. How was I supposed to feel comfortable when my body felt hot and cold at the same time? I groaned. “Where the hell is she?”

“Right here.” The door opened, and Mari walked in, a sardonic smile on her face. She did not look happy. Off to a great start.

She positioned herself between my legs. “Now, I must emphasize.” She paused to cough. “Please stay calm. The equipment here will get damaged, and we could risk an accident if you behave like the last time.”

Was I supposed to react or tell her off for speaking with that tone to me? “Sure, I’m sorry about last time,” I mumbled instead, feeling like a child who’d just been scolded for doing something naughty.

“No harm,” she replied. “Go on all fours.”

“Ex—excuse me?” I sputtered.

“Ma’am, you’ve got an Amazon down there. I need more access.”

Almost in tears, I turned my back and raised my hips. What was this, a prelude to lovemaking?

A sharp, ripping tear the next instant told me I’d been far too wishful. Tears and an agonized scream left my lips as I gripped the station for dear life. “Oh, my God!” My legs had begun trembling.

“Maybe we could skip the full Brazilian?”

“Oh.” She laughed, intent on preparing the next strip. “We’re not even a second in. I’m just doing brush control right now.”

“Unhh,” was all I could reply. I mustered the strength for what felt like an appropriate conversation between a woman and her pussy waxer. “I probably don’t get in there like I used to. My husband and I aren’t doing it all that much right now.”

She snorted. “Maybe he’s having trouble finding it?”

I ignored the jibe. “It’s just that both of us are working so late, plus—OW!”

Why did it feel like she was ripping my heart out of my vagina? Was that even possible? “For the love of sweet Jesus.” I wanted to weep like a baby.

You can do this. Yeah, you got this. I ground my teeth together. Then, the door opened.

“Hey, I’d like some priva—”

“Renn? Your card was declined.”

I looked up from my seat of torture to the worried face of the girl at the door. “Are you sure?”

“I ran it thrice.” She shook her head.

“Ah— I’m sure my husband just forgot to pay the bill. Work has been so busy right now.”

“Of course.” She tutted. “Unfortunately, we can’t continue to work on you if you can’t pay the bill.”

“But—” I spluttered. “She’s only halfway through my wax. I’ll come back with cash, I—”

“Sorry, Ms. Grace. It’s store policy. Mari, clean up in here. We have our regular two-o’clock coming in.”

Mari waited until the door was closed once more. “I’ll leave you to it.” She began giggling.

“What?”

“Maybe your husband likes uneven chicks.” She cleared out before I could find an appropriate comeback.

The fuck? Why was my card getting declined in the first place? I half-limped down the station and pulled my sweats back on. What was Tyson doing, messing around with our money? He was the one who handled the family finances.

I stepped out of the parlor and dialed a number.

“Hey, Renn!”

“Hey, Ver. Meet me for coffee?”

“Sure, where?”

“I’m just outside Treble.”

“Be there in ten.”

Treble was my go-to cafe for days like these when my mood needed cheering up. I didn’t have enough cash on me for anything too fancy, but this was nothing a glazed donut and a macchiato wouldn’t cure.

Veronica walked in, all styled in a pretty Sheri Hill summer dress with high heels, her make-up perfect, and sat down beside me. What a day to feel like a frumpy bitch.

“Is that a donut?” She looked scandalized. It sure was a departure from her go-to soups and salads. Hey, I had nothing against a sexy salad or a hearty soup, but I needed my carbs right now.

I bit into the sweet flesh, reveling in how it gave way to a jammy center, paying zero heed to her disapproving glances.

“D’you know something?” I took a sip of the life-giving coffee. “Ty maxed out my card.”

“What?” She frowned. “Why would he do that?”

I shrugged. “I don’t know, but I’m going to find out. I’m gonna go home and go over our accounts today. It’s been a while since I’ve done that.”

“Are you sure that’s such a good idea?”

“What do you mean?”

“I mean . . .” She twirled a lock of loose hair. “Isn’t it best to just leave him be? We know Ty. Maybe he just made an honest mistake. The last thing you’d want is to piss him off about something that could have been an accident.”

I shook my head. “This is no accident. He’s been acting really funny around me too.”

“How so?”

“I know Tyson’s cues.” I couldn’t tell why, but my heart felt constricted like something was breaking inside me. Like I knew what was going on, but I didn’t want to believe it, couldn’t afford to believe it because . . . Tyson was my husband, my partner, my home.

He couldn’t be cheating on me.

It wasn’t possible.

And I needed to be able to believe that. I finished the last swig of my coffee. “I’m going home, Ver. You could come with me.”

Veronica inclined her head. “I don’t think what you’re doing right now is very constructive, Renn. But I’m your best friend. I’d come with you for anything.”

We got up and headed back home. I waited until we were inside before running into the study room, where Tyson kept all our financials securely enclosed in cabinets. Before delving into them, I poured myself a glass of scotch. “Best be ready.”

Preliminary digging around was enough to tell me he'd maxed out the credit card at a lingerie store—not our own.

“Maybe it was an early birthday present?” Even Veronica sounded tentative.

I shook my head. “He already got me a coupon for that wellness spa.”

“A—a coupon?”

“I gotta go to this store.”

“Renn, this is too impulsive, even for you.”

“Either you come or you leave, Ver. I'm sorry, I don't have time for this right now. My marriage could be falling apart. I need to know if it is. I have that right.”

“Okay.” Veronica rose and pulled me into a hug. “Okay. Let's go nail this SOB.”

I held on to her for a brief second, and then we were in an Uber, headed to *Nightshade*. I knew that shop.

It was one of the most expensive underwear boutiques in town, with even the basics costing up to thousands of dollars. I didn't stop to breathe until I faced the front desk, a girl who couldn't have been more than eighteen.

“Hi,” I half-slobbered, half-spoke. “Could you . . . would you please tell me about this charge right here?” I pointed at the knee-bending number on the bill. “What was bought with it?”

“Ma'am, I'm afraid we can't divulge that information.” She tutted apologetically. “It's against our business ethics.”

“Okay, look.” I flailed my hands desperately. “It—it's for this friend who's really ill. She—I got her this same thing a couple of months back, but then she lost it, and I really wanted to get another one for her. The last time, it was my secretary who got this for me, so I—”

“Look,” Veronica pushed a hundred-dollar bill across the counter. “Please help us.” She gave me a glare. “Nice move there, Sherlock. She was about to spill all her guts out to you.”

“Hey, I can’t even afford to clean my privates. You think I got cash to bribe store clerks?” I scowled at her, bunching my hands into fists.

The receptionist had disappeared. She came back with a tiny, bedazzled pink set, a bikini with a pair of boy shorts. The top was entirely lace, and it came with a diamond bustier.

And the bottom? Oh, it had “*Hoe for you*” written with the same stones. It was ridiculous, an affront to my senses, and a confirmation.

Tyson would never buy this for me. He’d know I’d laugh my ass off and ask him to return it the very second I’d lay my eyes on it.

“I . . . thank you.” Turning, I clutched Veronica’s hand and pulled her out of the store. “That’s not for me. That’s not for me.”

Veronica looked shell-shocked on my behalf. “Renn, I have to go back to work, okay? But listen. Go home. Get some rest. We will talk about this tomorrow. Just don’t get into trouble when I’m not there.”

She got me an Uber. I watched the skyline turn a faint tangerine and marry into soft evening indigo.

Where would I go from here? Could we possibly turn back from this? Was I even supposed to consider forgiving him? One mistake was allowed, right?

Back home, and a few more drinks later, I felt differently. It was all because of a fucking text. I looked down at the irritating words once more.

Don’t wait up. Have a business dinner tonight.

I’d fucking had enough.

Who would know better about his whereabouts than Tracy, the bimbo who worked as his secretary? I called her.

“Mrs. Grace, what a nice surprise!”

My ass.

“What restaurant is Tyson at right now?”

“I’m afraid—”

“Look, Tracy, I’ve spent the entire day convincing people to give out information they’re supposed to hold close. It’s not been that difficult. I suggest you cave, or I’ll come down and get what I need from you.”

“I—he’s at The Inn.”

“Thanks.” I hung up and booked another cab. The Inn it was.

By the time I got to the posh urban restaurant, I was beyond cold and exhausted. The day refused to let up, and I just wished it would. I paid the cab driver and stumbled out.

The Inn was the epitome of fine dining—spacious interiors, clever yellow lighting, a koi fountain at the front, and a little courtyard filled to the hilt with expensive, manicured flowers. I crept up to one of the windows, hoping to get a sight of Tyson.

What I did see wasn’t something I’d prepared myself for.

Oh, Tyson was there. His lips were busy smooching a leggy blonde in a Sheri Hill.

I knew that blonde. I’d known her longer than Tyson.

Veronica.

“Oh, my fucking God,” I groaned, and the next second, I’d thrown up all over a bunch of expensive Juliet roses.

“Miss.” The valet, both concerned and disgusted, walked up to me. “Can I help you?”

“Just—” I dry-heaved all over his uniform. “A cab. Copper Towers. Please.”

Somewhere along the journey home, I fell asleep. I saw dreams, one after the other, vivid pictures of mountains and a little valley overlooking a pristine lake.

My home. Lockwood. I saw Mya, her warm spirit welcoming me back there. My father would begin with, “I told you so.” But he’d understand.

“We’re here.” The irate cab driver stopped near my apartment. “D’you need help getting up?”

“I’m fine,” I mumbled, handing him the last of my change. I’d have to open the safe if I followed through with my plan. What else was there for me to do, anyway?

It was late night when I packed my last bag. Tyson had wiped most of the home safe clean. Whatever I could, I packed into my handbag. He wasn’t getting any more of my money.

Lockwood had hardly ever felt like a retreat.

It was a stifling little town, too conservative and careful for wild ones like me. But when the bird could not fly, she needed rest.

As I pulled my jeans on, the door opened. The hours had trickled into the early morning. This was no time for Tyson to come home, but who the hell cared? We were done.

“Where are you going?” He laughed. “You look like a mess.”

“Funny, you saying that. Maybe that’s because you spent all our money on my best friend. How did fucking her make you feel? Validated?”

His face changed emotions like a hurricane. There was a brief interlude of shock, followed by anger, reckoning, and then, nonchalance. The bastard wasn’t sorry.

“Well, I’m glad the cat’s outta the bag. She takes care of herself, makes me feel good, and doesn’t have your upkeep hassles. You should learn something from her, Renn.”

Two steps forward, and I’d aimed a well-deserved punch to his left eye. He stumbled back onto the couch, groaning and cursing. I pulled my bags to the front door.

“Enjoy your fucking sorry life. Oh, and by the way, Veronica’s boobs are all plastic. Maybe that’s just a plus for you, you fucking idiot.”

“Get lost, you cunt,” he roared as I slammed the door in his face. “I married you for your money, couldn’t you see that? You whore!”

I could see it now. I'd been a fool. And everything was crumbling apart in front of my very eyes. My freedom. My marriage. My identity.

Travel to the airport, dazed.

Get on the flight, dazed.

Fall asleep. Wake up, dazed.

I arrived at the Lockwood terminal a little past six the next evening. I'd spent most of the time in between dozing in and out of uncomfortable dreams. In one of them, I was in a threesome with Tyson and Veronica.

Lockwood was colder than NYC, its beauty as redolent and quiet as ever.

Tall cypress trees welcomed me home, along with the cooing of nightingales and the gentle summer song of the fireflies.

My father's mansion was only walking distance from the airport, so I chose to take a hike.

I had nothing but one bag and one suitcase—and the rest of my life to fix. Half an hour from home, my eyes fell upon Candied Nights.

This was the bar where I'd fallen in love with Tyson. The one where he'd proposed to me.

I didn't know why, but something in me needed to negate every experience I'd shared there. Maybe because all of them were tied to the one who got away.

"Eh," I muttered, walking toward the neon signpost leading to the bar's entrance. "One drink won't hurt."

Mateo

Work had consumed every last cent of my energy, so when I got a call from Jonathan, the last thing I wanted to hear was that he'd found another client for me.

"John," I groaned as I cruised the highway. Wind entered the rolled-down windows of my Maybach, each gust bringing a welcome spray of salt-tempered relief.

It really helped that Lockwood was so fucking close to the sea. I could drive down later in the night after handling whatever John was about to throw my way.

"You know I'm beat."

"Do this for me." Our town's mayor sounded as he always did when his good-natured antics got him into a tough spot. He'd promised to help some idiot who'd been too loose with his cash.

"You know we can't keep doing cases like this, right?" I chided him, trying my best to not sound harsh. He was my best friend, after all. We'd known each other for the better part of my forty-two years.

"I know, I know." I could almost picture him wiping his face wearily as he spoke. "I messed up. It's just he came to me for help, and I didn't think I could turn him down. It's the faith in the collective that's made me what I am, hasn't it?"

True. Jonathan Grace wasn't Lockwood's number-one handyman for just any reason. He'd been elected mayor because he knew how to get results, and he had a real fucking heart up his sleeve. He listened. He advocated for practical solutions.

He cared enough to make changes count.

"Fine." I sighed, drumming my hand against the wheel. "Is he already at the bar?"

"Thank you." John let out a long, low sigh of relief. "I owe you for this. Yes, he's at the local spot."

"I hate men who think they can talk shop over drinks at a sleazy place like Candied Nights," I grumbled. Strings of golden lights illuminated the pathway leading down from Avery Lane, where I was, down to the bar where my offender sat.

"All I feel like once I walk into a place like that is old. The crowd is too young, the music is . . . well . . . you know what trash we get there."

"Please." He scoffed. "I'm hanging up now, but have you seen yourself lately? You're as ripped as ever. I'm sure all eyes in the bar will be on you. They always are."

"Right." I snorted. "Thanks for being my cheerleader. I'll see you tomorrow."

A long row of cars came into my vision as I took the last lane down to Candied Nights. I didn't have a lot to complain about this place, barring the silly, effeminate name.

It was a stylish, large, illuminated space with wave-shaped slats undulating across the ceiling. I walked in after nodding at the bouncer.

"Mateo, my man." He grinned good-naturedly. "I should thank you for bringing in so many patrons every week."

"Well, at least someone's happy." I almost scowled.

Candied Nights was dramatic and theatrical, its whimsical charm enhanced by a huge counter bearing Baroque motifs. I loved the little terrace area outside and preferred spending

most of my time there, drink in hand, wondering how this small town had become home.

“A Fruit du Passe for you, courtesy of the gentleman at the bar.”

My client wasn't wasting any time. And it was welcome. The dollars spent here could truly help purchase something special, and this layered blend of Genepi Dolin, Strega liquor, and a house-special celery syrup was no different.

I took a sip, letting the initial hints of dry fennel, tart lemon, and heady licorice give in to the decadently lush mouthfeel of the alcohol. “Delicious.” I raised my glass at the gentleman sitting by one of the counters, his mouth half-open as he examined me.

“Hey.” He did not stand up but extended a hand encrusted with rings on each finger to me. I resisted the impulse to make a snarky comment. “Cliff Baxter, I presume?”

“Yeah. Jonathan told me you could get me out of—” He coughed delicately, using a handkerchief over his lips. “The mess I'm in.”

“Well, I will certainly do my best.”

“If you don't mind my saying this, you look too fancy to be good at what you do. You're one of them pretty men.”

This time, I decided to strike while the iron was hot. “Given that the IRS is on your doorstep and you could lose pretty much everything, wouldn't you say you're grateful to have a way out?”

He blushed. “I guess.”

“You would say it, wouldn't you?” I leaned back on the chair and gazed at him, my expression lazy. If you couldn't deal with people like Cliff Baxter at the onset, this profession would eat you up and spit you whole.

It wasn't that I hadn't made my mistakes. Oh, I'd been at the odd end of many a hapless call, trying to figure out why my clients kept such unrealistic expectations of who I was and what I could do.

After all, when I signed up to be a lawyer, I didn't think people would reckon I was some kind of a suburban Superman. Boundaries were important, and the clown in front of me was living proof of that.

"I'm grateful, all right?" He raised his hands in a gesture of defeat. "It's just been all over the place for me."

"Must be hard," I replied, my gaze flitting between empathy and cold sarcasm. The man had been caught cheating by his wife on more than one occasion. The last time, she'd walked into his office and found his head between the secretary's long limbs.

There were moments of self-loathing when I wondered why I had to help such assholes. But work was work.

"So, we're going to fix some things first. You'll be able to keep the house, but I'd say settle for the numbers your wife's lawyer suggests."

"That—that would set me back by millions." He almost choked on his drink. "You don't know what the bitch is doing! She's asking for my dog too, and she—"

"Who watched the dog while you were busy fucking your secretary?"

There was pin-drop silence.

"How do I keep the house?"

I clapped my hand on the table appreciatively. "Good, now we're talking business."

About an hour later, Baxter finally had answers that satisfied the workings of his anal mind. I got up from the table, almost wobbling. What a night.

Jamaican music blared through the room in macabre self-contempt, trap belching over into disco-pop, drowning out every single sane thought. It was a ploy to get people to drink more—the louder the music, the looser our tongues got.

Even in places where partying was the norm, someone was always busy behind the scenes, working their asses off to make profits that would count.

A slim figure slid out from the inner recesses of the room. I was instantly struck by her silhouette, temporarily taken away from my hunt for a possible door to a private room that would offer a smidgen of relief.

Damn this fucking place. They should hire tour guides or something.

The skin on the nape of my neck stood out in a misshapen valley of goosebumps. I touched my vest, my subconscious mind traveling back to a rainy evening many nights ago. Young and brawny, I lay on my back, my eyes closed as an artist wove a tapestry upon my skin.

You could say it wasn't necessary. The neighborhood doesn't necessarily make the man. But where I came from, history meant something.

And when I asked the sculptor to take his needle and embed two swords in my back, I meant to take all future learnings with a grain of salt. I had everything going for me, even then. I was on my way to LSE, my future in law set in stone.

I had my ticket out of the morbid gray of my hometown. But I was nothing if not a man born of sentiment. Wherever I went, I wanted a reminder of my origin.

So, the first sword drove into a cloud. It meant I could dream, but only insofar as it would not cost me my ambitions. The second, inverse to the first, led to a heart, its anatomy perfect save a small hole.

Testimony to the sister I had lost. And the mother who couldn't remember me on odd days. After everything I'd endured, now, in this town so far away, the nerve-endings under both rang warning bells.

Change is coming. Be ready.

Shaking my head, I turned around. The slight shadow moved closer, her silhouette cast in gold and pine-green, her eyes bluer than the Pacific. Then, she stepped into a pool of light.

I knew that face. I'd seen her in another life. Jonathan's daughter. How she'd grown.

“R—Renn? Renn Grace?”

She slanted her innocence-laced eyes at me, each iris a separate story of deception and unlearning. There was pureness there, curiously juxtaposed with the ferociousness of the berry red of her lips.

The alarm system in my body, perpetually at loggerheads with its parasympathetic urge for peace and quiet, was already screaming a warning. *Predator*. Would I flee, or would I freeze? What would my ancestors do?

I felt like I was a scavenger in the jungle, face-to-face with my maker.

And she was stunning. She could have been a gazelle drinking from a lake in a forest at full moon or a siren. She was the ocean and the light reflected upon it. Her legs . . . I could write poetry on them.

Where had the time gone? How was this the tiny Renn who used to play with Jonathan, her chubby fists pounding his chest whenever she didn't get her way?

A slow, burning smile settled on my lips. She was closer now, and then, her cherry-red lips opened and she spoke.

“Hey, stranger. Fancy running into you here.”

There was something there. A hurt, a story. I couldn't lay my finger on it. “Renn.” I pulled her into a warm hug. She settled in my arms like a feather. Her long tresses reminded me of summers in Santorini, their scent curiously citrusy.

What was this girl doing to me?

“I thought you'd settled in New York!”

“Well, let's just say I missed my father. Fancy running into his best friend beforehand.” She ran a hand over my shoulder. “I'm glad to see you haven't forgotten me.”

“How can I, when you're going around town looking like that?” A fierce urge to protect her came over me. “Are you

okay?”

“Are any of us?”

Okay, why was this girl talking in riddles, and why did she feel so fucking good? If she were a puzzle, I’d willingly take my time to solve her. Piece by piece, enjoying every lasting interplay with tongue and hands.

“Throw me a bone, would you?” I grinned, still holding her in my arms.

“What’s the fun in that, especially when I could give you so much else?”

Her rosebud mouth was so close, impossibly close. I could almost taste the sweet give of the cherry shimmering upon them. The next second, my mouth was on hers.

I knew how to make a girl feel at home. I began with a taste, letting my tongue find its way into her mouth and proceeding with a gentle exploration.

“Mmm,” she moaned, leaning deeper into the kiss. The mere sound of her soft voice got me hard, and I amped it up a notch, stopping only to bite her lower lip. My tongue rolled in her mouth, tasting chocolate, figs, and honey.

Of its own volition, my left arm traveled down and grabbed her pert ass as I continued kissing her, the low groans escaping her lips in rhythm with my pace. She was warm, a breath of cinnamon in a cup of coffee.

“Oh, God.” She sighed as I broke the kiss and bent her head back, making her obey me like a marionette. The moment was ours, and she could tell she was at my mercy. I smiled, enjoying the feeling of control.

“Is it . . .” She sounded disappointed, as if she couldn’t believe it was already over.

In an instant, I dialed up the intensity. Overwhelmed by the pace of my tongue and lips, she clung to me like I was her only tether. The world around us was a haze of silver fog. I could feel her falling, and I slipped deeper and harder into the luscious crevices of her tender mouth.

My kiss grew insistent, almost ravaging her, and she welcomed each turn with equal passion. My hands reached her hair, and with one hand, I pushed her against the wall, biting her trembling lips.

“Fuck yes,” she replied, breathless. She kissed me back, equally urgent in her need to own me. Her hands raked my hair as she pushed her tongue in to match the pace of my own.

I pushed against her, the thickness of my groin telling her everything I couldn't say. There was already a latent battle in my heart. Renn was young. She couldn't be a day over twenty-five, which meant I had almost two decades on her.

I was her father's best fucking friend.

Even then, nothing felt as real as this did. Was this why no other relationship had ever worked for me?

Renn dug her nails into my hair, pulling me closer as she moaned into my mouth. I knew she was soaking. The mere thrill of the anticipation made me want her more. I wanted to control her and show her how to be mine. And then some.

An idea had started forming in my mind, and it involved the closest in our group. Eric and Lucas. This wasn't our first time sharing a woman. It felt like it would be even more special with her.

I broke the kiss and met her eyes with mine. “What would you like me to do?” I asked, barely breathing.

“I'd like you to rip my clothes off, bite me everywhere, and fuck me till I tell you I'm done.”

A girl after my own heart. Fuck, I'd never felt more in need of being so needed. I grinned boyishly at her. “Are you up for some adventure?”

She lifted her hips, grinding them against me. “I'm up for anything, Mr. Tavoni.”

It was just the way she said my name, the obeisance, and the fucking tease in her speaking. I couldn't wait any longer. I drew my phone out and dialed Eric's number.

“Where are you?”

“Just outside Candied Nights. Came to rescue you in case the client wouldn’t let up.”

“We’re going home, and we have company.”

Barely keeping my hands off her, I led Renn outside the bar to where Eric stood by his Fortuner. His expression changed from faint curiosity to surprise and then desire.

He saw what I did.

Renn was all fire, and we wanted to burn. Lucas wolf-whistled from inside the car. “What have we here?”

I looked at Renn. “Are you comfortable with . . . with the three of us?”

She responded with a second of confusion. “I’ve never—”

“You don’t need to be afraid,” Eric said, twisting his fancy mustache. “In fact, it could be one of those things that’ll change your life for the better.”

Say yes.

Say yes.

Renn’s mouth opened and closed, and then she was kissing me once more. “Don’t talk anymore. Just show me what you can do.”

Renn

The time from the driveway to the interior of the car, right up until when I was in the back seat, sandwiched between Mateo and the man he called Eric, was a blur.

“D’you know what I’d like to do to you?” Mateo murmured into my ear. “I’d like to strip you down to the last inch of your restraints and claim you. All of you.”

I trembled. The car windows were open, and the cold night air whipped against my face as I squirmed in response to his hands, touching me like I was a verse and he the poet.

Eric was equally gorgeous in a completely different way. Where had these men been all my life? Maybe that was what I was meant to find out, I realized, my mind lost in a maze of touching and soft whispers.

I looked at the driver, Luke. Dude rocked a man-bun, his getup curiously masculine and gender-fluid at the same time. His skin was made on the beach, for it glistened olive-gold even in the sparse remnants of yellow light cast by street lamps.

“So . . .” I tried to hide my smile. “Do you do this often? Find a fourth?”

Eric laughed, looking away from Mateo to me. “Not unless we chance upon someone really special.”

I blushed a deep shade of red. “Oh.”

“Does that bother you?” Mateo nudged his nose against the nape of my neck, pulling my attention away. He slid an arm behind me and traced lazy patterns with his fingers on my bare shoulders.

“That I’m experiencing something entirely new and possibly unholy? Not really.” I was tipsy but had enough sense to know I *wanted* this.

“Is that what you think you are, sweetie?” Eric whispered, tugging my focus to his hazel eyes as he leaned closer, his words feathering across my cheek. “Just a regular Friday evening?”

I could feel Mateo’s hand on my thigh as Eric leaned closer, his fingers sliding down my shoulder to skate over the tops of my breasts, exposed ever so slightly by the plunging pushup bra I wore under my dress.

His tongue traced my bottom lip, and I rolled my head back, pleasure rippling through me. This was what I desired.

My fingers spread through his hair, and at the same moment, his long tongue filled my mouth, bold fingers stopping only to undo the zipper holding my dress in place.

His fingers pulled my breasts out, their bold strokes not resting until they were cupping and squeezing the mounds.

He was *obscene*. I fucking loved it. I’d never felt this alive.

“You like that, don’t you?” he growled into my mouth. “You like what I’m doing to you.”

“Oh, yes,” I moaned, faintly aware of Mateo’s hand climbing higher and higher. Without conscious thought, I parted my thighs slightly.

My moan built to a low hum as his fingers scraped over my pussy, pushing aside my thong to swipe my folds.

In the meantime, Eric continued to devour my tongue, his hands still making love to my breasts.

“I feel like I’m missing out on a lot here,” Lucas complained from the front. I laughed into Eric’s mouth.

“You’ll get your chance.” Eric’s response was husky with need.

“This is just the beginning, darlin’.” Mateo’s Southern charm was in full force as he played my pussy like it was his instrument. I moaned into Eric’s mouth, wanting to consume him, wanting him to consume me.

“Oh, my God.” My eyes followed Mateo as he smoothly removed his fingers. “Oh, damn,” I whimpered as each one disappeared into his mouth. He held my gaze the whole time as he licked me off his hand.

“I can’t wait to show you what else I’m gonna do.” He grinned, leaning over to gently nip my mouth, only to lock his lips on it the next second.

“Tell me.” I’d never imagined I could hear a voice drip pure sin, like raw honey. But Mateo’s did. It dripped all kinds of promises, hot and filthy, and I wasn’t sure how many I could take before I orgasmed in the fucking car.

“What?” I breathed, twisting my body as Eric’s tongue traveled down to my navel. He was practically bending over me now, his mind set on exploring every inch he could.

“Do you like sheets, or do you prefer goin’ doggy in a car?”

I blushed once more. From any other mouth, the words would have been vulgar. From Mateo, they sounded like mana. He spoke what I desired, too much, too hard, too true.

“Anywhere,” I whispered.

“Then let’s take you to our casa. A princess like you deserves no less.” Eric grinned against my earlobe. I felt the scruff of his beard tickle the lobe, almost irresistible with its feather-like touch.

I couldn’t quite tell how Renn, sweet, straightforward, simple Renn who’d sworn loyalty to one man forever, was on

the verge of getting swept away by not one, but three of the hottest men she'd ever seen in her whole fucking life.

"I—" my half-thought was rendered into an incomprehensible moan as Eric's fingers reached between the folds of my lace innerwear once more, playing a secretive tune against the wetness of my opening. I'd never experienced something so utterly raw and delicious. The sex I'd had with Tyson made him look like a kindergarten brat compared to these men.

"Do you like toys, little kitten?"

I could only purr in response.

"Good girl. Now, I'm going to put something inside you. We've reached our castle, but you're gonna stay in here until we tell you to come find us, you hear me?"

The deliciousness of the chase was almost enough to drive me insane. I nodded, my legs trembling. I felt a silk blindfold rest against my eyes, and then either Eric or Mateo inserted something into my soaking pussy, something that felt like velvet and the most malleable cock ever. It stretched and aroused me, and I found myself moaning, absolutely out of control.

Eric undid the blindfold and left a lingering kiss on my lips before stepping out of the parked car. I looked around. We were in a long driveway overlooking the swankiest mansion I'd ever seen. Mateo had already gone.

Lucas, his eyes blazing with the sheer reflection of the hunger in mine, turned to me and smiled. "See you inside, kitten."

I barely made it outside the car when someone from inside the mansion did something that made the vibrator inside me sing. It stroked and pulsed against my clitoris, simultaneously hitting my G-spot until I felt like I'd come over the damned hedges.

"Oh, my fucking God," I moaned and half-wobbled, half-ran up the steps leading to a magnificent wooden front door,

its detailing entirely Baroque. Not that my eyes had any room for capturing anything but stars.

When I walked in, the humming inside me had receded to a dull echo. A bartender walked up to me, a list in his hand and a naughty smile on his face. Was this some retreat where all the gorgeous men hid from the world?

He laid the list in front of me. It had very little to do with drinks. Compiled beside tiny motifs of Easter bunnies was a range of activities that made my legs tremble. There was bondage. Cybersex. A threesome. Underwater sex. The sheer range of options made my head swim, and I was not one for subtle modesty. I enjoyed sex. As a matter of fact, there was a time when my heart and soul thrived on it. Tyson and I had a honeymoon phase too, although those days felt like they were an entire multiverse away.

The bartender introduced himself as Ro. “Choose one of the options, and you’ll know more as the evening progresses.” He winked and gestured at a long bar table lined with glasses, each full of a differently-hued liquid. After going back and forth, I chose a label that read *Strip and Tease with Ice and Fire*.

Ro beamed. “Quite adventurous for a first-timer. Go on up and help yourself to the amber liquid.”

I walked to the bar table and lifted the stem of a dainty glass, the drink inside it a soft, luminescent golden amber. One sip later, I was already in heaven. It tasted like warm butter over toast and honey mixed with Irish Cream and something decadently sweet.

“Have you memorized the taste?” Ro was looking at me with the same mischievous light in his eyes. I nodded.

“The men are inside.” He turned his back to me. “You’re going to find the one whose mouth tastes of the same drink and let him show you the way.”

“What if I kiss someone else?”

“Then you earn a penalty.” He smirked. “A very enjoyable one, of course.”

I remembered the time Veronica had told me intense kissing and foreplay were a great way to burn extra calories. I smiled before taking another sip of the delicious drink. Oak and chocolate exploded in my mouth, making room for just a bit of coffee. Damn good, and each flavor profile married into the one that followed. The signs were all there. I was on the edge of that very precipice where impulsive decisions defined my existence. Maybe I'd wake up regretting some of them, but the stories would make it worth the while.

If the hot ache between my legs could speak, it'd say the same thing. Ro led me to an inner room, and I stepped inside. He shut the door behind me. The room was a letter of love to Gothic-meets-Baroque architecture, accentuated by shades of velvet black, an opulent fireplace, and plush armchairs in clever corners. Even with my preoccupied mind, I could not stop gawking at the mint-green sofa overlooking an assortment of micro-herbs upon a cherry-wood mantelpiece. To my left was a gray wall with white accents, contrasted by the rich ambers and violets of the seating, and vases filled with roses and black dahlias. What caught my attention most of all, however, were the three men standing by the fireplace, wicked smiles on their lips.

Lucas looked like he'd come straight out of the Mills and Boon books I'd secretly read as a kid. I thought they'd stopped making boys this sexy, but he was a treat, albeit a sinful one. He had to be over six feet, and that hair? I wanted to wrap my fingers around it and pull him into a kiss. His eyes were exclusively on me. A tingle ran through my spine. I shivered as I walked up to him, my world becoming an increasing expanse of blue—Pacific blue, straight out of a storm. He made me want to become a poet. The man was trouble, but that was what made me ache for him more. I couldn't help breaking into a grin.

“Hey, gorgeous,” he drawled. His voice was gravelly, almost like the earth after a thunderstorm. It made me weak in my knees. All I could manage was a silly “hi,” as if I were a schoolgirl meeting her crush for the very first time.

“So, what would you like to do?”

I was close, dangerously close. Before I could think twice, I leaned in, and my mouth met his. He tasted less of oak and cocoa and more of cherry and citrus glory. I breathed into his mouth as our tongues met and danced around each other. I knew I'd earned myself a punishment, but my body welcomed it. The thickness of his groin pushed against me, telling me he was huge. The anticipation made me want him more. I wanted him to rip my clothes off and take me, fuck me, own me.

When we broke apart, his lips had a knowing smile on them. "You've earned yourself a punishment." I heard the click of a familiar remote, and a shock of pleasure convulsed through me. I moaned out, loud enough for the entire room to echo in response. I reached out and held Lucas's shoulder for dear life as he dialed up the vibrator, making it pulse harder inside me. My knees buckled, and he grabbed my hips as I trembled.

I screamed with pleasure, and just when I couldn't take any more, he dialed the remote down. I took one breath, then it was pulsing feverishly once more. My insides were liquid, my whole skin shining with sweat. Eric moved in to kiss me while Lucas controlled the remote. His tongue, warm and longing, found its way into my mouth. Still not the correct flavor.

"Dial it up, Lucas."

"Hey—but—"

I didn't get a chance to respond. The vibrator was zoning me out, moving so quickly and pulsing so deeply I could feel liquid dripping down my legs. Eric's mouth grazed my collarbone. "You utterly stunning girl," he growled, his lips against my collarbone. "You're in for the time of your life."

What could be more of an undoing than this?

Many years back, I remembered telling Tyson I could tolerate a lot of things. We were hanging out in "Back o' Town", the part of New Orleans that had developed around the New Basin Canal. It was a sunny day, the hallmark being our soft drinks and dressed Po-boys.

“No matter what we go through, Tyson, promise me we won’t ever lie to each other.”

Tyson had looked at me, his expression slightly confused, his lips smeared with ranch and mustard.

This was a day after he’d proposed and I’d said yes. My father warned me that it was too soon, and settling down with a boy who was clearly so immersed in a free-fall could bring no good.

Part of me had already known he was right.

The other part, however, the stubborn, warm-hearted Renn, wanted to take a chance on fairytales. It sucked that everything I’d ever debated against had actually come true. Tyson was supposed to be my ticket out of the single life with all its trials. I was never one for wading in the pool. All I wanted was a happy home. When he betrayed me, he took it all away. It was the biggest cliché in the book, but that didn’t make it any less painful.

Now, in the haze of lips touching and the heated embers of skin upon skin, I realized I’d never had the chance to know myself. I’d believed I was an inhibited girl who couldn’t do well with changes and adventures.

That’s what Tyson had made me believe.

Lucas pulled me close, running his long fingers over my cheek and down to my collarbones. “Hey, sugar, where’s your mind at? What can we do to bring you back here?”

I grinned and nipped his lower lip.

“Let us please you, Renn.”

The words Lucas whispered in my ear ran through my head as I stared at the three men. All of them looked at me with blatant need in their eyes. In another life, I’d be stunned at the audacity of my thoughts.

Yet, I didn’t know why, but I was completely and utterly secure around them. It was as if my vulnerability knew it was in safe hands. When Mateo’s hand touched the small of my back, I snapped out of my trance.

“Laissez les bons temps rouler.” He grinned.

Mateo’s hand moved from my back, traveled down my arm, and grabbed my hand. He linked my fingers with his and led me to the plush velvet couches upholstered in soft black, evocative of the thrumming of my heart. I almost sank into the deep cushions. Lucas handed me another drink and went to sit down next to Eric.

They were looking at me.

Why was I so nervous? I looked at Mateo, who smiled softly at me. His hand touched my thigh, making me jump slightly.

“Renn,” he said, rubbing my thigh, almost teasing me. “You don’t have anything to worry about. We won’t hurt you. And if at any point, you’d like us to stop, all you need to do is say the word. No questions asked. D’you understand?”

I nodded, biting my lower lip. “I’m sorry,” I murmured. “I’m a little nervous. I’ve never . . .” My words fell short, and I gestured to the three of them, breaking the lush silence with a laugh. “I also needed to let you know.” I smiled shyly. “I’m on the pill. Unless you guys need to wear condoms, I’d prefer to go without. I like how it feels as is.”

A growl from the other couch across the room sounded in reply. Looking over, I saw Eric close his eyes and swallow hard. Lucas was staring at me, and Mateo looked like it was Christmas eve, only make it Easter.

“What?” I giggled.

“You’re somethin’ else.” Eric’s voice was low, husky, like a barrel of aged cognac. “Where, just tell us, where the hell have you been all our lives?” His intense blue eyes bored into me, making my insides quiver.

Mateo moved his hand down my leg and pulled my feet to his lap. He worked on the straps of my sandals and slipped them off my feet, one by one. He followed with a massage on my toes, smiling all the while. I moaned faintly. The massage felt amazing after the long journey. These sandals were the MVP when it came to pretty feet, but they did hurt.

“Lie back,” he instructed. “Get comfortable.”

I did as he said and leaned upon one of the pillows, my legs stretched across Mateo’s lap as his deft hands worked on my feet. Slowly, he turned his body toward me. His fingers seemed to know each little kink I’d built up in the last couple of hours.

“There’s not one part of you I don’t want to kiss.”

I felt my face flush.

After a moment, I inclined my head in response to movement. Eric had stood up and was walking toward a stereo on the opposite end of the room. He put on a soft jazz record, slow and smooth. As he turned, he saw me watching him. He responded with a smile and came over to run his hands down my bare arms.

Leaning down, he planted a soft kiss on my forehead. I closed my eyes momentarily.

“You deserve to feel special,” Eric murmured, his hand on my lips. I opened my mouth, sucking on the tip of his index finger. “We’re gonna show you just how a lady like you needs to be loved.”

Once again, his words stirred up something deeply animalistic in me, making me want to jump and pull him down on me then and there.

I felt Mateo’s hands stop moving and looked at him. They immediately resumed their journey, traveling up my calves to my thighs, pressing each sensitive point with his thumbs. His fingers inched closer and closer to my hips.

My breath caught in my throat as he brushed his fingers over the lace underwear separating my pussy from them. His fingers slid under the band of my panties and slid them down below my hips.

Staring up at me, he tugged them all the way down and over my feet. He tossed them across the room and stared at me, his eyes hot and intense. Grabbing my legs, he spread them wide, his breath stopping short at the sight of my exposed pussy.

Getting up on his knees, he positioned himself between my legs. My eyes locked onto his as Eric trailed kisses from my ear, down my neck, and over my collarbones.

“You don’t need the clothes anymore.” He laughed, nuzzling his lips and beard against my pale skin. “I can’t wait to lick you up, darlin’.”

Mateo pulled my hips up and laid kisses over them and down my legs. He ran his tongue over the length of my exposed skin. Eric’s mouth moved against mine, his tongue teasing me with deliciously slow strokes. He pulled away, moving his hands to lift my dress, slowly pulling it up as his eyes shone. I sat up, letting the dress slide up and over my head.

Naked and in my full element, I looked at the men in the room.

A smile curved my lips.

There was nothing I wanted more than to be fucked by all of them.

“Yeah, you’re right,” Lucas replied to the silent acknowledgment in my eyes. He knew what was coming.

We all did.

Lucas

Renn lay on the couch, Mateo between her legs, staring at Eric kissing her shoulder and neck.

Mateo had texted us about her just minutes shy of our meeting.

“I’ve found the most beautiful woman in the world. You guys have to meet her.”

Not that I’d been looking forward to much else. Before Mateo’s call, I was knee-deep in a documentary about counterfeiting and its nuanced nature. The most curious of things fascinated me.

There was this thing about counterfeiting in the States. The New Orleans Field Office ports had seized a total of twenty-nine million dollars’ worth of counterfeit goods between the first month of the year and yesterday.

It held the usual, what could have passed as luxury clothing and electronics comprising the bulk of the seizures. The issue was that large express operations could net large-value seizures in single incidents, but a majority of the seizures happened in smaller, targeted operations.

This meant we didn’t have enough men out there to catch the people behind the racket. And this worried me. I’d never been one for deep, unquestioned love of the law, but economic terrorism was something I could never wrap my head around.

Then came the issue with *The Artist*, a man who was seemingly so good at making fake notes that even the most perfect of note-detecting machines failed to capture them. Law was my profession, but sleuthing? Oh, that was the passion that added the fuel to my fire.

The Louisiana Bar had made it possible for me to work as a criminal lawyer in Lockwood, but it also gave me the opportunity to form good relationships with the local police department. It was a small office of mostly good people, officers who wanted their city to stay out of trouble.

With the number of fakes in the market, though, we'd have to work at making that happen.

Eric and I had been going over the details of *The Artist's* modus operandi when he suggested that we go out to get drinks. And halfway through the route to Candied Nights, Mateo called us over.

Mateo, Eric, and I . . . we'd met at a curious crossroad. None of us were locals to this part of the world. Mateo came all the way from Italy.

My roots belonged to a family of foreign embassy delegates based in Qatar.

And Eric? Eric was a bit of a maverick. His father was of Scandinavian descent, and his mother was a brown, doe-eyed Indian beauty. He'd grown up an army brat, touching upon the surface of many states but never being claimed by any enough to make him want to stay.

The only threads tying us together were LSE and then Stillwater Associates, the law firm in Lockwood that gave our fledgling careers wings.

We meant for this sleepy town to be a pitstop. But Mateo met one of his old friends from LSE, a man who was not only the mayor of Lockwood but a damn good client at that.

Of course, we became best friends.

We just didn't think his daughter would turn out to be this smokin'. It wasn't even that her charm was too obvious or explicit.

Oh, no, she was all about the subtleties, given the sultry tilt in her hips and the sweet smile on her lips. Fuck, she made me want to become a shady-ass poet who spent nights drinking cheap vodka and wrote verses praising the asses of pert chicks.

I stood a few feet away from them, my hand inadvertently on the huge bulge forming in my trousers. She eyed me hungrily.

“Like what you see?” I cocked my head at her.

“Very much.” Her reply teased me, provoking an instant response. Her eyes shone at the bulge, and she bit her bottom lip once more.

She did that a lot.

It drove me fucking crazy.

Eric lifted her by her shoulders, helping her sit up for him. He slid behind her on the couch, taking the place of the pillow.

“Describe what you’re feeling, sugar.” I stroked myself, watching her like a hawk.

She blushed.

“I feel . . .” Her words were breathless. “I feel Eric’s cock against my back.”

Eric undid his jeans and shoved them to the floor before resuming his position. Renn reached behind him and pulled his shirt over his shoulders, giggling as she struggled to get it off.

“Let me,” he murmured in her ear before pulling it off and throwing it behind him.

Eric maneuvered her face to the side, grabbing it and pulling it to his, kissing her hard on the mouth.

Visceral moans erupted from her lips and echoed in his mouth, quickening the beating of my own fuckin’ heart. Truly, where had she been all our lives?

In the meantime, Mateo moved his mouth down Renn’s thighs. His fingers drew circles on her hips. I couldn’t hold back any longer.

“For fuck’s sake,” I growled. I moved forward and took her left hand, unbuckling the fastening of my trousers with my own. Moving her hand, I placed it over my cock. She emitted a small moan.

“You’re huge!”

I grinned. Never not a good time to hear that.

Renn wrapped her hand around my cock, slowly stroking it as Mateo’s lips moved to rest above her delicious mound.

She reminded me of the heroines in the films I’d snuck into our family attic to watch with my brothers. Our favorite was *The Baker’s Wife*. The lady, a pinup goddess, had Renn’s bone structure, the same delicate features and wavy, soft hair, even similar ways of tilting her hips and moaning for our pleasure.

It made me want to fuck her hard.

Her eyes locked on mine as Mateo’s lips blew on her pussy.

“Renn,” Mateo said, staring down at her pussy for another moment before running his eyes up her body to match her gaze with his. “You’re quite breathtaking.”

She closed her eyes as if she needed to believe the words.

“You mean that?”

Mateo laughed. “I’ve never meant something so much my whole life, and I tell lies for a living. Honesty doesn’t come easily to me, Renn. But here it is. You’re fucking beautiful.”

Eric’s hands slid between Renn and Mateo, working at the front clasp on her bra. Mateo resumed his position on her thighs, kissing them softly.

“Ah.” The groan was from me as she continued working her hand up and down my shaft, building momentum. It stilled the second Eric removed her bra and released her breasts into his hands. Mateo’s lips had met her pussy.

She let out a long, low moan as Mateo’s tongue snaked out to slide between her pussy lips and found her clit. Eric’s hands

found her nipples and pressed down on them. She moved her nimble fingers on my cock once more. My eyes closed, and I tilted my head back, engrossed in our coming together.

We were lost in the moment. Each of us had given in to the sensations running through our bodies.

“Damn, Renn,” I snarled as she moved between a relentlessly slow and fast set of strokes. “You’re so fuckin’ sexy.”

I leaned down and found her lips, turning her face up to mine. Eric’s fingers continued working a nipple at a time, his other hand gripping her hip and holding her still for Mateo.

She let out a long shudder when Mateo’s lips closed around her clit, sucking lightly and running a finger down to circle the pucker of her behind as he removed the vibrator. My cock twitched in her hand.

“I want to taste you,” she murmured, meeting my eyes. “Get on your knees and give me that cock of yours. I need to taste it.”

Oh, the heat.

I did as she commanded, positioning myself so my cock was just against her mouth. She turned herself so Eric was on one side, Mateo on the other, and her legs were pried open as she sat on the couch. My cock twitched once more.

Renn let out a shiver as Mateo moved a finger down to her pussy.

“Suck that cock, Renn,” Eric said, kneading her mounds. “Suck it good, Sugar. Show us what you can do.”

The feline green of her irises met the hazel shine of mine. I could feel the embers in them as her full mouth closed around the head of my cock. She wasn’t playing around.

Her tongue circled the top. My head rolled back as she sucked lightly, teasing me, tormenting me.

“Fuck yes, that’s it, Renn. That’s a good girl.” I tried to speak between shaking breaths. Reaching down, I grabbed her

head and brought her mouth closer. She responded by sliding her tongue down my shaft as I pressed in against her throat.

“God, Sugar, you’re so beautiful,” I said, enraptured by how magnificent she looked as I stared down at her, my cock sliding down her throat. She moaned around it. Mateo had two fingers inside her now, his thumb rubbing circles around her clit. I could feel her body twitching every time Mateo’s thumb came full circle.

Eric’s cock was in her hand now. He continued working on her nipples, pausing only to lick and bite the areola closest to his mouth.

I had my hands in her hair, holding her head steady so she wouldn’t strain, keeping her head up for me. She pulled her lips off for a second to let out a loud cry as Mateo inserted a third finger inside her, curling to her pelvis.

Catching her breath, she ran her tongue along my cock, using her free hand to massage my balls, leaving a trail of barely-there kisses from the base to the crown. I leaned my head back. I’d begun shaking.

“That’s a good girl,” I groaned. “A damn good girl . . . so fucking hot.” My voice came out in raspy growls as her mouth worked on me. She was shaking. Mateo leaned down and over, meeting her clit with his tongue. She cried out, and I felt her vocal cords vibrate against my cock, strained and tense. Her hips ground against his mouth, and my cock began twitching, drops of precum rising to the surface.

“Just like that, Sugar.” I held her head. “Grind into him, and don’t fucking stop suckin’ me like you are.” Holding the back of her head, I slid deeper into her mouth, pressing against the back of her throat. She relaxed her muscles like magic, taking me all the way in, my cock sliding deep into her.

Did this girl have no gag reflex? What the fuck?

I let out a loud groan as she teased the shaft of my cock. Eric grunted, his mouth locked on her left nipple.

If it went on a second further, I’d be done. And I wasn’t ready to be done yet. I slid out of her mouth and moved down

to kiss her neck. Sucking lightly, I pressed and kneaded her right breast as Eric continued biting and teasing the left.

She let out a long cry. “Oh, my God! I feel . . . it’s indescribable.”

“That’s it, Renn,” Mateo murmured against her pussy. “You sweet girl, I want to see that gorgeous body coming for us.” At his words, her body tensed, and she shook against his mouth, her hips bucking in an automatic response to the pleasure overtaking her.

My hand reached over and held her pelvis down as she moaned, her body giving in to waves of intense pleasure. I locked my lips around her neck. Eric’s tongue danced circles around her nipple, and Mateo continued probing and licking her with his tongue.

As her body continued to writhe and pulse, I stood up, moving her hand to my cock once more. Mateo moved to sit back up and slid a finger into her pussy. She groaned. Eric attacked her neck and collarbone, and I pulled her mouth to me, kissing her hard before whispering in her ear.

“That’s a good girl, Renn. Such a good little cock-slut. You’re doing so great. D’you like this?” I bit her earlobe and licked the tiny opening.

“Oh, yes, yes, yes,” she groaned. My skin felt like it was on fire. I was stranded in a hurricane, my head spinning.

“Think it’s time to switch it up, boys?” I heard Mateo suggest. Looking over at him, I noticed the devilish grin on his lips. He licked his fingers clean, tasting Renn on them, his eyes locked onto her.

She shot him a quick grin and grabbed my cock, gently guiding me to kneel in front of her on the couch. She lay on the couch, her torso propped up with two pillows. Eric came to stand next to her, and she guided his hand to her breast, a clear instruction for him.

My hands reached her legs, bringing her ankles up to rest on my shoulders as I climbed into position. The light in her eyes told me what no words could.

“You sure you—”

“I’ve never wanted something more.”

Renn

April Fourth, a little beyond seven in the evening. A true Dear Diary moment.

I let out a small moan as I felt the head of Lucas's cock at the entrance of my pussy, rubbing up and down my slick opening over my clit. I looked up at him, smiling as he knelt down and closed his mouth over my left nipple, sending shivers through my body.

Letting my head fall back, I caught Mateo's eyes on my lips, his hand fastened around his stiff cock. He pressed the head toward my mouth.

I gently kissed the tip, flicking my tongue all over it before taking the entire shaft in my mouth. My hand traveled down and around Lucas's back and then gripped his cock.

He groaned against my breast.

There was so much power within this moment. I'd never known I could be this desired or that *being desired* could be so fucking validating.

It was enough for Tyson to just pass a few casual compliments my way. On the extra lucky days, maybe a spank on my ass.

I wrapped my free hand around Eric's girth and busied my tongue around Mateo's cock. The next moment, I felt Lucas

slide into me. A low moan escaped my throat. Mateo shuddered as my voice vibrated around his length.

Lucas's teeth clamped down around my left nipple while his fingers focused on the other, rolling it between his thumb and index finger.

"Fuck, Renn." I heard Lucas moan as his cock started moving in and out of me. My mouth savored Mateo's cock, slowly pumping it in and out of my throat. The feeling of him burying his huge member in my throat sent shivers down my body, and I shook against him.

Feeling a finger on my clit, I pulled my mouth off to let out a cry somewhere between a moan of ecstasy and an animalistic mewl.

I gasped for air as Eric's hand rested between my thighs. His fingers traced circles around my clit. In the meantime, Lucas held my legs up and fucked me slow and steadily.

My eyes traveled the expanse of Lucas's body, tracing the curve of his angular torso, his spectacular chest, past the throbbing vein in his neck to his hazel eyes.

Dark with desire, they locked on mine as he entered and withdrew faster.

"Mateo," I moaned. "I want you to fuck my throat." I spoke in a raspy whisper as he left a drop of precum on my tongue, pushing steadily into my mouth. I took a deep breath before he slid down my throat.

At the same time, Lucas built his pace to a feverish pitch, his groin slapping against my ass cheeks as he fucked me hard, relentlessly.

Then came the switch.

Lucas slowed his pace to allow the other men to move me, but once it was done, his movements sped back up. He slammed deep into me just once.

He followed with short, quick thrusts, keeping his cock as deep inside as he could. Eric's mouth was on my nipples once

more, swirling his tongue around the taut buds as I worked on Mateo's cock with my lips.

Suddenly, Mateo leaned over to the free rock-hard nipple demanding attention, and twisted it, causing me to arch up against him. It opened my throat a little more, giving him the leeway to thrust in and out completely.

"That's a good girl, that's a good fucking girl," he said as I gasped between breaths. He thrust the shaft relentlessly into my throat, over and again.

Lucas picked up speed, his cock moving faster, each shallow thrust now deeper than before.

Mateo pulled his cock from my mouth as I started to shake, gasping for breath and dear life. A loud moan followed the gasps as his fingers twisted hard on one nipple.

Eric's mouth was clamped on the other while Lucas pumped in deeper, pounding into the most sensitive parts of me.

My breath came in faster, quicker breaths as waves of pleasure crashed all over my balmy skin. Lucas slammed into me as hard as he could, and I came all over his fucking magnificent cock.

With a cock in each hand, I moaned, the room reverberating with the sounds of our sex. My body shook with pleasure as six hands explored and commanded my skin.

"There you go, Renn. Good girl." Mateo smiled, his hands splayed across my chest and shoulders.

"So fucking beautiful, Sugar," Eric responded, his lips kissing their way over and above my breasts.

"You're fucking soaked, you gorgeous girl," Lucas groaned between thrusts as his pace slowed. I felt him pull out of me slowly. My legs fell to the couch. I lay there, my breathing hot and uneven.

"Holy shit." I smiled, trembling as the three of them chuckled, their deep voices rolling through my ears and reaching the pleasure centers in my brain.

I lay there for a moment and looked up at them as they all smiled at each other. Clearly, they were enjoying themselves just as much as I was.

Watching them as I lay there, something woke inside me. It was a new feeling, something I'd never known before.

Strength. I felt fucking amazing. And strong. There it was—the reckoning. I needed all of them inside me. I wanted to command them.

I swung my legs off the couch and sat up, giggling at the surprise on their faces. My legs were shaking, and I stood, grabbing Lucas for support.

“You okay, Sugar?” Mateo had a slick grin on his lips. I blushed, looking down for a moment before facing them, my eyes steady.

“I’m just fine. In fact . . .” I took Mateo by the arm and turned his back to the couch.

“I’m ready for more.” I pushed him back onto the couch and climbed over him, straddling his lap. Taking his rock-hard cock in my hand, I rubbed it against me, teasing the both of us.

Eric let out a long groan behind me. “Oh, fuck.”

I bit my lip as I eased myself down onto Mateo’s cock, letting out tiny cries as he filled me entirely. My cervix was still sensitive from the last orgasm.

I sat still for a moment, catching my breath. Looking over, I caught sight of Eric, his hand wrapped around his thick girth, stroking it as he eyed me hungrily.

Motioning with my head, I beckoned him silently. I looked down at my ass and back at him, a small grin on my face. “You know what to do.”

He growled and stepped behind me as I turned my head to Lucas, who stared at me with his mouth partly open.

I gestured to the spot right next to me. “Come stand next to me and fill my mouth once more.” He immediately obliged. I heard Eric spit and felt a warm drop of his saliva on my pucker before the tip of his cock brushed softly against it.

Shivering, I took Lucas's hard length in my hand, pressing my lips down on the tip in a quick kiss. Mateo put his hands around my ass, spreading my cheeks apart for Eric.

Time was still.

Mateo was buried inside me.

Eric teased my pucker.

Lucas rested against my lips.

Nothing made a sound, not even the quiet April wind waltzing in from the open window. There was only the feeling of being wanted so completely and unabashedly by these three gorgeous men.

For a brief second, I felt incredulous. What had I done to deserve this? Before tonight, I never knew how badly I needed this feeling. But regardless of the past, this had to happen now. It was like oxygen to my lungs.

My body prepared itself for something it had never experienced before. I felt the world slow down, the clock ticking into oblivion. Two seconds.

One.

And then Eric pressed harder, his cock stretching me. My mouth fell open as the head entered me with a tiny *pop*. I felt him slide inside and gasped. Mateo was smiling down at me, running his hands through my hair as he crooned words of encouragement into my ears.

Leaning down, Lucas kissed me, deep and quick, before standing back up. His eyes locked on mine as I took his cock into my mouth.

Mateo's mouth closed on my breast, and I moaned, filled to the brim. All three of them stopped, if only for the splitting of a moment, just to stay still inside me.

"Now," I moaned around Lucas's cock, and the others chuckled around me.

Eric and Mateo moved inside me, alternating thrusts. Lucas moved his cock in and out of my mouth, my hand

wrapped around its base as my tongue fucked him.

“Oh, fuck,” Eric growled. “That’s a damn . . . Good girl, Renn. Good girl.”

My hand rested on Mateo’s shoulder as he pumped his cock in and out of my pussy. I could feel Eric and Mateo alternating their strokes, in and out. Intense pleasure made my eyelids flutter and close. I was unable to focus on anything else save pure passion.

I pulled my face away from Lucas’s cock after some time, gasping as I stroked his cock. Bringing my mouth down, I worked his scrotum, kissing and sucking softly.

“Ah, fuck. Yes, Renn.” His response was gravelly and low. I pulled back, my hand still working his shaft, as I felt someone grip my hair and pull back. My back arched as Mateo and Eric pumped harder and faster into me.

“Go on, Lucas.” I heard Eric say the words. “I’ll hold her steady.” My breath caught in my throat as Lucas moved a little deeper into my mouth.

Mateo brought a hand down on my ass, and I screamed. Lucas’s blue eyes bore a silent question. I nodded just a little, giving him my quiet affirmation, knowing what was coming. He kept his eyes on mine, smiling before he slammed his cock down my throat once again.

“Oh, fuck!” I heard him shout as my eyes slammed shut. I gave in to the moment. I’d never felt so used, so full, and so very fucked. I was a goddess, a literal Aphrodite. As these three absolutely stunning men fucked me into complete submission, they fed me power.

Lucas slammed relentlessly into my throat. My body began tensing once more, shaking ever so slightly.

I choked a bit, catching my breaths between pumps as his hips moved rapidly against my face. Eric’s hand was locked in my hair as he and Mateo kept an even pace, moving inside me. Lucas slid his cock out of my mouth and moved his face down to mine, kissing me hard.

“That’s my good girl,” he murmured, inches away from my face as I emitted another cry, on the brink of a climax crashing through my body.

Mateo’s finger found my clit and rubbed it feverishly as the entire length of my body shook, loud moans escaping my throat again and again.

“Oh, *fuck!*” my moans had reached an incomprehensible pitch. My body shivered as juices fell freely from me, splashing all over the two cocks slamming in and out of my holes.

I heard Eric’s breathing start to increase. He brought his hand down on my ass and gripped it as his movements grew faster.

Mateo’s hips began pounding harder as well, and I could hear him moaning. Lucas’s hand came back to my face. He held my chin up and pressed his cock into my mouth.

Whimpering, I took a deep breath, anticipating the final few minutes of throat-fucking.

“Come down my throat, Lucas,” I moaned as he slid his cock against my tongue. My body shook. Mateo kept a finger fastened on my clit, and Eric bent me over a little.

Lucas started fucking my mouth once more as I felt Eric’s hand grip my ass. Mateo’s mouth was on my nipples again, alternating between them as he groaned and thrust up into me.

“That’s it, Renn. Oh, shit, you’re so fucking tight,” Eric whispered as he pounded into me again and again, harder with each strong thrust. His moans stretched, slowing down.

“Fuck, Renn. Sugar, you’re fucking soaked.” I barely heard Mateo speak as his hands held my hips, his mouth still moving between my nipples, sucking and biting them with a deep-seated hunger.

“So beautiful, such a good girl.” Lucas pumped in and out of my throat as I whimpered and groaned between their thrusts.

Dear diary,

How could this be happening? How could I, boring Renn Sophia-Grace, have three beautiful men want me like this? How could I possibly be pleasing them just as much as they were pleasing me? Could they really think I'm this sexy?

My body rocked with pleasure as I heard their grunts and groans, our bodies slapping into and against each other. There was so much give in this, just knowing I was pleasuring them by being me. I felt, rather than heard, the first of them orgasm.

Eric pounded into me, his shouts loud in my ears as his cock twitched inside me.

He gave one last rough slam, holding me in place as his climax hit him. I felt his cock throbbing as his hot, wet cum filled me.

Seconds later, Lucas looked down at me, his mouth open as he slammed down my throat, his hand slowly teasing my hot face. The juxtaposition between his soft hands and hard thrusts took me over the edge.

“So beautiful,” I heard him whisper before he exploded in my throat. I closed my eyes as streams of cum flowed down my throat. He thrust his hips gently, keeping his cock down my throat as his body shook against my mouth, moaning my name each second.

Renn.

Renn.

Renn.

Not a minute later, I felt Mateo thrust up into me and explode, shooting ribbons of his climax into my body. I felt my body tremble at the sound of my name, so soft on Lucas's lips. There were gasps and moans all around me.

Eric began sliding out of my ass. I let out a little moan as he pulled out completely, his hand caressing my back as he did so.

Mateo's strong hands grasped my hips, and he pulled me up off his cock. “Christ!” I shouted as his mammoth cock slid out of me, sending an aftershock through my body.

He chuckled and set me down on the couch next to him. Lucas's hands slid down my arms, and he kissed my cheek, warm and tender.

"You were so wonderful, Renn. So very beautiful." Mateo's hands moved up and down my arms.

I smiled, tears sliding down my cheeks as Eric slid down to his knees in front of me. Mateo took my legs and laid them across his lap. Lucas played with my fingers, looking up at me with a soft radiance that melted my heart.

I looked at the three pairs of gorgeous eyes looking down at me, feeling a warmth I hadn't felt since . . . maybe forever. I smiled. Another tear slid down my cheek. I was completely overtaken by my emotions. I smiled to reassure them that I was okay.

"I'm sorry," I half-sobbed, half-chuckled. "I'm a bit all over the place. You were incredible. I've never felt this happy. I can't tell you how you've made me feel."

"Well done, Gentlemen," I heard Eric say in his raspy, low voice. We all laughed.

It was time for me to go home.

Dear diary,

Why did I have a feeling this wasn't the end?

Eric

Fifteen years ago

I remembered my first day at the London School of Economics as if it were yesterday. The imposing buildings that stood tall and proud against the backdrop of the gray, cloudy sky, the rustling leaves of the trees that lined the campus, and the chatter of students all around me. It was all so overwhelming.

A shy freshman, I was like a deer caught in headlights. I didn't know anyone and felt like I was in a completely new world. I didn't make any friends in the first few days.

That all changed when I met Mateo and Lucas.

It was a cloudy afternoon, and I was sitting alone in the cafeteria, nursing a cup of coffee. I was lost in thought, trying to figure out how to navigate the new environment when I heard a commotion.

I looked up to see a group of boys circling someone, jeering and laughing. My heart sank as I realized that the person at the center of it all was me.

My instinct was to ignore them and go back to my coffee, but it was no use. They started to shove me, and I stumbled back, nearly knocking over my chair.

That's when I saw Mateo and Lucas. They were standing at the edge of the crowd, looking at me with concern.

"Hey, leave him alone!" Mateo yelled, stepping forward.

Lucas followed, and soon, the three of us were united, facing off against the bullies.

The bullies backed off, and Mateo and Lucas helped me up. We exchanged introductions and started to chat. It was like we had known each other for years, and I felt a sense of relief wash over me.

From that day on, we were inseparable. We hung out after classes, studied together, and explored London. They showed me the city's hidden gems, the places that only locals knew about. It was like we had our own secret world.

As we graduated from LSE, we all landed jobs at the same law firm in a small town near New Orleans, Louisiana. We decided to take the plunge and move in together.

The town was small and quaint, with a population of only a few thousand people. It was surrounded by thick forests and swamplands, and there was something eerie about the place. But it was our new home, and we were excited to start our new lives.

As we settled into our new jobs, we noticed something strange about the town. There were whispers of secrets and mysteries, rumors of hidden treasures and curses.

One evening, we were sitting at a local bar, drinking beer and chatting about our new lives, when an old man approached us. He was hunched over, with a long white beard and piercing blue eyes.

"You boys ain't from around here, are you?" he asked, his voice gravelly.

We shook our heads, and he leaned in closer.

"You best be careful. This town has secrets, dark secrets that no one wants to talk about. You best stay away from the swamps and the old plantation house. There are things there that should never be disturbed."

THE PRESENT DAY

Turned out the hidden treasures all dialed back to a ring of counterfeiting and deceit. Man, who would have thought a place this sunny could also be so dark?

Lockwood's historic swamps had long held a dark past, mostly because the superstitious oldies of the town made it known that there were ghosts in the region. What began as a rumor was set in stone through generations.

Until some decided to challenge the system and run a whole ass business from a rundown paper mill in the swamp's heartland. The paper mill was once a plantation house, then a place where history was made during the Civil War era.

Now, it was little more than a den of deceit.

As I walked down Blockhearst Road just on the outskirts of the mill, memories flooded back to me. The place had changed a lot since I settled in.

The streets of the main city had changed. They were now lined with newer buildings and shops, and the people had changed too. But some things remained the same. Including the swamps.

I'd been hired by a client to investigate a case of counterfeit money that had been circulating in the town. I had a reputation for being the best in the business, and my passion for catching counterfeiters drove me.

It was also something that brought me close to Lucas, who had the same penchant and thirst for catching criminals with a special taste for fraud. Mateo's genius helped us along.

I was walking toward the police station when I heard a voice call out to me.

"Hey, you there! Stop!"

I turned to see a man in uniform jogging toward me. He was tall, with a buzz cut and a serious expression.

“What’s the problem?” I asked, trying to sound nonchalant.

“I’m Ali,” he said, showing me his badge. “We’ve been watching you, Eric. We know what you’re here for, and we could use your help.”

I raised an eyebrow. “What do you mean?”

“We’ve been tracking a group of counterfeiters for a while now, and we think they’re based in Lockwood. We need someone who knows the area and the people to help us catch them.”

I nodded. “I’m your man. Let’s do this.”

Ali led me to a parked car, and we drove to a dingy warehouse to the north of the mill. There were a few men loitering outside, smoking and chatting, and they eyed us warily as we approached.

“Stay cool,” Ali whispered. “We don’t want to spook them.”

We entered the warehouse, and I was hit with the smell of ink and paper. There were machines everywhere churning out fake bills, and stacks of money were piled high on tables.

Ali and I approached the group of men, who looked at us suspiciously.

“What do you want?” one of them growled.

“We’re here to do business,” Ali said smoothly. “We’re looking for some high-quality counterfeit bills, and we heard you guys are the best.”

The men exchanged glances, and I could tell they were wary. But Ali kept up his charm, and eventually, they agreed to sell us some fake bills.

As they were counting out the money, Ali signaled to his team, who burst into the warehouse, guns drawn.

“Federal agents! Hands up!”

The men were caught off guard, and they scrambled to grab the money and flee. But they were no match for Ali’s

team, who quickly subdued them and cuffed them.

I watched in satisfaction as the men were led away, their operation shut down for good. This was why I did what I did, to catch men like them and put them behind bars.

After the operation, Ali dropped me off at the shopping center in the main area of the city. I ambled around for a while, and then, a text from Mateo drove me to Candied Nights. Immediately, the familiar smells of whiskey and fried chicken hit me.

It was a cozy place, with dim lights and a warm atmosphere. I spotted Mateo and Lucas sitting at a booth near the back, their faces already flushed from the alcohol.

“How’s it going, Eric?” Mateo asked, handing me a beer.

“Good. Just helped Ali and his team bust some counterfeiters.”

“Damn, you’re still a badass,” Lucas said, clinking his bottle against mine.

“No more than you, brother.” I winked.

We talked and joked around for a while, and then the topic turned to Renn, Jonathan’s daughter.

“She’s even more beautiful now,” Mateo said, a dreamy look in his eyes.

“Man, don’t even get me started,” Lucas chimed in. “I’ve been thinking about her all the fuckin’ time. It’s like an alarm has gone off and it won’t stop.”

My heart skipped a beat at the mention of her name. The night of our escapade was burned in my memory. Her lips around my cock, her eyes boring into my soul, her smile, her body. My God.

She was the most beautiful woman I had ever seen.

“Yeah,” Mateo said, taking a sip of his beer. “She’s something else, isn’t she?”

I couldn’t agree more. “She’s gorgeous,” I said, taking a deep breath.

“I can’t stop remembering her smile or her body—or the way she made us feel,” Lucas said, shaking his head. “I mean, we’ve shared women before, but this is different. I can’t get her out of my head.”

Mateo nodded in agreement. “Same here, man. Same here.”

We fell silent for a moment, lost in our own thoughts. It was true, we had all shared women before.

It was something we had started doing in our early twenties, and it had become a sort of tradition for us. But Renn was oceans apart. There was something about her that had captured us all.

“She’s like a damn flower,” Lucas said suddenly, breaking the silence. “A tropical one, with all those vibrant colors and exotic shapes.”

Mateo chuckled. “Yeah, she’s like a hibiscus. So beautiful and delicate, but with a little bit of a wild side.”

Trust my best friends to get drunk and find flowers to describe a girl they liked.

I grinned, loving the way they described her. “And her eyes are like emeralds,” I said, feeling my heart race just thinking about her.

We sat there for a while longer, lost in our own thoughts, clearly tipsy.

It was a complicated situation, with Renn being Jonathan’s daughter. But the age gap between us only made it more exciting.

I took another sip of my whiskey, feeling the liquid warmth slide down my throat. “I gotta tell y’all something,” I said, looking at my two friends, Lucas and Mateo.

They both perked up, their eyes gleaming with curiosity. “What is it, man?” Lucas asked.

There was something about her youth and innocence that was incredibly attractive to me.

I realized that we had a lot in common despite the age gap. We both loved hiking, Indie music, and trying new stuff.

Renn was smart, witty, and curious about the world, and I found myself wanting to spend more and more time with her.

I'll admit that part of what made being with Renn so exciting was the age difference. It was like I was introducing her to a whole new world of experiences, and she was eager to explore with me.

There was a certain thrill in knowing that we were older and more experienced and that Renn was willing to learn from us.

But it wasn't just about the age gap. Renn was genuinely an amazing person, and being with her made me feel alive in a way that I hadn't felt in years. I swear, in that one night, I felt like I was rediscovering myself through her eyes.

It wasn't the age difference that made being with Renn sexy. It was the connection we had, the chemistry between us that transcended age and experience. I took a deep breath.

What we have is too fucking good to sacrifice.

"I've been thinking about something lately. And I don't know how y'all are gonna take it, but I gotta be honest with you."

Mateo leaned forward, resting his elbows on the table. "Shoot," he said.

I took another sip, feeling the whiskey loosen my tongue. "I'm comfortable with sharing Renn," I said, looking at their faces to gauge their reactions.

There was a beat of silence before Lucas let out a bark of laughter. "What the hell, man?" he said, still chuckling. "But yeah, after the last night, we kind of had this figured out."

I nodded, feeling a bit embarrassed now. "Yeah, that's what I mean. Look, I know it sounds weird, but Renn's special to each one of us. And I feel like we could make it work, you know? We've been talking about this stuff since college, anyway."

Mateo frowned. “But Renn’s Jonathan’s daughter. And he’s the town mayor. This could get complicated.”

I sighed. I knew Mateo was right. Jonathan was our best friend, and we didn’t want to ruin our relationship with him or his daughter. But the thought of being with Renn, even if it was just sharing her, made my heart race.

“I know it’s risky,” I said. “But they don’t make women like Renn anymore. She’s smart, funny, and beautiful. And we all have feelings for her. Maybe we should talk to Jonathan and see if he’s okay with it.”

Lucas snorted. “Yeah, good luck with that. Imagine goin’ over to him and saying, ‘Hey, man, we want to share your daughter.’ That’s gonna go over real well.”

I winced. He had a point. But I couldn’t shake the desire to be with Renn. And I knew Lucas and Mateo felt the same way.

We sat in silence for a few moments, each of us lost in our own thoughts. I took another sip of whiskey, feeling it burn my throat.

Finally, Mateo spoke up. “I say we take the risk. We could go over to meet Jonathan tomorrow and talk to Renn, too. Find out where her heart’s at. If she agrees, maybe we could try to make it work.”

Lucas nodded. “Agreed. We’ll talk to him tomorrow. But Eric, man, you’d better not be trying to hog her all to yourself.”

I grinned. “I wouldn’t dream of it.”

THE NEXT MORNING

It was eleven in the morning when we pulled up to Jonathan’s mansion in my Ford F-150 XLT, with Mateo and Lucas in the backseat. It was a sunny day, and the sky was a bright shade of blue.

The mansion was huge, with white columns and a wraparound porch. No matter how many times I’d come here,

the quiet beauty of Jonathan's mansion would always astound me. Jonathan greeted us at the door, his hand outstretched.

"Welcome, y'all. Come on in."

We walked into the foyer, and I felt like I was in a different world. The walls were covered in expensive art, and the floors were made of gleaming hardwood. It was like a palace.

"Y'all look thirsty," Jonathan said. "Let me fix y'all some sweet tea."

We followed him into the kitchen, and I caught a glimpse of Renn, his daughter, walking by. She blushed the second she saw us, confusion in her eyes.

"Hey, y'all. How's it going?" she said, recovering her composure.

"Not much since we saw you last," Mateo returned, a sly smile on his lips.

Her blush deepened. "Hey, not here," she muttered. "Dad doesn't know—"

"Ah, I see you've already met!" Jonathan came back, armed with a tray of glasses and a pitcher of cold, sweet tea. "Renn, d'you remember my friends? You were an itty-bitty girl when you saw them last!"

"I didn't remember them," she replied, her tone sweet and slightly salty. "But they just introduced themselves. Are they helping you with your campaign?"

"There's not a single thing they don't help me with." Jonathan laughed, good-natured as always. A prickle of unease crept up my spine. *Would he feel the same way if he knew our real motive?* I pushed the thought back.

"I'll leave you men to it, then." Renn picked up a glass from the tray and turned her back to us. The sway in her hips burned in the back of my mind as she walked away, every tilt reminding me of how delicious it had felt to be inside her.

We boys sat around the table and chatted about the upcoming election. Jonathan was neck-deep in preparations, and he needed all the help he could get.

“I’m trying to attract the youth vote, but I also need to appeal to the conservative old folks. It’s a delicate balance,” he said, sipping his tea.

Mateo leaned forward. “Why don’t you organize a concert or a rally? Get some young musicians to perform, and invite the local politicians to speak.”

Lucas nodded. “And for the older folks, you could hold a fundraiser or a charity event. Something that shows your commitment to the community.”

Jonathan listened carefully, taking notes on a pad of paper.

“That’s a great idea. Y’all are some smart boys.”

After we finished our tea, Jonathan gave us a tour of the mansion. We explored the library, the ballroom, and the indoor pool.

“I feel like a king every time I come here,” I said, laughing.

Jonathan chuckled. “It’s a lot to take in, I know. But I’m grateful for what I have. And I want to use my wealth and influence for good.”

He truly did. Jonathan was the perfect fit as mayor of Lockwood. His ethics, discipline, and hard work were unparalleled.

I had seen firsthand the work he had done in the community, organizing fundraisers for local charities, working with the police department to reduce crime, and advocating for better education for our children.

He had a vision for Lockwood, and he was willing to put in the work to make it a reality.

As the day wore on, we continued to brainstorm ideas for the election campaign. But at the back of our minds, we all hoped to catch a glimpse of Renn again.

Later that afternoon, we were all sitting on the porch, drinking beer and watching the sun set.

Jonathan frowned when his phone lit up with a message.

“Boys, looks like I have to go to town for a bit. But I’d like you men to stay a while longer. Mateo, could you look over the case reports the police sent in today? They’re all in my study. I think you’ll find some interesting points there for my next speech.”

Mateo nodded. “I’m your man. Get going. We’ll help out and be on our way too.”

Jonathan raised his glass at us. “What would I do without you boys?”

Again, that prickling sense of unease. I hoped he’d feel the same way regardless of the circumstances.

Renn

I sat in my room, unable to keep the fire in my cheeks from lighting up every few seconds. It didn't help to know that the men who were the subject of all my fantasies were only a few doors away from me.

Everything made zero and perfect sense at the same time. I'd never imagined a relationship could have so much spark and alchemy, let alone one involving three men.

Tyson used to ignore me most of the time, like I was some sort of dead weight in our relationship. I used to think that was normal, that as a relationship aged, the passion and intimacy would fade away. But I was wrong.

I never had a chance to experience those things with Tyson because he was too busy cheating on me with my best friend. I was so blind, so foolish. I trusted them both, and they betrayed me.

As I ruminated, I wondered what could have been if things had been different.

If Tyson had treated me with love and respect, if he had been faithful to me. But those thoughts burned holes in the back of my mind, hurting only me.

Taking a deep breath, I tried to recenter myself on the present, on the life that I had so painstakingly built for myself.

It was hopeless. The night was tinged with regret for the time that I'd wasted with Tyson.

I pulled out a photo album and started flipping through the pages.

There were pictures of Tyson and me, smiling and happy, before everything fell apart. There we were, smiling like two goofy nerds at prom. That was the night he'd proposed. I could see the love and hope in our eyes, but I also saw the cracks in our relationship.

Well, I reckoned it had been a long time since we first got hitched.

We were just a couple of young'uns then, fresh outta high school and head over heels in love. I remember how he used to look at me, like I was the most precious thing in the world.

And I felt the same way about him. We had big dreams and plans for our future.

But things sure did change over the years. It's funny how life could just knock you down and leave you feeling like you're spinning your wheels. Tyson, he lost his ambitions somewhere along the way.

Used to be, he wanted to make something of himself, climb the corporate ladder and all that. But then he got comfortable in his job, and it seemed like he didn't care about much else. I tried to be supportive, but it was hard seeing him settle for mediocrity.

And then there was the infidelity. Lord knows, that hurt me to my core. Tyson and Veronica. Ver, sweet Ver, the girl I loved and trusted when no one else did, my best friend. And my husband.

I felt like I'd been punched in the gut. How could he do that to me? And with someone I trusted like that? It was like a betrayal of the highest order.

But when I look back on it all now, I realize that things were already going south between us even before that happened. Tyson had become distant, detached. We hardly talked anymore, and when we did, it was just small talk.

I guess we were both too scared to really dig deep and talk about what was really going on between us. Maybe we both knew deep down that it wasn't going to end well. I remember when we first got married, we used to go on long drives together, just exploring the countryside and enjoying each other's company.

It was like we were on a grand adventure, and nothing could stop us. But as the years wore on, those drives became less frequent, and when we did go, it was like we were just going through the motions.

Looking back on it now, I realized that I wasn't blameless in the downfall of our marriage, either. I had my own issues, my own demons to battle. But it was hard not to feel like Tyson had let me down. He'd taken the easy way out, like he just gave up on us. Maybe we both did.

But despite it all, I wanted to bury the regret of marrying Tyson. We had some good times, some great memories. And even though things didn't turn out the way we hoped, I still liked to think that we both learned something from it all.

Maybe we learned that love wasn't enough on its own, that you have to keep working at it, keep fighting for it. Or maybe we just learned that sometimes, no matter how hard you try, things just don't work out.

Either way, we had something. And me? I was Renn. I was born to just keep on keeping on, like I always had. That's just how us Southern gals do it. And somehow, tonight, I wanted the same release that had invaded and left me clean three nights ago, when I'd reunited with Mateo and his boys.

I looked at the time. Daddy had dropped in to tell me he'd be late getting back, and the men were working in the study. I knew it had a full view of the poolside. And I had an idea.

The closets in my bedroom were full of lingerie and swimwear suits I'd designed but never had the chance to showcase. What better time than right now? My heart racing, I walked over to the north wardrobe and opened it to row after row of silk, organza, filigree laces, and satin.

I rummaged through the contents for a while before landing on the perfect piece. It was an emerald-green two-piece that set off the feline glow in my eyes perfectly. Smiling, I slipped into the skimpy outfit and tiptoed out of my room.

Taking the winding stairs to the east, I ran, fleet-footed, from the upper rooms straight to the veranda, and then the swimming pool. I looked through the glass windows that formed the entire south wall of the family study.

Sure enough, Mateo, Lucas, and Eric were all seated there, their eyes buried in books that looked as old as the last Disney movie I'd enjoyed. I smiled. I knew how to get their attention.

Walking to the poolside, I turned on the stereo. Sultry jazz floated out of the speakers and surrounded me, enveloping my balmy skin like a warm hug.

Mateo was the first one to look up. His eyes widened and a grin split his lips apart. He nudged the others, and they followed suit. Soon enough, I had myself a very appreciative and hungry audience.

I turned my back to them, making sure they could see my shapely legs and ass sway as I walked toward the pool. I stood by the edge of the water, letting the yellow lights of the poolside cast silhouettes of my long limbs.

It wasn't long before the men joined me. This time, it was Lucas who came over first. I grinned, hoping he'd play along.

"Are you the pool boy?" I asked, batting my eyelashes at him. Mateo and Eric snickered from a distance, clearly having fun watching me school him.

To his credit, it only took him a minute to find his footing. "Sure, I am." He extended his hand and smiled, flashing a glorious set of teeth. "My name is Matt. Nice to meet you."

"It's nice to meet you too. My name's Cassie." I shook his hand, taking note of his firm handshake, tall height, and impossible good looks. The man could get me all worked up just standing there, smiling like a goof.

"If you don't mind my asking, what happened to our regular, Andre? Why is he standing there watching you?" I

asked innocently. “And who’s that with him?”

“He’s training me to take over,” he replied easily. “He’ll be observing from the side.”

Eric laughed, and Mateo raised his bottle at us. “Good one!”

Wasting no time, Lucas asked which way led down to the pool. I pointed him in the right direction. He was in blue jeans and a plain white tee. A Lana Del Rey-approved summer dream. I couldn’t help noticing his body and the sheer rippling of his muscles, even over the clothes he wore.

“So, how long have you been cleaning pools, Matt?”

“Just for the summer,” he responded casually. “I wanted to earn a little extra cash before I start law school next month.”

“That’s awesome!” I exclaimed. “Where are you going?”

“Stanford. I’ll be moving to Cali early next month.” He got the equipment needed to clean the pool before looking at me once more. “Are you in college, Cassie?”

“I have my own business.”

There was the power I needed to feel. In that moment, I was the one running the show, the cougar, the hot, older lady who knew what the fuck she wanted from her men. I intended to feel no iota of shame for it.

I found myself getting increasingly turned on by Daniel. His good looks, brilliant smile, and charm attracted me, and I could feel my nipples begin to harden.

“Hey, Matt, d’you mind if I ask you a question?”

“Sure, what’s up?”

I sauntered over to him and pressed myself against his body. I looked up, my eyes like sirens. “D’you like to fuck?”

The question caught him off guard, and his eyes widened with surprise. “Wh—what was that again?” he managed to utter.

Oh, he was playin’, all right.

“None of us are kids here. You can tell me,” I murmured, looking him straight in the eye. I ran a finger over the stubble on his chin, wondering how it’d feel down under. “Do. You. Like. To. Fuck?”

“I mean, yeah—who doesn’t?” He laughed, his tone uncertain, pretending to be thrown off by the question.

“Then here’s a better question for you.” I took a step back from him and undid my bikini top, revealing my round tits and hardened nipples.

“Would you like to fuck me?”

Lucas remained speechless as I proceeded to undo my bikini bottoms. I looked at his crotch, and a smirk appeared on my face at the noticeable bulge through his jeans. I took his hand and led him over to the nearby pergola.

His breathing had grown ragged. “What are you doin’, Cassie?”

“What does it look like I’m doin’?” I responded, making him stand near the lawn chair. I started undoing his jeans. His cock was already straining, and once I pulled them down, it sprang out like a proud extension before him, as huge and taut as I’d expected.

“What—” He groaned. “What if the neighbors see us?” A low moan escaped his lips as my tongue ran along the length of his dick.

“So what if they do?” I moaned lightly, knowing no one could see us for miles around. I took his cock into my mouth and began to suck him off. My tongue flicked over the sensitive head while my hands stroked his length.

Lucas relaxed as his lust took over.

He took a step forward and pulled me into his arms.

We kissed softly at first, our lips exploring each other tentatively. But as the kiss deepened, so did our passion. Lucas’s hands roamed over my body, making me shiver with desire. I ran my fingers through his hair, pulling him closer to me.

Our kisses became more urgent, our bodies pressed together in a frenzy of desire. His hands moved down to my waist, pulling me closer to him. I moaned into his mouth as I felt his hardness against me.

We melted, our kisses never breaking. ‘*Matt’s*’ hands roamed over my body, touching me in all the right places. I felt my body respond to his touch, my desire building with each passing moment.

As our kisses became more frantic, I felt his hand move between my legs. I gasped as he touched me there, his fingers sending waves of pleasure through my body. I arched my back, wanting more.

I went down on him once again, not quite being satisfied. “I want more of you,” I whispered, licking the base of his cock with the surface of my tongue.

“Oh, yeah?” He bunched my hair into his hands and held my head closer to him. “Show me what you want, then.”

“By all means.”

He groaned when I took his entire length into my mouth, holding him there momentarily. I then proceeded to suck him off once more, my tongue as enthused as the rest of my body.

“Sit on my cock,” he said, his voice breaking with desire. I released his cock with a wet *pop* and stood up. He was naked in seconds. I’d missed those rock-hard abs, so perfectly bronze under the halo of evening lights.

He sat down on the couch and helped me get on top of him. I was already soaking wet as I guided his huge shaft inside my pussy. “Oh, yes. Oh, God, yes,” I moaned as he stretched me.

“Damn, *Cassie*, your pussy is so fucking tight,” he groaned as I began to ride him. He smacked my ass and squeezed my round cheeks, drawing out cries of pleasure from me.

“Fuck me, *Matt*,” I moaned. “Show the boys how it’s done! Fuck me!”

He needed no convincing upon hearing my request. It was crystal clear—the only thing on his mind was fucking the shit out of me. He grabbed my ass once more and began pounding my pussy.

“Oh, fuck!” I cried out. “Just like that! Fuck me! Fuck my pussy like that!”

His cock thrust relentlessly inside me, and I was soon reduced to moaning and crying out in incoherent bursts of ecstasy. He smacked my ass as his tongue flicked and lashed over my hard nipples repeatedly.

The sound of his carnal grunts and our bodies slapping together as we fucked made me wetter and hornier. “Hold on to me, *Cassie*,” he said as he started to stand.

Surprised, I wrapped my arms around his neck and immediately gasped when he stood up with ease, with me still in his arms. His cock was inside me, and without missing a beat, he never stopped fucking me.

Now that I was in the air, all I could do was take his relentless thrusts, each sensation like fireworks in my blood.

It had to happen.

“Oh, fuck, I’m coming!” My pussy clenched tightly around his thick cock as my body shuddered from my orgasm. He continued fucking me until my climax had subsided.

“I want you in my mouth,” I said, each word in happening in rhythm with his thrusts. He helped me down, and I bent in front of him. My tongue flicked teasingly over the head of his cock as I stroked him. It wasn’t long before it twitched, and he released a spurt of warm cum onto my tongue.

Jet after jet followed, and I licked him clean.

“Damn, girl,” he managed to say in between breaths. “You are something else.”

“I can say the same thing about you,” I replied, smirking as I stood up. “Get dressed. You still have a pool to clean.”

The show wasn’t quite over yet.

After I cleaned myself and got dressed, I walked into the study.

My heart raced at the sight of the three handsome men sitting before me. Mateo, with his dark hair and piercing green eyes, sat confidently on the couch while Lucas, with his sandy blonde hair and ocean blue eyes, lounged lazily in an armchair.

Eric, with his messy brown hair and warm brown eyes, leaned against the wall, a small smirk playing at his lips.

My nerves got the best of me, and I felt a flush rise to my cheeks as I took a seat across from them. The air was thick with tension, and I knew that all three of them were waiting for me to make a move.

I took a deep breath and looked at each of them in turn, my heart pounding in my chest. I knew that I had feelings for all of them, but I didn't know how to choose.

Finally, Mateo spoke up, breaking the silence. "Renn, we've been waiting for you. We wanted to talk to you about something."

My heart stopped, and I looked at him expectantly. "What is it?" I asked, trying to keep my voice steady. Lucas chimed in. "We've all talked, and we've come to the conclusion that we all have feelings for you."

My eyes widened, and my heart began to race. I had never been in a situation like this before, and I wasn't sure how to respond.

Eric stepped forward, his eyes locking onto mine. "We know that this is a lot, and we don't want to pressure you into anything. But we wanted you to know that we all care for you deeply, and we're willing to do whatever it takes to make this work."

There was no denying what I felt for each of these men. They were all stunning.

I sat down, nervously tapping my foot against the hardwood floor. Eric, Lucas, and Mateo were all standing in front of me, each of them looking at me with hopeful eyes. I

knew what they wanted, and I couldn't deny that I wanted it too.

“Renn, we know this is unconventional,” Eric said, breaking the silence. “But we care about you, and we want to make you happy.”

Lucas nodded in agreement. “We've all talked about it, and we're willing to share you.”

My heart raced as I looked from Eric to Lucas to Mateo. They were all so different, yet they all made me feel so alive. Eric was the dominant one, always taking charge in everything he did.

Lucas was sweet and caring, always knowing just what to say to make me feel better. And Mateo was passionate and adventurous, never afraid to try new things.

I took a deep breath, finally admitting what I had been feeling for so long. “I know it's not conventional, but I can't deny that I have feelings for all three of you. And if you're all willing to share me, then I want that too.”

It should have felt scarier, but sitting there, surrounded by all this gorgeousness, the only thing I felt was a calm certainty.

Eric's face lit up, and he stepped closer to me. “Are you sure? Because once we start this, there's no going back.”

I nodded, feeling more sure of myself than I ever had before. “I'm sure.”

Lucas and Mateo stepped closer too, and before I knew it, they were all kissing me at once. It was overwhelming, but in the best way possible. I felt desired and loved, and I knew that this was exactly what I wanted.

I moaned in pleasure, feeling more alive than I ever had before. This was exactly where I was meant to be. Eric kissed my forehead while Lucas ran his fingers through my hair. Mateo looked at me with a smirk, and I knew that this was only the beginning.

“We'll take care of you, Renn,” Eric said, his voice full of promise.

I smiled, feeling more content than I ever had before. “I know you will.”

Something inside me had clicked, and I knew what I wanted.

“I want all of you,” I said, looking into their eyes. “I don’t even care that I’m repeating myself like a recorder, because I never expected this. I want to explore this with all of you.”

Mateo’s face broke into a grin, and he pulled me into his arms, kissing me deeply. Lucas and Eric moved closer, and soon, we were all wrapped up in a passionate embrace.

The night was far from over, but Dad would be back soon.

“It’s the eve of Easter,” I murmured as Eric trailed kisses on my neck. “Want to finish this somewhere else?”

The three of them nodded in unison.

I read the note once more, my insides as wet as honey in the summer.

It told me to go to Sundown Inn, room 204. And to come as a bunny.

An hour back, Mateo had dropped me to my room and asked me to await further instructions.

I grinned at the note once more. Somehow, it was fate or providence, but I had just the outfit I needed for this occasion. It was an ensemble of sorts that I'd made to surprise Tyson on our first honeymoon. He'd been shocked out of his righteousness.

"Renn, this is dirty. You don't need to become a whore to please me."

I pushed the thought back, my eyes burning all of a sudden. Opening my suitcase, I went all the way to the back, where a brown paper package sat nestled among skirts and T-shirts, labeled *Work Stuff*.

These were all prototypes for what I wanted for the future of my lingerie shop. I craved the fun and the adventure, stuff that he'd never have allowed. He was all about the florals and the balconettes, the conventional prettiness.

Which would be fine if it weren't so fucking boring.

Sighing, I unwrapped the fourth packet. I withdrew a pair of bunny ears, a scalloped bra, a G-string, and the tiniest little

mini-skirt. The ridiculously soft, baby pink fabric shone against my skin. It was PU leather, as stretchy as it was sexy.

Smiling, I slipped the costume on and followed up with an oversized tee and baggy pants. No need to draw attention until the time was right.

The drive down to Sundown Inn brought more into perspective, told me I was on the road to freedom.

I drove down the Louisiana coast, the sea breeze blowing through my hair. I had been on the road for hours, but I was determined to reach the inn before midnight.

The small town had always been a favorite of mine, with its charming streets and friendly locals. But tonight, there was something special about the town that I couldn't quite put my finger on.

As I drove, I marveled at the beauty of the night. The sky was clear, and the stars shone like diamonds in the sky.

The trees that lined the road were a deep shade of green, swaying gently in the wind. And as I drove closer to the coast, I could hear the sound of the waves crashing against the shore.

I finally arrived at the Sundown Inn, a small motel by the sea. My heart was pounding in anticipation as I stepped out of my car and made my way inside. And as I opened the door to my room, I saw Eric, Matteo, and Lucas waiting for me.

Their faces lit up as they saw me, and my heart swelled with something warm for them. We spent a while sitting outside, watching the sea meet with the shore.

Salty winds played with my hair and lips, and the night shone, deep and ponderous. We talked and laughed, enjoying each other's company.

As the night wore on, the air grew cooler, and I could feel the chill of the wind on my skin. But I didn't mind. Being with Eric, Matteo, and Lucas was all the warmth I needed.

We finally made our way back to the room, and as we lay down together, I knew that this was where I belonged, at least in the moment.

Mateo showed me to one of the inner rooms and asked me to wait for his call. I went in and stripped down to my costume. Minutes later, he opened the door and jerked me inside.

He was buck naked. He pulled me to him and kissed me passionately, his tongue exploring my willing mouth as his hands danced over my pert ass cheeks. I could feel his hard cock protruding against my bare stomach.

Reaching down, I took it in my hand, stroking and moaning as I did so.

Eric appeared to the side, and he had nothing on save a pair of black boxers. He began kissing my neck. Lucas had somehow appeared behind me. His hands touched and pressed the soft bumps of my skin as he whispered sweet nothings in my ears.

“Now that the Easter bunny is here, we can all begin,” Mateo murmured. I giggled as he pushed me to my knees. “Be a good bunny and eat your carrot.”

I was only too happy to oblige. I took his firm cock between my lips and gently pulled its entire length into my mouth as I cupped his balls.

“Mmm, yes, little bunny, play with that carrot.” He sighed as I began sucking his hard cock deep into my mouth.

“You’re the sexiest bunny I’ve seen.” Eric was on the floor under me. He helped me position myself so I found my pussy right above his mouth. My eyes fluttered open as he pried my G-string to the side with his teeth.

His tongue shot into my pussy, licking and stroking it like it was the most proficient paintbrush.

Lucas’s greedy lips were on mine. He quickly undid my bra and cupped his hands under my breasts. “I like this bunny better without her restraints,” he said, his thumbs stroking around my nipples as my hand tightened around Matteo’s shaft.

He took my free hand and placed its palm against his balls. He closed the tip to cup them. I looked at him for a second.

“Now, like this.” Guiding my hand, he showed me how to pleasure his balls while I serviced the tip of Mateo’s penis with my other hand and tongue.

“Mmm.” Mateo sighed, lost in pleasure. His fingers gripped the back of my head.

My breasts bounced as Eric’s licking grew more intense. “You make me want to come on those tits,” Lucas growled.

“They’re all yours!” I gasped. I put my hands under my breasts and lifted them toward him. “Would you like it if your cum went on my nipples?”

“And all over.”

“Filthy old man,” I replied, my veins tripping with eager anticipation.

Eric put his hands on my inner thighs and pushed my legs back and wider, moving his mouth closer to me. He proceeded to leave a trail of butterfly light kisses on my clitoral hood.

“Oh, my God,” I gasped against Mateo’s cock, making him twitch and quiver.

He angled his head and took the outer labia between his lips, kissing it. And then, he put his mouth over my clitoris and sucked for dear life.

“AH!” A long breath escaped me.

“Fuck,” Mateo groaned, shooting out a hot jet of precum into my welcoming mouth. Lucas leaned down and traced circles on my spine and neck as Eric’s mouth smacked and licked me.

Eric pushed on my thighs until he could insert the tip of his tongue straight into my sex. He ran his tongue up between my labia and against my clit, repeating until I could see stars.

I was panting, all decency forgotten and tossed to trash. I reached down and grabbed his head, keeping his mouth on my clit. He sucked it obediently and slid an arm around my thigh.

Long fingers touched the sensitive pearl and pulled my hood upward so I was completely exposed to his tongue.

“Oh, for fuck’s sake!” I rocked my pelvis back and forth over his face.

In the meantime, Mateo’s cock had never felt better than it did just then, gliding in and out of my mouth. His balls connected with my chin as I sucked him.

I could hear my moans and feel them in my throat as juices poured out of me in response to Eric’s fingering and Lucas’s touching. I was already rivaling the ocean at the thought of what was coming.

Mateo stroked my bunny ears as his movements began hastening. I relished the feeling of his smooth cock gliding in and out, filling me up and making my cheeks puff out.

“Does the bunny like her carrot?” He smiled down at me, and I nodded. I felt his hands guide my mouth over it as his balls slapped against my chin.

I held his gaze the whole time, a look of want in my eyes. He could sense it as his movements got even swifter. I saw him throw his head back and felt his hot seed as it erupted in my mouth. I moaned loudly, swallowing as it pumped into my mouth.

Without waiting, Mateo and the boys led me to the bed and made me lie on my back.

“Tonight.” Mateo smiled. “We take turns.” He leaned down to kiss my lips as his hands roamed my firm body, settling between my legs. They spread my tender pussy lips apart and moved around the slit, rubbing and massaging it.

I felt myself lose control and squirt on his fingers. I bucked on the sheets as my first orgasm overtook me, and I moaned like a woman unhinged at his ministrations on my hot, aching pussy.

As my orgasm ebbed, he stopped and brought a small bag from the nightstand. Eric and Lucas looked on, stroking themselves hungrily.

Mateo pulled out some edible paints. I giggled.

He opened them and began painting my tits like they were round easter eggs. I moaned as the brush tickled my stiff nipples. He had me turn over and did the same on my ass cheeks.

I giggled once more as he painted the globes and I felt it run between my legs. The coolness made me shiver. He opened my legs so I could feel his hot breath between them.

His tongue began lapping up the spilled paint, making me spread even wider for him so his tongue could attend to my wet pussy. I jacked my ass up into the air.

“Oh, just like that,” I moaned as his mouth covered my pussy and his tongue darted in and out, making me squirm on the bed and push myself against his mouth. He moved his chin against my clit, his mouth working wonders on my nether lips.

I squirted once more, my body and sex ablaze as his mouth devoured me whole. I was lost in my building orgasm, screaming as he brought me to the brink of my big moment.

He moved once more to my rosebud, licking the edible paint from it. I felt it twitch against his tongue, building heat once more.

Mateo moved up. I could feel him nibbling and licking the paint off my ass, tickling and biting at the same time. His mouth removed all the paint as I thrust toward him.

I felt his hands rub my ass cheeks softly. “My little Easter bunny could do with some punishing.”

A smile came over me. I knew what was coming next.

SMACK!

His hand met my firm left ass cheek, already aching for him. I jumped slightly, soon overcome by the pleasures my body felt as his spanking continued. My ass was so warm, and his kisses in between the slaps made goosebumps erupt all over my skin.

Soon, he stopped and I felt his finger enter me. I jumped back to grab more of him. I wanted to be filled. I’d forgotten all else, save the knowledge that I was going to get the fucking

of my life, and the only other two people who needed to see it were already in the room with me.

I felt his finger deep inside me and I clenched on to it with my vaginal muscles, holding on, milking it as he slowly fucked me. He inserted a second finger, doubling my pleasure, and then I felt his mouth on me once more, sucking and licking me as I squirmed.

His mouth was soon replaced by his finger as it speared me, and I tightened around it. Both of his hands worked on me as his mouth tenderly kissed my ass cheeks, making me moan even louder as another orgasm approached.

My rosebud grabbed his finger, and I shouted out my climax as I bucked against his hands. He rolled me over and gave me another kiss.

I lost myself as he took a nipple in his mouth, sucked the paint off it, licked it down, and then moved to take more of my breast in his mouth, removing more paint as he went.

He then kissed my neck while his hands worked my Easter egg tits, their stripes jiggling as he kneaded them.

My pussy heated up once again as he completely cleaned off my tit before moving on to the other one. Once he finished my breasts, I reached out and took his cock in my hand.

I then started to stroke it, eager to feel it inside me.

“Good bunny,” he whispered, nodding his assent.

He wanted this as badly as I did.

He needed me.

As he positioned himself, I felt his hard cock scraping against my thighs. I maneuvered him toward my hot, wet pussy.

“I’m so ready for you,” he groaned, looking at me with a curious light in his eyes. “You’re all I’ve been waiting for.”

In the splitting of a breath, I realized I felt the same way.

“Then show me.” I raised my legs, calling him in. “Show me how much you want this. Me.”

I pulled him toward me. Before the tip met my wetness, he was as wood-hard as he had been. He knew he would be a snug fit, so he began with caution, like the first drops of rain harboring on the brink of a storm.

But I wanted that storm.

I groaned. "I want to feel it." I touched his shaft with my hand, pulling him closer. Then, he drove in. As his huge cock filled me up, my eyes and mouth rounded in a shock of delight.

He leaned forward, his pelvis forcing my legs, and seized my nipples, claiming them with his tongue and teeth. He dragged on them with his breath in a low hiss.

"Oh, fuck yes," I moaned as every last inch was buried deep inside me. He drew back and began impaling me with slow, forceful strokes. They grew faster and harder. My gasps turned into an echoing "Oh, fuck me, yes, fuck me!" on repeat.

Moments later, my organism quivered as I climaxed once more.

Whoa, Renn, that's more in the last half-an-hour than the entire five years of your marriage.

Renn

I grinned and relaxed. He stopped his movements, almost as if he were studying me. I met his eyes with a fierce gaze, and he grabbed my hips and started fucking me again.

And then, he paused once more. The fucking tease. “No,” I pleaded. “Go on!”

My breasts rose and fell. He plowed me harder, until my groans were frantic.

As my back arched in another orgasm, he pushed deep into me, stayed deep, and humped his crotch against mine.

My tits jumped as his pelvis made contact with me. I could feel his balls on my ass as he rammed his cock deeper inside.

Then, I felt his cock unleash hot streams deep inside me. They rebounded off the walls of my cervix as his head fell back.

He did not stop fucking me.

“Yes.” I breathed hard as his cock emptied itself inside my womb and I built myself up to an emotional climax. He sensed this and withdrew, only to drive the thick organ into my tight little rosebud, which had already been opened by him.

That was all it took to push me right over the ultimate edge.

“Mateo, yes!” I writhed and screamed as he called out my name while he came inside my ass. I milked his cock with my rosebud, relishing the feel of my tight cavity getting stretched by his length.

“*Renn!*”

“*Renn!*”

“*Fuck yes, Renn!*”

It was dizzyingly wonderful. I rocked to help him fill me up, the fire of my lust engulfed by his cock as it probed the depths of my ass.

The feelings that came over me at his spearing caused me to whimper, beg, and cry for a very long time until I felt his cock swell so enormously that I thought it would rip apart my tight ass, and another load of his hot sperm erupted into my tight ass.

He shouted himself hoarse as his cock drained into me, and I moaned in response. I felt the warmth of his juices coating my insides as a broad smile appeared on my face.

I fell back on the bed. I wanted to do more, but oh, heavens, I was so tired. So full, content, and tired.

And that’s when Eric and Lucas sat down beside me and ran their hands tenderly over my bare skin. “Hey, it’s been a lot for a night,” Lucas said, his eyes like the sea. “Let’s just go down to the beach and talk.”

My eyes filled over. *How the fuck did I suddenly get so lucky?*

Half an hour later, we sat on the beach, our toes buried in the sand. My eyes were fixed on the vast, shimmering sea.

Beside me, Mateo, Lucas, and Eric lounged on beach chairs. It was midnight, and the sky was a tapestry of stars. The sea was beautiful, its waves rolling gently in the moonlight.

I looked at the stars and sighed. “I used to come here with my dad when I was a little girl,” I said, my voice thick.

“He used to tell me stories about the stars and how they all had their own purpose in life. I used to feel so small and insignificant, but he would always remind me that I was part of something bigger.”

Mateo put his arm around me. “You’re not insignificant, Renn,” he said. “You’re one of the most important people in our lives.”

Lucas nodded in agreement. “And we promise to always defend you, no matter what happens,” he said.

Eric added, “We have a thing for keeping our girl safe.”

I smiled at them. “I don’t know. I feel like I’d be at sea without you guys, and it’s been such an itty bit of time that we’ve shared.”

Mateo squeezed my shoulder. “You don’t have to worry about that, Renn,” he said. “We’ll be here for you.”

Lucas looked up at the sky.

The stars seemed to be arranged in a way that was almost magical, creating a shape that was both breathtaking and mesmerizing.

“Y’all see that constellation up there?” I asked my boys. “That’s Orion, the mighty hunter.”

Mateo looked up and squinted his eyes. “I see it,” he said. “It’s amazing how the stars can create such a perfect shape.”

Lucas nodded in agreement. “It’s one of the most recognizable constellations,” he said. “And it’s been a part of human mythology for centuries.”

Eric looked up at the sky and whistled. “I never paid much attention to the stars before,” he said. “But they’re really something else.”

I smiled at my friends. “Growing up, my daddy used to tell me stories about the stars,” I said. “He’d say that Orion was a great hunter who was always on the lookout for his prey. And that’s why the stars are arranged like that.”

Mateo put his arm around me. “Your daddy is a wise man,” he said. “And you’re lucky to have learned so much from him.”

The stars twinkled and danced, creating a spectacle that was both humbling and awe-inspiring.

“You know, I used to come here with my family when I was younger, too,” he said. “I remember my dad telling me that the stars were like a map, and if you knew how to read them, you could find your way anywhere.”

Eric chuckled. “I don’t think I’ve ever been to the beach at night before,” he said. “But I have to admit, it’s pretty peaceful.”

We all sat in silence for a few minutes, watching the waves crash against the shore.

“I’m a bit worried about Dad, honestly. Ever since Mom . . . he’s become this person who can’t see beyond the conventionalities of Louisiana culture. It’s all sweet and warm until it isn’t.”

Mateo sighed and rubbed my back. “Who can blame him, though? We’re a lot older than you, Renn. Plus, we’re unconventional by the very tenets of a basic human relationship.”

“Look at you,” I teased. “You’re lawyering up on me!”

He chuckled. “I’ll admit, it’s something all of us have been worried about. But we also think this is far too good to sacrifice, and Jonathan has a big heart. It’ll take time, but he will come around.”

I felt doubtful.

And they sensed it. There was something wonderfully warm about people who could just understand the emotional fabric of moments and respond in tune with them.

“We’re all grown adults,” Eric said gently. “We can make our own decisions.”

I looked at them and sighed. “I know,” I said. “But you don’t understand how traditional Lockwood is. If word got out

that I was hanging out with my daddy's friends, it would be the talk of the town."

Mateo put his arm around me. "Well, let them talk," he said. "As long as we're not doing anything wrong, we don't have anything to worry about."

I smiled at him, feeling a sense of comfort. "You're right," I said. "I'm just being silly."

Lucas leaned forward. "Speaking of silly, did I tell y'all about the time I got drunk and rode a cow down Main Street?"

Eric burst out laughing. "No, you didn't," he said. "And I don't think I want to know."

"Well, you're gonna know regardless!"

"Hear, hear!" Mateo chuckled.

Lucas grinned. "It was a Saturday night, and I had a little too much moonshine in my system."

Mateo let out a laugh. "I can already tell this is going to be good," he said.

Eric leaned forward. "Alright, spill the beans, Lucas."

I settled back into my chair, excited for what was to come. "I'm all ears," I said.

Lucas took a deep breath and began to weave his tale. "So, there I was, stumbling down Main Street, feeling like a real cowboy. And then I saw it, a big ol' bull just wandering around."

Mateo leaned in, his eyes wide with anticipation. "And what did you do?"

Lucas grinned. "I did what any self-respecting wannabe cowboy would do. I climbed onto that bull's back and held on for dear life."

Eric let out a laugh. "You rode a bull down Main Street?" he asked, incredulous.

Lucas nodded, his face serious. "I sure did," he said. "And let me tell you, it was the ride of my life."

We all burst out laughing, the image of Lucas riding a bull down the middle of Lockwood's Main Street too absurd to comprehend.

"You're lucky you didn't get trampled," I said, shaking my head in disbelief.

Lucas shrugged. "I had a little bit of liquid courage in me," he said. "Plus, I knew that bull was my ticket to fame and fortune."

We all laughed again, the humor of the situation not lost on any of us.

"Well, Lucas, I think it's safe to say you've lived a full life," Mateo said, chuckling.

Eric nodded in agreement. "You never cease to amaze us, Lucas," he said.

I grinned at Lucas, feeling grateful for the laughter and lightheartedness of the moment. It wouldn't last. Minutes later, the light on my phone blared. I looked down, confused at who'd be texting this late at night.

My life had never been adventurous enough for three-am texts. And whatever adventure was to be had was in the moment. Right now.

The screen shone with picture after picture, each more compromising than the other, each with at least one of the three boys beside me.

I dropped the phone, my hands trembling. This couldn't be happening to me.

Mateo was the first to notice something was wrong. He touched my shoulder immediately. "Renn?"

I picked the phone up once more and looked at the messages.

Hey, sweet pea. Long time, and you're already up to no good. How about we meet up and talk about your prospects before dear papa finds out what his goodie-goodie girlie has been up to?

You know I love ya,

Tyson.

How could he do this to me?

Ten years ago, the boy I knew was so deeply in love with the me of those days that he would have done anything to keep the world safe. Yes, our relationship grew rancid.

But we did have some good times. And I could not help sitting there, feeling salt sting my tongue—salt that had less to do with the sea and more to do with my own tears.

“He wasn’t always like this,” I whispered. “There was a time when Tyson was my best friend.”

Maybe they sensed my need to let this out, and all three, Mateo, Lucas, and Eric, fell silent.

“I was a loner when I started out at school. And Dad was so busy with his campaigns and with mom’s illness. I really, truly needed someone to just be there for me, to tell me it was all going to be okay.”

I was always tall and lanky, which made me stand out from the other kids. Unfortunately, this also made me a target for bullies.

They would make fun of my appearance and call me names like “skinny bones”. It was hard to find a place where I felt like I belonged, and most of the time, I felt alone.

The other kids didn’t spend much time talking to me, except for Mya. She was one of the only people who seemed to understand what I was going through. We would hang out together during recess and talk about our favorite books and movies.

Mya was a great friend, but she moved away at the end of fifth grade. I was sad to see her go, but I knew that we would always be connected through our memories.

After Mya left, I felt even more isolated than before. The bullies seemed to have gotten worse, and I didn’t know how to handle it. I started spending more time by myself, reading books and writing stories.

It was a way to escape from the reality of my life and to explore other worlds where I could be whoever I wanted to be.

Everything changed when I met Tyson. He was new to Lockwood, having just moved there with his family. He was tall and athletic, which made him stand out just like I did, but in a different way.

I was surprised when he approached me during lunchtime and asked if he could sit with me. We started talking, and I realized that we had a lot in common.

He loved reading and writing just like I did, and we both had a passion for clothes and culture—and that was when I realized I wanted to keep this boy around.

Over time, Tyson became my closest friend. We would spend hours talking about our favorite books and movies, and we even started writing stories together.

He helped me to see that there was more to life than just the bullies and the isolation. With Tyson by my side, I felt like I could take on anything that came my way.

Looking back on my childhood in Lockwood, I realized that it wasn't all bad. And I had him to thank for that. He'd made me see the other side, believe I could have a world for myself in spite of everything I thought to be set in stone.

“Y’know.” I gave a wan smile. “We decided to jump in on this lingerie business as a team, Ver, him, and me.”

Veronica and I met during my first year at fashion school. We became fast friends, and with Mya off on her adventures, she became the keeper of my secrets. It was all good for a time, until it wasn't.

“We used to sit in my daddy’s basement and come up with all these ridiculous ideas. Because lingerie—there’s so much history and culture there. And both of them made me believe I could do great things.”

How did life get so messy?

I wished I could just turn back the wheels and do something that would make Tyson understand he'd changed

too much for his own good. I knew there were parts of his life that I was well off not knowing.

He'd disappear for weeks at a time. On one such occasion, when he came back home, he smelled like the old plantation house to the south of Lockwood. That part of town was forbidden, but it was also the place where he and I had made love for the first time.

I used to wonder if he went back there for the memories. But who knew, maybe that's where he'd take Veronica. Maybe he'd fuck her on the age-old papers, just like he'd made love to me.

The thought burned holes in the back of my mind, and I shook my head.

“Guys, I think I wanna go home. It's been a very long night, and I'm really quite tired.”

Mateo put his arm around my shoulder.

“We ain't gonna let that sumbitch get away with this,” Mateo said, his voice low and serious. “We're gonna find a way to bring him to his knees.”

I was still so numb. Most of me could not process what was happening or why I was about to go to war with a man I had loved so ardently once upon a time. I knew that what Tyson had done was wrong, but I had never thought about getting revenge.

The idea of breaking the law scared me, but I also knew that I couldn't let Tyson get away with what he had done.

“But what can we do?” I asked, my voice trembling.

“Maybe,” Eric said, shrugging his broad shoulders. “But you're too precious to us to watch you get hurt like this.”

I felt a warm sense of gratitude wash over me. These guys had only just come to know me. They had no inkling of my past or my baggage, and now they were willing to risk everything to help me. I knew that I could trust them, no matter what.

Lucas, always the one with the most restless mind, spoke up next. “We’re gonna need a plan. We can’t just go in guns blazing.”

Mateo nodded in agreement. “He’s got those pictures saved somewhere, and we gotta find ‘em. But we also gotta make sure that nobody else gets hurt in the process.”

They talked for hours, coming up with ideas and scenarios.

“No matter what, we’re not gonna let him get away with any of it. Lucas will drop you home now. Go back, get some rest. And trust us to do something that’ll keep you safe.”

Their low, warm voices were like summer lullabies to my ears, each drawl telling me I was in good hands. I didn’t know what the future would bring, or if it would even let us be together, but this was part of why I felt blessed to have grown up in the South.

It didn’t matter that these men were from different parts of the world. They were as much a part of this culture now as I was, and they’d just shown it.

There was something special about the way people looked out for each other, even when the odds were against them.

It was a sense of community and solidarity that I knew I would always cherish, no matter where life took me.

I nodded gratefully at Lucas. “Let’s go, then. I think some sleep will do me a world of good.”

The night was deeper than it had been a few hours back. This was the zone of silence, faint hours from when birds would start teetering and life would pick up pace. Soon, fishermen would be around to get hold of the day’s first catch.

A wee bit of quiet before the chaos. Just like life.

Or whatever was coming my way. I’d set things in motion, I knew that now. And there was no turning back from this.

“Renn?” Lucas asked, his eyes fixed on the lamplit roads ahead. “You’re a very strong girl.”

It was odd to hear someone say that. All my life, I'd been told I was vulnerable, to the point that it had always felt like my weakness.

I was always trusting too hard, falling too fast, hurting too much.

Tyson used to tell me not to do so much for him. He felt that my love was too big.

But these men, even with the decades that stood between us, made me feel years more mature.

“Thank you for saying that,” I murmured. “I wish I could feel strong, but right now, my knees are worse than wobbly jelly.”

“Ha.” He chuckled. “It’s all gonna be okay. I like to think you’re gonna rise like Scarlett O’Hara did in *Gone with the Wind*. The world showed her a tough time, Renn, but she turned those skirts around and gave them her sassy finger, didn’t she?”

I couldn’t help smiling. “I can’t believe you’ve read *Gone with the Wind*. What was your favorite part?”

In the climactic scene of *Gone with the Wind*, Scarlett O’Hara stood alone, looking at the rubble of her former life, her once-grand plantation and home in ruins. Her family’s legacy had been reduced to tatters.

You’d think she’d give up, wouldn’t you? But she was a Southern belle. There was no giving up, not in our dictionary. So, even in the midst of all that devastation, she came up with a newfound strength and resilience. That, to me, was breathtaking.

That was what I aspired to.

There was so much underlying sadness to this scene, a sense of loss and longing for all that was no more.

Scarlett’s fierce determination was born of a deep-seated fear—and her urge to tell herself that she was enough. People could hate her or criticize her for being so stubborn and wily, but to me, she was the ideal feminine siren.

I remembered the first time my mother read the lines to me. I stayed awake for the whole of that night.

As she looked out over the rolling hills of her beloved Georgia, her eyes blazed with a fierce determination. "As God is my witness," she proclaimed, "I'll never be hungry again!"

And just then, I knew Lucas was a man of my own soul, cut from the same cloth and sewn with the very same threads.

"That part where she picks up the soil and says she's never going to go hungry again. Think of the power in her vulnerability. It was amazing."

I nodded, somehow noticing how my eyes misted over. "It was so poignant, so telling of her desire to survive and keep going, no matter what."

Scarlett's promise was a testament to the grit and determination of the human spirit.

It was a reminder that even in the darkest of times, we'd have the power to rise above our circumstances and carve out a better future for ourselves.

I had to believe I could do this right now. I had to.

"It was a reminder," I whispered. We'd turned the bend. I could see my father's mansion looming in the distance. The light in the study was on. He was probably going over more work for his campaigns.

"Even in the darkest of times, remember to leave a light on." Lucas smiled. "You're going to be okay, Renn."

The phone lit up once more. It was a penultimate warning from Tyson.

Don't keep me waiting, sugar bunny.

Mateo

Every morning, two northern cardinals, year-round residents in the shrubby woodland edges surrounding my studio apartment, would come visiting. They were plump little creatures with wispy crests and funny, longish tails and indulgently pink beaks.

The little man had a bright red color to him, and his lady was grayer, but with hints of red in her wings. Both would kick up a ruckus if I didn't leave sunflower seeds in the birdfeeder just outside my kitchen window.

It was sweet and annoying at the same time, something to look forward to in the mornings. Y'know, you spend all these years alone, but when you get up, you'd like little reminders that life is never limited to one heart.

The birds reminded me that we were all connected in the tiniest of ways and that things external to me could also make me happy.

Today, though, they reminded me of Renn. Innocent, wide-eyed, sweet Renn, and how heartbroken she'd looked when that asshole ex-husband of hers threatened her the way he did. I intended to break his life and his limbs if I could.

I woke up at the crack of dawn, feeling a little groggy from staying up late the night before. But I knew exactly what I needed to get my day started right. A good ol' cup of Joe.

And not just any coffee, mind you. I needed a heady espresso, the kind that makes you feel like you can conquer the world.

So I made my way over to my *Gaggia Classic Pro*, one of the best damn machines you could find this side of the Mississippi.

I flipped the switch and listened as the machine hummed to life, the sound reminding me of a gentle Southern drawl.

As I waited for the water to heat up, I took out my favorite espresso cup, a small white porcelain thing with a delicate floral pattern.

It was the perfect size for a single shot of espresso, and it always made me feel a little fancy whenever I used it.

Once the water was ready, I ground up my espresso beans and loaded them into the machine.

The smell of freshly roasted coffee filled the air, making my mouth water. I placed my cup under the spout and pressed the button, watching as the dark liquid poured out in a steady stream.

I took a sip, savoring the rich, bold flavor of the espresso.

It was smooth and velvety, with just the right amount of kick to get me going for the day ahead. I closed my eyes and let out a contented sigh, feeling the caffeine rush through my veins.

Making my morning cup of coffee was more than just a routine for me.

It was a ritual, a little moment of peace and indulgence that reminded me to slow down and enjoy the simple things in life. As I finished my last sip, my phone rang. It was the nurse who took care of my mother.

“Good morning, Mateo. I’m sorry to disturb you so early, but your mother is having a difficult time this morning. She’s refusing to take her medicines and keeps talking about Emory,” the nurse said, her tone gentle.

I took a deep breath, feeling a lump form in my throat. “Thank you for letting me know. I’ll be there as soon as I can.”

As I hung up the phone, I couldn’t help but feel a sense of despair.

My mother had been battling dementia for the past few years, and it was painful to see her slowly forget the memories we shared. But I knew that I had to be there for her, no matter what.

I quickly finished my coffee and got dressed, making my way to the nursing home where my mother resided.

As I walked through the halls, I heard the sounds of other residents talking and laughing with their loved ones. It made me feel grateful to have a mother to visit, even though she didn’t always remember me.

When I finally arrived at my mother’s room, I saw her sitting in her bed, staring blankly at the wall. I approached her slowly, not wanting to startle her.

“Good morning, Mom. It’s me, Mateo,” I said softly, taking her hand in mine.

My mother looked at me, confusion etched in her eyes. “Who are you? I don’t remember you,” she said in a trembling voice.

My heart sank at her words, but I tried to stay strong. “It’s okay, Mom. I’m your son, Mateo. I’m here for you, no matter what.”

We sat in silence for a few moments, my mother staring off into the distance. But then she looked at me again, her eyes filled with tears.

“I’m sorry, Mateo. I don’t know what’s happening to me. I’m scared,” she said, her voice cracking.

I hugged her tightly, feeling her frail body shake with sobs. “It’s okay, Mom. You’re not alone. I’m here with you, and I always will be,” I whispered into her ear.

As we sat holding each other, I knew that this was just one of many difficult moments we would face together.

But I also knew that I would do everything in my power to make sure my mother felt loved and cared for, no matter how much she forgot.

Emory Logan. The man my mother had truly loved, but never had a chance to marry. That was a story for another time. It spoke of all the mistakes I hoped never to make.

Renn, for one. Everything about our relationship was unconventional, but I knew my heart was set on her. Eric and Lucas felt the same way. I typed a quick message.

Hey, y'all, hope you're keepin' your heads up after last night. Can we meet up at the office today? Got somethin' important to discuss with y'all.

Eric responded almost immediately. *Sure thing, Mateo. What's goin' on?*

I hesitated for a moment before typing out my next message. *It's about Renn. She's goin' through so much right now, and I was thinkin' maybe we could help her out.*

Lucas chimed in with a quick reply. *I'm in. What do you need us to do?*

That's just what I hadn't figured out yet. Both Eric and Lucas had a thing for sleuthing around and helping the police. I preferred to do my job and let life take care of the rest. But right now, we needed to be a team.

Just wanna bounce some ideas off y'all, see if we can come up with a way to make things easier for her. Meet me at the office in an hour?

Eric and Lucas both agreed, and I felt a wave of relief wash over me. I headed out the door, my mind already racing with ideas and plans.

I made my way to the office, a sense of purpose and determination settling over me. It was time to roll up our sleeves and get to work.

Stillwater Associates was nothing if not an homage to the clients who walked through its door. Meeting rooms were named after theoretical small businesses. There was a large

mural wall that included illustrations of everything from large corporates to small cafe shops that needed to fight these corporates. The best part was—we'd painted the mural.

My first order of business was to help Anne Sullivan get justice.

I remembered the day when Anne walked into my office, her eyes full of tears and her hands trembling.

Her local hospital had done her in. The doctor there had injured her baby's femur during delivery, and to top it off, the nurses had tried to downplay the incident as "common" and "harmless".

She needed help getting compensation from the hospital. I could tell that this was a delicate and emotional matter for her, and I knew that I needed to handle it with care.

There was no telling how she'd get by, with the hospital refusing to take accountability. Her baby needed surgery, and her newfound parental joy was in tatters because of what had happened.

We'd sat down in my conference room, and I started asking her questions about what happened.

As she shared her story, I could see how much pain and suffering she had gone through.

It was clear to me that the hospital was responsible for the injury to her baby, and they needed to compensate her for it.

After gathering all the necessary information, I put my lawyer front on and started drafting a legal notice to send to the hospital.

I made sure to use strong legal language to make them understand the severity of the situation.

This morning, we received a response from the hospital stating that they were willing to negotiate a settlement out of court.

I knew that this was our chance to get Anne the compensation she deserved.

I'd called Anne to the office.

We sat down with the hospital's representatives in the conference room. I could see that Anne was nervous, so I started the conversation.

"Gentlemen, we appreciate your willingness to settle this matter out of court. However, we believe that our client deserves a hefty compensation for the pain and suffering she has gone through," I said.

Time to put your best foot forward, Tavoni. You got this.

"As you know, my client's baby was injured during delivery at your hospital. We're seeking compensation for the damages caused."

The lawyer, a wizened old man in owlsh glasses, licked his lips nervously. Always a good sign. "We're sorry to hear that, but we can't admit liability. We followed all the standard procedures during delivery."

Shaking my head, I smiled and handed over the photo rolls from when Anne's husband, the ever diligent Instagram father, had documented every step of the delivery process on camera.

It would have been super annoying, but it was his foresight that would help us get the dollars.

"I understand, but there were clear violations of the standard procedures that caused the injury. We have evidence that your staff did not follow the necessary protocols, and that's why we're seeking compensation."

Mark Cyrus, the lawyer, looked over the pictures. When he spoke, his throat was noticeably dry.

"Our legal team has reviewed the case, and we stand by our position. We can offer a modest settlement of \$50,000, but that's the best we can do."

"I appreciate your offer, but that's not even close to the compensation we're seeking. We're looking for \$750,000."

"That's an outrageous amount. There's no way we can agree to that."

Time to lawyer up.

“With all due respect, your offer is insulting. The damages caused to Anne’s baby are significant and will require long-term medical care. \$750,000 is a reasonable amount given the severity of the injury.”

“We can’t just agree to such a high amount without a legal battle.”

I smirked. There was no way they’d allow the risk of taking this to court.

“By all means, but consider the risks of going to court. We have strong evidence that shows your staff did not follow the standard procedures. A legal battle would only draw more attention to that fact and could result in a larger settlement.”

“We’ll need to discuss this further with our client.”

“That’s understandable, but let me make it clear that we’re not budging from our position. \$750,000 is the minimum we’re willing to accept.”

“We’ll get back to you.”

A brief pause followed, during which Cyrus went to attend to a call.

I could almost hear Anne’s breathing, and I knew she was panicking deep inside.

To her credit, she remained quiet, her faith in me unshaken. Five minutes later, the hospital lawyer turned his attention back to us.

“We’ve discussed it with our client, and we’re willing to settle for \$600,000.”

I shook my head. “I appreciate your willingness to negotiate, but that’s still not enough. We need \$750,000 to cover the long-term medical expenses.”

Cyrus finally sighed. “Okay, we’ll agree to the \$750,000 settlement.”

I beamed. “Great. I’ll draft up the settlement agreement, and we can sign it now.”

“Thank you, gentlemen. We accept your offer of \$750,000. We will send you the necessary paperwork shortly,” I said.

As the representatives left the room, Anne burst into tears of relief and gratitude.

“Thank you so much, Mr. Tavoni. I don’t know what I would have done without your help,” she said.

I smiled and patted her hand. “It was my pleasure, Anne. You and your baby deserve justice, and I am glad I could help you get it.”

She left me with a deep sense of satisfaction.

It was cases like this one that got my blood pumped.

It made me glad I was doing what I did, and God willing, we’d help Renn the same way.

I got up and walked down to the cafeteria. Lucas and Eric were already there. Lucas raised his cup of coffee to me. “We were waitin’ on you. Did Anne’s case work out?”

Grinning, I sat down opposite them and got myself a sandwich and some sweet tea. “Like a charm.”

Eric chuckled. “Just like we’d thought. So, what do we do about Renn?”

I frowned. “That’s been on my mind all night long. I want to say that someone like Tyson is up to no good. He’s already mortgaged their New York house, and he’s been living off Renn’s money.”

The boys nodded. “That’s not enough to get him, though. We need proof he’d done somethin’ really shitty.”

I nodded, thinking. “I think I could ask Renn to pull out a list of her investors. It’s a small shop and she won’t have too many. But given the way our boy’s been ruining his resources, I think we’ll find somethin’.”

“You mean fraud investments?”

“I dunno.” I shook my head truthfully. “But it’s worth lookin’ into it. Hey, Lucas—what about Perry? Is he still helpin’ you out with your New York clients?”

Lucas winked at me. “I can’t tell you how great it is to have my own personal detective. He’s the best in the business, too. Should I ask him to tail Tyson for a while?”

“Nothing too obvious, though. But it’d be great if he can find some links. Him and this girl, Veronica Miller. I’d love it if we could get some info on his credits and purchases. He was using Renn’s accounts, so we should be able to get a heads-up on those.”

“Y’think Jonathan will mind if we take Renn out one of these days? Just to lunch, no funny business.”

I sighed. It had been on my mind too. I wanted to spend time with Renn like any normal couple—except there were three of us, and we had fifteen years between us.

“We could call her out and ask her to come meet us. I’m not sure mixing Jonathan in this pickle is the best idea right now.”

Eric leaned back in his chair. “Sooner or later, though, Mateo, we’ll have to find a way to work around this. I know I’m thinkin’ about her long-term. I can’t even get her outta my mind.”

I felt the same way. Renn was a summer with no end, a flower that bloomed year-long.

She was a tattoo imprinted in my mind, and try as I would, there wasn’t a singular second in the entire day that I didn’t find myself ruminating about her.

What was this? Love?

But surely, it was too soon? And surely, I was too old to believe in these fairy-tale, Regency romance clichés?

Yet, the way she’d charmed us . . . that was undeniable.

It was like I was on a carousel, and I didn’t want the ride to stop. She knew how to work more than my body. She could speak to my soul.

And that meant something.

“I don’t know how we’re goin’ to get around Jonathan. I do know it’ll be worth it. But right now, we need to sort this shit out first. If word gets around Lockwood, it would ruin his reputation and his chances.”

Guilt was a potent, pungent thing, and it tasted pretty darn sour.

“I agree.” Lucas tapped his fingernails on the table.

“I don’t want Jonathan to lose his crowd because of what we got goin’ with Renn. We need to trip Tyson up.”

“Oh, I don’t doubt he’s gonna trip himself up somehow. We just need to be around when it happens. He’s already too dependent on Renn, so we have ways to monitor his movements. I say we ask Renn to meet up with him.”

Eric did a double-take. “What? Why?”

“Hear me out. She carries a recorder and hears his demands. Maybe he’ll be stupid enough to threaten her all-out. That’ll let us know what he has on her, and by extension, what he’s been doing all this time. In the meanwhile, Perry can get us some more dirt on him.”

Lucas exhaled. “I wish she wouldn’t have to meet him, though.”

Me too.

I called Renn. Her sweet, lilting voice answered almost immediately.

“Hey, Mateo.”

“Hey yourself.” I smiled. The boys made googly eyes at me, and I returned my middle-finger in a salute to both of them. “How’re you feelin’ today?”

“I’m better. Just a bit emotional.”

“Listen, Renn, I feel like an absolute dick asking you to do this . . . but can you meet Tyson face-to-face and ask him what he wants?”

There was a pause.

“Funny you should say that, ’cause I’m planning to meet him this evening. He’s comin’ down to Lockwood to have lunch with his folks. I told him to catch up with me at Beeker’s.”

No wonder she was a girl after my own heart. Our hearts.

“Amazing. Renn, I want you to keep a recorder on you when you meet him, okay? We need to know what’s goin’ on in his mind.”

Another pause. “I . . . will that be safe?”

“You gotta trust us.”

She sighed. “I do. Okay. I’ll keep my phone’s recorder on. And I’ll come meet you right after.”

I nodded.

The wheel was in motion. And Renn was a step closer to getting rid of the only obstacle between her and us.

I intended to make sure it happened.

Renn

I stood just outside the family study, unsure of where this conversation would take me. Daddy and I had avoided all mention of Tyson up until this moment.

When I was a child, this room used to be my solace. It doubled as the family library, with books distributed in stacked, dark mahogany bookshelves blending with the baroque ornamentation of the walls.

An arched ceiling, complete with a skylight and an astrological unit, was where Mom and I would learn about the stars.

There were days I missed her more than I could remember her. My soul, my heart, my tie to everything that once made sense.

Her departure was a wound I'd refused to address, but that was something I shared with Dad. When I was a kid, I used to tell her I'd blow upon dandelions and wish her illness away.

The memory broke through me like a sword cutting through a shard of ice. I was only a teenager when her diagnosis came through.

But even at the time, I spent hours watching documentaries and films—families going through the same crisis as ours. Cancer was no war, although that was how media had made us believe things.

It was certainly no fucking fictional dilemma, either. Or a battle that we needed to win by hook or by crook. When we went down these roads, we minimized the journey of the people who had to pass through life with the illness.

It wasn't a war for my mother. It was a road to acceptance. And that's what made it so hard on my daddy. Toward the end, all he could speak in was anti-defeatist lingo.

We have to fight this.

It's going to be a helluva conflict, but we must win.

We have to find a way to defeat this. We must.

So, when he did lose, it was as if the evil he'd tried to conquer had outdone him. My mother had already gone. Her heart was in a better, safer, warmer place.

I only wished she hadn't had to face the pain of the last few months. Which was why I did not regret asking God to take her toward the end.

It was better than seeing her scream and cry, than knowing her soul was already on another plane and she wanted to go join it.

My daddy had forgotten to see the obvious. Mom wasn't failing. She was rising every day, waking up, living, breathing, reminding him that she'd tried, she'd had the joys and the highs, and now . . . now she just wanted some ease.

It was no war for her. It was a journey to a soft end. Because that's what journeys were, right? They were meant to come to a close. But in obsessing over everything that he missed out on, Daddy forgot to cherish the last few minutes on the road.

The worst argument we had was on the eve of her passing. I told him things that I now regretted, my anger and distrust at his anal retentive ways coming through in words that hurled more bitter hurt than I could have deemed possible.

He, on his part, let the walls cave in and retreated. And time got in the way. We became daddy and daughter once more, but with caveats.

The night I returned, I did not have the energy to tell him all that had come to pass. He was surprised to see me. He thought my business in New York was going well, and so was my marriage.

So, I kept things simple.



THE NIGHT Of The Return

Monsoon in late March. Or was this a tidal wave that resonated with my heart? I still couldn't believe all the events that had come to pass in the last forty-eight hours.

Getting cheated on.

Losing my husband and best friend.

Finding myself with three of the hottest men I've known.

Coming home.

The family mansion loomed before me, as beautiful and nostalgic as ever. A massive driveway uncoiled in front, its sides lined with neatly trimmed grass, flowers, and hedges. Daddy had always had a thing for gardening.

It showed, with Woodland Phlox and Virginia Willows casting a heady scent of sweet memories all over the air, already tinged in petrichor.

My home rose from beyond the haze of planned, manicured lawns and a massive awning, her gray stone walls reflective of an homage to a full moon. Time could not touch her imposing beauty, for she only grew warmer every time I saw her.

She was my mother's legacy, handed down to her from her ancestors, and then to me. One day, I would make it her shrine. I turned my attention to the south.

The alcove sloped down to a quiet ocean. Sheets of soft ripples played against the pull of the moon, lazy in their nightly sojourn.

Light shone from behind the tall French windows that made up the north end of the living room. Silk curtains blew against the stormy air, more comfortable in their place at home than I'd ever care to be.

It was too much, too soon, too out-of-place. I was meant to be in my small studio apartment in NYC, brainstorming ideas for the summer catalog. But life . . . life could fuck you up in the strangest of ways.

Daddy was in the living room when I walked in, partly drenched from the night.

"Hey," I murmured.

He looked up from his plans for some reconstruction of some old building. A frown crossed his features, soon to be replaced by a warm smile.

"My goodness, Renee! What—what are you doing here?"

"I'm going to be home for a while, Dad. Tyson and I couldn't work it out."

That was all I'd needed to tell him. He studied me for a minute before nodding.

"I'll have Marla clean out your room. Have you eaten?"

"Barely."

"She'll get something up there. Go on, dry yourself and get to bed."

When I walked to the door, he called my name once more. I'd forgotten I was anything but Renn.

"Renee?"

I turned my head. "Yeah?"

"It's good to have you back. Stay a while."



What did I even want to tell him? That my ex had found out I was sleeping with three of his best friends and was now blackmailing me?

A lump formed in the back of my throat. I just knew I had to speak, to say something.

So, I laid a tentative foot forward.

He was, as always, buried in plans for the future. Never enough of the present for this man.

“Renn.” He smiled when I walked in. “Let’s walk to the front porch. I’ll have some tea brought over too.”

I nodded, surprised. I wasn’t expecting him to *want* to talk with me.

It was a sunny day, though, the kind you don’t want to waste indoors. I ambled out after him, wondering what the hell we’d talk about.

In that moment, I realized I could not tell him about Tyson or what was happening with Mateo, Eric, and Lucas.

There would be a time when talking about all of that would be easier. Hopefully.

It just wasn’t today. Not when this was the man who used to walk with his little girl poised on his shoulders and would piggy-back her all the way to and from kindergarten.

Not when this was the man who’d said he wanted to make Lockwood a safer town because I belonged to it, and he hoped I’d return.

Memories of our last conversation before I’d gone away to NYC came back, and I pushed them away. I wasn’t ready to walk that road.

“Come on.” He called me over. “Lord knows I could use the break.”

I nodded. “I can’t imagine what it’s like, with the elections so close.”

“Daddy, I’ve been thinking about your campaign for some days. And I think there’s something you can do to really

connect with the people here in Lockwood.”

He raised an eyebrow. “Oh, really? And what’s that?”

I took a deep breath. “You need to show them that you’re one of them. That you understand their struggles and their needs. That you’re not just some politician who’s out of touch with the real world.”

Not that Lockwood was anything like the real world. It was as old-fashioned and steeped in tradition as it could be. But that didn’t mean winds weren’t changing.

And if he wanted to be a man of the people, he needed to be open to hearing everyone—not just the oldies.

He nodded slowly. “I see what you’re saying. But how do I do that?”

I leaned forward. “You need to get out there and talk to people. Go to the local diner and have coffee with the regulars. Visit the schools and talk to the teachers and students. Attend community events and show your support.”

He stroked his chin thoughtfully. “That’s not a bad idea. But I’m not sure if it’ll be enough to win the election.”

I smiled at him. “Trust me, Daddy. People want a mayor who cares about them. Who’s willing to listen to their concerns and fight for their rights. If you can show them that you’re that kind of person, they’ll vote for you.”

He smiled back at me. “You know, Renn, you’ve got a good head on your shoulders. I should listen to you more often.”

I laughed. “You should, Daddy. I know what I’m talking about.”

As we sat on the front porch, sipping iced tea and enjoying the warm summer breeze, he turned to me, his eyes gentle. “Renn, I remember how you used to love helping out with the gardening.”

I smiled at the memory. “Yeah, I used to spend hours out in the yard, didn’t I? Ma used to say all my fingers were green, not just my thumbs.”

“That’s right,” he said, nodding. “You were a little garden gnome. You could make anything grow.”

I chuckled. “I don’t know about that, but I did enjoy it.”

There was a brief moment of silence between us before my father spoke again. “Renn, I’m sorry if I haven’t been the best father to you. I know I haven’t always been there for you like I should have.”

I could hear the sadness in his voice, and it broke my heart. “Daddy, it’s okay. We all make mistakes.”

He shook his head. “No, it’s not okay. I should have been there for you when you were growing up. I should have supported you more.”

I took a deep breath and placed my hand on his. “Daddy, you did the best you could. I know that now. And I appreciate everything you’ve done for me.”

He smiled at me, and I could see the relief in his eyes. “Thank you, Renn. That means a lot to me.”

We sat there in silence for a few moments, both lost in our own thoughts. But then my father turned to me and asked, “So, what have you been up to since you’ve been back home?”

I grinned. “Oh, you know. Just trying to get my bearings. It’s been a while since I’ve been back in this small town.”

He nodded. “Yeah, I know what you mean. It can be tough readjusting to life here after being away for so long.”

I sighed. “It’s not just that. I feel like I’ve changed so much since I left. Like I’m a completely different person now.”

He raised an eyebrow. “Different how?”

I shrugged. “I don’t know. More independent, I guess. More sure of myself.”

My father smiled at me. “That’s a good thing, Renn. You should be proud of yourself.”

I nodded, feeling a sense of something calm wash over me. “Thanks, Daddy. That means a lot.”

My phone blinked, and I turned my attention to it. It was Tyson, telling me he was home. I was supposed to meet him in another hour.

I absolutely did not fucking want to.

It was one of those things—hell behind me, and a pretty sharp fork right ahead. Hell seemed like a safer option because man, I wouldn't enjoy getting pricked without consent.

“Daddy, I gotta go.” I rose, my voice gentle. “But I really enjoyed talkin’ to you.”

He raised his empty pitcher at me. “I feel the same way.”

The smile was steadfast on my lips as I turned. No shitty text from Tyson could change that. Like I'd imagined, he'd called me to Denny's, the place we had most of our dates once school ended.

They did make a mean cheeseburger, so I had few complaints.

I didn't bother with changing out of the baggy jeans and tank I had on. I slipped out of home and drove the family Jeep down to Denny's, my mind ablaze with the conversation I was about to have.

In true Tyson fashion, he was late. I ordered a milkshake with fries and a cheeseburger. Today was not a day for diets, not that I really cared on other days, either. If food spoke to my soul, I'd have it.

“If it isn't my favorite small-town slut.”

My blood boiled as his hand touched my shoulder. But this wasn't the time for an outburst. I stayed quiet as Tyson slid into the cushioned seat in front of me and clicked his fingers for the waiter.

“I'll have two burgers and the fried chicken. And a large Coke.” He winked at me. “I'm sure you can pay for the two of us, right, love?”

It was as if someone had hit my head with a big fucking nail. I gritted my teeth.

“What do you want, Tyson?”

His arms crossed, and his ridiculously pouty lips turned up in a sneer.

He smirked at me. “I think you know what I want, Renn. I must say, I’m surprised. I didn’t think you had all this adventure in you. That too with your daddy’s best friends.”

My heart sank. He was already playing hard, and we were seconds into the conversation. “What do you plan to do with the pictures?”

He shrugged. “What do you think? I’ll leak them to the press, ruin your reputation, and make a fortune in the process.”

“You wouldn’t.”

He laughed and bit down on his burger, pausing to noisily slurp the sugary drink in turns. “Maybe you’re right. I could also show them to your daddy and tell him to pay me unless he wants pictures of his daughter shacking up with his friends printed all over.”

My hands were as cold as my heart. “Why are you doing this, Tyson?”

“Oh, I don’t have anythin’ against you. In fact, I think it’s great that you’ve been exploring your sexuality and all that shit. Maybe we’d have had a chance if you’d told me you were into these things.”

The table clattered as I jumped up. He smiled at me, his face miraculously calm. “Sit the fuck back down, Renn. The ball’s in my fucking court, remember?”

“Not when you’re talkin’ like this.”

“I’ll talk any fuckin’ way I want. I lost Veronica because of you. She thinks she’s some tramp, not that I disagree. You women are too much trouble, only good for stickin’ it to.”

“Enough!”

The man at the counter frowned at me.

“Sit down, Renn. Would you like me to release the pictures today?”

Trembling, I took my place once more. I was sick to my stomach. “You can’t release the pictures, Tyson. It’s illegal, and it’s wrong.”

He chuckled. “I can do whatever I want, Renn. And unless you want those pictures all over the internet, you’ll pay me a hefty sum to keep quiet.”

“How much?” I asked, already knowing I couldn’t afford it.

“Five hundred grand,” he said, his eyes glinting with greed.

I shook my head. “I don’t have that kind of money, Tyson.”

“Then you’d better start thinking of a way to get it,” he growled. “Because I won’t stop until I get what I want.”

“What else do you want?” I asked, feeling defeated.

“I want you to hand over the rights to your business,” he said, his voice cold. “And I want to become a shareholder who will have influence over key stocks.”

I felt a surge of anger. He was asking for too much. “You’re crazy, Tyson. I’m not giving you my business. It’s all I have left.”

He leaned closer to me, his breath hot on my face. “You don’t have a choice, Renn. Either you give me what I want, or I’ll make sure everyone knows what a little tramp you are.”

I took a step back, feeling trapped. But then something inside me snapped. I had been through too much to let Tyson bully me again.

“You know what, Tyson? I’m not afraid of you. You can leak those pictures if you want. But I won’t let you control me anymore. I’ll find a way to fight back.”

He sneered at me. “Good luck with that, Renn. You’re going to need it.”

I watched him walk out of my life once again, feeling terrified. But I knew one thing for sure. I wouldn’t let him win.

I couldn't.

The business was the last of what I had, a way for me to break away from all the stereotypes Lockwood had cast on me.

Relatives had expected me to marry straight outta college. They'd thought I'd settle down, have kids, housewife my way into oblivion. I chose to be different.

I chose to celebrate womanhood, the softest parts of our femininity that were always sexualized by those who shouldn't have ever had a say.

Victoria's Secret sure as hell was made by a dude, but *Piccoli* was not. My business was all woman, all luster and shine, everything I wanted to honor about being born a girl.

There was so much power we held, in the tiniest of ways. History bore testimony to wars being fought over women.

Love itself was grounds enough for a thousand political revolutions, as was the concept of feminine intimacy. *Piccoli* championed all of that. Every inch of lace and leather spoke of the ways in which we could return confidence to our bodies.

All shapes, all fucking sizes.

It was *my* world. *Our* world. And no man was going to take it from me.

Especially not a pig like Tyson.

I called Lucas. He answered after two rings.

"Renn, where are you? We were getting worried."

"I was at Denny's. Are the others with you?"

There was a slight pause. "I'm still at the office. D'you want to come over?"

Something lit in me. I wanted him. I wanted all of them in that moment.

"Only if we can fuck."

Another pause.

"Come on over."

Lucas

I looked at the table in front of me. Matteo had gone to attend to a pro-bono case. Eric was busy in a board meeting. But I knew neither of them minded what was about to go down.

The pink bunny ears Renn had worn the last night looked back at me, so innocent and dirty at the same time. The thought of all the things I wanted to do to her made me hard in a quick breath.

I decided to go to the reception desk to bring her to my office.

What I wasn't expecting was to see her almost get turned away by Irene, the snooty receptionist who pretended as if she owned the place.

Renn stood there, her eyebrows knit in a feral frown as she reasoned with her.

“Unless you have an appointment, I cannot possibly let you visit Mr. Perez.”

Her back was turned to me. I decided now was the time to act.

“Perhaps you should have consulted with Mr. Perez first?”

She wheeled around, the dismissal in her eyes quickly changing to fear and then admission of guilt. “Sir, I am so

sorry. I thought she was here for some kind of sales—”

“Did she say she’d come here to sell something?”

“No, but I—”

“So why would you assume that?”

“I—I . . .”

I shot daggers at her with my eyes. Renn looked at me with apprehension, but she’d just been insulted by a petty-ass Karen, and I wasn’t having it.

“Apologize to Ms. Grace.”

She looked from Renn to me, a dull blush creeping across her already overdone cheeks.

“I’m sorry,” she told me. “I should have asked you.”

“Yes, you should have,” I snapped. The whole office had become quiet. “But that’s not what I’m asking you to do right now, is it?”

She turned to Renn. “I’m sorry, ma’am. I did not know.”

Renn shook her head, clearly just wanting to get this whole thing over with. “Lucas, can we go and talk in your office, please?”

I cast a last icy look at Irene. “Last chance to get your act together for good, Ms. Jennings.”

She hung her head as I ushered Renn toward my office.

“Well, you almost did that thing.”

“What thing?”

“The thing where you make the office receptionist shit her pants, my dude.”

I snorted. “That’s a poetic way of putting things.”

She shrugged. “Facts over poems, Lucas.”

I ushered her inside and closed the door. I turned the latch, knowing what was coming and wanting to be alone with her.

Renn took in the office settings. It was a masterful room, spacious, abounding with potted plants, and overlooking a stretch of the sea. It made work easier.

Turning to the coffee machine, I poured her a cappuccino and picked up a melt-in-the-mouth mini masterpiece from Godiva.

“Have them together. One will heal the heart. The other will work on your soul.”

Renn popped the chocolate into her mouth and followed with a sip of the hot drink. She rolled her eyes in pleasure as the two tastes met in the back of her mouth.

“Heaven!”

I sat back down at my desk and opened my emails, willing her to play along. She smiled at me knowingly, and her eyes fell on the bunny ears. Striding over, she picked them up and placed them on top of her soft hair.

I leaned back in my chair, already hard as she twirled around for me.

“You’re a naughty little bunny, aren’t you?” I groaned, my voice hoarse.

She stopped, a few feet from my desk, and turned in a slow circle. Her cheeks were flushed, and she was biting her lower lip—something she did when she was expecting what she was right now.

I inhaled as she turned, my eyes taking time to adjust to how beautiful she was.

“Man, I’m no poet, but you make me wanna write lines, Renn.”

Her blouse was demure, but it fell across her pert tits like the covering of a Ferrero Rocher, just enough tease. Her skirt came up to her mid-thighs, black and ruched.

No wonder Irene had tried turning her out. She’d been jealous. I could see why.

“Is my outfit to your satisfaction, *sir*?” she asked me, her eyes wide and innocent.

“Very much, little bunny,” I replied.

Her hands came up to the buttons on her blouse, and she proceeded to unfasten the topmost one.

“Wait,” I told her. “Come here to me like a good bunny. I want to be the one doin’ that.”

She smiled that little smile of hers and quickly crossed the space between us to stand beside me. I turned my chair to face her and looked up into her eyes.

Raising my hand ever so slowly, as it shook with anticipation, I felt the smooth buttons under the tips of my fingers and set the first one free.

Pop.

Pop.

Pop.

Soon, her blouse revealed its inner treasures to me—her breasts and a stripe of her pale stomach.

I slid my fingers up the skin from the waist of her skirt and pushed the blouse down off her shoulders. I saw her shiver as my eyes took her in.

Running my fingertips along the freckled skin right above her bra, I pushed the shirt down her arms. She let it drop to the floor behind her.

My hands slid down her sides to the waist of her little skirt. I found the clasp, hidden in the fabric, and undid it.

The skirt slid down her rounded thighs to pool on the floor at her feet.

Her black panties were level with my shoulders, the mound of her sex there, just a thin piece of fabric between us.

“You are the most beautiful woman I have ever seen,” I murmured, planting a small kiss above her panties.

She giggled and sighed in response.

Reaching forward, I placed my hand on the soft flesh inside her thigh. She moaned as I slid it up along her alabaster skin, soon ascending into a little cry as my fingers reached between her legs.

I pressed against the fabric.

“Oh, my God, yes!”

“Are you a naughty bunny?” I teased.

“Yes, sir, yes!” She moaned above me, closing her eyes as she trembled. I could feel how wet she was—the panties were as damp as the Mississippi.

I pressed the lace between the puffy lips of her mound and was immediately greeted by the small nub of her jewel. She pushed her hips forward in an unconscious response, pressing her clit against my fingers.

“Say please,” I growled. “And tell me what you’d like.”

“Oh, please, sir, please, I want you all over me!”

I reached up and behind her, finding the clasp of her black lace bra. It was a beautiful thing, but she was even more stunning without it. I quickly popped the fastener, making the slight thing fall to the floor.

Her breasts bounced free, jiggling in their independence.

I did not stop rubbing her sex but let my eyes travel her nakedness.

Her face flushed like the early setting sun. The color spread down to her chest and cast a rosy shadow to her freckles.

“Perfection,” I murmured, tracing her nipples with my free hand. They stood out against the soft skin of her breasts like tiny peaks, each calling to my mouth to claim them.

I needed more of her. Hooking my fingers in the waistband of her panties, I pulled them down over her hips. I made sure to take my time, savoring the view of her pussy as it exposed itself to me.

“Oh, yes,” she moaned as I reached up and gripped the back of her neck, pulling her face to mine. Our lips met, and I devoured her mouth like a man starved.

My tongue pushed in, and we kissed passionately. The fingers of my right hand slid between the wet lips of her pussy. I pushed one finger in and then another, and she cried aloud into my mouth.

“Hush,” I whispered, tickling her tongue with mine. She moaned lightly in response. My thumb found her clit and began rubbing, making her rock as my fingers explored her naked sex.

I released her neck and lowered my mouth to where the party was. Licking between the swollen lips, I swirled my tongue around her delicious clit and sucked it into my mouth. I pumped my fingers while my mouth fucked her.

Renn’s breathing sped up and her hands gripped my hair, pushing my mouth harder against her pussy.

“Oh, fuck, Sir,” she gasped. “Oh, fuck, yes, I’m going to . . . I must—”

“Come for me,” I growled as I continued pounding her with my mouth and fingers. “Come for me, Renn. Show me how badly you want me.”

“It’s—oh, my God, oh, God, *fuck!*”

Her hips bucked as she came on my lips and fingers. I kept pumping her and sucking her clit until the bucking slowed to tiny twitches.

Renn’s face was bright red, the same color as her chest, and she gasped for breath. I’d never stood at the mercy of a goddess in bunny ears, but here we were.

Her legs shook as I stood up and pulled her naked body against my clothed one and hugged her. I kissed her once more, gently this time.

After some time, I spoked once more. “Are you ready to come for me once more?”

Her hands came between us, and she gripped my hard cock over my trousers. I was painfully hard with how much I needed her. A mischievous smile played on her lips.

“Finally,” she murmured, her voice like honey and wine. “I’ve been dreaming of your cock for far too long.”

Taking her time, she went down on her knees in front of me and grabbed my belt in her tiny hands. She undid it quickly and opened my trousers, pulling them and my boxers down in one swift yank.

My cock bounced free in front of her face. She giggled in appreciation. The tip bobbed in her face. She wrapped her hand around the shaft and it filled her grip.

“Just what I’d dreamed of,” she murmured and stroked it a few times, making me toss my head back. Her tongue left her mouth and darted out, and she licked the sheen of pre-cum off the tip.

She looked up at me, smiled, and opened her willing mouth, sucking me into her soft depths. She took in half, then two-thirds, and by the time her head bobbed forward the third round, she’d taken all of me into her tight little throat.

“Mmm.” She sucked me deep, stroking my shaft and grazing the sensitive skin of the bottom with her teeth. Her tongue ran along the underside before she plunged me deep into her throat once more.

I thrust my hips in time, fucking her face as I grunted. She made glugging sounds, propelling me to bury my hands in her hair and hold her in place as she sucked me like an obedient fucking bunny.

Renn looked up at me with her beautiful eyes shining with need. She looked so perfect with my thick cock between her plump lips, drool dripping down her chin.

I could feel my balls tightening, a sure sign I could not hold out much longer. I considered moving faster, but this was not how I wanted to finish. I wanted to fuck her more than anything else.

“Wait.” I gently stopped her head, and my cock popped free. A string of saliva connected the tip with her lips. She looked up at me with a victorious little smile.

Reaching down, I lifted her and led her to my desk, turning her so her ass was to me. I kissed her shoulders and moved down, tracing my tongue along her neck and the curves of her back, before turning her once more to suck her nipples.

I ran my tongue around the nubs, one at a time. She reached down and stroked my cock as I played with her tits. She tugged it to her cunt and rubbed the head between her lips. Groaning, I pushed it against the surface, never going in, just coating myself with her juices.

“Oh, sir, I—”

“Say the magic words, little bunny,” I snarled, my hands gripping her waist and hair.

“Please, sir,” she moaned. “Fuck me. Please fuck me.”

I groaned and thrust my hips forward. My cock was engulfed by the hot, wet depths of her sex. She was tight, oh, so good and tight! But there was no resistance as I plowed into her.

Renn wrapped her legs around my ass and used them to pull me in, deeper, until I was completely within her. I pushed her back flat on the desk, laying her down beneath me.

She looked so beautiful, her golden hair spraying out, her breasts bobbing under me, all natural and entirely unencumbered. Groaning, I drew back to consider her for one second.

“D’you know what I’m gonna do right now?”

She smiled naughtily.

“Show me, Sir.”

“Take that, then,” I snarled, slamming into her. “And that.” I thrust in, and then out. “And that.” On repeat.

“Yes!” she mewled. “Take me just like that! Fuck me!”

I gripped her hips and began slamming into her. Her eyes rolled back and closed, and I reveled in the sight of her breasts bouncing in rhythm to my thrusts.

“Oh, yes, yes, yes!” she moaned as our bodies slapped together. My hips hit hers, the soundproofed room shielding the glorious coming together of our bodies. I could see my cock driving into her and relished her hips moving up to meet my frenzied thrusts.

“That’s right,” I growled and panted. “Take my cock. Take it, little bunny!”

She gasped for breath and her nails dug into the bare skin of my back. “Yes! Fuck me and make me your little bunny! Fuck me hard!”

My back arched as I threw myself into her, giving her everything I had, heart, soul, physical electricity. Her body was coated with our sweat. Each time I drove into her, she cried out for more.

I could feel a building sensation in the pit of my stomach.

“Renn, Renn,” I groaned. “I’m close.”

“So—am—I,” she breathed. “Fill me up, Sir!”

I continued, holding on to the feeling of us and our bodies coming together as long as I could before I crested and drove deeper inside her. I held her hips as I climaxed, shuddering and groaning as load after load of hot cum filled her up.

She followed suit, and I had to cover her mouth with the back of my hand to keep her from screaming as she climaxed all over my cock, squirting her juices on me.

Renn rolled her head back, moaning softly as I released the last few jets of cum inside her. Her pussy contracted around me, milking everything out.

I fell forward atop her, gasping for breath. My cock was still twitching inside her. Turning my head, I kissed her deeply and gently withdrew.

“Wow,” she whispered.

Wow indeed.

After a while of just lying there, she got up to put her clothes on. I pulled her close once she was dressed and just held her in my arms. She breathed in my scent and rested her head on my shoulders.

“That was beautiful, Renn,” I murmured into her hair. “You are beautiful.”

“Stop,” she teased, blushing. “You’re making me feel things.”

Maybe we were not ready to talk about it yet, but I knew this meant more. This was no one-time thing. We’d already settled on that.

But I needed to give Renn time to figure her head out. And so did the other boys.

“How did it go with Tyson?”

“It was terrible. I was hopin’ I could sit with you, Mateo, and Lucas and talk about it.”

“Of course you can. Work’s about to end, anyway. Come home with us, and we’ll get at something between dinner and drinks.”

Something told me the evening was far from over.

It had only just begun.

Renn

I stood by the gleaming concrete office, waiting for Lucas to pull up in his car. To my surprise, a roaring Harley Davidson turned up in front of me.

“Hey, bunny!” He grinned. “Have you ever climbed a bike before?”

I had not. I gulped. I’d never ridden any bike, let alone a formidable beast like this one. He saw the palpable confusion in my eyes and let out a soft chuckle. It was a welcome sound, somewhere between a laugh and a snort.

“Hey,” I said, knitting my brows together. “I may not have ridden one of these things, but I can learn, okay?”

“Sure you can,” he teased me. “I’m here to help.”

He tilted the mammoth vehicle toward me until the incline came low enough for me to hop on without tumbling to the other side like a marionette.

I stood there, silent, almost in tears. I was officially a girl who’d tried everything and seen hell but could still shit her pants when it came to getting up on this monstrosity. He sensed my fear, and suddenly, his tone grew gentle.

“Hey,” he crooned. “Don’t you be afraid. You’re Renn, remember? There’s nothing you can’t do. It if helps, think you’re gettin’ up on a bench.”

In my confusion, I got up with both legs first and almost squatted behind him. He began laughing and gently reached back to help me lower my legs. “You just popped your bike cherry, darlin’!”

A clumsy second later, I was wrapped behind Lucas on his bike, my stomach clenched in nervous excitement. I’d never had the chance to experience wind in my hair so literally—and boy, was it a ride.

Lucas fired the engine to life, and in a wee second, it was as if I’d gone into a parallel dimension that was all wind and sunset. I could see airy ghosts flitting in my rear-view vision.

Heady shapes, all white, passed with flecks of green and red—trees, pavements, stop signs—and then a stretch of mandarin-tinged sea.

As we drove along the scenic coastline of Louisiana, I couldn’t help but admire the beauty of the surroundings. The warm breeze blew through my hair, and the sun was starting to set in the distance. The view was breathtaking.

Cold air gushed into both of my ears. I shivered, for it was an air that had claws and talons and whipped against my face. I let out an involuntary cry, but it was not an unhappy one.

Far from unhappy, in fact, because for the first time, I felt a real sense of freedom. Lucas cranked up the speed, revving the engine to challenge a hurricane. “Hold on tight,” he roared. “We gonna paint the town red!”

I gripped his waist and closed my eyes. My teeth chattered as we half-flew, half-rode through the streets and dirt tracks.

After about fifteen minutes, he slowed down. “Now, enjoy the visions ahead, little sparrow,” he said, his tone gentle once more.

Oh, the beauty of my sleepy little hometown. I’d never have my heart’s fill of her white shore beaches and how Lake Pontchartrain’s water gleamed on the surface of the sparkling sand, so clear blue that it could be a cluster of sapphires.

We rode up the Causeway bridge. Fraidy cats would panic as the land vanished behind them—the bridge was that long—

but I kept my eyes out for cormorants and pelicans and the occasional sailboat, too caught up in the journey to ruminate on what I was leaving behind.

The water cast gentle little ripples, undulating with the call of an early moon. Whenever people outside Louisiana thought of us, their minds would run to NOLA. But the heart and soul of Louisiana lay in the small cities and towns.

Here, the voice of the sea was almost a never-ending seductive lullaby, murmuring, whispering, inviting souls to just wander and rest. It was all heartsease, all calm, all sweet. It was home.

We rode in silence for a little while. My eyes grew accustomed to the plumes of strange birds in migration, flying low and slow. An easy wave of sleep took over me, and then, a gentle hand tapped me on my left knee, casting me out of my spell.

“Don’t you fall asleep just yet!” Lucas chuckled. “I may have to tie you up!”

I blushed.

“So, Renn, have you ever been to Qatar?” Lucas asked me, breaking into my thoughts.

“No, I haven’t. Why do you ask?” I replied, turning my attention to him.

“Well, I was born there. My parents were both US embassy members, and we moved around a lot. I’ve lived in so many different countries, I can’t even count them anymore.”

“That sounds amazing. What was it like?”

“It was incredible. I learned so much about different cultures and met so many interesting people. It’s what inspired me to study international relations in college.”

“That’s really cool. What did your parents do at the embassy?”

“My mom was in charge of the consular section, and my dad worked in public affairs. They both loved their jobs and were really dedicated to serving their country.”

As we continued to drive, Lucas shared more stories about his childhood and his travels around the world. I was fascinated by his experiences and the things he had learned along the way.

“I think traveling really opens your eyes to the world,” Lucas said. “It makes you appreciate different cultures and ways of life, and it also makes you realize that we’re all more alike than we are different.”

“I completely agree,” I said, nodding my head.

Lucas’s apartment lay at the end of a little woody trail by a tall oak forest. The sounds of teetering birds and the soft rush of plumes were enough to tell me he loved birds.

We got down from the bike in front of his beachfront home—it was evident life had been kind to Lucas, but he, for one, did not display any of the obnoxiousness that came so easily to men with money.

“It’s a four-years-young house. I love entertaining the boys here. We have four bedrooms, and a powder room for you to do your girly stuff,” he said, grinning as we walked up to the raised door.

I noticed a garage and a screened-in area, plus a cute little barbecue space and a road leading straight to the sea. It was the prettiest place I’d laid my eyes on, far homier than the mansion that was my home.

“It’s not much.” He shrugged.

“It’s amazing.” I laughed. “I love it.”

The interiors were largely cottage core, rustic and simple, with wood furnishings and delicate lace trimmings that added a quaint charm to the space and made it entirely personal.

“The boys are already here,” he said, smiling. “They took the trail down to the sea. I’ll call them up.”

In fifteen minutes, Eric and Mateo, in nothing but their swimming trunks and shining, bronzed bodies bathed in sunset glow, walked to the front yard. I couldn’t help the burning heat that rose into my cheeks as I saw them.

Eric came up to me and pulled me to his arms, a gurgle of baritone laughter in his throat. “Hey, bird. We’ve missed you.” Our lips met in a leisurely kiss. I tasted sand and salt and clung to him.

Mateo joined us and planted a kiss on my forehead. “How was your meeting with Tyson?”

I sighed and sat down on the couch while Lucas pulled out some beers from the fridge. Over the next half-hour, I told them everything I knew.

Lucas shook his head, looking grim. “He’s askin’ for too much, that’s for sure. Listen, Eric is meeting Perry soon. I know somethin’ will come up.”

“Perry?”

“That’s my guy from the Big Apple. We go way back, and he’s got quite the eye when it comes to trippin’ people up. He’s already told me there’s something goin’ on with your filings. It’s not everything, but it’s a starting point.”

I was confused. A few days ago, I’d handed over all my investor details and financials to the men so they could look them over and get an external audit done.

“You mean we can get him?”

Mateo looked at the boys and then me and winked. “We sure can.”

“Then show me the money.” I leaned back. “Tell me how bad the damage is.”

After what he’d done to our home and his demands, I was certain Tyson would have fucked my business over.

Eric crossed his muscular hands over his chest. “What we’ve found dates back longer than you’d think, Renn. We’re sorry.”

“Tell me anyway.” I gulped. How long had my husband been cheating on me?

“There’s a lot of on-the-job fuckery goin’ on. And we also found some pretty unsavory ties between Tyson and . . .

well . . . a group of financial terrorists.”

What?

What the fuck?

I was the CEO of my fucking company. I had to take responsibility for my shareholders—and I stood to lose everything if it turned out that Tyson had fucked around with my company’s shares.

Matteo’s calm voice brought me to safe shores from my scattered thinking.

“There’s a great many irregularities in the list of investors you have goin’ on over at Piccoli. You may not even have known how many of your company’s shares are being held or owned by out of state investors.”

My blood ran cold.

“It’s possible. I always trusted Tyson and Ver with investments. But the IPO offering—the board of directors—we’re all Americans. So that means I have a right of refusal, don’t I?”

Eric rubbed his beard. “That’s not what’s going on, Renn. It seems your company has shares owned by some pretty unsavory mob families. I’m talkin’ offshoots of the Gambino crime family—guys who had to flee after the trials in NYC. And there’s more.”

Lucas nodded. “These people are neck deep in counterfeiting, Renn. And we’d give two years’ worth of our earnings to bet they’ve been filtering fake notes through small-time businesses like yours.”

Oh, my fucking God.

“It’s no secret that our police system banks on red flags when it comes to money laundering and counterfeits, especially on such a global scale. So you, technically, are a registered brand with investors who’re known to be up to no fucking good.”

My throat was dry when I spoke once more. “How bad is it? Tell me some names.”

Mateo sat down beside me.

“Other than the Gambinos, there’s Tyson’s own uncle and his related family, all linked to the Bratva. Plus, we’ve found connections to an Italian mob conglomerate. There’s four pipelines to some of the baddest baddies in the world.”

I wanted to shout. Or kill Tyson. Or just cry.

But nothing would help me save Piccoli more than just hearing this through.

I knew Tyson had gone over to the dark side.

Part of me still refused to believe he could have become Emperor Palpatine himself. The fucking shit-faced asshole.

“Heavens to fuckin’ Betsy.” I groaned, rubbing my eyes wearily. “Why did I ever trust him?”

Why didn’t I watch out for the warning signs? Why did I get him involved in my business, my child, the one way I had to express my freedom?

The men were unfazed. They’d seen it all and done more—this was their territory, after all. They gave me a minute to calm myself. “I wouldn’t say it’s all bad, Renn.” Mateo finally spoke up.

It was hard to not be angry. I felt madder than a wet hen. The only time I’d been this unhinged was years back, facing my daddy after losing my ma.

“Is there any solution?” I croaked. “I can’t leave my company or try to run. No matter what, I have to see this to the end.”

What would this do to Daddy and his campaign? Who’d want a mayor with such a disgraced daughter—one who was possibly facing criminal charges?

Mateo suddenly grinned, reducing me to a flummoxed frown.

“What?”

“Renn, this is why we’re so charmed by you. I cannot tell you how many times someone in your position would have

tried to run or lay the blame on anyone else so they could go scott-free. And I'm talkin' about people who're really guilty. But you? You take ownership."

"And we're not gonna let you go down," Lucas chimed in.

I inhaled. "That won't change much, though, will it?" Piccoli had been my child, my soul. "I'm going to lose everything."

A long time back, Mya had told me to not lay my hopes on anyone other than myself. To help the world only after I'd sorted myself out. I should have listened to her.

And now I was about to lose everything because I'd been a fuckin' fool and gone and believed in my husband, of all people. And he'd gone dark on me.

"Well, it turns out that Tyson is gonna go down for all of this, Renn," Eric finally burst out. "I'm sorry." He raised his hands as the other two men scowled at him.

"You just ruined the build-up!" Lucas frowned.

"My stomach couldn't take it anymore," he replied, rolling his eyes.

A silver fucking lining.

"Tell me everything, please."

"Honestly, Renn, it wasn't too hard to see who was behind this. It had to be someone with complete access to your company's financials. That much was obvious."

"Sure . . ." I echoed Mateo's words, but my mind was on another plane. I felt like Hannibal probably did before giving up hope on humanity.

"This means you have literally two people in the pool of suspects."

Veronica and Tyson. But Veronica was a dumb fool. No matter what, she'd never be able to do this. She'd never be able to think somethin' like this up.

"Now, I want you to do the math," Lucas said, walking over to me and sitting down at the oak table.

“There’s only one prime culpable candidate with known familial mafia ties. One candidate who’s traveled abroad on company expense accounts. One candidate who’s been stupid enough to leave behind a very satisfying chain of evidential information.”

What? Okay. Okay. Hope.

“So, I can prove this happened without my knowin’ what was going on?”

“Yessir,” said Eric, beaming. “We need someone to testify on your behalf, though. But I believe there’s somethin’ else you should know. We’ll get to that in a minute.”

“Tell me.” I had to force the words out. “Tell me it was him. I already know. This is more than business. This is . . . this is someone I loved and made my home with.”

This time, there was no mistaking the empathy in their eyes. I saw it, like the fleeting twilight settling into dusk outdoors.

“Renn,” Mateo said gently. “You’re so young, but you’re also far wiser than all our years combined. People have stood back up and fought, and so will you.”

“I need a name,” I insisted. “I have to know.”

Because Tyson doing this to me was the death knell to everything good we’d ever shared. It meant there was nothing more than a life’s worth of rotten business dealings between us.

“Before that . . .” Eric sat down beside me. “This case will never see the courtroom. We’re gonna make the arrangements because the threat of public exposure could destroy the person behind all of it. They’re never gonna blackmail you again, Renn.”

Mateo held out a piece of paper. “This is the name. And all his connections.”

There it was, in black and white.

Tyson Brown.

“It’s not his birth name, by the way.”

My head hurt. “What is it?”

“His real name is Luigi Gambino. And you may not know this, but his uncle is one of the most wanted people in Louisiana.”

I exhaled. “Okay. Okay.”

“Now, about witnesses—”

“I have none.” I shook my head. “It was a small company, Lucas. Who’d stand up for me?”

“Veronica.”

What?

“She’d never do that.” I snorted. “She’s in it too deep with him.”

“Oh, but she’s not,” Mateo replied, grinning like a Cheshire cat. “Turns out she got dumped in a pretty unsavory way for a lingerie model. Perry told us last night that she’s willing to testify on your behalf.”

What in the Sam fuckin’ Hill?

These men—the three of them—they were a godsend. They were everything. Without thinking, with the knowledge of what they’d just done for me, I leaned in and kissed Eric.

“You guys.” I was tearful. “Thank you. Thank you.”

Eric’s mouth was warm and soft against mine. I held my hands out and hugged both Lucas and Mateo. We stayed like that for a moment, and then, the air between us was charged once more.

Call it a fucking celebration or a coming together of wills.

I’d save Piccoli. With them by my side, I could do it all. Our embrace grew warmer, and before I knew it, we had moved to the bedroom.

Mateo’s tongue slid into my mouth while Lucas and Eric undid my blouse and skirt, not stopping until they’d removed

the bra and panties too. Their hands grabbed my breasts, and I was unable to keep tiny moans from escaping my mouth.

Eric's lips latched onto one of my nipples. Lucas disappeared and returned with a can of whipped cream. He sprayed it onto my bare neck and collarbones and proceeded to lick me clean.

"God," I sighed as Mateo's tongue explored my own.

Mateo

I could never have enough of tasting Renn's sweet mouth. She was all strawberries and cream, something heady and delicious and too good to let go of.

She moaned as I bit her tongue lightly and proceeded to lick some of the whipped cream Lucas had sprayed on her from the sides of her neck.

"Let's go to the shower," she whispered, leading the three of us on.

We followed her to Lucas's bathroom. The glass on the sliding door was tinted. After Eric got in, he shut it behind him. The scent of a vanilla candle joined us as I kissed Renn once more.

Lucas turned the shower on, and I pulled Renn closer to me. She peeled my boxers off my waist, and my rapidly hardening cock pressed against her soft ass.

I maneuvered her into the middle. Reaching down, I picked up a bottle of coconut body wash.

"Soap 'er up, lads!" I grinned and pumped product into Lucas and Eric's outstretched palms.

"Oh, God," she moaned as she felt four soapy hands rubbing her warm, wet skin, turning every inch of her on.

I pumped some into my own hand. She leaned backward onto my shoulder, a soft sigh of pleasure escaping her lips. Her nipples were already taut.

Turning back, she pulled her hair out of the way and leaned down. She looked up a second, her eyes on mine, lit with desire, before she darted her tongue out and swirled it around the head of my cock.

I groaned. She just knew how to turn me on.

Renn smiled and began to lick my cock and stroke it with her small hands. I placed my own hands upon the walls of the shower to steady myself as her tongue ran up and down its length and circled the tip again and again.

In the meantime, her two hands reached out and grabbed Eric and Lucas's dicks, pleasuring each of them as she worked her mouth on mine.

She moaned to herself as she pleased the three of us. I couldn't help marveling at how fuckin' amazing she looked with my cock in her mouth.

Lucas leaned down between her legs and rubbed her slick, shaven pussy as she kept tonguing and licking me.

Soon, I gripped her hair and pushed myself into the recesses of her mouth until I'd reached her throat.

I let out an intense moan as she gurgled and fucked me with that perfect mouth of hers. She rose from her position and turned to kiss Eric.

The shower filled with the sounds of their lips meeting and their tongues clashing against each other as she continued rubbing and stroking Lucas and me.

I pushed Renn down upon the shower bench so she was level with all of our cocks. She soaped them up.

"Lucas, grab me the shower head," I muttered.

He reached up behind me and unlatched the head. Its hose was long enough to reach around him.

I took it and rinsed myself off before aiming it over each of their cocks. As soon as we were all soap-free, Renn went in for the kill.

“Fuck!” Eric almost snarled as Renn’s mouth went for his cock first.

Her lips smacked and suctioned, and she groaned as she sucked him off, playing with his balls as her tongue licked and fucked his dick.

I rinsed Renn’s lower body and handed the shower head back to Lucas. In the meantime, Renn had switched over to take Lucas’s cock in her mouth, making it almost impossible for him to place the head where it belonged.

“I’ll take care of that.” Eric grinned and fastened the shower head.

Leaning down, I gathered Renn’s long, wet hair as her head bobbed forward and back.

She was going to town on Lucas’s cock, her mouth making delicious sucking sounds that made me want to fuck her then and there.

I felt up the outline of her delicious body with my hands, traversing her underarms to the sides of her pert tits and then to her hips.

She switched back to Eric’s cock, moving between him and Lucas.

As she went back and forth, I leaned back and whispered, my tone husky, “Get her up.”

The boys led her up by her arms, and I stepped closer.

Our hands proceeded to explore her body as we rubbed our cocks on her bare skin, relishing how hot and wet she was at the same time.

We kept spinning her in circles so each of us could taste and touch her back and front.

“Oh, God, fuck me already,” she moaned, her back to me. I grabbed her forearms and rubbed my cock all over her Venus’s

dimples, groaning at how slick and horny I was.

Eric and Lucas took a tit each. Soon, sucking and licking noises filled the shower as they attacked her nipples with their teeth and tongues.

“Oh, fuck yes,” she sighed.

I let go of her arms and from behind, I reached between her thighs.

She was so wet! She pressed her buttocks against my fully hard cock, presenting it to me.

Leaning over, Renn put her hands on Eric’s hips for support and took his cock into her mouth. I knew what she wanted and slowly dove my cock into her from behind.

“Ah, yes!” she moaned as I entered her rosebud, but she did not stop fucking Eric’s cock with her mouth. I pulled out once more.

Teasing her.

“No, don’t,” she groaned, popping Eric out of her mouth like he was candy. “Fuck me, please!”

“Your wish is my command,” I replied huskily and shoved my cock all the way in. It slid in easily, and I was rewarded with a telling moan.

Soon, I was slapping into her wet ass, and her gurgles and cries filled the shower room.

She’d begun working Lucas’s dick with her tiny hand, and all of us were groaning with pleasure. Eric breathed heavily as he enjoyed her moans and echoes and tongue on his cock.

Soon, we changed positions and it was Eric plowing her while she sucked me off. Her head bumped against me with each thrust propelling her forward.

She grabbed me with one of her hands, the other still working Lucas. I was unable to take my cock from her mouth.

Eric continued pumping her from behind as I held on for dear life.

Renn adjusted the pull of her mouth so my cock felt like it was getting suctioned and licked at the same time. That was it.

Without meaning to, I erupted and convulsed into her mouth.

Right after my final shiver, she popped my still hard cock out and moved to Lucas.

Eric had picked up the pace, fucking her with all the authority of a lawyer who knows he's the shit. With each thrust, she mewled and moaned as she took Lucas's cock for a ride.

Taking a step back, I allowed myself to enjoy the scene.

Renn was holding on to Lucas for dear life, but with the commanding thrusts Eric was giving her, Lucas kept slipping out of her mouth.

“Fuck,” he finally grunted. “I’m gonna—”

“Me too!” She screamed, squirting all over his cock.

He continued fucking her through it, growling as he propelled his ejaculation straight into her with hard, intentioned thrusts.

Turning around, Renn proceeded to lick Eric clean and pushed her pert ass toward Lucas. Lucas entered her from behind as she stroked and licked Eric, who yelled as his climax entered its last moments.

Lucas stopped moving, keeping his cock buried balls-deep in her.

He held it there and grasped her hips while Eric filled her mouth. Renn went to town with him, milking his shaft until the very last breath of his orgasm had subsided.

Eric sat down on the edge of the bathtub to catch his breath, his eyes glazed over.

Lucas resumed pumping Renn, faster and faster until he was literally jackrabbiting her. She began crying out in pleasure.

Reaching out, Lucas grabbed her shoulders, arching her back up as he took her at a rapid-fire pace.

We stood and enjoyed the show, nursing our already spent cocks. We were still hard, still in the mood to mate.

Primal, but fucking beautiful.

Lucas grabbed her shoulders and moved to her forearms. He pulled her backward and arched her back further. Her tits bounced and slapped against each other.

Her eyes were almost closed, almost as if she were looking off into space.

Lucas let go of one arm, and she grabbed the edge of the bathtub and moved her ass back and forth so she was fucking Lucas instead of him taking her.

That was enough to set him off.

“Oh, shit,” Lucas grunted. “I’m gonna come.”

She slammed herself back onto his cock again and again, emitting little groans and crying out. “Don’t stop. Come in me!”

She kept shoving her body from the tub, stabbing his pole into her pussy each time. She turned her head and her beautiful eyes burned with intent. “I want it. Shoot it in me.”

Lucas grabbed her hips and plunged all the way into her, silently convulsing pulse after pulse of hot cum into her body.

“Damn!” Both Eric and I exhaled, grinning.

Renn’s arms rested against the tub. Her head dipped down and hung between her pert breasts while Lucas remained latched on, shivering slightly as his climax drew to an end.

The only sound besides our exhausted panting was the trickle of hot water from the shower head.

Both Eric and I were already hard once more, but we wanted to give Renn some time to compose herself. I laughed. “Let’s clean up here.”

Once Lucas extricated himself, she leaned back against the shower wall and smiled lazily.

We rinsed ourselves off and exited the shower room.

“Take your time and relax,” I murmured, leaning down to kiss her before leaving.

The living room had become a locker room as we roamed around, towels on our waists. Eric put on some sultry jazz, and I dimmed the room’s ambient light settings.

We sat back and sipped on some cold beers, knowing the show was far from over.

“So.” Lucas grinned, all business-like. “Perry told me some real shit about Veronica. Turns out she’s looking to get all the dirt she can on Tyson so she can get him to leave the country.”

I snorted. “That would be her best way out, wouldn’t it?” Sitting up, I nursed my beer in my hands. “Whatever it is, though, we’ll let Renn make her own call about meeting Veronica.”

The boys nodded. We all knew her support was important to settle this case out-of-court, but we also knew friends who did these things deserved a special place in hell.

“I agree.” Eric sighed. “No matter what, I’m sure she will make a sensible choice.”

My phone rang, breaking me out of a trance. It was my mother’s nurse.

I stood up, frowning. “Give me a minute.”

“Mr. Tavoni? We have some great news.”

My heart began beating fast.

“Your mother has been responding well to treatment. Of course, we cannot reverse the degenerative impact on her brain, but she remembers things now. More than she did the last time. Would you like to have a word with her?”

Against all intentions, my eyes misted. “Yes, please.”

That voice, it reminded me of lemon verbena and comfort.

My throat choked as I said the words.

“Hey, Ma.”

There was a brief pause.

Then, she spoke.

“I remember you.”

Eric

I knew from the look on Mateo's face that something good had happened. We waited until his conversation ended.

"She's doing better, isn't she?" I breathed, hoping I was right.

He nodded, his smile like the sun.

Relief flooded me. This was the night to top all nights. We sat around the living room, chatting, until the bathroom door finally slid open.

Renn emerged, looking like a radiant fae with a towel wrapped around her body, her wet hair loose and shining. She came over and sat down, sipped her beer, and joined in our conversation.

Before long, Mateo reached over and kissed her cheek. I had to excuse myself to attend a work call. When I returned, it was a different living room altogether.

The white bath towels were now strewn all around the sofa and tables. My retinas adjusted to the dim lighting, and I saw Renn riding cowgirl atop Mateo, her back turned to me.

She moaned and played with her breasts, her hips bucking back and forth. Lucas was standing over them, Renn's mouth wrapped around his cock and her hands on his butt cheeks.

“Mmm,” she moaned greedily as she sucked him. I stood there, feeling my own cock hardening at the sheer play of power in the room.

I sat down on the sofa and picked up my beer. With my free hand, I began stroking myself, enjoying the show.

Knowing she had an audience encouraged Renn even more. She ground her lower body down on Mateo while she sucked Lucas with renewed gusto.

The three carried on like this, with Mateo stopping her to pound hard and fast in between. I could hear the sloshing of her juices as she coated his cock. She was wetter and wetter.

As Renn got more and more worked up, she stopped sucking Lucas’s cock. She pressed it against her cheek and breathed into the base.

“Oh, fuck,” he groaned, playing the tip against her mouth.

Mateo pounded her ruthlessly from below, making her hips convulse in a quick climax, turning their connection into something electric.

She screamed, emitting hot breath on Lucas as she came all over Mateo’s erect penis. Even as she came, she took Lucas back in and milked him until he came.

Renn swallowed every last drop until Lucas, drained and fulfilled, came and joined me on the spectator’s seat. I raised my beer at him. “Good show!”

“Let’s give them a better one,” Mateo snarled. He pushed her back to the carpeted rug and extended her legs wide. In the dim light, it glistened with all her juices.

He ducked his head down and lapped at her pussy.

“Oh!” was all Renn could scream as she held her hands in his hair. He slurped away between her thighs and then inserted one, then two fingers into her.

Finally, he sat up and kept pumping his fingers and rubbed her clit.

“Oh, God—no—yes—fuck!” Renn covered her face with her hands and groaned and bucked her hips, squirting all over Mateo’s hand. But he did not let up.

He continued pumping her canal, his face set. Squirt after squirt of her orgasm erupted out of her. She was panting.

After a few beats of silence, she pulled him to her by his neck. “Fuck me hard. Now.”

“Goddamn!” Lucas ginned from next to me. He was obviously enjoying the show as much as I was.

Mateo mounted Renn in one quick motion and pumped into her. She spread her knees wide and dug her nails into his shoulders as he fucked her.

Going down, he grabbed her spread ankles as his pounding grew in ferocity. He alternated by bringing her legs up by his shoulders, fucking her every way he knew. And then some.

Finally, his back arched and he looked at the ceiling, ejecting his entire life-force into her body.

After appreciating the scene, I grabbed a sports drink, twisted it open, and tossed it over to Mateo. He accepted it with a half-grin, half-sigh.

We got Renn another sports drink, and she replenished herself deeply. Her eyes told us she wasn’t done. Not yet.

Good, because neither were we. As Mateo withdrew, I rose and positioned myself between her legs, rubbing the head of my cock on her clit.

I continued masturbating her clitoris with my penis, and she moaned as I teased her with it, never entering, just shy of enough.

“Ah,” she groaned, emitting a tiny squirt of juices. I knew this was my cue. Aiming lower, I shoved my cock in, balls-deep.

Soon, I was transported to a different kind of heaven, savagely fucking the girl of my dreams, absolutely oblivious to the world around us.

I spun her around and fucked her from behind. Looking down, I could see my cock lathering with a coating of her juices as I pumped in and out.

Still connected to her, I lay next to her and spoon-fucked her from behind. She lifted her top leg up and gave a great view to the boys over on the couch.

Her swollen pussy lips were spread wide to accommodate my pounding, intent penis.

“I’m coming!” she groaned. So was I, because pulse after pulse of my ejaculation proceeded to fill her womb. After that, she rose, her legs trembling, and pointed to the shower.

After a bit, Renn returned to the main room in a bathrobe, loosely tied to reveal the half-moons of her beautiful breasts. She took a look at the three of us and laughed.

We probably did look a little absurd. Not unlike primates.

She sat herself on the sofa between Lucas and me and reached over to grab a packet of chips.

“Did you enjoy that?” Mateo asked, smiling.

“More than you’d think.” She smirked. “In fact, I don’t think I’m done.”

I was in front of her immediately, my cock already hard at her command. She took it into her mouth after a sip of the sports drink. The cool liquid made me shiver.

Holding me by the base, she splashed the stuff around the tip of my cock, almost making me cave then and there.

She took me into her mouth as the boys watched and resumed revolving her tongue around and over it.

Then, she stabbed the back of her mouth with my cock’s tip, her gagging sound drawing Mateo up from the other side.

Renn stopped her head bobbing to admire what she’d done to me. She licked her lips and slowly took Mateo’s now-engorged dick into her mouth, her eyes still on me.

She proceeded to kneel down between him and me and took our cocks in each hand. While stroking up and down

Mateo's pole with her left hand, she leaned to her right and focused her attention on me.

She leaned forward and began licking and nibbling along the shaft.

She tongued the head greedily, going for it good and hard, while stroking Mateo with both her hands now.

Lucas joined in, and somehow, Renn was licking both of us back and forth. Her tongue alternated between the heads of our cocks, then she pulled them close together and rubbed both on her tongue and lips.

I could see how much she wanted us.

Suddenly, she stopped her mouth work and stood up. "Damn you guys!" She laughed, her eyes shimmering. She turned her back to us and straddled me, lifting the bottom of her bath robe.

Renn lowered herself onto my glistening cock head, literally impaling herself.

She bounced up and down on my cock, working up a sheen of sweat.

Lucas and Mateo reached over and opened the bath robe.

I was so hard, it felt like if my fifteen-year-old self would have been here, he'd have given me multiple high-fives. I reached around to rub Renn's pussy as it accommodated to my high-speed thrusting.

Lucas was touching her too. He needed her. "Mind if I join inside?" he asked.

"Go for it," Renn and I groaned in unison.

We sat back on the carpet. I lay down, and Lucas pulled Renn's knees up as she rolled onto my torso.

I moved my legs over Lucas's and under hers, leaning forward, and pushed the tip of my arched cock into her. Lucas was already inside.

There was little give at first, as if Lucas's cock did not want to give up kingship. I leaned down and spat for some

lubrication and then pushed once more.

Finally, Renn's pussy accepted my cock in alongside his.

She moaned out loud as we synced our thrusting, slipping in and out until we had a good rhythm going.

Mateo, using the wall to brace himself, leaned his cock into her panting mouth. Her lips immediately accepted him. All three of us were now fucking her.

Renn's pussy was tighter than I'd ever felt it. Between the alternate pumping and how my cock curved upward on her G-spot, she fell over the edge.

"YES!" she gave a sharp little cry, and suddenly, I felt hot gushes soaking into my pubes. The liquid spilled down the base of my cock, lubricating both me and Lucas.

Renn's climax continued as every muscle in her body shivered. The top of my cock could feel every contraction of her vagina as she squeezed and kneaded both cocks together.

That set Lucas off. "I'm gonna come," he panted, increasing his tempo. I pulled back as he filled her up, and then, it was my turn.

I started fucking her hard and fast from behind as Mateo pumped into her mouth. Increasing the intensity, I began grunting as my pelvis slapped into her ass.

"Ah, I'm coming too!"

The second I was done, Mateo leaned down and took Renn, missionary style. His fingers dug into her curved hips as he thrust into her, again and again.

"Yes! Yes! Yes! I'm your good little girl," she moaned as Mateo spanked her in accompaniment to his pelvis thrusting deep inside her womb. He dived down for a passionate kiss and sucked her tongue from her mouth.

Renn wrapped her arms across the back of his neck, and he increased the intensity of his fucking.

"You like my cock, Sugar?" Mateo's gentle question contrasted with how aggressively he was pounding into her.

“I love it so much,” she mewled.

“You want my cum in you?” he continued.

“Yes, please! I want your cum in me!”

As Mateo’s climax began, he rolled Renn on top of him, squeezing her body to his.

She wrapped his arms around his neck as his hands held her back and butt cheeks. No one could separate them as he sprayed his load into her, giving her his seed.

They remained in that position for a while, and then, he kissed her passionately.

“That was beautiful,” she breathed.

“It was everything,” he replied.

Lucas and I pulled our shorts on. All of us were spent. I went to sit down on the front porch as the others cleaned up and followed suit.

Renn sighed. “I wanna stay, but I need to get some rest.”

“I’ll drop you home.” Mateo stood up immediately.

We said goodbye to Renn, each of us grateful for how she’d brought us together rather than breaking us into split parts.

Sharing a woman only ever made sense if it meant there was no room for regret, jealousy, or bitterness.

And Renn symbolized all of that. Somehow, being with her . . . I did not feel that anything would come between us. Rather, it was as if we were part of the same team.

I sat on Lucas’s front porch, gazing out at the sea in the distance. The night was cool and comfortable when Mateo finally returned.

We had just shared a beautiful night of intimacy, and we all cherished Renn, each in our own ways.

“Y’all see that over there?” Lucas said, pointing to a bright light in the distance.

“What is it?” Eric asked, squinting his eyes.

“I reckon it’s a boat,” Lucas replied.

“Ain’t nobody out on the water this time of night,” Mateo chimed in.

“Well, there’s somebody out there now,” Lucas said with a chuckle.

We all laughed, and I leaned back in my chair, feeling content.

“Y’all know what I was thinking about earlier today?” Mateo said, breaking the silence.

“What’s that?” Eric asked.

“I was thinking about how lucky we are to have Renn in our lives,” Mateo replied, a soft smile on his face.

“Amen to that,” Lucas said, raising his glass in a toast.

“She’s brought us all together in a way I never would’ve thought possible,” Eric added.

“I don’t know what I’d do without her,” I said, my voice breaking with emotion.

“She’s the glue that holds us all together,” Mateo said, his voice just as hoarse as mine.

We all fell into a comfortable silence, lost in our own thoughts.

“I reckon we ought to do something special for her,” Lucas said, breaking the silence.

“Like what?” Eric asked.

“I don’t rightly know yet,” Lucas replied. “But we’ll figure something out.”

I smiled, feeling grateful for these men who had become my family. We had all come from different walks of life, but we were best friends.

Somehow, Renn had solidified that friendship into something even stronger.

We were united into one front, one front that wanted to help and nurture her. And that meant an immense lot to me.

“I love y’all,” I said, my voice barely above a whisper.

“I love you too, brother,” Mateo said, reaching over to squeeze my hand.

“We’re all in this together,” Lucas added, a smile on his face.

Renn

I woke up in my bedroom at Lockwood, my family mansion. It was an idyllic morning with a gentle breeze blowing through the window and the sound of woodpeckers chirping in the background.

Pushing the silky curtains aside, my eyes came level with our family's maple tree. There, on the topmost branch, my eyes fell on a little open, cup-shaped nest holding three sky-blue eggs.

Creation was all around me, and it was hard not to celebrate these tiny victories.

The little forest track outdoors was calling out to me. I could already picture the tall trees with their leaves rustling in the wind, the sunlight dappling through the branches, and the soft rustling of leaves under my feet.

But the peace of the morning was disrupted by a bitter feeling that had been gnawing at me for weeks now.

In just an hour, I was supposed to meet my ex-best friend, Veronica. I didn't want to meet her, not after what she had done to me.

I lay there, staring at the ceiling, trying to push away the thoughts that were crowding my mind.

At this point, it didn't even matter that Tyson had hurt me the way he had. What mattered was that Veronica had played along. She was supposed to be my soulmate.

I'd never subscribed to the "you only get one soulmate in life" crap. To me, our souls needed fertile soil wherever we went. Every juncture of our lives would demand changes, and in NYC, the fabric of my heart had adjusted to her love language.

Which, in all practicality, had been lies.

To make things worse, Tyson was involved in some dubious dealings in my company, Piccoli, and Veronica had known this all along. She was getting out because it was the safe route for her.

Not because she gave a shit about me. But even then, I knew what I had to do.

Veronica was the only one who could help me.

She knew everything that Tyson had been up to and was willing to testify against him.

But it was hard for me to swallow my pride and meet her. I could still feel the sting of betrayal every time I thought about what had happened.

I forced myself out of bed, determined to get on with the day. I took a quick shower and got dressed. As I was brushing my hair, I heard a knock on the door.

"Hey, Renn, you awake?" It was my best friend from school, who'd come over late last night to keep me company.

She'd slipped out in the early morning and come back with a brown paper bag. I smiled, knowing it held breakfast.

"You look like you got the weight of the world on your shoulders," Mya said, her voice full of concern.

"I do," I replied. "I have to meet Veronica in an hour."

Mya nodded, understanding. "It's hard, but you gotta do it. You need her help to bring Tyson down."

"I know," I said, sighing. "But it's not just that. She slept with my husband. My own best friend."

"I know, Renn, I know. But you can't let that cloud your judgment. You have to think about what's best for you and

your company right now.”

I nodded, taking her words to heart. “You’re right, Mya. I have to take life with a pinch of salt.”

She held out the bag, and I opened it. The warm smell of beignets filled the room, and I grinned. “You know the right way to my heart.”

I munched the soft, flaky dough, relishing its buttery mouthfeel. “Mya . . .”

This had been on my mind for the longest time. Mya was every bit unconventional as her ways. It was no secret that she lived in NOLA with not one, but three men. And one of them was her ex-best friend, Rowan’s, brother.

A while ago, I used to wonder how she shared her heart with all of them, let alone her body.

Now, it all made sense.

“Shoot.” Mya laughed as some jam fell on her pants. “Tell me, what’s on your mind?”

“Is it difficult? Sharing your heart with Wynn, Nico, and Gabe?”

She smiled wistfully. “Y’know, for a while, I did think it would be odd. But that was before things happened. And it was more the outer world telling me what I needed to be happy, not my own voice.”

“It felt natural, didn’t it?”

“The most natural feeling in the world. The boys know I belong differently to each of them and that I love them all, not any more or less than the other. Our kids are growing up unconventionally too, but they have the three best daddies the world has ever seen.”

Hope sprang in my heart.

“Why is this on your mind, though, Renn?”

I took a deep breath. “D’you remember Mateo?”

“Tavoni? Of course! He’s such a good lawyer!”

“Well, turns out, he’s more than that.” I blushed.

It took Mya a second to register what I was saying.

“No way . . . you and Mr. Tavoni? You go, girl,” she squealed. “The entire town has the hots for him, but I knew he’d choose someone special!”

“There’s more.” I hesitated. “I’m not with him alone. I—I’m dating him and his two best friends.”

Mya did a double-take. “Whoa. That’s somethin’ else. Isn’t Mr. Tavoni best friends with your daddy too?”

I nodded.

“Y’know what?” She smiled. “I think this is the best thing that could have happened to you. You’re listening to your heart. And she knows what’s best. Always remember that. But I’d still ask you to be careful, though. Have you considered talking to Jonathan?”

“I don’t know how he’ll handle it. You know Daddy, Mya.”

She chewed on her beignet thoughtfully. “I do. But sooner or later, he will know. In my case, that was the worst thing—my step-folks finding out the way they did. I didn’t have a lot to loose there. But you do. Jonathan is a good dad.”

Guilt stabbed my heart. She was right.

“Listen, let’s meet up for dinner tonight.” I finished the last bite and checked the time. “I need to talk about this, but I also have unpleasant business to finish up first.”

“I’ll be here at seven? We can order in some red beans and rice?”

“What about some jambalaya instead?”

“Done.”

AN HOUR Later

I made my way outside, taking in the fresh morning air. The little forest track was still calling out to me, but I pushed

those thoughts aside. I had more important things to do.

As I walked, the sound of birds filled my ears. I could hear the chirping of the blue jays, the soft cooing of the mourning doves, and the sweet melody of the mockingbird.

I arrived at the meeting spot, a small coffee shop in town. Veronica was already there, sitting at a table in the back. I took a deep breath and made my way over to her.

“Hey, Veronica,” I said, my voice cold and distant.

“Renn, it’s good to see you,” she said, trying to smile.

We sat down, and I got straight to the point. “Tell me everything you know about Tyson’s dealings in Piccoli.”

Veronica took a sip of her coffee and looked at me with a guilty expression.

“Renn, I’m so sorry. It was the biggest mistake of my whole life. I don’t expect you to forgive me, but I just want you to know how sorry I am. I lost the friendship of the person I most loved because of my own stupidity.”

I stared at her for a moment, my heart hurting. I knew I couldn’t forgive her right away, but maybe in the distant future, when the wounds had healed, I could find it in my heart to forgive her.

I took a deep breath and said, “It’s not just about you, Veronica. Tyson manipulated me too. I trusted him, and he used that trust against me.”

Veronica nodded, understanding. “I know, Renn. That’s why I’m here. I want to help you. I have some important documents and CCTV footage that shows Tyson was involved in fraudulent dealings.”

She handed me a folder, and I opened it up. As I looked through the documents, my heart sank. This was worse than I thought. Tyson had been using my company, Piccoli, to launder money and move counterfeit cash. I felt sick to my stomach.

I was carrying my laptop with me, so I decided to look at the CCTV footage right away. As I watched, my blood boiled.

Tyson was meeting with members of the Bratva, a notorious Russian organized crime syndicate, to talk about illegal cash flow.

“I have all the evidence I need now,” I said, closing my laptop.

Veronica looked at me, concern etched on her face. “Renn, are you okay? You look pale.”

I shook my head, feeling a wave of nausea wash over me. “I don’t know. I just feel sick.”

The urge to be sick suddenly felt stronger than my whole bearing, and suddenly, I had to run to the bathroom to throw up the coffee. Veronica followed me, concerned.

As I leaned over the toilet, trying to catch my breath, Veronica shuffled outside, her steps uneasy.

“Renn, I’m sorry if this is out of line, but I need to ask you something.”

I heaved. “Fire away.”

What she asked me stopped me in my tracks. “Renn, when was the last time you had your period?”

I was shocked at her question. “What? Why are you asking me that?”

Veronica’s voice was tinged with concern. “Renn, it’s just a question. I’m worried about you.”

I thought for a moment, trying to remember the last time I had my period. And then it hit me like a ton of bricks. It had been over ten weeks.

For fuck’s sake.

I felt my hands shaking as I tried to process what was happening. Could it be possible that I was pregnant? I couldn’t even begin to think about what that would mean for me and the boys.

And Daddy. Fuck, what would I tell him?

Veronica looked at me as I stepped out, my face similar to a person who'd just had their first encounter with a ghost, concern etched on her face. "Renn, are you okay? Do you need to see a doctor?"

I took a deep breath and tried to calm myself down. "No, Veronica, I'm okay. Thank you for asking. I just need to go home and rest."

A wave of panic washed over me. This was getting far too real. With everything going on, how could I even think about having a baby?

"D'you need me to drive you home?"

"No, I think I'd rather walk. But thank you for asking me."

"Are you okay, Renn? Is it . . . could it be?"

"I don't know, Veronica. I don't even know if I'm ready for that kind of responsibility."

Veronica gave me a small smile. "It's okay, Renn. We'll figure it out. Let's just focus on getting rid of Tyson first, and then we can worry about the rest."

I nodded, feeling a thousand feelings all at once. I looked down at my phone and left Mya a quick text.

Need to meet ASAP.

She replied almost instantly.

I'm down at Avery Road, should I come to your place?

Thinking fast, I typed my next message. *Isn't there a fertility clinic in Avery Rd.?*

There was a brief interlude. Then, she responded.

It's on Lakeview, right by the gas station. I'll wait there.

As we left the coffee shop, Veronica hugged me. "I'm sorry, Renn. I hope we can be friends again someday."

I hugged her back, feeling a wan sense of warmth spread through my body. "Maybe someday, Veronica. But right now, I just need to focus on getting my life back on track."

Veronica nodded, understanding. “I’ll be here for you, Renn. Just give me a call if you need anything.”

I watched as Veronica got into her car and drove away and quickly turned to detour to Lakeview. It was a quick walk, and the air did me a world of good.

Mya was already at the clinic’s gate, a look of deep worry on her face. “I’ve spoken to them inside, and you’re good to take an HCG test. Results will come by the evening.”

I nodded.

“What does this mean for me, though?” I whispered as we went in. “Mya, you’ve done this. Tell me it’s doable.”

“It’s the most natural thing in the world, Renn, but you can’t hide what you are from the world anymore. Especially not your dad.”

The world was blurry. What would I even tell him?

“My best bet is that you come clean. You’ve done nothin’ wrong. It’s love, for Christ’s sake. And talk to Mr. Tavoni and the others. Tell them what’s goin’ on.”

I nodded, my heart cold. I’d tell them. But only once I knew for sure. I couldn’t risk a fluke here.

The possibilities, though. A heart within a heart.

A tiny set of arms and feet.

A little mini-me, growing up in a world where I could teach her to be free and know a love like no other.

Something else hit me at that point. *I want this. Maybe I’d wanted it all along. Tyson was the one who’d never wanted kids to come between us. Me? I’d craved children.*

It was as if the world was telling me I was finally ready.

Mya took me back home after the test, and after lunch, I fell into a deep sleep. There were no dreams barring one where I woke up in a meadow, and there was a little girl beside me.

She had golden hair and Mateo’s blue eyes. And the biggest little dimples on her cheeks.

It was love at first memory.

I only woke up when Mya tapped my shoulder gently, telling me the results were in.

We sat in the bedroom in quiet reflection for a whole five minutes.

“No matter what happens,” I finally whispered, “If this is true, I know it’s because I’ve been good, and the world finally thinks I’m ready.”

Mya nodded. “You’re going to be amazing,” she replied, her voice breaking.

I looked at my phone and opened the document.

The levels were . . . insurmountable.

“Whoa,” Mya breathed. “Renn . . . I think there’s more than one in there.”

I swallowed. “Well, I’ll be.”

Mya’s friend was running a clinic, and we got in on short notice. All I knew was, there had to be a definite answer.

There could be no in-betweens here. I either was a mom, or I was just Renn.

Then, in that little ultrasound room, with my belly full of pee and my heart full of questions, I heard them.

One.

Two.

Three.

Three.

Two.

One.

Three hearts, in perfect rhythm with my own.

My babies.

Our babies.

Tears fell from my eyes as I looked at the radiologist, who smiled benignly. “Everything looks healthy. I’m scheduling you for another test at thirteen weeks.”

How could life ever be the same? How could I ever be the same?

Mya and I spent the whole evening walking around town, our heads in the clouds. It was as if I’d forgotten how much I still had to face. But I wasn’t dealing with any of it alone any longer.

No, I had a little army by my side.

I checked the time. It was a little after five p.m., and we had one final dealing to finish before I talked to Dad. Because now, there was no way around any of it. He’d have to know.

He deserved to know.

I left Tyson a message.

Meet me at Denny’s.

I called my men there too.

Mateo was the first to arrive to the scene. I handed him all the documents Veronica had given me, a victorious smile on my face.

Eric and Lucas cheered as they went through the contents. “We have the bastard now.”

Tyson was the last to walk in, a smirk on his ridiculous face. It disappeared quickly when he saw I wasn’t alone, but with my entire arsenal.

He scowled heavily at the men, but he could not bring himself to say anything to them. Instead, he fixed his small eyes at me. “What’s the meanin’ of this, huh?”

“Oh, I just thought it’d be right to give you a proper goodbye, darlin’.” I smiled innocently at him and pointed to the seat beside me. “Sit down.”

Somehow, he knew there would be no point in refusing.

He ambled up and slid into the booth beside me. “This had better be good, Renn. You got my money?”

I grinned. “I have somethin’ even better.”

Mateo laid out all the evidence in front of him, and Lucas played the footage for his eyes alone.

It was lovely, watching all the color on his face drain faster than a newly-unclogged toilet.

“What the hell d’you think you’re doin’?” he hissed.

Mateo leaned forward. “We got you, you son of a gun. We know what you’re doing,” he said in a low voice.

Tyson’s eyes widened, and he swallowed hard. “I don’t know what you’re talking about,” he said, but his voice shook a little.

“Don’t play dumb with us,” Eric said. “We know about your connections to the mafia and how you’ve been funneling counterfeit money through Renn’s company.”

Tyson leaned back in the booth, trying to appear relaxed. “You can’t prove any of that,” he said.

I reached into my purse and pulled out a thick folder. “Actually, we can,” I said, laying the folder on the table. “Veronica gave us everything we need to take you down.”

Tyson’s eyes flicked to the folder, and I could see the fear in them. “What do you want?” he asked.

I smiled.

“Simple. We want you to leave town and never come back. You have to give up all claims on my company and my NYC house, and you can never contact me or any of my men again. And if you don’t comply, we’ll hand all this over to the authorities.”

Tyson’s lower jaw trembled like a baby’s. “You can’t do this.”

My phone lit up. It was a long message from Veronica.

I'm leaving NYC for a while, Renn. But before I go, I wanted to share this last bit of info with you.

There's two attachments here. In the first, you'll see Tyson talking to Rafaella, the man on FBI's Most Wanted. There's a part where Tyson tells him about moving money around and how you have no idea.

The warehouse for the fake cash—it's the old plantation house at Lockwood. You'll find all the notes stashed there. They've been doin' it for over a year now. I stayed silent because I thought I loved him enough. Turns out I was wrong.

Renn, about that little thing we talked about in the coffee shop. I just wanted to tell you that no matter what you do, you're going to be amazing.

I can't imagine anyone better than you, actually. You were born to nurture.

I'm so sorry for everything I've put you through. I hope, one day, you and I can sit over another cup of coffee and talk about better things and happier people than Tyson.

Until then, know I will always want the best for you.

Yours.

My heart beating fast, I showed the message to the boys.

“Hah.” Lucas frowned for a second, but it quickly changed to a snarky grin. “So, Tyson, how's the little plantation house looking for you?”

There it was. I know that face. I'd seen that face on Tyson every time life hit him with a bat.

He knows he's a goner.

Mateo joined in, his voice airy. “So, it seems as if the police have found a really neat little stash of notes there! Funny thing! I'm sure a fingerprint analysis could help them identify who's behind the ruckus.”

“Fuck all of you,” Tyson growled. “You don't know who you're messin' with.”

Eric drummed his fingers on the table. “Oh, but we do. Our friend, Ali, he’s with the Feds. He’d be pretty darn grateful if we gave him a name. We could do that, ya know?”

Tyson balked. His eyes darted from the men to me, and then back to the men. “What do you want? I won’t publish the pictures, is that it?”

“Nah, that’s too measly right now.”

Lucas leaned forward. “And trust us, Tyson. You do not want to mess with the authorities. They have some pretty hefty legal clauses that will send you to prison for a long, long time.”

Tyson glared at us, but we all knew he didn’t have a choice. “Fine,” he said through gritted teeth. “I’ll leave town. But I’ll get even with you someday.”

I shrugged. “Do what you have to do. But remember, we have the proof. We have Veronica’s testimony. We have everything we need to send you away for a very long time.”

Tyson stood up, slamming his hands on the table. “You haven’t heard the last of me,” he growled before storming out of the eatery.

I watched him go, feeling a sense of relief wash over me. It was over. Tyson was out of our lives, and we could finally breathe easy.

Eric nudged me. “You okay, Renn?”

I nodded, smiling at my men. “Yeah, I’m good. Let’s eat.”

And that’s exactly what we did. We ate our food, laughing and joking like nothing had happened. But then, Lucas brought up the message.

“Renn, what did Veronica and you talk about in the coffee shop? I read the full message, but I wanted to wait until this dick was gone before talkin’ about it.”

I breathed. Now was the time.

“Guys, I need to show you something.”

I picked up the last folder from my bag and handed it to them. Confused, Mateo opened it to reveal the ultrasound images. Three little embryos, each resting and beating, each alive, each healthy.

“Oh, my fuckin’ God.”

“I—I just want to say that you guys don’t need to do anything unless you feel like—”

Mateo interrupted me immediately.

“Are you kiddin’, Renn? This is . . .” His voice was choked with emotion as he pulled me into a hug. “This is the best thing that could have happened.”

“Don’t even think about us not being there for you. We’re going to do this together, every fucking step of the way.”

Lucas was the next to speak up. “Renn, I want you to know that we’re gonna be here for you when those babies come. All three of us. We’re not gonna let you go through this alone.”

I felt my eyes start to water. It meant everything to me that they were here with me, that they wanted to be here with me. “Thank you, Lucas. That means more than I can say.”

Mateo chimed in, “Yeah, and we want to make sure you know that we’re gonna love those babies just as much as we love you. We’re gonna be the best daddies we can be.”

Eric nodded. “And we’re gonna take care of you too. You belong with all of us, Renn, and we’re gonna make sure you feel that way every day.”

I couldn’t help but smile. These fellas were the real deal. They had my back, and they were gonna be there for me and our babies. “I love you all,” I said. “More than I ever thought possible.”

Lucas reached across the table and took my hand. “We love you too, Renn. And we’re gonna show you every day just how much.”

We finished up our meal and headed outside, knowing there was only one way to go from here.

I felt a little overwhelmed, to be honest. Three babies were a lot to handle, but with these fellas by my side, I knew we could do anything.

As we stood there, each of us lost in our own thoughts, Eric put his hand on my belly. “Hey there, little ones. We can’t wait to meet you.”

Mateo turned to me. “You know, Renn, you’ve given us the best gift of all. A family. Something we never thought we’d have.”

I felt tears start to form in my eyes again. “You fellas have given me the same thing. I never thought I’d find love like this. I never thought I’d have a family, either.”

Lucas pulled the car into the driveway and turned to me. “We’re gonna make sure you feel loved and taken care of every day, Renn. You deserve that.”

I looked around at my three men, all so different but all so perfect for me. “I already do feel loved, Lucas. You guys are everything to me.”

Mateo pulled me close to him. “You know, Renn, we never thought we’d be in a situation like this. Three fellas with one woman. But with you, it just feels right. We’re all meant to be together.”

I nodded. “I feel that way too. I can’t imagine my life without any of you. And now, with our babies on the way, I know we’re gonna be one big, happy family.”

Eric wrapped his arms around me. “We’re gonna be the best daddies we can be, Renn. We promise.”

I leaned into him, noticing how each of them were like recorders on repeat. The news was a lot to digest, I could tell, and I smiled.

“Where to, from here?”

Mateo sighed. “To your place. Jonathan is already there. I told him we’re comin’ over to discuss some important stuff with him.”

I knew this was coming, but I couldn't help paling at the thought.

“What if it costs him his position?”

“As mayor? If anything, it'll show he's willing to embrace change and support love, in all shapes and sizes. But he needs to see that too. We can't keep this from him any longer, love.” Lucas kissed my forehead.

“We need his blessing.” Mateo smiled. “And we're gonna end tonight by getting it.”

As the car rolled into my family mansion's driveway, my heart was already pounding. Daddy was in the living room, his eyes on the TV.

He saw me walk in and got up, his face masked.

“Renn, what is this?” He pointed to the TV.

In the still, I was walking out of the USG clinic, my folder in my hands. The headline read, “Is the town's sweetheart, Renn Sophia Grace, finally expecting?”

I balked.

“What's going on here, Renn?” Daddy asked once more.

EPILOGUE

Renn

“Renn, what’s goin’ on?” Daddy insisted, his hands folded across his chest. “Why didn’t you tell me you were expecting? Is that why you left Tyson?”

I registered all the questions and sat down on the couch, my head between my hands. The men looked at each other, waiting for a signal.

“No, Daddy,” I finally whispered. “I left Tyson because he cheated on me with Veronica. The babies—”

“Babies?”

“I’m carrying triplets.”

He gasped and sat down beside me. “Renn, that’s a high-risk pregnancy! My God, but if you and Tyson aren’t together, how will you do this on your own?”

“I’ve done a lot on my own, Daddy, but that’s not the thing. The babies aren’t his.”

“What?” His thick eyebrows came together in a frown. “What do you mean?”

“Jonathan.” Mateo sat down on the chair opposite to us. “There’s something we need to talk to you about.”

“What’s going on?” Daddy looked from him to me to the other boys. “Do you fellas know something I don’t?”

“We’re dating,” Eric blurted out, so blandly I almost rolled my eyes. But that was him. It wasn’t in him to flourish or furnish words.

I loved him for that. At least part of the truth was out.

“You and Renn?” Daddy’s frown descended into a heavy scowl. “What are you goin’ on about? You’re too old for my little girl. Is this a joke, Eric?”

“Daddy.” I reached my hands out to hold his gnarly fingers in my palms. “Listen to me. I’m with all three of them. Lucas, Eric, and Mateo.”

Silence fell across the room as my father’s face registered what I’d just said. He opened and closed his mouth like a goldfish, staring at me as if I were a ghost from his past life.

Then, he rose and backed away. “No. I refuse to accept it. No. Absolutely not.”

“Daddy, please.”

He was already walking away.

“Jonathan.” Mateo reached out to stop him, but he pushed his hand away.

“To think,” he spat out. “You were supposed to be my best friends. Did you ever stop and consider what this would mean for me? How do I face the world, knowing this?”

“Jonathan, if you’d stop to think, you’d see that we love her. All of us love her like she is our own, and she feels the same way. It’s all love, Jonathan. There’s only love here.”

He paused in his tracks, nonplussed. “How can you say that? Love is between two people.”

“But it isn’t, Daddy.” I spoke up, my eyes shining. “It’s just there. It’s us, we’re the ones who condition and give it so many limits. But it can have its own language and its own taste, so long as the people in it are happy.”

He looked at me then, his eyes lit with a strange emotion. “You’re telling me you’re happy?”

I nodded. “More than I can say, Daddy. This feels right to me. To all of us.”

Without saying anything more, he walked out of the room, leaving me and the men together.

“Well, um . . . that was . . .” Lucas sighed and sat down beside me. “I think we’d best leave for the night, Renn. But we’re right here, and we’re going to meet you tomorrow. And then the next day. We’re going to work through this.”

Mateo nodded and took my hand in his. “We think he needs some time to process all of it. So we have to give him that. But we’re only a call or a message away.”

Eric kissed my head. “I wish we could spend the night with you, but we know this is for the best, all right?”

I nodded. They were right. “I’ll be okay. I’ll see you guys tomorrow.”

After the men left, I walked up to my room and fell into a deep slumber. I had no idea how long I’d slept, but when I woke up, sunlight seeped in from the windows.

Daddy was sitting on the stool next to my bed, a soft expression on his face.

“Good morning, Renee.”

“Hey, Dad.” I sat up. “How’re you feeling?”

He laughed. “Like a truck has passed over me, but it’ll pass. I need you to know we’re gonna be alright.”

Oh, hope.

“Are you . . . are you sure?”

He took my hand. “Renn, after your mother left, I wasn’t the best father to you. In fact, I did everything wrong. I pushed you away.”

Tears gathered in my eyes. “Daddy, no. It was hard on the both of us.”

“But more on you. She was your mother. That’s something that never goes away. And I wanted to support you, I just

didn't know how. I do now. And I don't intend to make a mistake this time."

"You never made any mistakes, Daddy. We just let her absence pull us apart." I smiled through my tears. "She'd never have wanted that. I like to think she'd be pretty mad at me too for shouting the way I did."

He chuckled at that. "You've always had her temper. And her spirit. I used to think she flourished best when she was left in the wild, like a rose that can grow in nature. I got too caught up trying to save her."

Reaching out, I held his hand.

"I never stopped to ask if she wanted to be saved any longer." He choked on the words. "I was so busy looking out for what I wanted, I forgot to ask her what she needed. It was so selfish of me, Renn."

"Daddy—"

"Not any more," he continued, raising his hand. "I intend to make things right this time. To let you know that I support you, no matter what happens."

I leaped out of bed and hugged him. "Thank you, Daddy."

"Nothing else matters but your happiness, Renn."

"You've made me the happiest person in the world today. Thank you for believing in me. And I promise it won't ever come back to hurt you. I'm grown up now, Daddy."

He smiled at me, suddenly proud. "I know you are. I see a mature young girl, a girl who knows what is right for her. Just promise me you won't let yourself get hurt."

I nodded. "I promise. I promise."

"Then live your life. You have my blessings."

An Hour Later

I parked my car outside Mateo's apartment and ran up the front porch, straight to his living room. He was sitting with Eric and Lucas, their expressions forlorn.

Their faces lit up when they saw me.

“Renn!” Lucas smiled. “We thought—”

“Is everything okay?”

I beamed. “He said yes.”

Mateo jumped up. “No way!”

I nodded and ran into his outstretched arms. Eric and Lucas got up and came to hug me too, each of them taking turns to kiss my salt-stained face. “Oh, my God, we did it!” we cried in unison.

We’d done it.

Taking their hands in mine, I led them to the bedroom, acutely aware of their eyes on me as I walked, slightly ahead of them.

As we reached the bedroom, Mateo turned me to him and kissed me passionately. Eric’s hands roamed over my body, undoing the restraints of the floral dress I’d worn.

Lucas pulled me to him and started kissing me, his tongue moving against and making love to my own while Mateo’s hands and mouth roamed the bareness of my back, playing with my Venus’s dimples and leaving tiny nips and kisses.

Eric worked on my bra. As soon as it was off, he went straight to grabbing and squeezing my breasts, kissing me all the while, his tongue dancing with my own.

Lucas slowly stroked his hands up and down my stomach and lower back. “You’re so beautiful, Renn. There can be no one else.”

Meanwhile, Mateo kneeled behind me and drank in the wet juices already pouring down my legs. Reaching forward, he undid my panties and slid them down my legs.

Lucas caressed my ass with his left hand while Mateo moved his fingers to my pussy. He gently eased a finger inside, making me moan into Eric’s mouth. I was on fire, and they were fueling it.

Eric broke the kiss and looked at me tenderly. “Renn, you mean the world to us.”

“The world and more,” Mateo confirmed.

I sighed. “Make love to me.”

The three men stepped back and undressed completely. I gasped as their cocks jumped out and stood at attention. I reached out and dropped to crouch in front of them.

Taking Eric into my mouth, I smiled internally as I heard him take a sharp breath. I began with just the tip in my mouth, building my pace until more than half was in. He tilted his head back, relishing the sensation of my lips sucking him.

“Fuck, you feel so good,” he groaned, fueling my efforts. I began bobbing my head up and down, going faster.

There was something different between all of us tonight. It was more than the need to be with each other.

No, this was more an admission of love, an acknowledgment of our bonding.

After a while, Eric extricated his cock from my mouth, quickly to be replaced by Lucas. I felt Mateo’s mouth down below, his tongue exploring and making love to me.

“Oh, my God,” I moaned against Lucas’s penis as Mateo fingered my G-spot, never removing his tongue from the tenderest part of me.

Soon, he was carrying me to the bed. He positioned me so Eric was to my left and he to my right. They filled the expanse of my body with kisses, each more tender than the last.

“We love you,” Mateo whispered, running his hands through my hair, his eyes ablaze. “We love you so much.”

“And I love all of you.” I murmured, maneuvering my legs so Mateo slid right into me. I inhaled sharply as my womb adjusted to the feeling of him deep inside. It was perfect.

Lucas leaned his head in from the top and trailed kisses on my lips, nose, ears and forehead while Eric lubricated my rosebud.

“Do you—”

“I’m all yours.”

Eric entered me from behind, and I exhaled, moaning lightly against Lucas’s mouth. I was so full, so loved in the moment, that nothing could surpass the joy of it.

Then, all of them began moving in perfect unison, going fast, going slow, undoing me and bringing me back together.

“Oh, my heavens,” I groaned as Mateo increased his pace, thrusting deep inside me. The first climax came like the crashing of waves on the shore. I held on to him for dear life as my energies exploded and unfurled inside me, binding me closer to them.

Mateo followed soon after, filling me up. Then, Lucas took his position, taking me to paradise, tender and ruthless in the same breath.

I clenched my pussy around his cock, making him groan hard as he fucked me crazily. Eric kept up a steady pace, drilling me with his cock as my ass slapped against his balls.

Mateo kissed my mouth as I began coming all over Lucas’s cock, each pulse in rhythm with the ecstasy and the agony.

“Yes, baby, just like that,” Lucas growled as he leaned in and entered the deepest parts of me. He was so far in I could feel his balls slapping against my pussy as he took me.

“Oh, fuck,” Eric groaned from the back. “I’m gonna come, Renn.”

“Take me,” I moaned, knowing Lucas was right on the edge.

In one fell swoop, the three of us climaxed together. I cried out into Mateo’s mouth as Eric and Lucas filled me with their hot, wet ejaculation and my own shot out of me.

It was a feeling of lightness, so tender and fundamental that I could do nothing else but tremble.

We lay in silence for a little while, me in the center with my three babes, my men with their hands and feet wrapped around me.

“Can you imagine?” Mateo smiled. “Did you think this would be the ending we got?”

“But it isn’t an ending at all,” I replied. “It’s the start of so many things. Days of hope.”

Eric nodded and nuzzled his head against mine. “I think we’re going to be an amazing team, Renn.”

“I agree,” Lucas added. “I mean, it’s literally a team here. If there’s a girl in there, we’re gonna gang up and keep all the nasty boys away.”

“And if there’s any little men?” I giggled.

“Then maybe we could play soccer. But I kinda have my heart set on a girl.” Lucas grinned.

He was so sweet. They all were.

Mya had been right. This was how love was supposed to feel.

It could never be small. Never after this. No, love with these three and the three inside me was a big, whole organism.

I could feel it surrounding and nurturing me, filling me with courage. That was what I’d learned the most in my time here.

When I’d returned, I’d had little hope for redemption. What was I but a girl on the cusp of a divorce that threatened to consume her whole life?

Now? Now I had a purpose. A business to save. A home to make. A life that was my own in the making, and one that I could channel and create and build, any damn way I’d choose.

As it was meant to be. It happened in its own pace, telling me that no matter what, I would always be able to carve my own roads.

And, God willing, I’d teach my kids to do the same.

To keep on keepin' on.

Thank you for reading Renn's happily ever after.

[Click here to start reading Renn's friend, Mya's story - Cupid Strikes... Three Times.](#)



Being my best friend's maid of honor meant that I had to promise myself I would stay away from her hot older brother.

Let's just say that I'm exceptionally good at breaking promises... not once, but thrice.

[Get your copy now!](#)

PROTECTING THEIR PRINCESS (PREVIEW)



DESCRIPTION

**Falling in love with my former Navy SEAL protectors was
easy.**

But avoiding this scandal is the hard part.

Very hard.

My new security team is everything I imagined it to be.

Three strong, hot men that would take a bullet for me.

But the “good girl” of Hollywood needs more than just
protection.

No sketchy stories.

No unbelievable rumors.

Except for the one I have with my co-star.

My fans don't know that my heart belongs with the men in my
bed.

The SEALs have me thinking about them between cut and
action.

They hate that I have to pretend to love my co-star for
publicity.

But we all have bigger problems on our hands than just
jealousy.

The reason why I hired them in the first place.

Danger is inevitable when you're famous.

*Especially when I'm about to bring a child into my world of
craziness...*

ADRIANNE

There was a dead bird between me and the most handsome man I had ever met. Its poor little body was twisted and broken. I had found it arranged into a bouquet of red roses this morning. “Where did you find this . . . gift . . . again?” Ethan Mercado, head of Mercado Security, asked.

He met my eyes, waiting for my answer, and all I could manage was not swallowing my tongue.

Ethan had sandy-blond hair, and his eyes were a color somewhere between stormy grey and deep blue, and he was just so *big*. Everything about him was big.

Seriously, no man should be this good-looking.

There should be a sign or something to warn people.

We were standing over a dead bird, for God’s sake, and all I wanted to do was climb this mountain of a man and wrap myself around him like a scarf.

I glanced away, cheeks flushed.

I was being a total creeper, and he had to know it by now. “It was sitting on my welcome mat this morning,” I explained after clearing my throat.

Saying the words out loud was ice water down my spine, and I was able to meet his gaze again. “I have a security fence around my property. There shouldn’t have been a way for anyone to just walk onto my property.”

Ethan frowned. “What kind of security system do you have?”

“It’s a wireless system that’s hooked to a 24/7 service. If there’s movement on any of the cameras, it starts recording, and if there’s a problem, I can call for help,” I told him.

His frown deepened. I was surprised by the genuine concern in his eyes. “It’s already a gated and guarded community. I didn’t really see the point in having someone sit at a guard station outside my house as well,” I said, stumbling over the words.

I looked down at my hands and twirled a ring that I wore on my pointer finger. It belonged to my mother before she gave it to me, and I’d been fidgeting with it ever since. “I’ve never really been comfortable with the bodyguard thing either, but then—”

“You got the part in the new Falconi movie.” *Ugh, so he had heard*, I thought and prayed that he wasn’t a fan.

Nearly a year ago, it was announced that I would be taking on the role of Marcia Falconi, world-renowned geneticist-turned-superhero after a freak lab accident. It was the latest film in the Falconi series, and at first, I was so excited.

Then, my world exploded, and it seemed like every Internet troll had something to say about how I was the worst casting choice in the history of casting blunders. “The fans can be nuts, huh?” Ethan asked, hitting on the problem instantly.

An unattractive sound hiccupped from my throat. “They’ve been . . . difficult,” I said as diplomatically as I could.

My producer would be proud.

“I had to shut down all of my social media accounts because of the comments. They doxed me, and I moved, and it happened all over again.” I gestured at the bird. “I’ve been getting *presents* like this for the last month, but this is the first one that’s made it *onto* my property.”

“Has the production company offered any kind of help?” He looked outright angry now, but I couldn’t understand why.

“The assistant director gave me your card,” I said. “He said you were the best in the business.”

“That’s it? After all of this?” Ethan stood, and my throat constricted. *God*, but he was tall. I stayed in my seat, staring up at him. “Ms. Montoya—”

“Adrienne,” I interrupted him.

“What?”

“That’s my name,” I clarified. Ethan blinked once . . . and then again. “You don’t have to be so formal with me,” I added, in case I was somehow unclear.

“Most of our clients in the entertainment business prefer a more formal working relationship.”

I shrugged. “I’m not one of them.”

His jaw clenched visibly, and I found myself rambling out an explanation. “I mean, I know how to have a working relationship, obviously, but I don’t even have an assistant, you know?”

While I lived in the Hollywood Hills, unlike many of the people I worked with, I didn’t grow up there. My mother was a night nurse at Cedars-Sinai, and she worked harder than any person I’d ever met in my life.

She would have a conniption if I hired a maid, not when I’m perfectly capable of cleaning and cooking for myself. After my first movie, I paid off the mortgage on her condo. I wanted to buy her a house, but we “compromised” on the condo. She didn’t want to get a big head about her *big-shot superstar daughter*.

“Adrienne,” he said, and my name rolled off his tongue in a way that made me tremble all over.

What in the hell is wrong with me?

I wasn’t the girl who got instantly swoony over a guy. I had met some of the most beautiful people in the world, worked with them, and I had never felt a glimmer of attraction. “I’m worried that your production company hasn’t done

enough to take care of you. They should have insisted on a bodyguard or a security detail.”

“I didn’t want a security detail,” I insisted, standing because I didn’t want him looking down at me. Ethan’s eyebrows pulled together in surprise. “Mr. Mercado, I have always taken care of myself. My mother raised me to handle my own problems, and until I found the bird on my doorstep this morning, I thought I *was* handling it. I purchased a highly rated security system, and I pay extra for around-the-clock monitoring. I never posted about my whereabouts when I had social media, and when the comments and doxing got too bad, I removed myself from social media entirely.”

He was quiet for a moment, and then he cracked a smile. “First, if I’m going to call you Adrienne, it’s only fair that you call me Ethan.”

His eyes seemed to assess me, and I tried to stand cool and unaffected under his gaze, but I’m sure he could tell that I was shaking. “Second, you’ve done well so far,” he conceded.

I smiled back. “Thank you, Ethan,” I said, “but I do think it’s time to turn things over to the professionals.”

“Agreed,” Ethan said. He reached out and picked up the conference phone on his desk. “Rue? Can you send in Callan and Foster, please?”

I didn’t hear his assistant’s reply, but no more than ten seconds later, the office door behind me opened.

The first man who came through the door was a smidge shorter than either of his colleagues. He had dark eyes and equally dark hair, and there was a hint of a tattoo peeking out of the collar of his shirt. *I wonder how far down that tattoo goes*, I thought.

The second man, a tall, blond-haired, blue-eyed Cali-surfer type, followed after him. Where the first man had an easy smile, the second barely looked my way.

Just like Ethan, these two were . . . devastatingly good-looking. I couldn’t decide which one I’d rather look at.

What is wrong with me? Had it been that long since I'd gotten laid or something? Where was all this coming from?

"Adrienne," Ethan said, dragging my attention back to him, "these are my associates, Callan Shepherd and Foster Wyatt. They are the best of the best. I served with them in the Navy. I have literally trusted them with my life."

The dark-haired one, Callan, laughed. It was a rich, good sound. He was the kind of guy who laughed easily and often. "Aww, LT, we love you too," he said and reached out a hand. He had the kind of smile that could make a nun's panties melt off.

Our eyes met as I took his hand. "It's nice to meet you," he said.

"You too," I managed to choke out, and his smile grew into an all-out grin. *Great*, I thought, *he knows exactly what I'm thinking*. "You called him LT?"

"Lieutenant," Callan explained. "Merc was our team leader."

I shifted my gaze to Ethan, filing that information away for later, and then I looked at Foster, who was standing beside Callan like a blond shadow. I reached out a hand to him. "Adrienne Montoya," I introduced myself.

Foster shook my hand in a perfunctory way, but his eyes slid over me slowly, branding me with only his eyes. "Foster Wyatt, ma'am," he said.

The *ma'am* made me giggle, and a wrinkle formed between his golden eyebrows. "I'm sorry," I said, trying to stifle myself. "I'm not laughing at you, I promise. I've just never been called 'ma'am' before."

Foster's face froze. "I apologize if I've offended you, Ms. Montoya."

I waved my hands. "You haven't offended me at all," I promised him, and for a split-second, I got a smile from him. It was soft and a touch awkward, but it filled my stomach with butterflies all the same.

Those are the kinds of smiles that people do anything for, I thought. “And please, call me Adrienne.” I looked at Callan. “All of you. You’re going to be . . . protecting me, after all, right?”

Ethan nodded. “If you decide to hire us on,” he said. “Adrienne, here, has a stalker who’s escalating.”

Callan and Foster’s attention snapped to Ethan. “Escalating how?” Foster asked.

“I’ve been getting presents in my mailbox, drawings of me as Dr. Falconi, creepy fanfiction-type stories, stuff like that,” I told them and then pointed to the dead bird on Ethan’s desk. “Today, that was on my porch in a bouquet of roses.”

Callan’s warm smile dropped off his face, and I missed it immediately. It was like losing the sunshine. “Any threats?”

That made me snort in an unattractive way, but the sound got a little smile out of Foster, which made my heart race. Just a little. “The dead bird isn’t a threat?”

He gave me an apologetic look. “Unfortunately, no,” he said. “I’ve seen fans send some crazy things to clients before, and they always seem to think that the person would like them.”

That was a nauseating thought. “What about me says I would *like* something like this?” I gestured at the desk.

“It’s usually not about you, specifically,” Ethan said gently. “This person is conflating you with the character you’re going to play, and if I remember my comic book lore, Dr. Falconi was doing tests on avian DNA when she had her accident that gave her superpowers.”

I tried to think back about all of the research I’d done on the Falconi comics, and it did ring a bell. “*Ugh,*” I groaned and sank into the seat in front of Ethan’s desk. “This is a mess.”

Callan sank down onto his knee beside me. “I know this is scary.”

I shook my head. “It’s not scary,” I said. “I mean, it is, but I’m so used to taking care of myself that I thought I could

handle having a *stalker*.”

A self-deprecating laugh bubbled from my throat. “I’m an idiot.”

All three men reacted immediately to the word. They all started talking at once—you’re *not an idiot* and *don’t talk about yourself that way*—and they all shifted toward me physically.

They didn’t touch me, but I felt more physically surrounded than I had before. It should have been intimidating, that many guys on all sides, but all I could feel was an intense excitement.

Confusion and arousal rushed through me. An ache was forming in my core, and I squeezed my legs together to try and ease it.

Beside me, Callan gasped. *Did he see me?*

“I think the question to answer now is whether you want Mercado Security watching out for you,” Ethan said, easing back so that he wasn’t looming over me. “We’re a hands-on firm, and there are some non-negotiables in the contract.”

“Such as?”

“No ditching us,” he said. “We had a wealthy couple hire Mercado to watch out for their teenage daughter, and she kept trying to give us the slip because she thought it was funny. When we brought it up to the parents, the mother laughed it off as ‘kids being kids’. I don’t like my time being wasted.”

I wasn’t sure whether to be offended or not. Was I supposed to be the teenager in this scenario? “Do you expect me to pay you, and then run away from you?” I asked and tried not to sound petulant.

Ethan smirked at my tone but shook his head. “I just want to make the non-negotiables clear, Adrienne.”

My name in his mouth should not be as hot as it is. I nodded. “Anything else?”

“We’d work as a team,” Ethan explained, indicating Callan and Foster. “We’d switch off as we need to, but it would mean

at least one of us is with you at all times. Especially since whoever has been sending you these gifts knows your home address and has already gotten around your own security system.”

“Okay, that makes sense,” I said, and I hoped I sounded normal. One of *these* men with me at all times? The throb between my legs was quickly becoming more of an ache, and all I was doing was sitting here, talking to them.

He spread out his arms. “So, which one of us do you want?”

The question short-circuited my brain for a moment. “What?”

“Merc wants us to start tonight,” Callan explained, voice tinged with laughter and eyes filled with mirth. “So, which of us do you want going home with you?”

I heard the words, but it was like my head wouldn’t wrap around the question. My body seemed to have no trouble at all comprehending. *When was the last time I was this wet from just being around someone? Never?*

“Uhm . . .” My throat tightened, and I did my best to swallow around it.

Sweat popped up on my lower back. It shouldn’t be a hard decision . . . but it felt oddly important at the same time. As if whoever I picked was my favorite. “You all decide who has the freer night. I don’t want to put anybody out. I’m just going to pop into the restroom.”

I rushed for the door and did not stop, even when Ethan called my name.

End of preview

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Ajme Williams writes emotional, angsty contemporary romance. All her books can be enjoyed as full length, standalone romances and are FREE to read in Kindle Unlimited.

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