



NAUGHTY BOSS

He
definitely
wasn't
supposed
to get that
email...

NEW YORK TIMES & USA TODAY BESTSELLING AUTHOR

WHITNEY G.

**Naughty
BOSS
Whitney G.**

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For Nicole London.

This is for the endless emails you send me while working at your horrible job every day.

I can honestly say that I hate your job (and your boss) more than you do.

Naughty Boss

He definitely wasn't supposed to get that email...

Subject: My Boss.

Have I already told you that I hate my boss today?

Sexy as hell or not, this pompous, arrogant, ASSHOLE asked me to pick up his dry cleaning the second I walked through the door. Then he told me that I needed to take his Jaguar to a car wash that was ten miles outside of the city, but only *after* I needed to stand in a never-ending line to buy some type of limited, hundred-dollar watch.

I honestly can't wait to see the look on his face two months from now when I tell him that I'm quitting his company and that he can kiss my ass. KISS. MY. ASS.

All those former fantasies about him kissing me with his "mouth of perfection" or bending me over my desk and filling me with his cock are long over. OVER.

Your bestie,

Mya

PS—Please tell me your day is going better than mine...

Subject: Re: My Boss.

No, you haven't already told me that you hate your boss today, but seeing as though you've sent me this email directly, I know *now*...

Yes, I did ask you to pick up my dry cleaning the second you arrived to work to day. (*Where is it?*) And I did tell you to take my Jaguar to the car wash and pick up my *thousand*-dollar watch. (Thank you for taking five hours to do something that could be accomplished in two.)

You don't have to wait two months from now to see the look on my face when you tell me you're quitting. I'm standing outside your office at this very moment. (*Open the door.*)

No comment on your "fantasies," although I highly doubt they're "long over."

Your **boss**,

Michael

PS—Yes. My day is definitely going *far* better than yours...

THE BOSS

Michael

Manhattan, New York

The last time my face was plastered across the front page of a tabloid, the headline was at least somewhat true. What I was currently staring at in this moment was beyond far-fetched, even for someone with a scandalous and sex-filled reputation like mine.

*Playboy CEO of Leighton Publishing Leaves Woman Crying in Hotel Lobby
After Hours of Loud Sex on Balcony*

I flipped through the pages of *The National Enquirer*, skimming the details from the so-called “trusted source” while resisting the urge to roll my eyes. According to them, I’d had sex with this woman in the penthouse suite of a hotel and simply put her out so I could have sex with someone else. And according to the woman who’d clearly concocted this bullshit story, she said my exact words to her were, “Thank you for letting me fuck your pussy. It’s time for me to fuck someone else’s now. You can see yourself out.”

There was no mention of the fact that this very same woman was recently convicted for lying to a grand jury in a theft case, but tabloids were never interested in the truth. They only wanted to sell papers.

I managed to get through the entire article without a reaction, but I couldn’t help but laugh at the last line: *Rumors are now swirling that the*

‘naughty’ CEO engages in sex with two different women for every day of the week. He apparently keeps a private schedule for his sex-life.

I shook my head.

It’s only one different woman for every day of the week...

Tossing the tabloid into the trash, I remembered to send a generic text to the women I planned on seeing this week. There was Lisa on Tuesday, Mariah on Wednesday, Hannah on Thursday, and Tiffany on Friday.

Michael: Looking forward to seeing you this week.

Their responses came in exact succession.

Lisa: Looking forward to seeing you too :)

Mariah: Can’t wait to fuck you again...

Hannah: Let me know if you want to change it to an earlier day :)

Tiffany: Anytime :)

With a few minutes to spare until my six o’clock meeting, I set a box of potential front-list novels on my desk. I made two pots of coffee and opened new notepads. Then I impatiently waited for my executive assistant.

I’d long given up on her arriving early to meet me for anything because she was always five minutes late. She literally lived right across the street from the building and she never ceased to amaze me with her endless excuses as to why she couldn’t be on time.

Ten minutes past six, I decided to give her the benefit of the doubt. Fifteen minutes past six, I wondered if my previous thoughts of her being the most incompetent assistant I’d ever had were true, and at twenty minutes past six I caved in and called her desk.

“Yes, Mr. Leighton?” she answered on the first ring.

“Did you forget that we’re supposed to discuss the winter selections today?” I asked. “You know how I feel about things needing to be *on time*.”

“Oh, right! I am so sorry! I got caught up on these reports, but I’m on my way.”

She hung up, and within minutes she walked into my office carrying a box of assigned novels. She placed it on my desk and sat across from me.

“Wait.” She held up her hand. “Before we start, can I ask you something personal?”

“No.”

“What if it’s something important?”

“It can’t be important if it’s something ‘personal,’ because you’re not entitled to know anything about my personal life.”

“Are you really as bad as all the tabloids say you are?” She raised her eyebrow. “Like, when do you possibly find the time to sleep with so many women since you’re always here working?”

I could’ve sworn I said no...

I gave her a blank stare.

“I deserve to know what type of man I’m working for,” she said, crossing her arms. “Especially if this man wants me to keep the truth about how difficult he is to work for under wraps.”

“Are you threatening to blackmail me?”

“No.” She smiled. “I just really want to know if your sex life is as exciting as the press makes it seem. I actually think it’s pretty hot, and off the record, I am totally willing to look past the non-fraternization policy if you ever want to try me out.” She lowered her voice. “I can be naughty in the bedroom, too. I can let you have my pussy, and you can leave me hanging in the hotel lobby afterwards if that’s what you’re into.”

Jesus...

“Can we please get started with the work?” I rolled my eyes. “I need your thoughts on the titles you were assigned so we can send them down to marketing tomorrow.”

“So, right after that I can go?”

No, right after that I can ‘fire’ you...

“Yes.” I cleared my throat. “What did you think of Grisham’s latest?”

“His latest *what?*”

“His latest book.” I pointed at the box she’d brought in, at the advanced copy of *The Whistler*. “It was one of the three legal thrillers you were supposed to read this month.”

“Oh, yeah.” She picked up the hardback and flipped through its pages. “I thought it was very good. Very legal, very *thrilling*.”

“Can you please be slightly more specific than that?”

“I really liked the book’s cover a lot.” She ran her fingers across the cover. “He really pulled me into the story with it, you know? This image of the boats docked at an orange sunset sea was quite compelling. I think the graphic artist definitely deserves an award.”

Silence.

“We’ll come back to the thrillers,” I said finally. “You were also supposed to read five romance novels. Which one would you recommend the most?”

“Well,” she said, leaning forward and pouring herself a cup of coffee. “It was a hard choice, and I do mean a really hard choice, but...Out of the amazing ones I was assigned, I think loved the one that ended in a happily ever after the best.”

“Every romance novel ends in a happily ever after, Penelope.” I felt my blood pressure rising. “That’s what makes it a fucking romance.”

“Really? Wow. I never knew that. So, I guess I loved them all!”

I stared at her, clenching my jaw. I always thought she was on the incompetent side from the very day she started, from the moment she said, “So, you’re a literary publishing company and you only publish books? Why not movies?” And somehow, I’d managed to look past that. But *this*? This was bullshit and she was far worse than any of my other failed and fired assistants

“Have you read *any* of the front-list books, Penelope?”

“No, but only because I didn’t know that I personally had to.” She slurped her coffee. “I mean the books got *read*, but you never said that I was the person who actually had to read them.”

“What the hell are you saying?”

“I’m saying that I’m working really smart here. I hired a virtual assistant and paid her a couple hundred bucks to read all of them. Oh, and I sent a few of them to some book bloggers on Facebook that I follow. They like, totally live for this reading stuff so they’ll probably have those ARCs done even sooner. Can you believe they like, actually enjoy reading?”

“Let me get this straight...” I tried to keep my voice calm. “I hired you to be my executive assistant and you outsourced other people to do all your work?”

“Not all my work. Just the stuff I don’t want to do. I mean, occasionally, I’ll read a page or two to keep my brain refreshed, but reading isn’t really my thing. And you only gave me a month to read ten books. *Ten*, Mr. Leighton...That’s technically hard labor and I could sue.”

“This is a fucking—” I caught myself. “This is a *publishing* company. We publish books, and books being ‘your thing’ is the very first thing we asked about on your application.”

“Oh, I lied about that part, but only that part. Everything else I wrote was honest, especially the part about wanting to work under a sexy CEO for a change.”

“Penelope...” I held back a groan. I didn’t need to waste any more of my time with this. “You can get the hell of out my office now.”

“Really?” She stood up smiling. “I was hoping we’d get out of here early. My favorite show will be on in an hour. You know, maybe you should ask me to review TV shows—I’m sure I’d impress you that way.” She shrugged and headed to the door. “See you tomorrow!”

The second she left my office, I sent my advisor Brad an email.

Subject: Tell HR to Fire My Executive Assistant.

Now.

Right now.

Michael Leighton,
CEO, Leighton Publishing

I walked over to my beverage cabinet and unlocked it, pouring myself a much needed shot of scotch. I downed it and quickly poured another. As it was burning its way down my throat, Brad’s ringtone sounded on my cell phone.

“Yes?” I answered.

“You want to take one good guess as to what I’m looking at right now?”

“Depends on if I’ll win a prize for getting it right or not.”

“I’m staring at the cover of *Page Six* with an undeniably-not photo-shopped picture of you. It’s definitely you and one of your ridiculously expensive watches with a Cuban cigar between your lips.”

“Sounds like a very good photo. Feel free to send me a copy.”

“Oh, but that’s not the best part of this photo. The best part is the three bikini clad women with messy hair who literally look like they’ve all just fucked you. Would you at least like to guess the headline?”

“You still haven’t mentioned a prize. Is there a prize?”

“*Playboy CEO Beds Three Busty Blondes in Belize*. What do you have to say for yourself, Michael?”

“Not much.” I walked over to my desk and clicked on the picture he emailed me. “They did a brilliant job with the use of alliteration in the title, though. They must have finally hired a competent editor.”

“God, Michael...” He sucked in a breath and sighed. “Do we have any grounds to threaten them with retraction and defamation, or is this true?”

“It’s partially true.”

“Which part?”

“The part about me being in Belize.”

“Please stop fucking with me.”

“Fine.” I smiled. “I only ‘bedded’ two of the busty blondes. Not three.”

“Oh, just two. We’ll that’s quite comforting and I guess they owe you an apology. *Not*. Anything else?”

“Yes. The article says I’m wearing a Rolex in the photo. I haven’t worn a Rolex in over five years.”

“Ugh.” He groaned. “I’m using one hundred thousand dollars of our public relations account to prevent them from running this on Friday. I’m also sending them an additional two hundred to three hundred fifty thousand to refrain from mentioning your name or running your picture for the next two months.”

“Thank you.”

“Please don’t. I’ll need a list of everything you’ve done over the past eight months so I can clean it up in advance. And you know, for someone who plans to take his company public within the next two years, I would think that you would try a lot harder to clean up your image and stay out of the press. Otherwise, the only investors you’ll attract will be me and you.”

“Noted.” I poured one last shot of scotch. “Did you get my email about needing a new executive assistant?”

“Another one? This is number seven.”

“Eight. However, I’ve yet to be sent a competent one. Perhaps if you used a different screening agency, or at least let me sit in on some of the interviews —”

“No. I’ll tell you what I will do, though. But only if you do something for me.”

I was silent, so he continued.

“Could you kindly keep your dick in your pants for the next twelve months and try not to fuck anyone?”

Twelve months? “Anyone?”

“ANYONE. ANY-ONE.” He enunciated every syllable. “At least anyone who will definitely draw attention to you and your unfortunate, insatiable ways. And that includes all the women you have lined up for this week. Your assistants may not have known what those small blue dots on your digital calendar mean, but I do. Cancel them all right now. You can sleep with whoever you want again after you successfully go public.”

I hesitated for a long while, but I realized that what he was saying made perfect sense for the sake of the company and my image.

“Fine,” I said at last, begrudgingly sending them all my standard, “Something just came up. I’ll have to reschedule,” message and walked over to my windows.

“I’m not going to use our partner agency to find your new assistant. I’m going to handle this personally. Any requirements on your end?”

“Hiring someone who is capable of reading a book is a good start. I’d also prefer someone ten to fifteen years older than me, married or already engaged, submissive enough to complete tasks without sarcasm, Ivy League education, and someone who knows how to tell the goddamn time.”

“Yeah, okay. Let’s put up the job description in those exact words and see how much of a field day the press has with that one.”

“I’m willing to bend on the Ivy League part if it’s a college with a good reputation. I’m not bending on anything else.”

“We’ll see.” He was definitely rolling his eyes, and I could tell he was about to give me his infamous lecture about hiring laws and blind interviews, so I beat him to it.

“Just get me the best person for the job. I’ll wait however long it takes since this fire today, hire tomorrow approach isn’t working. And actually, just get me someone who impresses you, because if that’s the case I know this person will impress me.”

“Now, you’re finally thinking smart,” he said. “Give me six weeks. I’ll screen the hell out of everyone and make sure the next executive assistant you have is someone who’ll last over a year.

“Thank you, Brad.” I hung up, wanting to feel optimistic, but with my track record, I knew the odds of me employing the same executive assistant for a year were highly unlikely. Just like I knew the chances of me going twelve months without fucking someone were too unbelievable to completely fathom.

I’ll try it though...

THE EMAILS

Mya

Subject: Manhattan Publisher Seeks Executive Assistant

So...I'm pretty sure this job listing is for that "sexy" CEO we sometimes see on all the tabloids!

You should definitely apply for this. You'd be perfect.

Check out the attachment below.

Your bestie,

Amy

——Forwarded Message——

High level executive at Leighton Publishing seeks a highly competent and professional executive assistant. Requirements and salary package attached via pdf below. Send resume(s) and contact information to Brad.Collins@LeightonPublishing.com.

—Bachelor's degree from an accredited college institution (master's preferred)

—A minimum of five (5) years experience working for high level corporate executive

—Passion for literature

—Ability to work under high stress and for at least 50-60 hours a week

—Ability to draft error-free press releases and PR copy at a moment's notice

[Salary&Benefits@LeightonPublishing.pdf](#)

Subject: Re: Manhattan Publisher Seeks Executive Assistant

It can't be. There's no way a guy like that would post a job like this on Craigslist, is there? And at that huge of a salary range?!! O.M.G!

Wait. I thought he was the "naughty" CEO? Isn't that what they call him?

Your bestie,

Mya

PS—I definitely applied. :-)

Subject: Re: Re: Manhattan Publisher Seeks Executive Assistant

"Naughty." "Sexy." Same thing. And who knows? Maybe he's desperate?

According to *Page Six* and his former EA, he can't keep an assistant for more than two months at a time. She claims he was "really demanding" and asked her to do "hard labor."

Then again, I'm sure the real reason no women last around him is because they're all distracted by how big his cock is.

(If you get hired, please find out how big it is. Do it for me, at least.)

Your bestie,

Amy

Subject: Re: Re: Re: Manhattan Publisher Seeks Executive Assistant

The Brad guy from the ad just called me and told me to be at Leighton Publishing next Friday for an interview. AN. INTERVIEW!

Wish me luck!

Your bestie,

Mya

Subject: Did you get the job?

Haven't heard anything from you in two weeks! The two of us aren't *that* busy these days and you stay right across the hall! What gives?

Did you meet Michael Leighton during the interview?

Your bestie (Do we really have to continue signing off like this on every email like we're still teenagers?)

Amy

Subject: Re: Did you get the job?

Sorry, I've been swamped with some massive reading and pre-research. (Don't ask.) But yes! I got hired On. The. Spot! The Brad guy (Leighton's advisor) even doubled the initial salary offer in the middle of our negotiations.

I didn't technically get to "see" Mr. Leighton until this morning when I went to officially sign the paperwork and I lie to you not, the man is the sexiest man I've ever seen in my life. Hands down.

He made me wet after he shook my hand and said the words, "Welcome to my company, Mya." That's honestly all it took...

Sexy as ever or not, I'm determined to last way longer than all of his other assistants. He can't be that bad, right?

Your bestie (Yes. It's tradition to sign off like this :)),

Mya

ONE YEAR LATER...

THE ASSISTANT

Mya

Manhattan, New York

I stumbled into the glittering lobby of Leighton Publishing, balancing a small box of files in one hand and a binder of reports in the other. I was over an hour early, but I knew that wouldn't be enough for my boss.

Taking the elevator straight to the top floor, I rolled my eyes as the golden numbers lit up above the doors. Michael Leighton insisted on having the entire top floor to himself, and only allowed me and the lowly secretaries access when we had a morning meeting like today. Or, when he was too lazy to travel down one flight of stairs, when he would call and say, "Come up to my office."

The second the doors sprung open, I headed toward the massive conference room that was right across from his office. I unlocked the doors and hit the lights, pulling down the projector screen as I made my way around the room.

I set out notepads and pens at each chair, and then I dialed the breakfast caterer.

"Fifth Avenue Catering," a woman answered on the first ring. "How may I help you this morning?"

"Hello, this is Mya London with Leighton Publishing," I said. "I was wondering what time your delivery person was going to—"

"They're on the elevator right now, Miss London." She interrupted, a slight smile in her voice. "We know how your boss feels about time. No worries."

"Thank you." I ended the call and dialed the literary agent who was due to arrive or a separate meeting later today, letting her know that we would

only have time for a twenty-minute pitch. Then I emailed each and every staff person a reminder to arrive to the boardroom at least ten minutes early.

As soon as I hit send on the message, an email from Mr. Leighton popped onto my screen.

Subject: What I Need Today.

Coffee from Dean & DeLuca. Mary Kubica's new book. Ad report. Hotel confirmations for next Saturday night, two. Q3 revenue reports. Travel itinerary for January. Files for meeting at 3 o'clock on my desk by noon.

Michael Leighton,
CEO, Leighton Publishing

There was never any point in responding to his first email of the day. One hundred percent rhetorical and two hundred percent rude, he always sent them at exactly seven o'clock and they were always comprised of staccato-like sentences. There was never a "Hello," "Good morning," or a mere, "Hope all is well today." The asshole never even said, "Please."

And even when I completed everything on his ridiculous lists in record time, instead of saying, "Thank you," he had the audacity to say, "You're welcome."

"No, no, no." I picked up a plate of banana muffins the second the catering assistant set them down. "My boss is extremely allergic to these. Can you replace them with blueberry ones?" I quickly looked over the other things she was starting to set out, making sure nothing else was suspect.

"You sure you want me to replace them?" She smiled. "He'll die a lot a faster if I don't."

"I'm sure." I said. "I'm not trying to kill him...yet."

She laughed and took away the offending pastries, and before I could call Dean & DeLuca to order his overpriced coffee, he sent me another email.

Subject: Time.

You were two minutes late to work yesterday, and one minute late to the noon meeting.

Don't let it happen again today.
Michael Leighton
CEO, Leighton Publishing

I started to respond with “Eff you and your obsession with time, you egotistical asshole,” but I wasn't going to let him get to me today. I sent him a curt “Ok,” ordered his coffee, and scrolled through my inbox, looking for correspondence from any of the countless jobs I'd recently applied to, but all I saw was spam.

Ugh...

Dialing my personal town-car driver, the best benefit that came with being his executive assistant, I begged him to retrieve the coffee for me. And then I told him to buy whatever else “looked pretty” in that café and add it to the purchase account.

“Are you sure about that, Miss London?” he asked.

“*Absolutely.*” I hung up. I was only supposed to use the “CEO credit card” for Mr. Leighton's coffee and meals, but since he'd been increasingly mean to me over the past few months, I'd been using it on whatever came to mind. He could more than afford it.

The sudden sound of the elevator stopping on the floor made me look over the room one more time, made me realize that another day with him was just beginning.

“Good morning,” I said as several staff members began to fill the room and take their designated seats. “Good to see you all today.”

They all offered me their usual warm “Hellos” and slight looks of sympathy in return.

“Thank you all for being early,” I said. “As you all know, this month is going to be extremely busy in regards to our front-list, and today you'll be asked which books you'd like to push from your departments and how much of the budget you'd like to spend on promoting each title.”

Mr. Leighton suddenly entered the room as I spoke, turning the head of every woman at the table. He was dressed in an impeccable three-piece navy blue suit and matching tie, and the diamonds in his newest designer watch gleamed against the room's soft light.

His beautiful eyes met mine as I continued my short introduction, and for a split second I was reminded of how utterly gorgeous and captivating he

was.

His face was flawlessly sculpted with piercing almond colored eyes that pinned me to the spot any time we were alone. His lips looked as if they were handcrafted for kissing, his jet black hair was always cut low enough for a woman to run her fingers through it, and the way his suits fit over his muscles consistently invaded my dreams more times than I cared to admit.

When I was finished talking, he stared at me—giving me a familiar look he gave me from time to time. One I still had yet to figure out. It was a cross between the way he looked in my fantasies when he was burying his head between my thighs, and when he was asking me to stay late after work. A look that said he may not be as horrible of a boss I often made him out to be.

“You can take your seat now, Miss London,” he said. “Unless you’d like us to spend the rest of this two-hour meeting staring at you.”

Fantasy over...

I sat down in my chair. I only halfway listened as he went around the room and condescendingly questioned the staff members one by one, requesting client novel updates, publications schedules and budgeting concerns. And as he directed his venom at the staff member next to me, I stared at his mouth of perfection. Then I discreetly pulled out my phone under the table and sent Amy an email.

Subject: I Wonder If He Eats Pussy...

I’m currently staring at his mouth as he’s (surprise, surprise) being an utter jerk and telling the staff all the things he wants them to redo and the thought just crossed my mind. Like, his lips are beyond incredible and if he could keep them shut he’d be A LOT sexier, but I wonder if he ever puts them to use behind closed doors...

Your bestie,

Mya

PS—If he tells me I was “one minute” or a mere “two minutes” late one more time...

Her response was immediate.

Subject: Re: I Wonder If He Eats Pussy...

Probably not. If he's anything like you say, he'd probably more of a taker in the bedroom. I mean, I'm sure he's a *good* taker, but I can't see a hot-shot guy like him using his tongue for anything other than sarcasm.

Your bestie,

Amy

PS—Why haven't you poisoned his breakfast yet?

“*Miss London?*” Mr. Leighton's deep voice made me look up from my phone.

“Yes?”

“The morning meeting is over now. Feel free to leave my boardroom with everyone else.”

I bit my tongue and stood up, forcing a smile as I headed toward the door.

“Oh and *Miss London?*” He walked over to me before I stepped into the hallway.

“Yes?”

“You were about to leave without your files for our Friday meeting. I'm pretty sure you'll need them if you plan on doing your assigned work between now and then.” He handed me my massive binder. “*You're welcome.*”

THE ASSISTANT

Mya

Manhattan, New York

Friday was supposed to be the best day of the week, that one day that stood between the final hours of the work week and freedom, but Mr. Leighton had managed to make it my worst day for over a year.

He insisted on meeting in the executive boardroom at three o'clock until seven o'clock. And then he always sat at the head of the table, which would be normal if he was holding a meeting, but we were the only two people in the room and there were always several seats between us.

Today he was wearing my favorite suit—a three piece black one with a navy blue tie for accent. His cufflinks, monogrammed “ML” were gleaming underneath the room’s bright light, and I swear the way he was looking at me made me think he wanted to fuck me.

“Do you plan on staring at me for this entire meeting or would you finally like to start?” He raised his eyebrow.

Bastard... “I’d like to start.”

“Good.” He opened his folder. “What did you think of the latest Grisham?”

“Absorbing.” I flipped through my notes. “Reminiscent of what me fall in love with his writing during his *A Time to Kill* era.”

“I felt the same.” He wrote down a few words. “Do you think it’s front list worthy for the next quarter?”

“It’s John Grisham, that shouldn’t even be a question,” I said. “Although, in a perfect world I’d say no. But only because his next book is far more commercial and I think we could do a lot more for that one.”

His lips briefly curved up into a smile, but he didn't let it remain. "Which romance novel would you like to recommend?"

"One second..." I flipped through another page of my notes. "*Castrating Her Boss.*"

"Excuse me?" His eyes met mine. "What book did you just say?"

"*Casting Her Boss.*"

Her narrowed his eyes at me before writing down my suggestion.

"Anything in particular that stood out? Favorite parts?"

"Probably when the asshole boss redeems himself and stops treating the heroine like shit..." I muttered under my breath, but then I cleared my throat. "The realism was great. The heroine was a movie director and I learned a lot about Hollywood while reading."

"What about your Young Adult selection?" He continued to go through all twelve genres I'd been assigned to read—asking follow-up questions here or there, but as usual, he never let our conversation go off topic or get remotely personal.

When we finished the book recommendations, we transitioned into the month's e-book revenue and promotional adjustments, and by the time he decided that I was "free to go" it was nine o' clock.

Nine. O. Clock.

"Mr. Leighton?" I said as I slipped into my coat.

He didn't answer. He was still writing, looking down at his paper.

"*Mr. Leighton?*" I repeated with a little more bite in my voice, enough that made him finally look up at me.

"Yes?"

I hesitated, hating the fact that something as simple as his eyes meeting mine was enough to make my panties wet.

"This is the fifteenth Friday in a row that you've kept me past six.

"No, this is the fifteenth Friday in a row that the *work* has kept you past six. If you completed more of it throughout the week, then maybe you'd be able to leave earlier."

"Regardless," I said, keeping my voice firm. "I'm going to need to leave at six o'clock on Fridays like everyone else here so I can enjoy a full weekend. If I'm not out of here by six, I'm going to deduct time from my Monday arrival and start time."

He set his pen down and leaned back in his chair. "*Come again?*"

“Like today.” I picked up my purse and slung it over my shoulder. “Today I’m leaving at nine o’clock which is three hours past acceptable per section 83B in the company handbook. So, on Monday, I’ll be arriving three hours past my normal time at around eleven o’clock. I will also—”

“You’re going to arrive here at *eight o’clock*.” He cut me off, his voice deeper than usual. “And you’re going to stay in these Friday meetings until we get the work done because that’s what you get paid very generously to do.”

“No, I’m not.” I wasn’t backing down. “I’ll see you at eleven o’clock on Monday, Mr. Leighton.”

“Be sure to bring a pen to sign off on your write-up papers because first of all,” he said, looking me up and down. “You’re *not* like everyone else here...You’re salaried, not hourly. And per your contract and section 89B in the company handbook, Friday meetings can go as late as eleven o’clock depending on the season, so technically, I’ve been doing you a favor since the day you started here.” He paused. “*You’re welcome*.”

“Furthermore,” he said, “if you want to talk about following rules to the letter, we can easily discuss how you’ve been using my credit card to buy things for yourself. Things like overpriced gifts and breakfasts at Dean & DeLuca, unnecessary office supplies from the most expensive stores on Fifth Avenue, and a bunch of other personal things I don’t recall ever authorizing. I believe any other boss would say that that’s technically stealing, and that’s an immediate ground for termination is it not?”

He slowly stood up and walked over to me, making my heart race a mile a minute. “We could also get really technical and discuss how you use your assigned town-car to drive you around to all types of non-work related places on the weekend with your best friend. Amy is her name, correct?”

My cheeks had never been so hot, and I struggled to say a single word. Before I could come up with a rebuttal, he stepped so close our chest were touching. Then he slipped his hand into my coat pocket and pulled out my cell phone, hitting stop on my “record conversation” app—clearly realizing I was hoping to catch his asshole ways on tape for future use.

Smiling, he returned the phone to me. “See you Monday, Miss London. *Eight o’clock*.”

Two hours later...

“So, let me get this straight.” Amy poured me a glass of wine in her condo later that night. “He literally just emailed you and told you that he changed his mind and you need to come into work at six o’clock in the morning on Monday? And you think it’s because you complained about leaving late today?”

“That’s definitely why.” I tossed back the wine in one gulp. “It’s like he purposely pushes back at me or does things to get under my skin because he feels like it. He knows exactly how to piss me off, and I still can’t read into him for some reason. I don’t understand why.”

“He’s an asshole, that’s why.” She poured me another glass. “I told you to start keeping track of all those overbearing task emails he sends to you. Start highlighting the ones where he’s at his rudest and least professional.”

“That won’t work,” I said, quickly downing the fresh glass and reaching for the bottle. “He’s the ultimate professional in communication. Besides, you can’t interpret his tone from an email, and no judicial team in their right mind would read anything into those short sentences he sends me.”

“Well, have you tried recording your meetings like I told you to weeks ago? Guiding him into a conversation that makes him say something questionable?”

I shook my head, neglecting to tell her that he’d easily out-manuevered that attempt mere hours ago.

“My only hope is a new job. I’m just going to stick it out until one of those other places finally call me.”

“You know, you could just quit tomorrow and use up all the leave time you’ve acquired. You’ve got what? Six weeks paid for all those crazy hours of overtime you’ve worked?”

“Seven.”

“See! And you’ve never even used a sick day! You could at least use some of those. And while you’re at it...”

I tuned her out, nodding along as she suggested endless options, but I knew I’d never be able to follow any of those to the letter. Amy was far too removed from corporate culture and she didn’t understand the inner-working politics or the bigger picture.

If Mr. Leighton was any other boss, I would happily take sick leave any time he got under my skin, but if I started doing that now, I wouldn't have any left. Not only that, but he seemed like the type of asshole who would actually send someone to check and see if I really was sick. The type who would actually attempt to 'get even' if he found out I was lying.

"You know what?" I said to Amy. "I'm just going to apply to ten times as many jobs, and work super hard while avoiding him as much as possible. No matter how big of a jerk he is to me, I'll remain professional and never let him see me crack until I can yell at him when I do finally leave."

"Okay, sure." She didn't look convinced, but she smiled. "Good for you. Worst case scenario, at least you still get to have an up close seat to one of the most gorgeous men in the city and you can continue to use his face for your fantasies until you quit. How big did you say his cock is?"

"*Huge.*" I was more than certain it was. I'd witnessed it hard during a meeting here or there, witnessed him crossing and uncrossing his legs under the boardroom table. "I'll be sure to take a more dedicated look at it before I leave."

"Please do. For both of our sakes." She turned on the television. "Okay, your boss no longer exists for the rest of our weekend. Let's talk about something else. ASAP."

THE BOSS

Michael

Manhattan, New York

I stepped off the elevator the following Monday evening, noticing that the lights were still on in the boardroom. Confused, I headed over to shut them off, but I saw Mya sitting alone at the end of the table. She was flanked by several boxes of files and holding one of my best designer pens between her teeth.

I stared at her as she flipped through her notebook, remembering how I'd once attempted to find numerous ways to get rid of her when she first started. How I really tried to get her to quit.

It was never personal, and never because she was awful. She was actually the smartest woman I'd ever met, the best executive assistant I'd ever hired, but her unfortunate flaw was being sexy as fuck. *Beyond* sexy as fuck.

Absolutely stunning, her light hazel eyes perfectly complemented her long brown hair and puffy, pink lips. Her light, raspy laughter was sexy enough to catch any man's attention, and she possessed a never-ending wardrobe of curve-fitting dresses that I actually looked forward to seeing everyday.

For months, I'd wanted to see her smart ass mouth wrapped tightly around my cock. I'd wanted to bend her ass over my desk and fill her pussy with my cock while fucking her from behind, but I knew better than to ever attempt to make that fantasy a reality.

There were only a few times when I'd been careless—when I'd let my gazes linger on her for a little too long, or when she wore a particular shade of dress that left little to the imagination.

Coughing, she suddenly looked up and noticed me staring from the doorway. Her cheeks flushed pink and she cleared her throat. “May I help you with something, Mr. Leighton?”

“I don’t recall giving your permission to come onto my floor today.”

“That’s because you didn’t.” She shrugged. “So?”

“So, unless you personally hear me say the words, ‘Step into my office,’ or ‘Yes, you have permission to sit in my boardroom and do your work’ your ass is currently trespassing.”

“Oh, really?” She shrugged again. Then she took out her cell phone and smiled, hitting ‘record’ on that goddamn conversation app. “Could you kindly repeat what you were just saying, Mr. Leighton? I.e. Michael Leighton of Leighton Publishing? Particularly that ‘*Your ass is trespassing*’ line...”

I shut the door, immediately walking to my own office.

The second I hit the lights, Brad turned around from the beverage cabinet and held up a bottle of champagne.

“Congratulations to you!” He uncorked it, letting the frothy foam drip onto the carpet.

“What’s the occasion?” I took off my jacket and sat behind my desk.

“Three things, actually.” He poured two glasses and walked over, handing me one. “For one, the most obvious, you’ve had the best year for any publisher in the country.”

“Two, you’ve gone an entire year without appearing on the cover of a tabloid or getting involved in any sex scandals.”

“That shouldn’t be an accomplishment, Brad.”

“It is when it comes to you. Trust me.”

I tried to think of the third thing and beat him to it, but I didn’t have a clue as to what it could be.

“And three...” he said. “You’ve seemingly done the impossible. You’ve kept the same executive assistant for over a year. You can thank me a million times later for finding Mya London.”

I tossed back my drink at the sound of her name and rolled my eyes. I was considering walking right back into that boardroom and telling her to bend over the chair.

Or maybe I should fuck on her the table...No. The floor...

“Um. Hello?” Brad waved his hand in front of my face. “Are you there, Michael?”

“My apologies. What were you saying?”

“I was saying that it’s quite ironic that the one time you find an assistant who lasts a year, she decides to leave.” He laughed. “Crazy, right? I’ll make sure we find someone half as good when she leaves.”

“*What?* What do you mean when she leaves?”

He tossed back his drink. “She put me down as a reference for a few jobs she’s received interviews for and they’ve left voicemails requesting me to call and answer a few of their questions.” He pulled out his phone. “Speaking of which, I need to schedule those at some point tomorrow.”

“Which companies?” My blood was suddenly boiling.

“The usual thieves of great employees.” He laughed again. “Apple, Microsoft, and Amazon.”

“And why the hell didn’t she—” I changed my tone. “Why didn’t she use me for a reference?”

Or even fucking tell me she was leaving?

He shrugged. “Probably assumed you’re busy enough and you wouldn’t have time to call the people back. Or, maybe she rightfully assumed that *I’m* the better choice.”

He changed the subject and started talking about our next quarter projections, but I could only halfway listen. I was furious at the audacity of Mya to even *think* about leaving.

I was paying her more than double what I paid any of my previously EAs—deservedly so, and her benefits package was specifically tailored for her: The day I found out she loved and preferred the hardback version of novels, I added a mandate to her contract that she receive five hundred dollars’ worth of hardback books per month from any bookstore she wanted. The day I found out she didn’t have her own car and was taking a cab back and forth to work and conferences? I added a mandate to her contract that gave her unlimited access to her own private town car and driver. (No other executive assistant in the building had ever had his or her own town car, and I’d made sure no one else in the company knew about this arrangement. Even Brad.) And the day I found out she’d actually wanted to be a professional assistant and eventually rise to the ranks of CEO of a company someday, I thought I’d found a highly potential business partner for the future.

But now, I wasn’t so sure. Add that to the fact that she wouldn’t even tell me that she was considering quitting?

This was fucked up.

This was *war*.

“So, I’m thinking.” Brad was still babbling. “If we put more of an investment into the audio production for the second quarter of next year—”

“How much are the other companies offering her as a salary?” I cut him off. “Are they paying significantly more than we are?”

“What?” He stepped back. “Did you hear any of what I said over the past five minutes?”

“Not at all.” I didn’t even try to pretend otherwise. “How much are they paying her?”

He blinked.

“Actually, don’t even answer that,” I said. “Forward me those company inquiries, and any other new ones you may get. *I’ll* be her reference...”

THE BOSS

Michael

Manhattan, New York

“Here’s every report you requested, your print out of next month’s front-list, and your coffee.” Mya set down a mug and a stack of folders in front of me the following afternoon. She was wearing a bright blue dress that clung to her hips and exposed the top of her breasts, and my cock had been hard the second I saw her this morning.

Even during her presentation to the interns hours ago, I’d sat still in the boardroom and tried to focus on anything else while words left her alluring mouth, but it was no use. The thoughts of bending her over every surface in my office were only getting worse by the day.

“Would you like anything else, Mr. Leighton?” She adjusted her exposed bra strap, snapping me out of my thoughts.

“What about the Danbury report?” I asked.

“Did it.”

“The Porterfield files?”

“Did it *weeks ago*.”

“Have the backlist titles from—”

“Faith Sarandon been contracted and signed?” She cut me off and crossed her arms. “Yes. As have all of the remaining backlist catalogues from the other twenty-two authors you asked me to acquire. They’re very happy with your so-called *generosity*. Anything else?”

“Actually, yes.” I ignored the way she’d said ‘generosity’ and opened my desk drawer. I pulled out her personnel file and set it on my desk. “I was looking at your employee contract and making sure it was up to date. You’re currently signed on for two more years. Is that still correct?”

“To the best of my knowledge.” She smiled. “That sounds about right.”

“So, *nothing* has changed and you’re quite happy working here?”

“Sure.” She looked away from me and cleared her throat. “Is that all you need from me, Mr. Leighton? I have tons of work to do today. We have that Somerstein meeting at noon.”

I picked up a pen and slid the contract across my desk. “I made a salary adjustment to the contract. If you initial it, it can be processed as early as this Friday.”

She picked up the paper and finally looked at me, her stunning hazel eyes meeting mine. “I um...Do you mind if I look at this later?”

“I *do* mind. Look at it right now.”

She parted her lips, but she didn’t say a word. She flipped through the papers, stopping at the salary page and her eyes widened.

“This is...” She blinked a few times. “This is quite an increase.”

“It is.” I narrowed my eyes. “I think you should sign it.”

“Wait a minute...You added a non-compete clause,” she said, reading softly. “I, Mya London, agree to remain at Leighton Publishing for a minimum of forty-eight months, and unless terminated, will never pursue any competing opportunities.”

“There’s a set of pens in front of you. I prefer black.”

She set the papers down and stepped back. “I need time to think about it.”

“What exactly do you need to think about?” I was beyond confused.

“That offer is triple what you’re currently making, which is saying something since you’re currently making double what every other executive assistant here makes.”

“I guess I don’t like committing to something unless I’m one hundred percent sure that’ll at least be good and somewhat enjoyable for me.”

“It will definitely be more than ‘good’ and *extremely* enjoyable for you.”

“Are you referring to this job, Mr. Leighton?”

“What else would I be referring to?”

Silence.

“Um...” She cleared her throat, taking another small step back. “Surely you yourself don’t sign contracts after only reading them once.”

“I would if it was a contract like this.”

She muttered something under her breath I didn’t quite catch, and then my desk phone rang.

Keeping my eyes locked on hers, I answered it.

“Yes?” I said.

“Hey.” It was Brad. “Glad I caught you before the Somerstein meeting. I just got a call from Hilton Corporate and gave them your direct line, so try to be available for their questions in a few hours. I already told them Mya was amazing, but they need a second, more direct reference. They want details I don’t have, so try to be specific.”

“I’ll definitely do that.” I hung up, still looking at Mya. “So, how much time would you need to look over my proposal?”

“A couple months should be enough.”

“*Months?*” I clenched my jaw.

“Yes.” She glared at me. “*Months.* Working for you for an extended period of time is a lot to think about.”

Silence.

“Fine.” I picked up the papers and returned them to my drawer. “You can get the hell out of my office now.”

She shook her head and glanced down at my pants, blushing before leaving the room.

I sat back down in my chair and shook my head. I was confused and upset at the fact that she’d not only blatantly lied to my face, but she was also refusing to admit she was seeking other jobs. That, and she was still getting under my skin with her sexy bullshit.

Then again, if she wanted to play games, I could do the same...

THE EMAILS

Mya

Subject: The Ass-holery Report #235 (Can You Believe I'm Still Keeping Track of These?)

Today we're supposed to go over the top literary fiction titles that will be rolled out in the Spring. I emailed him my top picks LAST WEEK but since he "doesn't remember," he asked me to RE-DO the entire 200-paged report in an hour. An hour!

Of course, I made way more than one copy of it, so I'm not **really** re-doing it, but fuck him.

Fuck him hard.

Your bestie,

Mya

PS—Is it sad that, ass-holiness aside, he still makes my panties wet more than once a week?

Subject: Re: The Ass-holery Report #235 (Can You Believe I'm Still Keeping Track of These?)

You mis-typed! We're on ass-holery report #335, not #235! :) And BRAVO for making copies! Way to think smart!

Ugh, I can't wait until you quit! I mean, wherever you end up next, you probably won't get all those over the top benefits, but you won't have to deal with him so that's more than a fair trade-off.

Your bestie,

Amy

PS—No, but only because you're still sadly single.

Subject: His cock has to be at least nine inches... (At least)

This is going to sound totally insane, but I swear this man was rock hard during my entire presentation today. Like, he *had* to be, and he had to know I was stealing glances of it because he sat in the back of the room, leaning back with his legs wide open, and he kept his eyes on me the entire time.

Your bestie,

Mya

Subject: Re: It has to be at least nine inches... (At least)

You delete these emails, right? LOL I'll take your word for the nine inches. I'm sure he didn't earn his former playboy reputation for nothing...

Maybe you can give him a huge kick in his nine-inch cock before quitting?

Stay focused on leaving + start limiting these emails that complement him and his cock. (Otherwise, you may start to subconsciously believe that you should stay there. O_o).

Your bestie,

Amy

THE ASSISTANT

Mya

Manhattan, New York

I couldn't believe that Mr. Leighton had the audacity to offer me an extended contract after the way he treated me, couldn't believe that he'd included a mention of it in every one of his emails since the day he brought it up.

As I stared outside my town car window, I decided that I needed to tell him that I really was looking for another place of work. That it wasn't personal, but I wanted to go someplace where I'd actually be appreciated.

And somewhere where he won't be such a distraction...

The second the driver pulled in front of Leighton Publishing, my phone buzzed with his usual morning email.

Subject: What I Need Today.

Coffee. Stephen King's new book. Reports for the two o'clock meeting.

Your signature on the employment extension contract.

You're welcome.

Michael Leighton

CEO, Leighton Publishing

I sighed. I'd done my best to avoid that last line on all of his task requests, simply not addressing it via email or simply saying "I need more time to think about it," if he brought it up during one of our meetings. And even

though the sexual tension between us was at the highest levels it'd ever been, I couldn't afford to let that cloud my judgment.

His overbearing sexiness was not a good enough reason to stay, and the odds of us having sex were slim to none. (Not that having sex with him was a good enough reason to stay either.)

After securing a copy of Stephen King's newest book from Barnes & Noble and a cup of his favorite expensive coffee, I rushed inside the building and headed right up to his office.

I knocked against his door five times and waited for his familiar, "Yes?" before opening the door.

The second I stepped inside, I felt his deep brown eyes watching my every move, and I tried not to make eye contact as I walked over and set the book and the coffee on his desk.

"Is there something on your mind, Miss London?" He waited for me to look at him, and I finally gave in. "Any particular reason why you're currently mumbling?"

"No, Mr. Leighton. It's just—" I decided to be honest, to finally get this over with. "I'm not interested in signing the extension contract."

He raised his eyebrow. "Are you referring to right now, or *ever*?"

"Ever." I stepped back, waiting for his reaction, but there wasn't one. His face remained stoic and he simply picked up his coffee and took a long sip.

"Fair enough," he said. "Thank you for telling me. After you settle into your office, I need you pick up my dry cleaning from Midtown. There should be fifteen suits and twenty shirts in my name."

What the hell? "Would you like me to pick up anything else?"

"Not at all."

I forced a smile and headed toward the door. "Thank you for being understanding about the contract, Mr. Leighton."

"Anytime, Miss London."

I left his office and took the steps to my own, quickly printing out the two o'clock reports so I could save time since I had a new dry cleaning mission. As I was stapling the first set of sheets together, my phone buzzed with a new email from him.

Subject: Something Else I Need Today.

My Jaguar needs to be washed. Take it to the place I like in New Jersey, ten miles across the bridge.

Michael Leighton
CEO, Leighton Publishing

Is he being serious?

I dropped my reports to the floor, barely getting a chance to reread the message to see if my eyes were playing tricks or me or not, because he sent me another email.

Subject: And Also...

I forgot to pick up a particular watch I ordered weeks ago on my way to work this morning. You'll need to stand in line at Audemars Piguet on 57th Street by noon to ensure that I receive it today.

Michael Leighton
CEO, Leighton Publishing

I slammed my door shut to prevent myself from screaming. I paced the floor a few times before responding to him with a curt "Ok." Then I headed down to the private parking garage.

I took the keys from the lockbox and tried my best not to think about using them to leave major scratches against his car, and I quickly slid behind the wheel. Instead of immediately heading toward the dry cleaners I took his Jaguar for a half hour joyride first.

I took my time driving through the city streets, stopping for ten-dollar coffee and charging five cups worth to his card every time. I spotted a beautiful cashmere scarf through a window dressing at Macy's and rushed inside to buy it in all twenty-five colors. On my way out, I noticed a new line of fashion at the nearby lingerie store, so I took his precious credit card and purchased ten matching sets of overly priced panties and bras.

Screw him...

Still feeling reckless and far less professional than I'd ever felt in my life, I picked up his dry cleaning and tossed it in the back seat. I drove across the George Washington Bridge and sat in the back of a café for half an hour.

I checked my email and saw that my bastard boss had emailed me yet *again*.

Subject: Timing.

I refuse to believe it takes three to four hours to pick up an order of suits and a watch. Even considering getting my car washed, you should be back by now.

Michael Leighton
CEO, Leighton Publishing

I immediately deleted it and noticed that there were several other new emails in my inbox. Emails I actually *wanted* to see.

Apple, Microsoft, and Amazon all sent positive, personal messages that all read to the likes of, "Congratulations! You've made it to the final round of interviews! We simply need to verify your information and references. Afterwards, we'll make an internal decision behind closed doors."

I nearly jumped up from my chair, screaming about my pending freedom. I knew there was no way in hell that I wouldn't receive a formal offer from at least one of those jobs, and since I was still awaiting to hear back from twenty more, I felt more emboldened than ever before. I felt like I could quit Leighton Publishing right now and leave Michael's Jaguar in the middle of New Jersey for him to find by himself tomorrow.

It took all of one minute for me to realize that I wasn't that bold. That, and I needed a way to get back to New York City.

Annoyed, I vented all of my frustration in a long ass email to Amy, and per her previous advice, I deleted it the second I hit send.

Subject: My Boss.

Have I already told you that I hate my boss today?

Sexy as hell or not, this pompous, arrogant, ASSHOLE asked me to pick up his dry cleaning the second I walked through the door. Then he told me that I needed to take his Jaguar to a car wash that was ten miles outside of the city, but only *after* I needed to stand in a never-ending line to buy some type of limited, hundred-dollar watch.

I honestly can't wait to see the look on his face two months from now when I tell him that I'm quitting his company and that he can kiss my ass. KISS. MY. ASS.

All those former fantasies about him kissing me with his "mouth of perfection" or bending me over my desk and filling me with his cock are long over. OVER.

Your bestie,

Mya

PS—Please tell me your day is going better than mine...

THE EMAILS

Mya

Subject: My email.

Did you get my email from this afternoon?

Your bestie,

Mya

Subject: Re: My email.

No...What email?

Your bestie,

Amy

Subject: Re: Re: Re: My email.

The one about my boss and all the shit he asked me to do today. :-(. I would resend it to you, but I deleted it...

He's so ridiculous, Amy.

Can I call you in like twenty minutes when I get back to the office?

Your bestie,

Mya

Subject: Re: Re: Re: Re: My email.

Of course. I'll be waiting.

Your bestie,

Amy

THE ASSISTANT

Mya

Manhattan, New York

I slumped in my office chair minutes after returning Mr. Leighton's Jaguar to the garage. I didn't bother bringing any of his dry cleaning inside, though. If he wanted those suits, he could go down to the garage and get them himself.

Now, more than ever, there was a huge part of me that wanted to pack up all of my things and never come back. Yet, I knew I couldn't leave this place without personally telling him to go fuck himself first. I'd more than earned that.

When I'd finally let go of enough anger, I picked up my desk phone and dialed Amy's number.

"Hey there!" She answered on the first ring. "Are you feeling any better?"

"Not at all." I sighed. "I don't know if I'm going to make it to the two-month mark anymore, Amy. I really don't."

"You can do this," she said. "This is just one bad day and I'm sure by the time you get home later you'll feel differently. Don't let him get to you. Ever." There was a sudden loud banging noise in her background. "Ugh! Let me call you right back, Mya. The neighbors are being ridiculous with their music today."

She ended the call before I could say goodbye, and I heard a ping from my inbox seconds later, knowing she'd sent me one of her usual "Stay Calm" emails.

I opened my email—expecting to see something inspiring, but the second I saw the subject line and the sender my jaw dropped to the floor.

Subject: Re: My Boss.

No, you haven't already told me that you hate your boss, today, but seeing as though you've sent me this email directly, I know *now*...

Yes, I did ask you to pick up my dry cleaning the second you arrived to work to day. (*Where is it?*) And I did tell you to take my Jaguar to the car wash and pick up my *thousand*-dollar watch. (Thank you for taking five hours to do something that could be accomplished in two.)

You don't have to wait two months from now to see the look on my face when you tell me you're quitting. I'm standing outside your office at this very moment. (*Open the door.*)

No comment on your "fantasies," although I highly doubt they're "long over."

Your **boss**,

Michael

PS—Yes. My day is definitely going *far* better than yours...

Oh. My. Fucking. God!

I felt all the color draining from my face, and I swear I didn't breathe for over a minute.

I shook my head in utter disbelief, refusing to accept that I'd sent my rant to him instead of Amy. I refreshed my computer screen again and again, hoping that this was some type of joke.

A loud and sudden knock came to my door and my heart nearly fell out of my chest, but I didn't get up. I didn't make a single move.

The knock came again, much louder this time, and this time I heard his voice. "Miss London?" He knocked once more.

I slowly stood up from my desk and looked outside the peephole. Mr. Leighton was looking down at his watch, his face still impossibly perfect and flawless. His full lips pressed into an angry flat line.

He looked up from his watch and stared through the peephole, letting his eyes meet mine.

I jumped back from the door and considered my options. I could open the door and listen to whatever he had to say, or I could leave through my

office's side exit door.

It was a no-brainer.

I grabbed my coat, my laptop, and shut down my computer. Then I rushed out of my side door and took the freight elevator down to where my town car was waiting.

My driver eyed me suspiciously as I literally ran through the garage, but he didn't protest when I begged him to hurry up and get me home.

I didn't wait for him to open the door for me or wish me a good day when we arrived. I practically jumped out of the car and rushed straight into my building—making a beeline for Amy's place.

"Amy?" I knocked on her door. "Amy!"

"Coming!" She swung open her door immediately and pulled me inside. "No need to bang on my door like that, Mya. What the hell is wrong with you?"

"I think I just got fired."

"What? How do you *think* you just got fired? You either did or you didn't."

"Okay, okay. I didn't get fired yet, but I'm pretty sure he's going to fire me. He's definitely going to fire me. Oh god, oh god, oh god..."

"Mya, slow down." She placed her hands on my shoulders. "Speak English, slowly. Very slowly."

"I accidentally sent him one of my complaining emails, a complaining email that was one hundred percent meant for you."

"Was it worse than the one you sent me yesterday morning?"

"Way worse. I mentioned my fantasies about his cock in this one... I called him an asshole and said I used to want him to bend me over his desk."

Her face turned red as well, and she opened her mouth to say something, but the sound of my phone ringing caught both of our attention.

I pulled it out of my pocket and damn near dropped it at the sight of Mr. Leighton's name on my screen. Unsure of what to do, I tossed it onto her couch.

"Is that *him*?" Amy asked.

I could only nod.

"Do you plan on answering it?"

"No." I stared at it until it went to voicemail. But then it rang again. And again.

Rolling her eyes, Amy picked up my phone and hit ‘answer’ before tossing it to me.

“Hello?” I answered, my voice was basically a whisper.

“Hello, *Miss London*.” The sound of my name falling from his mouth made me take a seat. “Did I catch you at a bad time?”

I shook my head as if he could see me.

“Are you there, Miss London?” His deep voice sent warmth through my body. “Did I catch you at a bad time?”

“Not really...”

“Good. Where are you right now?”

“Oh, um...” I looked to Amy for help, but she was smiling, looking as if this shit was actually funny. “I just ran down to the copy room.”

“So, you’re still in the building?”

“You could say that.”

“I saw you getting in your town car half an hour ago.” There was a smile in his voice. “You’re definitely not in the building right now.”

“Yes, well...Is there something you need from me right now?”

“There is actually,” he said, his voice even deeper, sexier. “I came to your office this afternoon because I needed to discuss something private and very important that pertains to you and me, but I missed you somehow. So, I need you to come into work an hour early tomorrow so we can have this private and important conversation. Can you do that?”

I nodded, slightly turned on by the way he’d said the word “private.”

“Miss London,” he repeated. “Can you do that?”

“Yes...”

“Good. I’ll see you in the morning.” He ended the call, and a large glass of wine was immediately thrust into my hand via Amy.

Shit. Shit. Shit...

She tried her best to distract me from today’s epic mistake by making me watch terrible Netflix shows, and letting me crash on her couch for hours, but it was no use.

I woke up twice in the middle of the night, hoping this all was some type of bad dream. And for a moment, it seemed like it really was, until I checked my phone and saw that Mr. Leighton had sent me a message minutes before midnight.

Subject: Tomorrow.

Arrive one hour earlier than normal.

Don't forget. (*I won't.*)

Michael Leighton

CEO, Leighton Publishing

THE ASSISTANT

Mya

Manhattan, New York

There was no “What I Need Today” email from him this morning, no last minute request for coffee, new release novels, or breakfast.

As I headed to the office one hour earlier like he requested, I noticed his Jaguar wasn’t in his designated spot. Somewhat relieved, I took the elevator to my floor and unlocked my office—unsure as to whether I should start organizing my things for an upcoming termination or not.

Whenever he decided to bring up my email, I knew I was going to have to choose between three options when I responded. Plan A: Deny. Deny. Deny. Plan B: Deny *more*. Deny *more*. Deny *more*. Plan C: Suck up my pride, admit I was wrong, and hope he doesn’t fire me because I haven’t received an official job offer from anywhere else yet.

It has to be Plan A...

Just as I was about to sit down, my desk phone rang and his office number appeared on the screen. Taking a deep breath, I picked up the receiver. “Yes, Mr. Leighton?”

“Come up to my office.” He hung up without a single word, leaving me confused.

I locked my purse in my drawer and took the steps, knocking three times until his familiar, “Yes?” greeted me and made me open the door.

He was sitting in his chair, his back facing me. At the sound of my heels clacking against the floor, he slowly spun around—his deep brown eyes meeting mine.

His suit today was one I hadn’t seen before, a dark grey one that perfectly complemented the new silver watch on his wrist. The watch he’d far too

recently made me stand in line to get.

“Have a seat.” He motioned for me to sit in front of his desk.

I sat down and he picked up his coffee, taking a long sip.

“You know, *Miss London*,” He emphasized every syllable of my name. “I honestly thought you and I were on better terms, especially after working together for over a year. But it seems I was *clearly* mistaken.”

He looked as if he was waiting for some type of explanation in regards to my email, and I still wasn’t sure if I wanted to go for Plan A, B, or C. As if he could sense that I was weighing my options, his lips curved up into a smirk.

I tried to avert my gaze away, even for a second, but I couldn’t look away from him at all.

“Are you going to say something?” he asked. “Or are you going to continue sitting there as if you have no idea what I’m talking about?”

“Is this about me leaving early yesterday?” I settled on Plan A. “I was feeling a little ill, that’s all.”

“This is about a particularly inappropriate email where you make a mention of me *fucking you*.”

My cheeks were on fire and I knew he wasn’t going to let me avoid this at all.

“I’m sorry,” I said, the words rushing out. “I had no idea that I’d accidentally—”

“This is also about...” he said, cutting me off as he raised his hand. “Me possibly needing to go to human resources and file a complaint. A *sexual harassment* complaint.”

What?

Slowly standing up, he walked in front of his desk—keeping me pinned to the seat with his angry gaze, making me soaking wet with every slight lick of his lips.

“Sexual harassment is a very serious offense here at Leighton Publishing, Miss London.” He looked me up and down. “I’ve had people fired for far less egregious offenses, and I technically should be doing the same to you right now as that would only be more than fair.” He didn’t let me get a word in. “Especially since I don’t think you fully understand why what you did was so offensive.”

“I do...” My voice was a whisper.

“Oh really?” He raised his eyebrow. “Can you imagine if I accidentally sent a similar email to someone about you the way you did me?”

I didn’t answer.

“Let me put this in perspective for you.” He leaned forward, so close his knees were touching mine. “If I sent an email to you—*accidentally* that is, and it said that I’ve wanted you to sit your pussy on my face since you started working here...Or that I’ve wanted to bend your ass over my own desk and fuck you until you begged me to stop every time you wore a particular shade of dress, don’t you think I would need to be reprimanded somehow?”

I was speechless at his words, and I wasn’t sure if he was simply giving an example or if he’d really thought about me the way I’d thought about him.

“Answer me, Mya.” The way my name fell from his lips made me suck in a breath. “Don’t you think there would be an uproar with serious consequences?”

“Maybe.”

“Maybe? No, *definitely*.” He adjusted his tie. “In fact, there would be such an uproar that I think the IT department would be forced to go through all the emails I’d ever sent on any company device since nothing sent on a company server is ever truly deleted. In fact, they’d probably have to investigate and see if this was a one-time offense or a particularly interesting pattern...”

I felt my jaw dropping and struggled to keep my lips together.

“I mean,” he said, looking somewhat serious. “Depending on what they found, they’d have to personally address me and assess the damages. And if the person I was talking about ‘fucking’ in my emails wanted to, I’m sure she could make my life very miserable.”

Silence.

He picked up a folder from his desk and slowly set it in on my lap—somehow managing to turn me on even further without even touching me. “Three hundred and sixty-seven emails between you and your ‘bestie’, Amy.”

That’s it?

“That’s *this month alone*.” His voice was clipped. “I didn’t have time to read more than a few of them, but I’m assuming we won’t be seeing anymore of these in our IT database. Or will we?”

“No.” I shook my head.

“Good. I had them all permanently deleted. *You’re welcome.*” He stood up and glanced at his watch. “Those Roberto files are due before our morning meeting with Lockwood.” He walked over to the door and held it open, waiting for me to leave.

Avoiding his gaze, I stood up and headed into the hallway.

“Oh, and one last thing, Miss London,” he said, making me look over my shoulder.

“Yes?”

“For the record, per your email with the subject heading, ‘I Wonder If He Eats Pussy’...” He looked me up and down. “I *do* eat pussy, and if I ever was going to eat your pussy...If that thought had ever been filthy enough to cross my mind and certain circumstances between us were different, you wouldn’t be able to walk for days after I was done with you...”

THE BOSS

Michael

Manhattan, New York

I'd read every single email I pulled from the intel department. Every. Single. One.

They were easy to track since apparently she and her friend labeled all the ones in regards to me as "Ass-holery Report," "My Boss," or "This Man Today..."

It was quite apparent that she "hated" me and I almost regretted taking out my sexual frustration on her by demanding so much. Almost.

Her mind was damn near as naughty as mine when it came to sex, and it was slightly gratifying to know that the attraction wasn't one sided, even if there was little I could do about it.

I'd never mixed business with pleasure before, and I wasn't going to start now. I just needed to get through all eight of our meetings today without thinking about what I'd seen in her emails, without thinking about the fact that maybe it wasn't mixing business with pleasure if she was so hell bent on leaving soon.

If I was 'letting' her leave soon, that is.

Fuck...

THE ASSISTANT

Mya

Manhattan, New York

Subject: What I Need In Two Hours

The Lexington files. Transfer papers on the acquisition of Lerner and Taylor. Your front-list report. The notes from this afternoon's meeting.

Michael Leighton

CEO, Leighton Publishing

I closed his email and sighed. I was starting to wish that he'd simply fired me. Ever since that meeting in his office two days ago, he'd been twice as domineering. Twice as unbearable.

It'd taken everything out of me not to walk out on the all-staff meeting when he purposely put me on the spot and asked me several questions about a book he knew I hadn't had the chance to read yet. Then again when he chastised me in front of everyone for submitting incomplete reports that weren't even due for another four weeks.

There was no way I was going to complete every objective in his most recent email within two hours, so I wasn't even going to try. I grabbed the work I'd already finished and headed up to his office, sending Amy an email on the ride up.

I didn't care if he caught this message on the company server or not.

Subject: Horrible Boss+ Typical A*hole Behavior + Long Day = Wine. Stat!

I'm leaving work early today. Can I come over and drink wine at your place for the night?

Your bestie,
Mya

Her response came through in seconds.

Subject: Re: Horrible Boss+ Typical A*hole Behavior + Long Day = Wine. Stat!

Of course.
I'll head out now and buy your favorite.
Your bestie,
Amy

The second the elevator doors opened, I headed straight for his office and I didn't bother knocking.

I opened the door and saw him reading a book at his desk.

"May I help you with something, Miss London?" He looked up at me.

"Here is my front-list report." I slammed a huge binder of paperwork on his desk. "The Lexington report, what I managed to finish for it anyway, should be in your inbox within minutes."

"You didn't need to come up here to say that. You should've just sent me an email..." His gaze went to my lips, but then he narrowed his eyes at me.

"You know I hate when people come into my office without permission."

"You hate a lot of things." I shrugged. "Maybe you should just learn how to deal with them like everyone else. I'll be bringing my notes from this afternoon's meeting up here when I finish—*without knocking*, since I'll probably have to bring you a late lunch, and then I'm officially done for the day."

"No." He flipped a page in his book. "You'll just *think* you're done for the day. I need you to stay until eight o'clock today."

“I can’t,” I said firmly. “I have plans.”

“I know,” he said, putting down his novel. “Your plans involve staying here until eight o’clock.”

“Mr. Leighton...” I looked him right in the eyes. “With all due respect, which you deserve none of after the way you’ve treated me this week, I’m *not* staying today. I don’t have time. And actually, you know something else?” I knocked the folder I’d just set on his desk onto the floor, sending hundreds of loose report sheets to the floor. “I’m not going to pick that up, and I’m not going to do anything else today. I’m going home. *Now.*”

“*Miss London...*” He gritted his teeth. “Don’t make me—”

“*What?* Fire me? Please do.” I turned away from him and rushed out of his office with my blood boiling and my frustration at an all-time high.

Seething, I took the steps down to my office and slammed the door shut. I logged into my scheduling portal and sent email cancellations for the remainder of my meetings. I also sent Human Resources a message that confirmed I was leaving early for “personal reasons” and that I may need to request additional time off in the coming days.

I made sure all the emails went through, and then I shut down my computer and closed all of the binders on my desk.

As I was slipping into my coat, my door swung open and Michael stormed inside my office.

“Going somewhere?” He hissed, clenching his jaw. “Did you not hear what I said when we were upstairs?”

“I did.” I picked up my scarf. “Did you not hear what *I* said? I’m. Leaving. You can stand there and threaten me with your stares all you want, but I’m going home.”

“Mya...” He shut the door and locked it, then he stepped toward my desk. “I’m not going to ask you to stay here again.”

“Good.” I shrugged. “Then that makes it that much easier for me to leave.” I slung my purse over my shoulder and headed for the side door, but he grabbed my elbow from behind and spun me around to face him.

“Why are you being so goddamn difficult?” He pressed his forehead against mine. “I really need you to stay here with me today...”

“Then I need you to give me a worthwhile reason to.”

His lips suddenly crashed against mine and his arms went around my waist, his fingers deftly unfastening the belt of my coat. Keeping his mouth

against mine, he pulled open my lapels and pushed the coat off my shoulders and onto the floor.

Biting my bottom lip, he slid his hand up my dress, slowly tearing off my soaked panties. He kissed me until I was breathless, gently pushing me backward and against my desk.

Briefly letting my lips go, he pushed all of my binders and files onto the floor. My office line began to ring, and he immediately knocked the phone to the floor, too.

Without saying a word, he grabbed me by my waist and lifted me up, firmly planting me on the face of my desk. My bare ass cheeks hit the cold metal and I sucked in a breath as I caught sight of his hardened cock through his pants.

“Spread your legs for me,” he commanded.

The sound of people talking outside my office made me want to jump up, but he placed his hand against my stomach and stared into my eyes.

“They won’t be able to hear us,” he whispered. “Do what I told you to do. *Now.*”

I slowly moved my legs apart and he loosened his tie, keeping his gaze between my thighs.

He stepped between my legs and pressed his thumb against my swelling clit, applying just enough pressure to make me murmur.

“I need you to promise me that you’re not going to scream,” he said. “They *will* hear that...”

I nodded, unable to respond as he bent down and sucked my clit into his mouth. “Can you promise me that, Mya?”

“I...” I nodded again, breathing slowly as he blew against my skin.

“Yes...I promise I won’t...Scream when you fuck me...”

“I wasn’t referring to when I fucked you.” He lifted his head up, smirking. “I have to eat your pussy first.” He suddenly grabbed me by my ankles and pulled me closer to the edge of the desk, quickly positioning both of my legs over his shoulders.

Without wasting another second, he buried his head between my legs and pressed his mouth against my pussy—sending every nerve in my body into overdrive. His tongue darted against my clit relentlessly and I cried out as he slid two thick fingers inside of me, as he groaned.

My hands went to his hair—gripping it hard as I begged him for mercy, but he continued to torture me with pleasure. In between moans, I threatened

to scream, but he only laughed and the strokes of his tongue became more powerful.

As his hands held my legs steady against his mouth, I felt myself on the verge of an orgasm, felt my entire body beginning to shake.

“Michael, I...I...” I struggled to get another word to fall out of my mouth. My body convulsed against the desk, forcing me to break my promise and scream so loudly I was sure everyone on the floor could hear me.

I felt him pressing his fingers against my mouth, heard him commanding me to be quiet, but I shut my eyes and tossed my head back—losing all control.

I wasn't sure how long I continued to shake, or if any of my coworkers heard me, but when I opened my eyes again, my legs were still around Michael, and he was staring at me.

I thought he was going to say something, to find a way to break our heated silence, but he simply moved my legs from around his shoulders and unbuttoned his pants. My eyes widened as far as they could go as he pulled out his cock, as I realized he was thicker and more well-hung than I'd imagined.

He smiled at my shocked reaction, tipping my chin up with his fingertips. “Bend over the desk.”

I gasped. “*What?*”

“You heard me.” He grabbed my hands and pulled me up. Then he gripped my hips and spun me around so my back was to his front. “Bend over the fucking desk.”

Slowly obliging, I pressed my chest against the metal.

I heard the sound of his pants hitting the floor, the sound of him unwrapping a condom. From behind, he slowly pushed my dress up to my waist.

Slapping my ass, he slowly slid his huge cock into me, inch by inch.

Moaning, I struggled to maintain my balance as I adjusted to his impressive length.

When he was completely inside of me, he grabbed a fistful of my hair and pulled my head back until our eyes met, whispering, “Is this how I fucked you in your fantasies?”

I didn't get a chance to answer. He pounded into me relentlessly, keeping one hand in my hair and slapping my ass each time I cried out.

He bit my shoulder as I said his name, as I shut my eyes once more and realized he was ten times better in reality than any fantasy I'd ever concocted.

He let go of my hair and slid a hand up to my breasts, squeezing them as he whispered, "I've wanted to feel your pussy on my cock ever since you started working here..."

I gasped, unable to react as my legs began to shake all over again.

"Michael...Michael..."

"Mya...Mya..." He mocked me, a slight smile in his voice.

"I...I..." I gripped the edge of the desk as he slapped my ass again. He whispered my name as the tremors continued to build inside of me, and I heard him say, "Wait for me," but I was already there.

My pussy throbbed in pleasure and another orgasm wracked its way through my body, leaving me limp and breathless against the desk. Leaving me wondering just how long he'd fucked me.

Holding me still, he found his own release seconds later, and I struggled to catch my breath.

The two of us remained entwined, and he kissed the back of my neck.

"Are you okay?" he asked softly.

I nodded.

"Can I let you go now?"

"No."

He let out a low laugh and held me against him longer, waiting until I gave him the okay to let me go. Kissing the back of my neck once more, he slowly pulled out of me and tossed the condom into the trash. Then he wrapped his arms around me and spun me around so I was propped against the desk.

As if he could tell I was unable to fully function on my own, he readjusted my dress and helped me into my coat. Then he ran his fingers through my hair and looked me over before picking up my heels and helping me slide into them.

"You should call your driver now," he said softly, picking up my desk phone from the floor and handing it to me. "I'll walk you downstairs."

I nodded and dialed my driver, watching Michael slip into his pants and adjust his tie. His eyes never left mine, and as soon as my driver said, "I'll be downstairs in five," I hung up.

Michael handed me my purse and I wobbled on my heels as I attempted to walk—earning a knowing, sexy smile from him. He pulled me against his

side and thankfully walked me toward the freight elevators so no one would see us.

I avoided looking at him as we rode the elevator. I was in complete and utter shock that I'd actually fucked him, that the leading man in all my fantasies had easily put every single one of those to shame with reality.

When we stepped outside together, I was immediately confused as to why the sky had fallen dark so quickly.

Michael walked me right to the town car and opened the back door, waiting for me to get inside. He looked as if he expected me to say something, but for whatever reason, I could only think of one thing.

"Thank you for being so understanding, Mr. Leighton," I said, not wanting to give the driver any type of impression about what the hell had just happened between us.

"For understanding what, Miss London?"

"That I wasn't staying until eight o'clock today. Glad we could come to that understanding."

A slow smile spread across his face and he glanced at his watch. "I think you're highly misinformed right now, Miss London. It's *nine o'clock*." He took one last look at me and shut the door. "See you Monday."

THE EMAILS

Mya

Subject: I slept with him.

Like, I *really* slept with him...

Your bestie,

Mya

Subject: Re: I slept with him.

You “really” slept with *who*? The blind date guy?

*And why are you emailing me from a brand new Gmail account?

Your bestie,

Amy

Subject: Re: Re: I slept with him.

My boss...

*Super long story.

Your bestie,

Mya

Subject: Re: Re: Re: I slept with him.

What the FUCK? Are you OUT OF YOUR GODDAMN MIND, MYA?

What the hell is wrong with you???

(How was it though...? :))

*I like super long stories.

Your bestie,

Amy

Subject: Re: Re: Re: Re: I slept with him.

It was the best sex I've ever had in my life.

Like, I don't think I'll ever be able to stop replaying it in my mind. And I don't think I can go back to work on Monday and look at him with a straight face again after this...

I'll be at your place in five.

Your bestie,

Mya

THE BOSS

Michael

Manhattan, New York

My weekend flew by in a restless blur, punctuated by mental replays of fucking Mya in her office. I'd honestly never thought about the same woman after I was finished having sex, but the more I attempted to stop thinking about Mya, the more images of her writhing against my lips came to mind. The more images of her bent over her desk and saying my name invaded my every thought.

Not only that, but I hadn't heard from her today. She hadn't answered my "What I Need Today" email with her usual "Ok," and she was already more than two hours late. I figured she was trying to pull that "I stayed late Friday so I'm coming late Monday" bullshit, so I decided to think nothing of it.

I tried my best to distract myself until our two o'clock meeting because she knew better than to miss any day of work for the next month since it was acquisition season.

As I was reading through the newest stack of approved book deals, a soft knock came to my door.

"Yes?" I set my papers down, expecting to see Mya, but it was only Brad and a catering delivery guy.

"Morning," Brad said as he walked over to my desk. "I wanted to come early and treat you and Mya to a late lunch if you don't mind."

"I don't mind." I lied, motioning for the delivery guy to set out the food on my desk.

"Wild weekend?" Brad asked.

"No. What makes you ask that?"

“You look like you’re on edge, like you haven’t slept in days or you’re stressed about something. Or maybe it’s...” He paused, letting out a long exasperated sigh. “Are you bracing to tell me about an upcoming tabloid story?” He shook his head. “You were doing so well, Michael. So well...”

“No.” I rolled my eyes. “And I’m not on edge. If you must know, I didn’t sleep well last night and I still have to get through a three-hour session with you and Mya that starts at any moment.”

“Speaking of Mya—” He started to say, but I interrupted him.

“She’s allergic to garlic,” I said to the delivery guy, picking up the basket of bread he’d set down. “Can you replace this with wheat rolls?”

“Yes sir.”

“And this.” I gestured to a bottle of caramel syrup he’d set out. “She’ll think this is hazelnut and have a coughing spell if she drinks a sip of it. Take this as well and bring up chocolate syrup instead.”

“Yes sir.” He picked up the offending items and headed to the door. “Be right back.”

Brad raised his eyebrow, looking completely confused. “Have you always memorized your assistant’s food preferences?”

“Only the ones who last over a year.”

“Ah.” He laughed. “Well, like I was saying, Apple and Microsoft called to tell me that you still haven’t returned their calls about her reference so you really need to do that at some point this week. You do plan on giving her a good recommendation, don’t you?”

My phone rang before I could address that question.

“Yes?” I answered.

“Good morning, Mr. Leighton,” a soft voice said. “This is Shelby in Human Resources. I’m sorry I’m notifying you so late, but your executive assistant called in earlier and put in a notice for a week of sick leave.”

“A *week*?”

“Yes sir. Would you like me to fill her space with a temp during this time?”

“No, thank you.” I hung up and leaned back in my chair. Mya never used sick leave, even when she was actually sick. She’d come to countless meetings coughing and sneezing when she probably should’ve stayed home, so I wasn’t sure if she was using our recent tryst as leverage, or if she’d somehow become deathly ill in a matter of forty eighty hours.

“Michael?” Brad attempted to get my attention. “Michael?”

I ignored him, pulling out my phone and sending Mya an email.

Subject: Sick Leave.

You better have a goddamn doctor's note...

Michael Leighton

CEO, Leighton Publishing

Her response was immediate.

Subject: Re: Sick Leave.

And if I don't?

Mya London

Executive Assistant to Leighton Publishing CEO

Subject: Re: Re: Sick Leave.

If you don't, I suggest you call HR right now and rescind your "sick leave" since I already know it's fake. Then I suggest you magically appear in my office within the next hour so we can prepare for next week's round of author acquisitions.

Michael Leighton

CEO, Leighton Publishing

Subject: Re: Re: Re: Sick Leave.

Oh, that's right. Next week *is* very important...

I'll probably be sick next week, too.

(I'll probably still be "recovering" from something.)

Maybe if I'm gone for awhile you'll see how hard my job really is.

Maybe then you'll appreciate me more.

Mya London

Executive Assistant to Leighton Publishing CEO

Subject: Re: Re: Re: Re: Sick Leave.

You will not “probably be sick” next week.

You will bring your ass to work.

(It doesn’t take two weeks to recover from getting properly fucked.)

I’d appreciate you a lot more if you came into work today...

Michael Leighton

CEO, Leighton Publishing

I closed my inbox, not waiting for her response. I looked up and noticed Brad staring at me as if he’d just seen a ghost.

“What?” I said.

“You fucked Mya, didn’t you?”

“Excuse me?”

“You heard me.” He didn’t flinch. “You slept with her...You slept with her, and that’s why you haven’t called those companies back. That’s exactly why you don’t want her to leave.”

“That’s not why I don’t want her to leave.”

“So you’re *admitting* to the part about fucking her?”

“No,” I said, denying it and spending countless minutes attempting to calm him down. I knew he’d have a heart attack if he knew the truth.

When I was sure he was convinced, I pulled out the files for today’s meeting so the two of us could go through them alone.

As he began to organize his own files, I opened a new tab in my browser and looked up a local florist so I could order “Get Well” flowers for Mya—so I could send her a more direct “Bring your ass to work” note.

I picked out a seven-layer bouquet of lilies since she’d once mentioned loving those in a novel meeting, and I was halfway to the purchase screen when I stalled.

What the hell am I doing?

I closed the screen and clicked my pen.

I could definitely survive a week without her help since she wanted to continue to play games. I was pretty sure I could do her job even better than she could.

It couldn’t be that hard.

THE BOSS

Michael

Manhattan, New York

One week of “sick leave” later...

Subject: My Boss...

I still can't believe I fucked my boss last week...

You think he would be mad if I called in sick for a second week?

Your bestie,

Mya

PS—Is it sad that I desperately want to fuck him again?

Subject: Re: My Boss...

I still can't believe that you haven't learned to double check who you're sending your emails to...

Yes, “he” would be quite furious if you called in sick for a second week.

Your boss,

Michael

PS—It's not sad at all, considering he wants to fuck you again as well.

I hit send on my email and put my phone away. She hadn't shown up to work this morning—no advance notice to Human Resources at all, but I wouldn't dare file a write-up or even so much as verbally reprimand her. I'd damn near

lost my mind over the past week by attempting to do everything she normally did for me, and I was starting to wonder if I really was as terrible of a boss as she said I was.

Even now, as I sat across the table from an author we were attempting to acquire, I was seconds away from saying, “You know what? I don’t feel like being here right now,” and asking her to reschedule. And I was very much tempted to drive to Mya’s house to address that last “PS” note in her email.

I was also regretting hosting this meeting over dinner instead of at my office. In fact, the only reason I’d scheduled a reservation at this five-star restaurant was because three months ago I’d overheard Mya telling someone she wished she could afford to dine here someday. Of course, I’d deny that fact if she ever asked, but since she wasn’t even here tonight, I didn’t see a point of me being here either.

“So...” The author across from me, a pretty brunette in her mid-thirties cleared her throat. “If I sign with Leighton Publishing, I’m going to need some promises from you.”

“What type of promises, Miss Sutherland?”

“Well, I’ll need you to actually promote my book.”

“We promote *all* of our books.”

“Well, I know that. That’s why your reputation is so great, but that’s only the basic level of promotion. I want you to promise me a movie deal within two years, six figure advances for every future book I write, and I want a world tour at only the best bookstores.”

“This is your *debut* book...”

“I know. And I could totally self publish this thing on amazon and have it live in five seconds. Yet, here I am, taking a risk on you and offering you the next smash *New York Times* bestseller on a silver platter.”

I rolled my eyes and took a long sip of wine. I started to change the subject, but she started talking about which actors and actresses she would prefer to read her audiobook, which ones we “better” promise her, so I easily tuned her out her voice.

This was usually the part where Mya would step in and tell the author to have realistic expectations, the part where my fraying thread of patience wore even thinner and I’d have to excuse myself to get more coffee. Without her here, I was minutes away from cracking and telling this woman to shut the hell up and get over herself.

“You know what I mean?” Miss Sutherland’s voice interrupted my thoughts. “Don’t you hate when Hollywood turns books into movies, but then they strip away the best parts? I honestly can’t sign a deal with you unless you promise that won’t happen to me.”

“*Miss Sutherland...*” I tried to keep the annoyance out of my voice. “The chances of Hollywood taking your debut book, which is a goddamn cookbook filled with catfish recipes, are so fucking low that—”

“I’m sorry I’m so late.” The sound of Mya’s voice stopped me from saying another word.

Dressed in a short, black cocktail dress that exposed her long legs, she looked absolutely stunning. Her lips were painted in a bright, alluring red, and her hair was piled high on top of her head in a pretty bevy of loose curls.

She walked over to Miss Sutherland and shook her hand, and then she mouthed “Stop it” to me as she sat down.

“I think what Mr. Leighton is trying to say—” Mya faced Miss Sutherland. “is that we should focus on doing all we can in the cooking sphere for this book. Then we can discuss ideas for your next collection of recipes so we make sure your future catalogue with us is as strong as it can be.”

I stared at her and remained silent for the remainder of the meeting, appreciating how she smoothly steered the rest of the conversation.

By the time we were done, Miss Sutherland was signing the contract and wishing us both well. When we all stood up to leave the restaurant, I pressed my hand against the small of Mya’s back and noticed how she attempted not to react.

The second Miss Sutherland was tucked away in her cab, Mya looked up at me.

“*You’re welcome.*” She smirked.

“Thank you. I appreciate it,” I said, looking her up and down once more. “You look pretty damn good to have been ‘sick’ for a week.”

She didn’t answer. She simply stared at me, and it took every ounce of restraint not to take her hand and pull her into my car for the night.

“Are you planning on coming to work tomorrow or are you keeping me in suspense?”

“I’m not sure yet. It depends on how I feel when I wake up, on if I want you to see even more of how much you put me through when you have to do everything yourself.” She held up her hand for the town car and he pulled

right in front. “But I must say, I’m happy you finally said those two precious words to me in regards to my work.”

“What two words?”

“*Thank you.*”

I said nothing. I just watched as her driver opened the back door and motioned for her to get inside.

I slid inside next to her before he could shut the door.

“What the—” She buckled her seatbelt. “What are you doing?”

“Driver, roll up the partition please.” I waited for the driver to divide the car. “Mya London, do you really think that because we’ve fucked I won’t fire you?”

“Michael Leighton,” she said, mocking me. “I *know* you won’t fire me and it has nothing to do with the fact that we’ve slept together.”

“We haven’t ‘slept together’, we’ve *fucked.*”

“Fine.” She lowered her voice. “Fucked. But I know you wouldn’t dare fire me.”

“Would you like to bet?”

“Not with a man who knows that I’m the best damn assistant he’s ever had.”

I smiled, unable to come up with a rebuttal for that. Before I could fire back, the driver’s voice came over the intercom.

“Miss London, are you still going to the AMC in Times Square?”

“Yes, Archer. Thank you.”

I shut off the speaker button. “What’s at the AMC in Times Square?”

“I have a date with a complete and utter gentleman.” She looked away from me, as if she was somewhat embarrassed. “It was set up weeks ago. I didn’t want to be rude and cancel at the last minute.”

“What’s his name?”

“None of your business.” She turned to face me again. “And unless you want to be a third wheel, are you going to have Archer take you back to your Jaguar while we’re in the movies? We’re going to need the car for dinner later, and no offense, but you’re not good dinner company.”

“*What’s his name?*” I repeated.

“Taylor,” she said. “Would you like to know where he works and how old he is, too?”

“I would. Tell me.”

“He’s an analyst for ABC studios, and he’s twenty-seven. Happy?”

“He’s too young for you,” I said. “And at that age he doesn’t have any real rank in that company. You can do better than that.”

“You’re referring to yourself?”

“No, I’m *the best*,” I said. “But you can at least do better until you realize that.”

She narrowed her eyes at me, but she didn’t say anything further.

“And if this is the guy from the email with the subject heading, ‘It’s Been A Week And He Hasn’t Called or Texted Me At All’, then you probably already know I’m right. No man in his right mind would wait a week to call *you*, unless he was your boss that is.”

Her cheeks turned bright red and her jaw dropped.

“We’re here, Miss London,” her driver said, pulling in front of the theater.

Mya unbuckled her seatbelt and waited for him to open the door.

I walked ahead and held the door to the theater for her, following her as she walked toward the ticket counter.

“I’m only picking up two tickets,” she said to me. “You’re not really going to follow us into the theater are you?”

“No, but I’ll wait until he actually appears if you don’t mind.”

“I *do* mind.”

“Tough shit.”

“Fine.” She picked up her tickets from the clerk and I followed her to a couch in one of the theater’s private lounges. She pulled her phone out of her purse and smiled at the screen. “He says he’s in traffic but he’ll be here in twenty minutes. I’ll be sure to tell you all about our night at work tomorrow since you’re so concerned.”

“I’m not concerned at all, but thank you for confirming that you’re coming to work tomorrow.”

“You’re not worried he’ll compare to you?”

“We’ve discussed this. *No one* compares to me.” I smiled. “And you know that. You also know that you have no desire to fuck him tonight because I’m willing to bet you’re still thinking about fucking *me*. This is either a pointless date you’re too scared to cancel, a ploy to make me jealous, or both.”

She blushed and looked down at her phone.

Fifteen minutes passed and she didn’t look up again. She simply refreshed her phone’s screen again and again.

I looked at my watch. The movie was due to start in ten minutes and her date was a no-show.

Her phone suddenly buzzed in her lap and she smiled, tapping the screen. She held it up to her face, her smile fading by the second.

She typed a few words, and then she looked at me. “He said something came up so...Okay. You can go ahead and make me feel like shit now. I’ve missed it at work, so now you can apply it to my personal life I guess.”

“What are you talking about?”

“You know, tell me how dumb I was to invite a guy who previously stood me up twice, instead of letting him ask me out. And then you can say how dumb I was for wasting my time getting all dressed up, trying my best to make you jealous—”

I cut her off with a kiss, softly biting her bottom lip until she moaned. Until she stopped attempting to talk and gave in. “Let’s go.”

THE ASSISTANT

Mya

Manhattan, New York

I sat still in the passenger seat of Michael's Jaguar as he drove, still in shock that he'd demanded to spend the rest of the night with me. He'd asked my driver to take us back to the restaurant to retrieve his car, to ensure we had complete privacy for the rest of the night.

I wasn't sure why, but when he looked over at me at a stoplight, I couldn't help but think that a part of this felt right. That when he wasn't being my boss—even for a split second, he was more than likeable.

"It'll be pretty hard to get a reservation at this hour in New York City," I said, finally breaking the silence.

"We don't need a reservation for where we're going."

"I'll take your word for it, but for the record, I need to apologize in advance."

"For what?"

"Because since you're just assuming I'll like where we're going instead of being a gentleman and asking me," I said. "I'm a very picky eater and I'm allergic to a lot of things."

"I'm aware." He turned right at the light. "You don't like seafood, you only eat chicken if it's prepared a certain type of way, you're lactose intolerant yet you still eat certain types of cheese, and if you would like, I can break down an entire list of random shit that seems to make you sick for some reason." He looked over at me. "Would you like me to?"

I shook my head, stunned.

"Good," he said. "I didn't ask because I don't have to, because contrary to what you may think of me, I do pay attention to you. Are you going to give

me a chance to be nice or are you going to spend the night acting like we're at the office?"

"I'll give you a chance..."

"Good." He placed his hand on my exposed thigh. "Because I've been trying very hard not to fuck you since you showed up at dinner tonight, so the second you want me to stop trying, please don't hesitate to let me know."

I blushed and leaned back in the seat, staying quiet for the rest of the ride as he steered through the snow-lined streets.

Thirty minutes later, he pulled into the turnaround of a high rise tower. Valet approached his car and he walked over to my side to open the door for me.

He pressed his hand against the small of my back, and as the doorman opened the door for us, he looked down at me and whispered. "Did you really wear that dress to make me jealous?"

"Depends. Did it work?"

"Very much so." He led me up a short flight of steps and onto a glass elevator that faced the bright and glittering lights of Manhattan.

We rode it all the way to the top level, and the second the doors gave way, a waiter greeted us and gestured for us to follow him into a private room.

A hearth blazed warmly in the corner, and there was only one table in the center that faced the floor to ceiling windows.

The waiter smiled and took our wine orders before disappearing.

"Is this place normally set up for private dinners?" I asked.

"Not at all." He looked at me. "But I don't think either of us would like to be spotted together right now, considering our relationship."

"Yeah, I wouldn't want people thinking I slept with the 'Naughty Boss' or Tabloid CEO to get my job."

"Me either." He looked amused. "When are you really coming back to work?"

"You mean, when do you really get to fuck me again?"

"No, I'm going to fuck you *tonight*," he said. "I truly mean, when are you coming back to work?"

"Once you admit that you need me a lot more than you think you do, and once you apologize for being so rude to me over the past year that I've worked for you."

"And if I don't?"

“Well, amazing sex aside, I have three more weeks of sick leave and some very generous vacation days I can make use of. As a matter of fact—”

“I need you and I’m sorry.” His words came out in a rush. “And I really do need you to come back to help me, until you “quit” that is...”

I knew he wanted me to say that I wasn’t quitting, that I would at least consider staying, but one nice date and hot office sex or not, I was leaving Leighton Publishing the second I received a worthy enough job offer.

Thankfully, the waiter returned before I could get a word out, and the two of us ordered the exact same thing. A simple Swiss chicken pasta.

To my surprise, Michael steered our dinner conversation away from work and sex. For hours, we talked about all the things we had in common, which, for some reason, was a lot more than I thought.

And even though he was behaving like a complete gentleman, every time our eyes met, it was clear he was seconds away from suggesting that I let him fuck me on the spot.

At three o’clock in the morning, the waiter told us he couldn’t keep the space open a second longer, so Michael helped me into my coat and we ventured out into the city. He held me against his side as snow fell over us, and we walked all the way down to the skating rink at Rockefeller Plaza.

I gripped the railing and for several minutes we watched couples and families attempt to keep their balance on the ice.

“Can I ask you something personal?” I looked up at Michael.

“Yes.”

“Were any of those stories in the tabloids from last year true?”

“Some of them.”

“Oh.” I frowned. “Really?”

“What are you really asking me, Mya?”

“Is there any reason why you haven’t been featured in one for a very long time?”

“Yes...It’s because I haven’t done any of the things I used to do for a very long time.” He trailed his finger against my lips. “I promised my advisor I would tone down my ‘activities’ for the sake of the company going public in the future.” He paused. “I also happened to accidentally hire a very compelling and sexy distraction working on the floor right below me.”

“In other words, you slept with your usual groupies in private.”

“I tried to.” He admitted. “But I was honestly too damn attracted to someone else to waste my time on other people.”

“I don’t believe you.” I blushed. “There’s no way you haven’t slept with anyone else since I started working for you.”

“You should, and *I haven’t*.” He ran his fingers through my hair. “I have no reason to lie to you. I even tried getting rid of you when you first started since you were such a distraction, but that clearly didn’t work out.”

“You were purposely being mean to me in the beginning to get me to quit?”

He smiled, silently confirming it.

“That is so…” I couldn’t believe he could look so genuine while saying that. “That is so fucked up.”

“It was.”

“No, *is*.” I looked into his eyes. “You still act as if you’re trying to get me to quit.”

“Sign the extension and I’ll be a lot nicer.”

“How about treat me better first and I’ll *consider* thinking about it?”

“How about both?” He gently pushed me against the railing. “I haven’t truly been ‘mean’ to you in the past six months. Demanding? Yes. Slightly unreasonable with the scheduling time and getting upset about you refusing to sign my contract? Maybe.”

“*Definitely*.”

“Fine,” he said. “But I haven’t been ‘mean’ to you.”

“You’ve just done your best to keep me out of your sight and far away from you, because you were thinking about having me as much as I was thinking about having you?”

“Exactly.” A smile spread across his face. “I was only protecting myself.”

I burst into laughter, feeling his lips against mine within seconds, feeling his arms wrapping around my waist and pulling me close.

“Can I take you home and fuck you now?” he whispered against my mouth. “Or do we need to do something else to make you see that I really do like you?”

“We can…” I blushed at his last five words. “We can do the first thing you said.”

Michael unlocked the door to his lavish penthouse condo, ushering me into his bedroom that overlooked the city. The second he closed the door behind

us, his lips were on mine and his arms were around my waist.

“I can’t stay with you long tonight,” I whispered. “I have to leave within an hour.”

“An hour?” He unzipped the side of my dress. “What makes you think I’ll be done with you in an hour?”

“Nothing, but my boss is highly obsessed with me being on time for work, and it’s already five o’clock in the morning. If I’m more than a minute late, he’ll send me an email and act like it’s the end of the world.”

He let out a low laugh and tore off my panties. “I think he’ll be more than willing to make an exception in this case.”

I moved my hand down to his pants, pulling his zipper. “I’m not so sure about that. He can be quite the asshole sometimes.”

“Is that so?” His pants hit the floor and he kissed me harder, trapping my bottom lip between his teeth. He pushed my dress down off my shoulders, and then he pushed me back onto the bed.

“That’s very so.” I smiled as he climbed in bed next to me, as he sucked one of my nipples into his mouth. “I’d be very surprised if he was late to work today at all.”

“He will be.” He grabbed my hands and rolled me on top of him. He put on a condom and slowly positioned me over his hardened cock—silently commanding me to lower myself onto it.

I took my time, filling myself with him inch by inch, and when he was completely inside of me, I entwined my hands with his and rocked against him.

“*Fuck...*” He breathed as I tried to speed up my rhythm, as he gripped my hips and forced me to slow down.

Freeing his right hand from mine, he pulled my head closer and covered my mouth with his—kissing me until I was nearly breathless.

He pressed his fingers deeper into my skin, controlling the movement of my hips. He whispered my name against my lips, and my muscles tensed as I felt his cock throbbing inside of me.

“*Fuck, Mya...*” He held onto me tightly as he came, and I felt familiar waves of pleasure rolling through me at the same time.

Panting uncontrollably, my entire body went limp and I collapsed against his chest.

I shut my eyes, expecting him to let me catch my breath, but he quickly moved me off of him and flipped me onto my stomach.

Confused, but too tired to ask what he was doing, I kept my eyes shut and groaned. The next thing I felt was his mouth against my back, him leaving feather-light kisses in a soft trail all the way down my spine. All the way down to my cheeks.

Both of them.

“*There,*” he said, slapping my ass and flipping me over. “Now you can officially say I’ve kissed your ass.”

We both burst into uncontrollable laughter, and he positioned a pillow under my head.

“Are you okay?” he asked. “Do you need anything?”

“Water...And a grand tour of your apartment later.”

“Okay. We can definitely do that.” He kissed my forehead and walked away.

I winced as I tried to stretch my legs and managed to roll over on my side. I looked around the room for my purse, spotting my cell phone flashing the tell-tale blue light of a new email from its pocket. Thinking it was Amy with an emergency, I pulled the sheets over myself and got out of bed.

Subject: What I Need Today.

You in my office for a meeting at ten.

Michael Leighton

CEO, Leighton Publishing

What the!

I turned around immediately, finding myself face to face with Michael. “You seriously expect me to be able to get to work and hold a ten o’clock meeting with you today?”

“Yes.” He pulled me toward the bed. “I have some former fantasies of my own I’d like us to fulfill in my office...”

THE EMAILS

Mya

Subject: Non-Assholery Report #15 (Get Used to This New Gmail Account)

He bought me flowers today. Fresh white lilies from my favorite florist. (A florist I don't recall ever telling him about...)

But then he asked me to sign that extension again.

Maybe he's not that bad after all? Or is this just the sex talking?

Your bestie,

Mya

Subject: Re: Non-Assholery Report #15 (Get Used to This New Gmail Account)

It's. Just. The. Sex. Talking.

Please!

(But I will admit that him sending you flowers and getting **your coffee** every morning is a nice and necessary change...It's still the sex talking though. :))

Your bestie,

Amy

Subject: Apple Just Turned Me Down...

Apple just called me and said they will not be able to offer me employment based on "extensive conversations with my reference." Do you think Brad said something negative about me? :(

PS—Google just called me and said the same thing...

Your bestie,
Mya

Subject: Re: Apple Just Turned Me Down...

I'm so sorry, Mya. I'm sure this only means that you're going to land a job at one of the other companies and it'll be a much better fit for you.

I highly doubt Brad said anything negative about you though. He's loved you since your first interview and practically thinks you're the reason Mr. Leighton has become a better executive. Why don't you ask him what he said?

Your bestie,
Amy

PS—Well, we won't use Google anymore! I'm switching to Bing at this very moment!

Subject: Re: Re: Apple Just Turned Me Down...

I called Brad on my lunch break. He said he had nothing but high praises for me when Apple and Google called. Then he said *Michael* was the last person who spoke with all the companies.

I can't believe he would try to sabotage me behind my back...

Especially now that we're sleeping together. :(

Your bestie,
Mya

THE ASSISTANT

Mya

Manhattan, New York

I rocked my hips against Michael's face one morning, moaning as he slid his tongue against my clit again and again. His hands were gripping my thighs, steadying me as I began to shake.

"Oh goddddd, oh godddd..." I cried out, holding on to the wall behind him as I came on his lips.

Shutting my eyes, I felt my legs go slack, felt him moving me onto his lap. When I finally stopped shaking, he picked me up and carried me over to his office sofa. I felt him wiping between my legs with a warm cloth, and then he stepped away into his private bathroom.

He returned seconds later and sat next to me, running his fingers through my hair.

"I hope you enjoyed that," I said softly, pushing his hand away. "I'm pretty sure that's the last time I'll let you fuck me."

"Excuse me?"

"Were you sabotaging my career behind my back in hopes that I'd eventually sign your extension contract? Did you honestly think you could somehow use the fact that we've had sex, or the fact that I like you, to prevent me from going to another company?"

He raised his eyebrow, having the audacity to look confused.

"Apple called me yesterday and said they moved on with another candidate because my boss, i.e. *you*, wasn't able to give me a stellar enough recommendation for their company." I stood up, preventing him from pulling me close. "Google said the very same thing. And just this morning, I received two voicemails from Amazon and Microsoft, three from other companies,

and I'm sure when I go downstairs to listen to them, they'll tell me the same thing."

"Mya..."

"No." I shook my head. "I'm sorry I ever thought that there was even a slight chance that the two of us could work out when I left your company, and I'm sorry I ever thought you were anything more than a pompous, selfish, asshole because you clearly still are."

"Sexy as hell or not?"

"Yes. Sexy as hell or—" I stopped myself. "That's not the point of what I'm trying to say. I put in my notice with Human Resources before I came up here, so I highly suggest you accept it, and I highly suggest you give me one hell of a 'goodbye' package because you will not be seeing me again."

"Are you finished talking yet?"

"Yes." I rushed toward the door, but he caught me from behind and spun me around.

"I would never sabotage you, Mya." He wiped away one of my stray tears with his fingertips. "Of course, deep down I did want you to stay, but I had nothing but nice things to say about you. I even said they'd be foolish *not* to hire you, but—"

"But?" I glared at him. "But *what*?"

"But if they thought the low-ass salaries they were offering were good enough for you, they needed to increase them exponentially or move along to someone else. I thought you deserved more."

"Is that all?"

"No," he said, looking into my eyes. "I also needed to personally interview each of the CEOs myself. Needed to make sure each one was a good fit for you, and that whoever you worked for next was already married."

I opened my mouth to ask him if he was being serious, but he beat me to it.

"Yes," he said, smirking. "Yes, I 'seriously' did need to do that."

"What does the CEO being married have to do with anything, Michael? What if I have no interest in seeing you after I quit?"

"You *do*, so we're not even going to entertain that line of conversation." He rolled his eyes. "If the CEO is already married, I won't have to worry about 'this' happening at your next place of employment, and I can be somewhat less jealous."

“How *selfish* of you.” I couldn’t believe him, but for some reason I couldn’t help the smile that was forming on my face.

“I’m pretty sure when you listen to Amazon, Microsoft, and the other companies’ voicemails, that they’ll be offering you one hell of a deal.” He cupped my face in his hands. “At least, that’s what they all told me yesterday.”

“This still doesn’t excuse you from interfering with my job search and insisting that you be my reference over Brad.”

“I’m pretty sure it does.” He kissed me. “And now that there’s no chance in hell of you signing my long-term extension contract, and you’ve hopefully realized that I’m not sabotaging you, how about dating me long-term instead?”

“I’ll have to think about it.” I kissed him back. “It depends on what you’re offering...”

THE EMAILS

(Well, “The End”)

Mya

One year later...

Subject: My Boss.

Have I told you that I love my boss today?

One hundred percent brilliant and super kind to everyone, she doesn't make me get her dry cleaning, get her coffee, or do anything that my former bosses (Yes, plural) used to do...

I have two meetings this morning and I can honestly say I'm looking forward to them because they both involve things I really enjoy.

I'm pretty sure I can get used to this.

Your girlfriend,

Mya

Subject: Re: My Boss.

No, you haven't told me that you love your boss today, but seeing as though you're technically your own boss, I hope this will always be the case.

Your boss at Microsoft was far worse than I ever was. (I'm actually proud of you for quitting that place after three months.)

If one of the meetings you're referring to is the one in my office where we'll be fucking, good to know you enjoy it.

I'm not sure if I'll ever get used to this.

(When do you plan on changing your closing signature?)

Michael Leighton,
CEO, Leighton Publishing

Subject: Re: Re: My Boss.

Now.

See you in five minutes.

Mya London,

CEO, London Publishing

A Letter to the Reader

Dear Incredible Reader,

Thank you so much for taking time out of your life to read this book! I hope you were thoroughly entertained and enjoyed reading it as much as I enjoyed writing it.

If you LOVED it and have any extra time, PLEASE leave a review on amazon.com, B&N.com, goodreads.com, OR [find me here on Facebook](#) so I can personally thank you :-). If you hated it, well...keep that shit to yourself! LOL (Just kidding. Feel free to let me know how I can improve next time!)

I'm forever grateful for you and your time, and I hope to be re-invited to your bookshelf with my next release. (Speaking of my next release, if you'd like to be a part of my mailing list so you can be notified of my upcoming release dates and special offers, please sign up via this [link](#).)

Love,
Whitney G.

A Sneak Peek of Reasonable Doubt

By Whitney G.
Prologue

Andrew

New York City is nothing more than a shit-filled wasteland, a dump where failures are forced to drop all their broken dreams and leave them far behind. The flashing lights that shined brightly years ago have lost their luster, and that fresh feeling that once permeated the air—that *hopefulness*, is long gone.

Every person I once considered a friend is now an enemy, and the word “trust” has been ripped from my vocabulary. My name and reputation are tarnished, thanks to the press, and after reading the headline that *The New York Times* ran this morning, I’ve decided that tonight will be the last night I ever spend here.

I can’t deal with the cold sweats and nightmares that jerk me out of my sleep anymore, and as hard as I try to pretend like my heart hasn’t been obliterated, I doubt that the agonizing ache in my chest will ever go away.

To properly say goodbye, I’ve ordered the best entrées from all my favorite restaurants, watched *Death of a Salesman* on Broadway, and smoked a Cuban cigar on the Brooklyn Bridge. I’ve also booked the penthouse suite at the Waldorf Astoria, where I’m now leaning back on the bed and threading my fingers through a woman’s hair—groaning as she slides her mouth over my cock.

Teasingly darting her tongue around my tip, she whispers, “Do you like this?” as she looks up at me.

I don’t answer. I push her head down and exhale as she presses her lips against my balls, as she covers my cock with her hands and moves them up and down.

Over the past two hours, I’ve fucked her against the wall, forced her to bend over a chair, and pinned her legs to the mattress while I devoured her pussy.

It's been quite fulfilling—*fun*, but I know this feeling will only last for so long; it never stays. In less than a week, I'll have to find someone else.

As she takes me deeper and deeper into her mouth, I tightly tug her hair—tensing as she bobs her head up and down. Pleasure begins to course its way through me, and the muscles in my legs stiffen—forcing me to let go and warn her to pull away.

She ignores me.

She grips my knees and sucks faster, letting my cock touch the back of her throat. I give her one last chance to move away, but since her lips remain wrapped around me, she leaves me no choice but to cum in her mouth.

And then she swallows.

Every. Last. Drop.

Impressive...

Finally pulling away, she licks her lips and leans back against the floor.

“That was my first time swallowing,” she says. “I did that just for you.”

“You shouldn't have.” I stand and zip my pants. “You should've saved it for someone else.”

“Right. Well, um...Do you want to order some dinner? Maybe we could eat it over HBO and go at it again afterwards?”

I raise my eyebrow, confused.

This is always the most annoying part, the part when the woman who previously agreed to “One dinner. One night. No repeats.” wants to establish some type of imaginary connection. For whatever reason, she feels like there needs to be some type of closure conversation, some bland reassurance that'll confirm that what just happened was ‘more than sex,’ and we'll become friends.

But it *was* just sex, and I'm not in need of any friends. Not now, not ever.

“No, thank you.” I walk over to the mirror on the other side of the room. “I have someplace to be.”

“At three in the morning? I mean, if you just want to skip the HBO and go for another round instead, I can...”

Her irritating voice fades into my thoughts, and I begin to button my shirt. I've never spent the night with a woman I met online, and she isn't going to be the first.

As I adjust my tie, I look down and spot a tattered pink wallet on the dresser. Picking it up, I flip it open and run my fingers across the name that's printed onto her license: Sarah Tate.

Even though I've only known this woman for a week, she's always answered to "Samantha." She's also told me—*repeatedly*, that she works as a nurse at Grace Hospital. Judging by the Wal-Mart employee card that's hiding behind her license, I'm assuming that part isn't true either.

I look over my shoulder, where she's now sprawled across the bed's silk sheets. Her creamy colored skin is unmarred and smooth; her bow shaped lips are slightly swollen and puffy.

Her green eyes meet mine and she slowly sits up, spreading her legs further apart, whispering, "You know you want to stay. *Stay...*"

My cock starts to harden—it's definitely up for another round, but seeing her real name has ruined any chance of that for me. I can't stand to be around someone who's lied to me, even if she does have double D tits and a mouth from heaven.

I toss the wallet into her lap. "You told me your name was Samantha."

"Okay. *And?*"

"Your name is *Sarah*."

"So what?" She shrugs, beckoning me with her hand. "I never give my real name to men I meet on the internet."

"You just fuck them in five star hotel suites?"

"Why do you suddenly care about my real name?"

"I don't." I glance at my watch. "Are you spending the night in this room or do I need to give you cab money to get home?"

"*What?*"

"Was my question unclear?"

"Wow...Just, wow..." She shakes her head. "How much longer do you think you'll be able to keep doing this?"

"Keep doing *what?*"

"Chatting someone up for a week, fucking her, and moving on to the next. How much longer?"

"Until my dick stops working." I put on my jacket. "Do you need cab fare or are you staying? Check out is at noon."

"Do you know that men like you—*relationship avoiders*, are the type that typically fall the hardest?"

"Did they teach you that at Wal-Mart?"

"Just because someone from your past hurt you, doesn't mean that every woman after her will." She purses her lips. "That's probably why you are the way you are. Maybe if you tried to actually *date* someone, you'd be a lot

happier. You should take her out for dinner and actually listen, see her to her door without expecting an invitation inside, and maybe bypass the whole 'let's go fuck' in the hotel suite thing at the end."

Where are my keys? I need to go. Now.

"I can see it now..." She can't seem to shut up. "You're going to want more than sex one day, and the person you want it from is going to be someone you least expect. Someone who will force you to give in."

I pull my keys from underneath her crumpled dress and sigh. "Do you need cab money?"

"I have my own car, dick-face." She rolls her eyes. "Are you really this incapable of having a regular conversation? Would it kill you to talk to me for a few minutes after sex?"

"We have nothing more to discuss." I set my room key on the nightstand and walk toward the door. "It was very nice meeting you, Samantha, *Sarah*. Whatever the hell your name is. Have a great night."

"Screw you!"

"Three times was more than enough. No, thank you."

"Things are going to catch up to you one day, asshole!" She yells as I step into the hallway. "Karma is one hell of a bitch!"

"I know." I toss back. "I fucked her two weeks ago..."

Contract (n.):

An agreement between two people that creates an obligation to do or not do a particular action.

Andrew

Six years later...

Durham, North Carolina

The woman who was currently sitting across from me was a fucking liar.

Dressed in an ugly ass grey sweater and a red plaid skirt, her hair looked as if it'd been dyed with a box of crayons. She looked nothing like the woman in the picture online, nothing like the smiling blonde with C-cup breasts, butterfly tattoos, and plump, pink lips.

Before I'd agreed to this date, I'd specifically asked for three separate proof of truth pictures: one of her holding a newspaper with the most recent date on it, one of her biting her lip, and one of her holding up a sign with her name on it. When I requested these things, she'd laughed and said that I was "the most paranoid person ever," but she'd done them. Or so I thought. With the exception of telling her my real name—I stopped giving out my real name years ago, I'd been completely honest and I expected that in return.

"Well, now that we're *alone...*" She suddenly smiled, revealing a mouth full of metal and rubber bands. "It's nice to finally meet you in person, *Thoreau*. How are you today?"

I didn't have time for this. "Who's the girl in your profile picture?" I asked.

"What?"

“Who is the girl in your profile picture?”

“Oh...Well, that isn't me.”

“No shit it isn't you.” I rolled my eyes. “Did you hire a model? Buy a bunch of stock images and use Photoshop?”

“Not exactly.” She lowered her voice. “I just thought you'd be more likely to talk to me if I used that photo instead of my own.”

I looked her over again, now noticing the strange unicorn tattoo across her knuckles and the “Love is blind” quote that was inked onto her wrist.

“What were you expecting to happen when we actually *met*?” This shit was boggling my mind. “Did you *think* about what would happen when that day came? When I realized that you weren't who you said you were?”

“I was kind of expecting for you to have lied about your picture too,” she said. “I didn't know that you would really look like *you*, you know? This is the first time a guy on *Date-Match* has told the truth. I think it's a *sign*.”

“*It's not*.” I shook my head. “And the model? How did you get someone to take all those pictures?”

“It wasn't a model. It was my roommate.” Her eyes widened as I stood up. “Wait a second! All the things I said to you on the phone were absolutely true. I *am* interested in politics, and I do love studying the law and keeping up with high profile cases.”

“What law school did you go to?”

“Law school?” She raised her eyebrow. “No, not *law school* type of law. Law like, I've watched every episode of *SVU* and I've read all of John Grisham's books.”

I sighed and pulled a few bills out of my wallet, putting them on the table. I'd wasted enough time with her.

“Goodbye, *Charlotte*.” I walked away, ignoring the rest of her apology.

The moment the valet pulled my car around, I slipped inside and sped off. *This shit is getting ridiculous...*

This was the sixth time this had happened to me this month, and I didn't understand why someone would willingly lie with a potential face to face meeting on the line. It didn't make any fucking sense.

Annoyed, I picked up a bottle of scotch from the store across the street, and made a mental note to block this latest liar from my page. I was starting to feel like I'd run out of available women to sleep with in Durham. I was also starting to feel like I needed to switch cities and start all over again; the

cold sweats from years ago had returned, and I knew the nightmares were coming next.

As soon as I stepped into my condo, I poured myself three shots and tossed them back. Then I poured three more.

I scrolled through my phone and checked my emails for the day—client referrals, more requests to chat from *Date-Match*, and a message from the sexy blonde I was supposed to meet this Saturday.

The subject-line read, “Honesty is Key, right?”

I tossed back another shot before opening it, hoping it was an invitation to meet tonight instead.

It wasn’t. It was a goddamn essay.

“Hey, Thoreau. I know we’re supposed to meet each other this Saturday and trust me, I was sooo looking forward to it, but I need to know that you’re interested in me for me and not my looks. I’ve met a lot of creepy guys on here because they just like my picture, and when we meet, they just want to have sex. I can assure you that I am who I say I am, but I’m looking for something a little more fulfilling than casual sex. We don’t have to have a full blown relationship, or engage in an intense affair, but we could at least build a friendship first, you know? I’m looking forward to seeing you, so let me know if you’re still interested in meeting me—Liz.”

I immediately clicked on my profile and opened the “What I’m Looking For” box, making sure that it still read the same: “Casual sex. Nothing more. Nothing Less.”

That line wasn’t there for decoration, and it was in bold print for a reason.

I returned to the woman’s message and responded. *“I am no longer interested in meeting you. Best of luck finding whatever you’re looking for – Thoreau.”*

“Are you for real?” She replied instantly. *“You can’t use another friend? We can’t be ‘just friends’?—Liz.”*

“Hell no—Thoreau.” I signed off and blocked her address.

Another shot made its way down my throat, and I scrolled through the remaining emails—immediately opening the one that came from the only person I considered a friend in this city. Alyssa.

Subject: Desert Dick

So, I'm emailing you right now because I just thought about how much pain you're in currently...We haven't talked about you getting laid in quite a while, and that concerns me. Greatly. Like, I've CRIED about your lack of pussy...I'm very sorry that so many women have sent you fraudulent pictures and given you a severe case of blue balls. I'm attaching the links to a top of the line lotion that I think you should invest in for the weeks to come.

**Your dick is in my prayers,
—Alyssa.**

I smiled and typed a response.

Subject: Re: Desert Dick

Thank you for your concerns about my dick. Although, seeing as though you've NEVER discussed getting laid, I think having Cobweb Pussy is a far more serious illness. Yes, it is true that so many women have sent me pictures, but it's quite sad that you've never sent me yours, isn't it? I'm more than willing to send you mine, and eventually help you cure your sad and unfortunate disease.

**Thank you for telling me that my dick is in your prayers.
I'd prefer if it was in your mouth.
—Thoreau.**

Just like that, my night was now ten times better. Even though I'd never met Alyssa in person and our conversations were restricted to phone calls, emails, and text messages, I felt a strong connection to her.

We'd met through an anonymous and exclusive social network—LawyerChat. There were no profile pictures, no newsfeed activity, only message boards. There was a small profile box where information could be placed (first name only, age, number of years practiced, high or low profile status), and a logo on each user's profile that revealed his or her sex.

Every user was "guaranteed" to be a lawyer who'd been personally invited via email. According to the site's developers, they'd "cross-

referenced every practicing lawyer in the state of North Carolina against the board's licensing records to ensure a unique and one of a kind support system."

I honestly thought the network was bullshit, and if it weren't for the fact that I'd fucked a few of the women I'd met on there, I would've cancelled my account after the first month.

Nonetheless, when I saw a new "Need Some Advice" message from an "Alyssa," I couldn't resist trying to replicate my previous results. I read through her profile first—twenty seven, one year out of law school, book lover—and decided to go for it.

My intent was to answer her legal questions, slowly steer the conversation to more personal things, and then ask her to join *Date-Match* so I could see what she looked like. But she wasn't like the other women.

She sent me constant messages, and she always kept the topic of conversation professional. Since she was such a young and inexperienced lawyer, she asked for advice on the simplest topics: legal brief editing, claim filing, and exhibition of evidence. After we'd chatted five times and I'd grown tired of having three hour long info-dump sessions, I asked for her phone number.

She said no.

"Why not?" I'd typed.

"Because it's against the rules."

"I've never met a lawyer that hasn't broken at least one."

"Then you're not a very good lawyer. I'll find someone else to chat with now. Thanks."

"You're going to lose that case tomorrow." I typed before she could end our session. "You have no idea what you're doing."

"Are you really that upset about me not giving you my phone number? What are you, twelve?"

"Thirty two, and I don't give a fuck about your phone number. I was only asking for it so I could call and tell you that the brief you sent me is littered with typos, and the closing argument reads like a first year law student wrote it. There are too many mistakes for me to sit here and type them all."

"My brief isn't that bad."

"It's not that good either." Before I could sign out of our chat, her phone number appeared on the screen, and underneath it was a short paragraph: "If you're going to call and help me, fine. If you're using my number to talk me

into joining a dating site later, then forget it. I joined this network for career support, that's it."

I stared at her message long and hard—debating whether I should help her with no chance of getting anything out of it, but something made me call her anyway. I walked her through every mistake she'd made, insisted that she clear up a few sentences, and even re-formatted her brief.

Just when I was about to tell her goodbye and hang up, the strangest thing happened. She asked, "How was your day today?"

"That's not in your brief." I said. "You only want to talk about lawyer shit, remember?"

"I can't change my mind?"

"No. Hang up." I waited to hear a beep, but the only thing I heard was laughter. If it wasn't for the fact that it was such a raspy and sexy sound, I would've hung up myself, but I couldn't put the phone down.

"I'm sorry," she said, still laughing. "I didn't mean to offend you."

"You didn't. Hang up."

"I don't want to." She finally stopped laughing. "I apologize for that hostile message I sent you...You're actually the only guy I've met on here who answers all my questions. Are you busy right now? Can you talk?"

"About *what*?"

"About yourself, your life...I've been asking you boring legal questions every day, and you've been very patient so...It's only fair that we talk about something less boring for once if we're going to be friends, right?"

Friends?

I was hesitant to respond—especially since it didn't seem like the 'less boring' topics would involve sex, and she'd said the word "friends" so easily. Yet, I was in the middle of another sex-less night already, so I began to have a regular conversation with her. Until five in the morning, she and I discussed the most mundane things—our daily lives, favorite books, her dream of becoming a late, professional ballerina.

A few days later, we spoke again, and after a month, I was talking to her every other day.

Tossing back another shot, I pressed the call button on my phone and waited to hear her soft voice.

No answer. I considered sending her a text, but then I realized it was nine o' clock on a Wednesday and we wouldn't be able to talk at all tonight.

Practice...Wednesday nights are always ballet practice...

“Mr. Hamilton?” My secretary stepped into my office the next morning.

“Yes, Jessica?”

“Mr. Greenwood and Mr. Bach would like to know if you want to participate in the next round of intern interviews today.”

“*I don’t.*”

“Okay...” She looked down and scribbled something onto her notepad.

“Did you at least look over the resumes then? They have to narrow it down to fifteen today.”

I sighed and pulled out the stack of resumes she’d given me last week. I’d read through them all and written notes, mostly—“Pass” “Double Pass” and “I don’t feel like reading this.” All the remaining applicants were from Duke University, and to my knowledge, we were the only firm in the city who accepted pre-law *and* law school applicants for paid internships.

“I wasn’t impressed with any of the applicants.” I slid the papers across my desk. “Was that the entire selection pool?”

“No, sir.” She walked over and placed an even larger stack in front of me. “*This* is the entire selection pool. Do you need me to do anything else for you this morning?”

“Besides getting my coffee?” I pointed to the empty mug at the edge of my desk. I hated that I always had to remind her to bring it; I couldn’t function in the morning without a fresh cup.

“I’m so sorry. I’ll get that right away.”

I turned on my computer and scrolled through my emails, sorting them all by importance. Of course, Alyssa’s latest email was pushed straight to the top.

Subject: Get Over Yourself.

Thank you for the childish picture text of the white dust that was outside your condo this morning. I really appreciated it, but I can assure you that that is NOT what the inside of my vagina looks like right now.

Not that it’s any of your business, but I don’t need to get laid every other day to satisfy my needs. They are WELL taken care of with a VARIETY of tools.

—Alyssa

Subject: Re: Get Over Yourself.

I sent you *two* pictures. One of the white dust and one of a dried up lake with dying animals. Was the second picture more accurate?

The only tool your pussy needs is my tongue. It's here whenever you want it, and it works in a "VARIETY" of ways.

—Thoreau

"Here you are, Mr. Hamilton." Jessica suddenly set my coffee on the desk.

"Can I ask you something?"

"No, you may not."

"I thought so," she said, lowering her voice and looking into my eyes. "I know this is a bit unprofessional, but I need a date for the gala next month.

"Then *find a date* for the gala next month."

"That was my way of asking *you* to be my date..."

I blinked. I needed to find a way to word this "Hell no" very carefully.

Jessica was fresh out of college—way too damn young for me, working here because her grandfather started this firm, and looking for much more than I'd ever be willing to give. I'd overheard her several times on her lunch breaks, talking about how she wanted to be married before she turned twenty five. She also apparently wanted to be a stay-at-home mom with six kids, and live in a house in the suburbs.

In other words, she was completely out of her fucking mind.

"So, what do you say?" She smiled.

I tried not to roll my eyes. "Jessica..."

"Yes?" Her eyes were full of hope.

"Look, sweetheart. Not only would it be highly inappropriate for the two of us to *ever* engage in any type of relationship outside of this office, but I'm not the man you're looking for. At all. Trust me."

"Not even for *one night*?"

"The words 'one night' in my book hold certain expectations that you couldn't possibly meet. So, *no*. Go do some work."

"Is 'one night' a code for sex?"

"Why are you still in my office?"

“I wouldn’t tell anyone if we had sex,” she whispered. “I’ve actually fantasized about it since we first met. And, since you never have any calls on the books from a girlfriend, I’m assuming you’re available.”

“I’m not.”

“I walked in on you while you were in the restroom once... You’re at least nine inches I think.”

What the fuck?!

I was five seconds away from recording this conversation on my phone and emailing it to her grandfather.

“I’m *really good* at giving blowjobs,” she said. “I’ve been doing it since high school. All the guys I’ve blown have said my mouth is *amazing*.” She bit her lip.

“Is there super-glue on my floor? Is that why you’re still standing there?”

“If you were my date to the gala and we ended up having a good time, you’d be the first man I’d actually went all the way with.” She blurted out, blushing. “I’m still a virgin, *down there*.”

“Then I’m *definitely* not the man for you.” I rolled my eyes. “Now, leave before I call Mr. Greenwood and tell him that his precious granddaughter is offering to suck my dick over morning coffee.”

Shocked, her cheeks tinged red and she quickly walked to the door. Then she looked over her shoulder and winked at me—*fucking winked* at me, before stepping out.

I immediately typed a note into my planner: *Find a new secretary—an older, married one...*

Before I could finish organizing my inbox, my cell phone rang. Alyssa.

“I’m busy,” I answered.

“Then why did you pick up the phone?”

“Because the sound of my voice makes you wet.”

“Funny.” She laughed. “How’s your morning?”

“Typical. My secretary just came onto me for the third time this month.”

“She sent you another ‘You and me belong together’ note with chocolates?”

“No, she offered to suck my dick.”

“What?” She gasped. “You’re kidding!”

“Unfortunately not. After that, she told me she was willing to give me her virginity. Needless to say, I’ll be posting a replacement ad pretty soon.

Anyone from your office want to work for a better firm? I'll double the salary."

"How do you know that *my* firm isn't better than yours?"

"Because you call and ask me for advice on cases all the time—silly cases at that. If your firm was better, you'd never have to ask."

"Whatever." She groaned. "Have you bucked off the online dating wagon yet?"

"*Bucked? Wagon?*" I could never understand her little Southern metaphors. "What the hell does that mean?"

"Ugh, god..." She sighed. "It means you didn't update me about your date last night so I guess it was a bust, which means you haven't slept with anyone in over a month. That has to be a record for you."

"It is."

"Do you want some advice?"

"Not unless you want to come to my office and tell me *in person*." I smiled.

"No, thanks. Speaking of advice, I'll need your help Friday night."

"With what?"

"I just landed a pretty big case. I haven't gone through all the documents yet, but I already know I'm in over my head."

I leaned back in my chair. "If it's that big of a case, you could bring the documents to my condo tonight. I'd be happy to help you sort through them. Categorization has always been my specialty."

"Ha! Nice try, but I don't think so." She continued to talk about her case, but I was only halfway listening. It still struck me as odd that she didn't want to meet me in person, that she shut down the very thought any time I brought it up.

"Also..." She was still rambling. "I'll probably have to do some research on those changes. I'm not sure if—"

"Tell me the real reason why I can't meet you in person." I cut her off.

"*What?*"

"We've known each other for six months now. Why don't you want to meet?"

Silence.

"Do I need to repeat the question?" I stood up and walked over to my door, locking it. "Did you not understand me?"

"It's against the LawyerChat rules..."

“Fuck *LawyerChat*.” I rolled my eyes. “It’s against the rules for you and me to have each other’s phone numbers in the first place, for us to act like fucking teenagers and make each other cum over the phone at night, but you’ve never complained about that.”

“You’ve never made me cum...”

“Don’t lie to me.”

“You haven’t.”

“So, last week when I said that I wanted you to ride my mouth so I could eat your pussy until you came all over my lips, you were *pretending* to breathe hard?”

She sucked in a breath. “No, but—”

“I thought so. Why can’t we meet in person?”

“Because it would ruin our friendship and you know it.”

“*I don’t.*”

“You’ve told me that you never sleep with the same woman twice, that after you sleep with someone you’re done with her.”

“I’ve never fucked one of my *friends* before.”

“That’s because I’m your only one.”

“I’m aware, but—” I stopped. I had no defense for that.

Silence lingered over the line, and I tried to think of another argument.

She spoke up first. “I honestly don’t want to ruin our friendship over one senseless fuck.”

“I guarantee we’ll have more than *one* senseless fuck.”

Her light, airy laugh drifted over the line, and I sighed—attempting to envision what she looked like. I wasn’t sure why, but over the past few weeks, I’d been longing to experience her laughter face to face.

“You know,” she went on, “for a high profile lawyer, you have a pretty dirty mouth.”

“You’d be surprised how much filthier it can get.”

“Filthier than what I’ve already experienced?”

“*Much filthier.*” I’d been treading the waters since we began this friendship—still hopeful that we’d meet in person someday, but now that we weren’t, there was no point in holding back. “I guess I’ll *talk to you* tonight.”

“Not unless you find another date between now and then. I know you’ll be searching.”

“Of course I’ll be searching.” I scoffed. “Is Alyssa your *real* name?”

“Yes, but I’m sure *Thoreau* isn’t yours. Do you care to finally give it to me?”

“I’ll give it to you when you come to your fucking senses and let me see you.”

“You just won’t let that go, will you?” She laughed again. “What if the real reason I don’t want to meet you is because I’m ugly?”

“I have a good feeling that *you’re not.*”

“But if I *was?*”

“I’d fuck you with the lights off.”

“I prefer the lights *on.*”

“Then I’d make you wear a paper bag over your head.”

“*WHAT?!*” She burst into giggles. “You’re ridiculous! Ugh, there’s a client at my door right now. I have to go. Can I call you later?”

“Always.” I hung up, smiling. Then it hit me.

Fuck...She always finds a way out of that line of questioning...

Perjury (n.):

The willful giving of false testimony under oath.

Alyssa (Well, my real name is “Aubrey”...)

“Lies always catch up to people in the end. Why don’t people understand that?” That’s what Thoreau’s text message said this morning.

“You don’t think some lies are justifiable?” I texted back.

“No. Never.”

I hesitated. *“So, you’ve never lied to me?”*

“Why would I?”

“Because we barely know each other...”

“Only because you keep me at a distance.” He sent me another text before I could respond. *“Would you like to know my real name and where I work?”*

“I prefer our anonymous arrangement.”

“Of course you do, and I’ve never lied to you. I trust you for some strange reason.”

“Some strange reason?”

“Very strange. I’ll talk to you later.”

I tossed my phone into my purse and sighed, letting that familiar feeling of guilt wash over me. I’d never meant to continue talking to him, to become his friend outside of LawyerChat, but I was in too deep, and I didn’t want to let him go.

Months ago, when I’d spotted the invitation to the exclusive network on my mother’s desk, I swore to only use it when I needed to ask questions for my pre-law classes. I’d used her access code to log in, built a fake profile, and made sure all the questions I asked were weaved in a way that no one would know that they were for homework assignments.

Unfortunately for me, the pre-law program at Duke was unlike any other program in the country. It consisted of more hands-on classes, one-on-one mentoring from practicing lawyers, and it was mandated that each student find an internship for the final four semesters. In addition to that, they expected us to read through and interpret case files like we were already lawyers.

If I had known that asking Thoreau for so much homework advice would lead to an actual friendship, I might have stopped talking to him sooner. Then again, just like I was his only friend, he was my only friend, too.

He was open and honest every time we spoke, and I only wished that I could be the same—especially since he seemed to have a habit of saying, “I hate fucking liars” whenever one of his dates deceived him.

Damnit...

Smoothing the tulle fabric of my tutu, I took several deep breaths; I could think about my friendship with Thoreau later, right now I needed to focus.

Today was audition day for a production of *Swan Lake* and I was a nervous wreck; I’d barely slept the night before, skipped breakfast, and showed up to the theater five hours early.

“Please clear the stage, ladies and gentlemen!” The director shouted from below. “The official auditions will begin in thirty minutes! Please clear the stage and make your way to the wings!”

Before heading backstage, I looked out into the audience. Most of the faces were familiar—my classmates, instructors, a few directors from the ballet company I’d worked for last summer, but the faces I needed to see weren’t there.

They never were.

Hurt, I found a corner in the dressing room and called my mother.

“Hello?” she answered on the first ring.

“Why aren’t you here?”

“Why aren’t I *where*, Aubrey? What are you talking about *now*?” She let out an exasperated sigh.

“My open audition for *Swan Lake*. You promised that you and dad were coming.”

“It’s Aubrey, honey!” She yelled to my dad in the background. “Your recital was today?”

“I haven’t been in a *recital* since I was thirteen.” I gritted my teeth. “This is an audition, a once in a lifetime audition, and you’re supposed to be here.”

“I guess my secretary forgot to tell me about it this morning,” she said. “Have you landed any internships for your major yet?”

“I have *two* majors.”

“*Pre-law*, Aubrey.”

“No.” I sighed.

“Well, why not? Do you think one is just going to fall from the sky and land in your lap? Is that it?”

“I had an interview yesterday at Blaine and Associates,” I said, feeling my heart grow heavier by the second, “and I have another one next week at Greenwood, Bach, and Hamilton. I’m also about to audition for the role of a lifetime if you’d like to pretend to give a fuck for five seconds.”

“*Excuse me*, young lady?”

“You’re not here.” There were tears in my eyes. “*You’re not here...Do* you know how huge this production is going to be?”

“Are you getting *paid*? Is the New York Ballet Company running it?”

“That’s not the point. I’ve told you over and over how important this audition is to me. I called and reminded you last night, and it would be really nice if my *parents* showed up and believed in me for a change.”

“Aubrey...” She sighed. “I do believe in you. I always have, but I’m in the middle of a huge hearing right now and you know that because it’s all over the papers. You also know that becoming a professional ballerina is not a stable career choice, and as much as I would *love* to leave my high-paying client to watch you tiptoe around on stage—”

“It’s called dancing *en pointe*.”

“Same thing,” she said. “Regardless, it’s just an audition. I’m sure your father and I won’t be the only parents who couldn’t make it today. Once you graduate from college and get into law school, you’ll see ballet for what it really is—a *hobby*, and you’ll be grateful that we pushed you into double majoring.”

“Ballet is my *dream*, mother.”

“It’s a phase, and you’re way past the prime age for becoming a professional last time I checked. Remember how you suddenly up and quit at sixteen? You’ll quit again, and it’ll be for the best. As a matter of fact—”

I hung up.

I didn’t want to listen to another one of her dream-killing speeches, and it angered me that she’d called ballet a “phase” when I’d been dancing since I

was six years old. When she and my dad had poured countless dollars into private classes, costumes, and competitions.

The only reason why I'd "quit" at sixteen was because I'd broken my foot and couldn't audition for any of the dance schools anymore. And the only reason I started to show the faintest interest in law was because I couldn't do much outside of my rehab sessions except *read*.

My heart had always belonged in pointe slippers, and that fact would never change.

"Aubrey Everhart?" A man suddenly called my name from the theater door. "Is that you?"

"Yes."

"You're next to take the stage. Got about five minutes."

"Be right there..." I stuffed my bag into a locker. Before I could close it, my phone rang.

Knowing it was my mother calling to offer a half-assed apology, I tried my best not to scream. "Please spare me your apologies." I immediately picked up. "They don't mean anything to me anymore."

"I was calling to tell you good luck," a deep voice said.

"Two minutes!" A stagehand glared at me and motioned for me to head onto the stage.

"*Thoreau?*" I turned my back to the stagehand. "What are you telling me good luck for?"

"You mentioned having some type of audition weeks ago. It's today, right?"

"Yes, thank you..."

"You don't sound too excited about your *dream* right now."

"How can I be when my own parents don't believe in it?"

"You're *twenty seven years old*." He scoffed. "Fuck your parents."

I laughed, guiltily. "I wish it was that simple..."

"It really is. You make your own money, and despite the fact that you don't really know shit about the law, you seem to be a pretty decent lawyer. Fuck them."

"I'll keep that in mind," I said, trying to steer that subject away. "I'm shocked you remembered that my audition was today."

"*I didn't*." He hung up, and I knew he was smiling as he did that.

"Fifteen seconds, Miss Everhart!" The stagehand grabbed my arm and practically pulled me onto the stage.

I smiled at the judges and stood in fifth position—arms over my head, and waited for the first note of Tchaikovsky’s composition to play.

There was a rustling of papers, a few coughs from someone in the audience, and then the music began.

I was supposed to demonstrate an arabesque, a pirouette, and then perform the routine that I’d been rehearsing in class for the past month and a half. I didn’t feel like it, though, and since this was one of my last opportunities to make an impression, I decided to dance how I wanted.

I shut my eyes and completed pirouette after pirouette, fouette turn after fouette turn. I wasn’t even on beat with the music, and I could tell the pianist was confused and trying to keep up with me.

I demonstrated every jump I knew, perfectly landing each one of them, and when the pianist gave up and struck the last note, I returned to fifth position—smiling.

There was no applause, no cheers, nothing. I tried to read the judges’ faces to see if they looked mildly impressed, but they were stoic.

“That will be all, Miss Everhart,” one of them said. “Will Miss Leighton Reynolds please take the stage?”

I murmured “Thank you” before stepping off and rushing out of the theater. I didn’t bother watching the rest of the auditions.

For the remainder of the afternoon, I walked around campus and tried not to cry. When I was sure that no tears would fall, I sent emails to Thoreau; that was the only thing that could possibly make me feel better.

Subject: Thinking...

“One dinner. One night. No repeats.” Do you pick a cheap or expensive restaurant? Do you pay for the dinner and the hotel room? Or do you make the woman split it with you?

—Alyssa.

Subject: Re: Thinking...

Expensive dinner. Five star hotel suite. I pay for everything.

Would you like me to book a few reservations for us so I can show you?

—Thoreau.

Subject: Re: Re: Thinking...

Of course not. And a “few” reservations? What happened to just one?

Subject: Re: Re: Re: Thinking...

I told you I’d make an exception in your case. I invested in a box of paper bags today.

—Thoreau

I laughed and looked at my watch. It was five o’ clock and I was sure the results for the production had been posted hours ago, but I was too scared to look. All I wanted was a chance to be a member of the swan corps, or even an understudy for the lead.

Why did I fuck up that routine? What the hell was I thinking?

After driving myself crazy with questions, I forced myself to make the trek back to the dance theater to look at the final cast posting. When I arrived, there was a huge crowd in front of the sign, and I could hear the usual “I’m in! I’m in!” and “How could they not pick me?” revelations.

I squeezed my way through everyone and squinted at the sheet, looking for my name on the minor cast sheet but it wasn’t there.

It was on the *major* cast sheet, and right next to the lead role of Odette/Odile, the white and black swan, was my full name in bold.

I burst into tears, jumping up and down in disbelief. I wanted to call my mom and tell her the good news, but my heart suddenly sank at the thought.

I knew that at this very moment, she was probably telling my father that I’d hung up in her face, and that he needed to make sure I knew the strings behind them paying for my education: “If you drop pre-law, we’ll stop writing the checks...Pre-law pays for your classes, ballet doesn’t.”

I lifted my aching feet out of a bucket of ice and patted them dry with a towel. I wasn't sure how I was going to juggle a leading role, classes, and a potential internship, but I didn't have a choice.

Sighing, I glanced at the calendar on my desk where I'd scribbled "Interview prep day" in today's slot.

My upcoming interview with Greenwood, Bach, and Hamilton—one of the most prestigious firms in the state, was more than just an interview. It was a *process*, and every intern-seeking student knew that landing an internship at that firm could do wonders for a resume.

The firm was so selective that they conducted four rounds of phone interviews, three online tests, and required each applicant to complete several essays before the final interview with the partners.

I'd soared through the phone interviews and the exams, but the essays—regarding hundred paged case files, were something that I hadn't expected. I'd even thought they'd sent me the wrong packet so I called to say, "I believe my packet was switched with the *law-school level* intern application." The secretary simply laughed at me.

She'd said the firm expected all of its interns—law school level *and* undergraduate level, to fill out the same packet to the best of their ability.

"Don't worry," she'd said. "We're not expecting perfection from you. We just want to see how your mind works."

I grabbed the case file that was giving me the most trouble and placed it into my lap. Then I went to the GBH firm's website and familiarized myself with the three partners who would be interviewing me.

Greenwood, the founder of the firm, was a salt and pepper haired man with wiry framed glasses. He touted Harvard as his reason for being so demanding and thorough, and boasted that in his thirty years of practicing the law, he'd attained one of the highest victory rates in the country.

Bach, partner of the firm for over ten years, was a bald man in his early forties, though he looked a bit older. He'd worked his way up through the firm, and since he was "such a hardworking individual with unparalleled passion," Greenwood had no choice but to make him his first partner. He had one of the second highest victory rates in the country.

Last was Hamilton—Andrew Hamilton, and he was...He was *sexy as fuck*. I tried to focus on his biography and ignore his picture, but I couldn't help it. His deep and piercing blue eyes were staring right at me, and his short, dark brown hair was begging my hands to run through it.

He had the face of a Greek God—evenly tanned, perfectly symmetrical, strong and chiseled jawline, and his full lips were curved into a slight smirk.

Even though the picture only showed the top part of his body, I imagined that by the way he filled out his navy blue suit that there were hard and defined muscles underneath it.

I was getting wet just looking at him.

Focus, Aubrey...Focus...

Strangely, his bio was the shortest one of them all. It didn't list his education, his background, or the year he became partner. It was just a bunch of filler words about how "the firm was so honored to have such an esteemed and proven lawyer" on their team. Oh, and he enjoyed eating chocolate.

How informative...

I copied and pasted all of their bios into a word document, and then I called Thoreau.

"Good evening, *Alyssa*," he answered, making me melt with his voice as usual. I swore he could talk me into doing anything—*almost* anything.

"Hey, um..."

"Yes?"

God, I loved his fucking voice... He hadn't said much of anything and I was already turned on.

"You called so I could listen to you breathe?" He had to be smiling.

"I did, actually." I rolled my eyes. "Are you enjoying my sounds?"

"I'd enjoy them a lot better if you were underneath me."

I blushed. "Um..."

"The case, *Alyssa*." He laughed. "Tell me about your latest case."

"Right, um..." I cleared my throat. "Long story short: My client carried a gun into a federal bank and forgot to turn on the safety lock. Someone bumped into him and his hands instinctively went to his pocket, and the gun fired—shooting him in the leg."

"Since when do you practice *criminal* law? I thought your specialty was corporate."

Shit... "It is, it is. I'm taking this case for a friend, pro bono."

"Hmmm. Well, your *friend* is looking at two to five years in a federal prison if he doesn't have any priors. What part of this do you need help with exactly?"

"The pleading part. He didn't hurt anyone but himself."

"Did he have a license to carry?"

“No...” I looked through my notes.

“Then I’m sure the prosecution will convince the jury that he carried that gun into the bank with the intent to harm someone other than *himself*. Take whatever deal they offer.”

“Well, I...” I looked at what the assignment sheet said. “What if I already rejected that deal?”

He sighed. “Call the prosecution and try to get it back. If they say no, plead no contest.”

“*No contest*? Are you out of your mind?”

“*Are you*? What type of corporate lawyer agrees to take an open and shut criminal case? A fairly inexperienced one at that...”

“For your information, it’s an assign—” I coughed. “Never mind. Telling me to plead no contest is pretty much the same thing as telling me to plead guilty.”

“If that was the case, I would have said *plead guilty*.” He sounded annoyed. “*No contest* is your client’s best option, and any *real* lawyer would know that. Are you sure you passed the bar exam?”

“I wouldn’t have been invited to join LawyerChat if I hadn’t, would I?” I felt my heart ache with that lie. “I’m just trying to avoid my client being sentenced to prison.”

“Then you *really* should stick to corporate law.” There was a smile in his voice. “Your client is going to prison and there’s nothing you can do about it. The only negotiable thing about his case is *how long* he’ll spend there. Anything else I can help you with? Do I need to lecture you on the difference between *guilty* and *not guilty*?”

I rolled my eyes and put the file away. “Thank you for your condescending help as always.”

“My pleasure,” he said. “I need to ask you something important.”

“About my case?”

“No.” He let out a low laugh. “What do you look like?”

“*What*?” I could barely hear my voice. “What did you say?”

“You heard me. Since I may never get a chance to see you, I’d like to know. *What do you look like*?”

I stood up and walked over to my mirror, letting my eyes roam over my reflection. “I’m not sure how I’m supposed to answer that...” I needed to change the subject, fast. From everything he’d told me about his dates over

the past few months, he definitely had a type he liked best, a type that intrigued him like no other: Blonde, slightly curvy, full lips...

Me.

I'd tried to envision what he looked like plenty of times. Dark haired, maybe? Dirty blond? A mouth made for kissing with deep green eyes? Six pack, no, *eight pack* that leads down to a lick-able V?

He does mention working out every day...

I was more than certain that he was attractive—he had to be if so many women put up with him on those dating sites, but each time my mind drew a picture, I'd convince myself that I had him all wrong.

“You know what?” I said, snapping out of my thoughts. “I’ve never been good at describing things. What do *you* look like?”

“I look like a man who wants to fuck you.”

Tingles ran up and down my spine. “That’s not a description...”

“What color is your hair?” He didn’t sound amused, and I knew he wasn’t going to let me direct the conversation tonight.

“Red.” I yanked the band from around my bun and let the blond strands fall to my shoulders.

“How long is it?”

“It’s short...”

“Hmmm. What about your eyes?”

I stared at my blue and grey irises. “Green, light green.”

“Do you have freckles?”

“No.” At least that part was true.

“And your lips?”

“You want to know how thin or thick they are?”

“I want to know how they’d look wrapped around my cock.”

I gasped.

“Are you playing shy tonight?” Ice cubes clinked against a glass in his background. “How much of my cock do you think you could take into your mouth?”

I remained silent, and my breathing began to slow.

“Alyssa?” His voice was soft. “Are you going to answer me?”

“It’s hard to make a prediction about something you’ve never done.” I heard him inhale a deep breath, and the line went completely silent.

I thought he’d ask me how I’d managed to have sex with boyfriends in the past without ever giving a blowjob, but he didn’t.

“Hmmm. Are you a natural redhead?”

“What does it matter?” I moved over to my bed. “I’m clearly not your type.”

“I have a *preference*, not a type, and a smart mouthed redhead who’s never had another man’s cock in her mouth is more than worthy of an exception.”

I hooked a thumb underneath my panties and peeled them off before slipping under the sheets. “Too bad I’m not a full blown virgin, huh?”

“I don’t fuck virgins.” He paused. “But considering the fact that you and I have never fucked, you might as well be one.”

Wetness slipped down my thighs, and I felt my nipples hardening. “I highly doubt—”

“I’m tired of only being able to talk to you on the phone, Alyssa...”

Silence.

“I *need* to see you...” His voice was strained. “I *need* to fuck you...”

“*Thoreau...*”

“No, *listen to me.*” His tone was a warning. “I need to be buried deep inside of you, feeling your pussy throb around my cock as you scream my name—my *real* name.”

A hand trailed down past my stomach and between my thighs, and my fingers began to strum my clit. Slow at first, then faster, faster with every sound of his heavy breaths in my ear.

“I’ve been very patient with you...” His voice trailed off. “Don’t you think?”

“No...”

“I have,” he said. “I’m tired of imagining how wet your pussy can get, how loudly you’ll scream when I suck your tits as you ride me...How hard I’ll pull your hair when I bend you over my desk and fuck you until you can’t breathe...*Tired.*”

I shut my eyes, letting my other hand squeeze my breast, letting my thumb pinch my nipple.

“I’m giving you two weeks to come to your fucking senses...”

“*What?*”

“*Two weeks,*” he whispered. “That’s when you and I are going to meet face to face, and I’m going to claim every inch of you.”

“I can’t...I can’t agree to...that.”

“*You will.*” His breathing was now in sync with mine. “And the second you do, you’re going to invite me over and I’m going to remind you of everything you’ve teased me with over the past six months.”

I was speechless. My clit was swelling with each rub of my finger, and my breaths were getting shorter and shorter.

“I’ll be gentle at first,” he whispered, “especially when I slide my cock into your mouth and pull on your hair, showing you exactly how I like it to be sucked.”

“*Stop...*” I was panting. “*Please...Stop...*”

“Trust me, *I won’t.*”

“*Thoreau...*” My legs were trembling.

“I can’t just *talk* to you anymore. I need to *feel* you, I need to *taste* you. Say yes to two weeks...”

I bit my lip, knowing that if he said it again, if he asked me one more time, I would say yes.

“*Alyssa...*” He was begging.

I was seconds away from coming, seconds away from screaming “Yes! Yes! Yes!”

“Promise me you’ll let me fuck you in two weeks...”

As if my mouth was under his command, it freed my bottom lip and prepared to say yes, but I hung up.

Keeping my eyes shut, I lay in bed and let the waves of an orgasm roll through me as I screamed the three yeses he couldn’t hear. When I finally stopped shaking, I rolled over and grabbed a pillow, pulling it to my chest.

Before I could force myself to sleep, I heard my phone ringing beneath me.

It was a text from Thoreau. “*I’ll take that as a yes. Fourteen days.*”

End of excerpt

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