



*Big Grumpy*  
**FIREMAN**

CASSI HART

# Big Grumpy Fireman

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A Big Burly Romance

*Cassi Hart*

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*Inspired by the men and women that stand guard. I appreciate our first responders, they are true heroes.*

*Thank you for your support, enjoy!*



*Cassi H   nt*

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# *Chapter One*

*Camilla*

I have always hated Thanksgiving.

It's the one time of the year that brings people together. The sweet aroma of roasted turkey fills the air, laughter echoing through the house as people exchange wild stories. It's a time to create lasting memories, repair bonds, or affirm them. A time when the dining table becomes a canvas adorned with colorful dishes, each one is a masterpiece of flavors. No one pays any mind to the calories the velvety pecan pie carries or just how much they've been watching their weight when the pumpkin pie is served with ice cream.

Well, at least I think that's what happens at Thanksgiving. That's what I have seen happen in the Hallmark movies anyway.

I've had every reason to hate Thanksgiving over the years. The media is always selling the idea that it's supposed to be a magical time, but that must be some of the propaganda my father claims they sell. Either way, there is a little part of me that wants to experience that magic, and this year, nothing is going to stop me. Dad promised to leave work early, Mom promised to stay home, and my sister Katherine and her fiancé are around too, so it's definitely going to be different this year.

There is a smile on my face when I strut out of my bedroom. This is the first time everyone will be under the same roof in



years. Dad and Kat are always on some business trip, and Mom goes out to brunch and then shopping with her friends, but not this year.

This year, they promised we would celebrate Thanksgiving as a family.

The house is silent as I skip my way downstairs, my smile wavering at the eerie silence. There's no soft holiday music playing from somewhere in the house or inviting aroma of the savory dishes the day promises.

"Mom, Kat!" I call out when I get to the foot of the stairs and walk toward the kitchen. "Kat? Is anyone home?"

Neither my mother nor sister answer, and the kitchen is empty when I walk in. There is nothing cooking on the stove or in the oven.

I walk out of the kitchen and to the backyard, but it's empty and just as silent, and for a second, I think I slept through an apocalypse until I hear a dog bark in the distance, followed by a kid's laughter.

I run back into the house, checking all the rooms before coming back to the kitchen, my heart hammering as I fight to regain my breath.

It can't be.

It's Thanksgiving! I can't be home alone again.

Every Thanksgiving for as long as I can remember, there has always seemed to be some sort of unspoken agreement in my family where everyone disappears and leaves me alone in the house. Last year, Dad and Kat traveled to a business summit in Istanbul, and I was left home alone with Mom. I woke up to a

message stating she would be at the country club and I could join her later if I wanted to or go out with my friends. All my friends were at home with their families celebrating Thanksgiving, and it would have been rude to show up uninvited. I spent that day in bed with a bag of chips binging on Hallmark movies.

This year, I made my parents promise me a proper Thanksgiving dinner, but how can that happen in an empty house?

Maybe they all went out and forgot about me. Like a sequel to Home Alone, except it's on Thanksgiving. Wouldn't surprise me if that was the case. I'm the Kevin McCallister of this family. The one that always gets left behind.

With a sigh, I walk to the fridge and grab a bottle of juice, pouring some into a glass before hopping onto the counter. I scroll through my phone and text my twin sister, Kat, to ask where the hell everyone has run off to, but my messages go unread, so I decide to call Mom instead.

She answers on the second ring with a, "Hi, honey." There is conversation in the background, and for a heart-stopping moment, I think they actually did go out to celebrate Thanksgiving without me.

"Hi Mom, where are you?" I say with a sigh. "Why is no one home?"

"Oh, we're at Kat's."

Her words startle me, and I sit up straighter, frustration and confusion swell through me. "What do you mean you're at the

Kat's? Why? Is she okay? Did you guys decide to celebrate at her place? Why didn't anyone tell me?"

"Slow down, Camilla," she says. "Your sister woke up with a stomach bug. Your father and I stopped by to bring her some soup and electrolyte drinks."

I breathe out a sigh, comforted by the fact that my sister has both her fiancé and my parents looking after her, but part of me is still hurt that they didn't think to wake me before they left.

"Is Kat feeling any better now?"

"Of course. It's probably nothing to be worried about, and between you and me, I think she is pregnant."

Oh.

Oh!

"Are you sure?" I whisper, forcing excitement into my tone, and it's a good thing no one is here to see me because I'm certain my expression doesn't match my words. Christ, I should be happy. If my twin is having a baby, then that's great news, but I can't help the painful tug in my chest.

It's always been Kat. She's the one my parents spent all our lives dotting on, and I was the unfortunate mistake that came along with her. Her grades always mattered, her life was closely monitored, and she got to spend all her time with our father. She was always introduced as their daughter, and it was almost like I was an afterthought.

I clear my throat, pushing back the lump there, but I can't help the bile that rises. I don't hate Kat. Quite the opposite. My twin sister is this extroverted, lovable human being who cares

about everyone, and it's not her fault that she is the chosen heiress to the family business. It's not her fault that our parents love her more.

Kat is only a minute older than me, and by virtue of coming out of the womb first, she automatically became the heiress to our family fortune.

If I sound bitter, it's because I am. Not because she gets to inherit a billion-dollar empire. God, no. Money is the least of my worries when I already have my own inheritance in place left to me by our late grandparents, but as the heiress, Kat has always received our parents' undivided love and attention, and I get...

I get nothing. My parents barely pay attention to anything I do.

Well, Kat says I should be grateful for the freedom, but what I wouldn't do to have our parents focus half the attention they give Kat on me, and now, the one day of the year I have begged for is still spent focused on her. I push back the selfish unbidden thoughts and concentrate on my mother's voice.

"... I guess we'll have to wait and see if she really is having a baby. I'll let you know when we're done here and on our way home." I catch the end of her statement, and I can tell she is already done with the conversation.

"Mom, wait!" I call out, my heart hammering in my chest.

"What about Thanksgiving?"

"What about it?"

"You'll all make it for dinner, right?"

"Camilla!" she scolds. "Don't be selfish. Your sister needs us here with her."

Sure, she does, I think. If my mother asked her, Kat would probably beg to be left alone.

“I’m sorry, uhm, please let me know when you are headed home and if Kat needs anything ...”

Someone speaks in the background, and I can tell my mother’s attention is distracted for a bit before she comes back on.

“Sorry, honey. I have to go.”

“Maybe I should come over—”

My voice is interrupted by the beep signaling the end of the call. I can’t believe I was selfish enough to ask about Thanksgiving when my twin is sick. I let out a sigh and hop off the counter, grabbing the juice to put it back in the fridge when my eyes lock on the several pans of side dishes and the turkey our chef prepared yesterday.

My parents didn’t want to be bothered fixing everything themselves, but they gave the staff the day off for the holiday. Before leaving, the chef prepped everything; it just needs to be cooked. I look around the kitchen, but I don’t see any cooking instructions. Chef Aubrey must have sent the instructions to my mother directly.

It’s all here. Everything that is needed for a proper Thanksgiving dinner, and I ...

No, I shouldn’t.

But ...

“Don’t think about it, Cami,” I scold myself, biting into my nails as I try to talk myself out of the idea taking form in my mind, but I know there is no stopping it. Before I know what I am doing, I am dialing my college roommate’s number. She

and I hit it off when we met at the freshman orientation and have been best friends since. That was three years ago, and I guess it says a lot that I'm much closer to her than I am to my own twin.

"Miss me already?" Lucia's sultry voice filters through the speaker, bringing an easy smile to my lips.

"Always," I say with a laugh. "Please do me a huge favor and tell me how to cook a turkey and stuffing. Also mashed potatoes, gravy, rolls ... What else?" I ask, looking inside all the dishes in the refrigerator. "Oh, and cranberry sauce. Is there anything else I need for a traditional Thanksgiving dinner?" There is such a long silence after I am done talking that I have to draw my phone from my ear to see if the call has disconnected. "Lucia? Are you there?"

"Did you fall and hit your head?" she asks instead. "You sounded all right when we spoke yesterday."

"No, why would you say that?"

"Cami, why do you want how to cook Thanksgiving dishes?"

"To make them, duh," I say, loving the idea the more I think about it.

"Hmm, how do I say this without hurting your feelings?" she asks gently. "Honey, you can't boil a pot of water without setting off the smoke alarm."

"That was one time!"

"What about the time I told you to help me prepare the sauce for the Meet and Greet and you burned it?"

“Fine, two times,” I concede. “Look, I can follow simple recipes, okay? I want to surprise my family with a cooked meal when they get home. Please help me.”

“Cami, there is a reason why I am the cook in our apartment.” And she’s an amazing one at that. It could stem from the fact that her family runs a chain of Italian restaurants all over the country that she will soon inherit, or it’s just a skill she was born with. Either way, her cooking is second to none.

“Lucia, trust me,” I plead. “I promise you, I will follow your instructions. Everything is already prepared; I’m just putting it in the oven or on the stove.”

She breathes out a sigh. “Fine, but I’ll send you instructions, but you have to promise to follow them exactly. Call me if anything goes wrong, okay?”

“You’re the best,” I say excitedly, dancing a little in the kitchen as I grab the apron. “Now what do I need to do?”

I put her on speaker as I pull all the dishes out and place them on the counter. There are a lot, but I am not exactly surprised by that fact. Lucia texts me a few simple-to-follow steps. Well, what she considers simple by her standards.

“Cami ...” Lucia’s sigh stops me. “Are you sure this is a good idea? Maybe you should just call a restaurant and order—”

“Psst, now that wouldn’t be a home-cooked Thanksgiving meal, would it?”

“No, but ...”

“Hey, trust me,” I say with a smile. “I’ll follow the instructions to a T and call you if I need help with anything.”

“Okay,” she says hesitantly. “I’ll trust you. Love you.”

Lucia hangs up, and I grab my phone, scrolling excitedly through the steps she’s sent, but the smile falls when I realize how much needs to be done.

“Nothing to be worried about,” I mutter to myself. “It’s no big deal. It’s just cooking.”

Feeling a mix of excitement and nervousness, I decide to turn on the stove, but I must turn it too high as it flames and I jump back, startled. I knock the vegetables off the counter and let out a chuckle at my overreaction as I lean down to pick them up.

I place them back on the counter and slump back, laughing at how terrified I am when I haven’t even done anything yet.

With another chuckle, I start to reach for the pan but stop, my senses going on alert when I smell something burning.

I sniff the air, gasping when I catch the whiff of smoke, and it takes me a full second to realize where it’s actually coming from.

It’s me. I’m on fire.

Oh my God! I notice the smoke coming from my apron and quickly strip it off, and perhaps that would be the end of it, except in my panic, I toss it toward the burning stove. Within seconds, the flames leap higher, dancing wildly across the countertops and engulfing the window treatments.

No!

Panic sets in, and I realize this has spiraled out of control.

“What do I do ... What—water!”



I rush to the sink and turn on the faucet. I grab a pan and place it under the running water before splashing it toward the growing fire, but it barely slows down the flames. Smoke is filling the room at an alarming rate, and I can barely see the fire anymore. My eyes tear up as I carry on splashing water in the direction of the stove as fast as I can.

Why isn't this working? Water puts out fire; that's science!

Christ, maybe this is karma for being so selfish when my twin is ill. Tears spill as I try desperately to put out the flames as best as I know how until it becomes too much, and I grow lightheaded.

This is all my fault.

My knees buckle as black spots begin to appear behind my eyes. I blink against the smoke. There is only regret when I give in to the weakness and drop to my knees, choking on the smoke of my own making.

I begin to crawl slowly in the direction of the patio door, but I'm not sure how far I make it before I collapse onto the floor. When I close my eyes, I figure this is how I die. Alone, on the kitchen floor, on the one holiday I have wanted to spend with my family all my life.

I'm not sure how much time has passed when I open my eyes next, only for them to lock with familiar gray ones, and I figure I am in Heaven. There is no other explanation for why I would be staring into the eyes of my first and only love.



## *Chapter Two*

*Damian*

I stop by the chief's office, letting myself in after a single knock. The man is nearing fifty, but he looks seventy with his full head of white hair and deep crow's feet around his eyes. He is lying back in his chair, sound asleep. His loud snores threaten to shake the building off its foundation.

I've known him all my life, and he was a close friend of my parents long before I was born. After their accident, he took me under his wing and pushed me to join the academy where I worked hard to follow in his and my late father's footsteps and became a fireman. Without the chief, who knows what would have become of the bitter man who felt like the world had a personal vendetta against him?

"Hey, Chief, I'm heading out. Want me to grab you a coffee before I leave?"

"Fucking hell!" he yells, sitting up with a start and almost toppling off his chair. I snort a laugh, which has him glaring in my direction. "What time is it?"

"Half past one," I say with a yawn. I have been on shift for the last thirty-six hours with only a short nap in the breakroom, but I still need a proper eight hours of sleep to function again.

"Right, I still need to finish up this report," the old man groans, pinching between his eyes. "You should probably get going. I bet the missus and the kids are waiting for you at

home. Oh wait, you have none of those because you are a sad lonely bastard with no one to miss you while you're gone."

"Harsh," I snort, shaking my head. "At least I get to go home."

"Touché." The man glares at me again before waving me off, and I start to leave when he stops me. "Oh, shit. I almost forgot."

"What?"

"Wife told me to ask you to join us for Thanksgiving dinner if you have no plans. You know how she dotes on you like her favorite child despite having four of her own."

It wouldn't be the first time I have eaten with the chief's family. My parents and I used to dine with them all the time, and me more so after the accident. But as much as I would love to join them tonight, I would rather sleep the day away. I start to say so when suddenly, the alarm blares through the station. Without a second thought, I rush back to my locker, quickly slipping into my protective gear. The adrenaline kicks in as my team and I spring to action, racing toward the fire trucks.

"Shit luck, huh? You were just headed out," one of the guys on my team says, and I simply nod, my focus on what awaits us.

Sirens wailing, lights flashing, we navigate the streets with urgency, the anticipation building with every mile we cover. I've already had to deal with four fires during my shift, and they were all bad. I can only pray that this one will not be as bad as the last. A few hours ago, we pulled a man out of a burning building after he'd forgotten to put out his cigarette and passed out drunk, setting the place on fire. He is currently

at the hospital nursing third-degree burns, but at least he gets to live.

“Oh, that’s not good!” My teammate whistles as we approach the house with smoke bellowing from its windows, and my blood runs cold.

My reaction is not due to the scene, although that is terrible, but instead to the familiar house.

Everyone has a moment in their lives that shaped them, for better or worse. A moment when something in them flipped, and a new part of them—sometimes a much darker one—was born.

For me, it was the day I started working for the Greene family. Eight years ago, I was only twenty-two when I started as their pool boy and then errand boy, doing just about anything they wanted. I was their lap dog, and they treated me as one, reminding me of just how much they had and how much I lacked. The man of the house was an asshole, who reveled in humiliating me, and his wife was a nightmare, who docked my pay just because she could.

My time with the family cultivated something dark in me. As dark as the smoke coming from the house they lived in.

I grit my teeth, and for the first time since I became a fireman, a dark thought filters in my head that this might be karma, but I push it back. To save lives and homes—no matter how much I despise the owners—will always be my first priority.

Always!

Adrenaline rushes through my veins as we swiftly assess the situation, strategizing the best way to approach the house.

Despite the thick smoke, we locate the source of the fire and determine the best way to approach.

“Cami!” someone yells, and I watch as a red-haired woman sprints from a car toward the burning house, fighting the man who grabs her. “Let go, Jack. Cami is in there!”

I don't stay back to figure out who the woman is as we divide ourselves into two teams. The first team quickly grabs the heavy-duty hose, connecting it to the nearest fire hydrant as the rest of us rush into the house.

“Please help her. My sister is in there!”

The woman's yells follow us into the house where we split into pairs to cover more ground and look for the person trapped inside. Once inside the house, wearing my mask and equipped with a thermal imaging camera, I cautiously navigate through the thick smoke. I guess it helps that I know this house like the back of my hand. The adrenaline rushes through my veins as I slip into the kitchen, and it's not long before I spot a faint heat signature on the camera screen. I rush toward the source and quickly communicate with my team that I have found her.

The woman is light when I lift her into my arms and draw her to my chest, then hurry for the door, but there is too much smoke the way I came through, forcing me to take the back door and exit into the backyard.

“Please be alive,” I whisper as I carry her outside. It's a good thing the house has a massive backyard that opens up to a forest area. I carry her as far as I can from the fire before gently laying her on the neatly trimmed grass.

I strip off my headgear and gloves before checking for a pulse, letting out a relieved sigh when I feel it beating strongly. I check for burns, but she seems unscathed, which is surprising considering where I just found her.

A groan slips from the woman's lips as her eyes blink open before settling into a squint against the harsh sunlight. My eyes connect with her green ones and ... I forget how to breathe.

They're not just any shade of green, her eyes. They're moss-green to be specific, and they're perfect. They stare up at me in surprise at first and then wonder, carrying bits of hero worship in them.

It wouldn't be the first time someone has looked at me like that. Hell, I am built like a tank and I save lives for a living, I've had my fair share of ego-boasting complimentary looks tossed my way, but none have sent my heart hammering in my chest like hers.

None have robbed me of my ability to breathe.

Her eyes are teary as they stare up at me, her face covered in soot and hair in all sorts of disarray, and despite all that, she is the sexiest woman I have ever seen in my life.

My cock swells in my pants as my eyes drop to her cleavage. Her top leaves very little to the imagination, and the swell of her perfect tits held firmly by a nude bra sends a deep throb rocking through me.

Fuck! What is wrong with me?

Since when am I this sick fuck that lusts over a woman who is clearly in her most vulnerable state?

Get a grip, Damian!

I clear my throat, reining in my desire for this woman.

“Are you okay, Miss?” I ask, running my eyes over her, but this time, I force back the desire as I inspect her for injuries, and when my eyes lock back with hers, I suddenly realize who she is. The wild, curly red hair should have been the first clue. And how could I have forgotten those eyes?

She’s one of the daughters of my former employers, but which one? They are twins, after all. One of them was the prized golden child who could do no wrong. The other was a wall flower, quieter than a church mouse.

But she spoke to me, I think. She was one of the only people who ever treated me like I mattered.

Camilla. She used to follow me around like a puppy. Despite being nearly a decade younger than me, she was desperate for my attention, for anyone’s attention, really.

The last time I saw the twins, they were teens, and that was ... shit. That was nearly nine years ago. Right after the accident.

“I’m fine,” she sniffs, drawing me from my dark thoughts. “I ... I can’t believe I am alive. Unless this is a dream, then ...”

She stops, breaking into a coughing fit, and I help her sit up, rubbing her back as she coughs.

“Hey, you’re okay,” I whisper, helping steady her.

“My mom is going to kill me,” she says, slumping back against me and lifting her teary eyes to mine. “It’s all my fault.”

“What happened?”



“I ...” She closes her eyes, combing a hand through her thick wavy red hair. “I thought I would make Thanksgiving dinner and surprise everyone, but I messed up. I was only thinking of myself—”

“I’m sure you didn’t mean for the fire to happen,” I offer, confused by my own words. I am not exactly known to be a comforting guy, preferring to be more technical with my work. I put out fires, rescue kittens from trees, and free people trapped in cars, but I don’t stick around long enough to comfort them.

“They won’t see it that way,” she whispers. “I was only thinking of myself, thinking I could finally do something to make them proud of me.”

Camilla.

I recognize her now.

The younger and softer of the twins had a tiny mole under her left eye. It’s so small, it’s almost invisible, but I notice it now, just as I noticed it so many years ago. Her sister was always so loud, forever the center of attention. The younger of the twins seemed to blend into the background whenever her family was near.

It’s hard to reconcile this beautiful woman with the child from back then. She looks nothing like the mousy little thing whose life’s mission was to get my attention in her own quiet way, and it seems she hasn’t recognized me yet.

I’m not surprised. To the girls, I was just an errand boy that slaved for the family many years ago, but there was a part of me that always felt some sort of kinship with this particular

twin. She had every luxury that money could buy. But she never had her family's undivided attention and love.

It makes sense that even in adulthood, she's still seeking her family's approval.

I brush my finger over her cheek, rubbing at the soot on her face, but the move only works to spread it further.

"You need to get checked out," I say, clearing my throat and pushing back the raging desire I suddenly have for this woman who I'd known in another life. "Let's get you out front to an ambulance."



## *Chapter Three*

*Camilla*

Kill. Me. Now.

Grab a stick and knock me out with it because how the fuck will I ever recover from this? I look like death warmed over in front of Damien freaking Sharpe.

Sweet Lord, it's a struggle holding still with the memory of his fingers brushing over my cheek and those mysterious gray eyes staring down at me with concern like I've always wanted him to.

He is touching me just the way I've only ever dared to dream. I have thought of this—his touch—for years, and I don't want it to ever stop. He mentioned taking me to see a paramedic, but he hasn't moved a muscle. I haven't either.

I can't risk moving and breaking this magical moment.

When I was in middle school, I thought of running away from home in an attempt to get some sort of reaction from my parents. Just once, I wanted to distract them from my twin so they would see me, and I even had my bag already packed when this dark-haired stern-looking gorgeous boy walked into my life.

The moment Damian started working for my family, he became my sole focus, only to break my heart when he disappeared without so much as a goodbye about a year later.

And now, he's here.

Damian was ... everything.

Still is, if I am being honest with myself. Why else would I put off being with someone all these years if what he means to me is nothing?

Back then, I couldn't express my feelings because I knew he wouldn't return them, partly because of our age difference and partly because of his position as my parents' employee, so I settled for following him around whenever he was at the house, and he put up with it. Not only that, he encouraged it. He would speak to me, inquire about the book I was reading, and ask me for my opinion on things. Damian was the only person in my entire life who ever saw me.

The day he disappeared, I thought I would never see him again, and now ...

When did he get so fucking hot? He looks even better than he did as a teenager.

My heart skips a couple of beats as I stare up at him from under my lashes. He's transformed from the boy I once knew into the most striking man I have ever seen. His once boyish features have matured, giving him a rugged appearance. His chiseled jawline highlights his strong, confident presence, but his eyes ...

It's always been those dark stormy gray eyes that captivated me, drawing me closer and closer to the man I loved, and for the first time, I get to be alone with my crush. So, of course, I look like death warmed over.

Despite the mortification I feel right now, it does nothing to dull how I feel for this man. My nipples are drawn tight with him standing so close to me, and for the first time since I met him, he's not looking at me with sympathy or acceptance.

He looks almost ... Dare I think it?

Turned on.

Am I confusing concern with ... want? With need?

I bet he doesn't even remember me, which is a good thing. I was really annoying back then, but I can't exactly tell him that I did all that just for his attention. I bet a "Hi, I'm the red-haired little pest that used to follow you everywhere. How've you been?" wouldn't go over so well, so I feign ignorance.

I pretend my sex isn't clenching with need at the muscular giant currently watching me.

"Your breathing has sped up," he rasps, his deep voice sending shivers down my spine. "Are you sure you're okay?"

If I am breathing rapidly, it has nothing to do with the heavy amount of smoke I inhaled and everything to do with the man holding me. His heavy presence is enough to rob me of my breath and send wet heat slicking down my thighs.

Christ, this is pathetic.

One would expect me to be over a man I haven't seen in years, but all time has done is deepen my desire for him. My body is practically vibrating with the need to turn around, loop my arms around him, and tell him that I'm older now.

I want him to know I've stayed pure, remained untouched ... for him.

Get a hold of yourself, Cami!

I swallow back my need and remind myself to say something.

“I ... uhm, I ...”

“Hey, it’s okay. We’ll get you checked out real soon.”

I nod at his words, hypnotized to the spot by his voice. Was it always this deep?

I suck in a sharp breath when he tucks my hair behind my ear, his eyes firmly on mine as he does so, and I have to resist the urge to fling myself into his arms just to feel the rest of his perfect body against me.

I am saved from just that when I hear my name. At first, it doesn’t register that someone is calling out to me until I look up to see my sister running toward us, and close behind her are her fiancé and our parents. Damian helps me to my feet as people start filing into our backyard.

“Cami, oh my God!” Kat sobs, flinging herself into my arms.

“I thought the worst had happened to you.”

“I ... I’m fine!”

“What the hell happened, Camilla?” Dad asks, stepping up beside us.

“I’m sorry,” I whisper, pulling back from my sister’s hug to meet my father’s furious face. “I didn’t mean for it to happen.”

“What did you do?” Mom asks with a glare, standing next to my father.

“I ... I thought I could prepare a Thanksgiving dinner while everyone was still at Kat’s ...”

“Don’t you dare pin this on your sister!”

I drop my eyes to the grass as tears begin to form. “I am not pinning this on anyone. I just—”

“Instead of making excuses, perhaps you should reflect on what you have just done, young lady!” Father hisses. “Your sister would have never been this careless. This mess is going to cost us millions to fix, not to mention the damage to your mother’s garden—”

Someone steps in front of me, cutting my father off and blocking him from me. “Are you fucking kidding me right now?”

“This is a family matter, mister. I would advise you to stay out of it!”

I cannot see Damian’s face from my position, but somehow, I can feel the anger vibrating off him as he stares my father down. “Your daughter almost died in that fire and not once have you inquired about her health!”

A heavy silence follows his words, and I can picture my father’s face flushing red at having someone call him out. He is a very powerful man, and men like him don’t get interrupted often.

“Pathetic!” Damian spits, but I am too focused on the hand he slides into mine to gauge the reaction his words might have caused. I don’t realize we are moving until someone tries to stop us.

“Where the hell are you taking my daughter, you lunatic?” my mother screams.

“To the hospital to get checked out, something you should have done when you got here,” Damian grits out. “Now stop



me again, and someone will need room in the ambulance!”

No one steps in our way as we head out through the gate. Sure enough, there is an ambulance waiting in front of the house. After exchanging a few whispered words with an older-looking man with white hair, Damian leads me to the ambulance. No one dares stop Damian when he hops into the back with me or when he insists on being in the room with me as I get examined.

All this feels like a dream.

Perhaps I am still passed out on the hard floor, breathing in dangerous toxins, because I do not exist in a world where someone would stand up for me, and no way that person would be the first and only man I have ever loved.

When we get to the hospital, they run a few checks on me, and I get an x-ray to determine the damage to my lungs before being led to a hospital room. Damian paces in the room, making everyone in it nervous, but no one dares kick him out after I’ve made it clear I want him to stay. He seems angry, annoyed even, and I hate that I am the cause.

“I’m sorry,” I whisper once we’re alone in the room, but he clearly hears me with the way his head whips in my direction.

“What are you sorry for?”

“Everything,” I say, my eyes dropping to the white hospital sheets. “I didn’t mean for any of this to happen. My friend warned me about cooking—”

I gasp when he tips my chin and tilts my head, so I am staring into those gray eyes I have obsessed over for years. “Did you

mean to set the house and yourself on fire in an act of rebellion?”

My eyes fire up as hurt spears my chest. Is that what he thinks of me? That I'm some spoiled brat whose goal in life is to wreak havoc just to get some attention?

His grip tightens on my chin, and he gives me a stern look. “Answer me!”

Fuck, he has no right looking so goddamned hot bossing me around. I shouldn't like it, but how else do I explain the slick heat between my legs. My panties are practically soaked, the wetness could put out a fire.

“Camilla!” he growls.

“No,” I whisper. “I didn't mean for it to happen.”

“Then you have no reason to apologize,” he says gruffly.

“Accidents happen. Even the most experienced cooks start fires, and it's fine to feel sorry, but what you are not going to do is beat yourself up when your family is already doing that for you.”

“I ...” My brain short circuits as I try to think of what to say, but it looks like I don't need to as he is not done.

Damian leans down, his face close to mine. Eyes dark and heated as he meets my gaze. His lips ... they're so close, I could lean in and kiss them.

“You made a mistake, but it's not the end. You learned your lesson, and now, I don't want to hear another apology coming from your lips, okay?” he says. “No more!”

“Okay,” I whisper, letting myself drown in his eyes.



## *Chapter Four*

*Damian*

It's a fucking pain in the ass trying to pretend I am not rocking a raging erection. It's not something I've had to deal with before this moment, and now that I have, I know just how much it fucking sucks. The cause of my predicament is still watching me with doe eyes as I listen to the doctor.

The doctor is explaining everything to me, but I can barely focus on anything except the woman seated a few feet from us, watching me.

I can feel her eyes on me.

It's nothing like a soft caress and more like sharp claws digging into my skin and scratching their way into the shell I have worked so hard to build around my control.

They had her change into a hospital gown that does even less to hide her perfect body.

I am a sick man!

A sick man that dares lust over a woman on a hospital bed, but I can't stop myself either. I want to tug the strings off that ugly gown to reveal her body. Those perfect tits have no business staying hidden from sight.

They need to be caressed, kneaded, and pinched before I suck them between my lips. I want to turn her around and fuck her

in plain sight as the doctor watches. Everyone is welcome to watch me claim my little wallflower in plain view.

“So, as you can see, the scans show that her lungs are in perfect condition. There is slight damage to her throat, but nothing to be worried about.”

“Hmm,” I hum, nodding at the doctor’s words, but my mind is miles away. I was already hard earlier, but now my cock is throbbing. The thoughts I’m currently harboring only work to fuel my need for her.

“Her voice might be scratchy at times, but that is completely normal. It might take a while, but she will be back to normal in no time.”

“Right.”

“Well, that’s all Ms. Greene, Mr. Sharpe,” the doctor says, nodding to each of us and slipping his pen into his coat pocket. “I will write her a prescription for medicine she can take for her throat, but you can bring her back to the emergency room if she starts having other symptoms.”

I shake the man’s hand, thanking him for attending to Camilla, and I wait until he’s left the room before turning around to face her. I have to swallow back the need to storm to where she is and draw her into my arms, but I can’t do that, not when I am sporting an erection as heavy as mine.

There is no telling what I will do if I touch her.

“Get changed. We’re leaving,” I say instead.

“Okay,” she whispers walking into the bathroom adjacent to the room to get dressed, and I use that time to call my buddy to bring over my truck. I left the keys in my locker, and besides,

it's way past my shift, so there is no need to head back. They can always call me if they need a pair of hands, but right now, someone needs me more.

I make the arrangements to have the car brought over before hanging up. I walk to the window and stare out, willing for my erection to go down, but thoughts of Camilla and her sexy body keep filtering in and making it hard to do so.

I think of her father and the way he treats his twin daughters. None of them have it better than the other. I have seen the man scold the older one for the slightest of mistakes. I have seen him pressure her to the point of breaking down, and at the same time, watched him completely ignore the younger twin. At one point, I even thought the girl might be a ghost, and I was the only one seeing her.

My erection is gone by the time Camilla comes out, and just like that, she undoes all my hard work. Dressed in a crop top and denim shorts that show off more skin than they hide, it's a real wonder I haven't already blown in my pants. The little pieces of fabric do almost nothing to hide her creamy thighs or hardened nipples. My balls draw taut with need when I realize she doesn't have a bra on this time.

Fucking hell, this little thing will be the death of me. I swallow hard as I watch Camilla walk up to me, her long siren red hair flowing over her shoulders, and I just want to lean in and bury my nose in it and soak up her warmth.

It's tempting.

It's really tempting to close the distance between us, sweep her into my arms and kiss her until she is trembling. I want to strip off those little shorts and thrust my cock into her warm pussy.

I bet she's wet right now, her little cunt trembling with need as I rail her, fingers digging into her thighs. I bet she's so tight, her creamy juices would coat my dick with every thrust.

Fuck!

Get a hold of yourself!

The thought doesn't stop me from running my gaze over her perfect tits, erect nipples pushing hard against the thin material of the shirt and begging for my lips. A hoarse sound slips from me, and I back up a step, clenching my fists as I fight for control.

I want her.

That much is obvious at this point, but I can't have her, at least not right now. I would break her if I did.

I haven't touched or wanted to touch anyone for years. It's been ages since I have felt this animalistic instinct in me, fighting to crawl its way out, and there is no telling what I will do to my little siren if I let my hands touch her.

I could hurt her with my hunger. With this insatiable need to possess her body, spill my seed into her, and mark her for myself ...

"Let's go," I force out. "We still need to pick up your medication before heading home."

"Home!" Her face falls. "Kat and her fiancé live on Jackson's Street. Everyone's probably waiting there."

My eyes narrow on her as I close the distance between us. She backs up a step, bumping into the bed when she does so. "Do you want me to send you back to those people?" I ground out,

forcing her to meet my gaze, and my heart hammers when her green eyes lock on mine.

Camilla is the twin that always stood out to me, despite her quiet nature. I always found her intriguing and her dry wit hilarious despite her annoying habit of following me everywhere. I realize that if it'd been her sister I'd found in the house, I probably wouldn't have reacted the way I did with this little siren.

"They're my family," she whispers.

I snake an arm around her waist and hoist her onto the bed before stepping between her thighs. She gasps when my erection brushes against her thigh but makes no move to push me away.

"You've still not answered me," I whisper. "Do you want me to send you back to those people?"

"What other options do I have?"

"Come home with me," I tell her, drawing her flush against my body. "If it's Thanksgiving you want, then that's what I'll give you."

Her body trembles when I smooth my hand along the small of her back before thrusting my cock against her inner thigh.

"Damian ..." she whimpers, pushing up against me, and we both groan when my cock brushes her clothed sex. I grind my teeth, fighting to control my breathing as my little siren flexes her thighs around my waist and begins to grind her cunt over my raging erection, the clothes between us stopping me from thrusting inside the way I so desperately want to.



“The choice is yours, sweetheart,” I say through clenched teeth, even though it truly isn’t. There is no way in hell I am sending her back to those assholes who haven’t given a shit about her one moment in her life, but I will let her think it’s an option.

“I’ll go with you,” she says.

“Good, because they don’t deserve you.”

“I didn’t think I had a choice,” she whispers, looking away before shifting her eyes back to mine. “You know I waited, right?”

My brows draw in confusion. “Waited?”

“For you to come back. To realize you liked me and come for me,” she whispers, her words disarming me. “Even after you disappeared and I had no idea why you suddenly left or where you went, and all through college ... I waited.”

“You ...” My voice trails off as I try to make sense of her words.

She looks down at her lap, avoiding my eyes as she speaks. “I wouldn’t let anyone touch me or kiss me or even take me out because of you.”

A virgin. Fuck me!

“Then I won’t keep you waiting any longer.” I trace a hand up her shoulder before cupping her jaw. I rub my thumb over her pouty lips for a second before I lean in and capture them in a hungry kiss.

Camilla whimpers, closing her arms tightly over my shoulders as she leans into the kiss. It’s awkward at first, exposing it as

her first kiss, and that only works to send a deep hunger rocking through me with the need to possess her body not only for the night, but for good.

Mine!

The need to claim her is now at a fever pitch, and there seems to be a shift between us. Sometime between the moment she'd looped her arms around me and when she confessed her feelings for me, everything changed. Now I can't imagine there coming a time when she doesn't feel the same way.

The thought of my little siren finding out how unworthy I am of her and shifting her feelings to someone else has me kissing her deeply, looking to claim her for myself. She whimpers into the kiss when I slip my free hand into her top and cup her perfect tit with my palm.

Her body begins to tremble when I pinch her erect nipple between my knuckles and tug hard.

"I'm here now," I say with a groan, biting her lower lip and tugging gently before brushing my lips against hers in another hungry kiss. "You are mine now!"

"Damian ..."

I grab her chin and tip it, dropping my lips to her jaw and kissing a trail along her skin. I lick a path up her neck, running my open mouth over her sensitive skin. My phone vibrates in my jeans, probably alerting me that my truck is here, but I find that I can't draw away from her addictive lips.

"You're mine!" I growl, rubbing her nipples with my thumb and soaking in her reaction. "Tell me you understand."

She whimpers when I slip my hand up her thigh, and we both moan when I rub my finger over her clothed pussy. Fucking hell, it takes everything not to shoot in my pants. I have to fight the need to slip my finger into her panties and feel for myself just how wet she is, but there will be no stopping if I do.

“I understand,” she cries, her body trembling with need.

“Yours. Only yours.”

“Good,” I say heavily, pressing my lips against hers in a hard kiss, as if to seal the words. “Now let’s go make you a proper Thanksgiving dinner.”

I stare down at her flushed face and glazed eyes and realize there is no going back to a life without her.

Mine!



## *Chapter Five*

*Camilla*

My knees are still trembling as I walk past Damian and into his home.

I've thought about this moment a hundred times over. I've pictured myself walking into his home so many times that it feels like I'd created all possible scenarios in my head but none of them come close to this moment.

I never pictured that the day I walked into his home, I would be at my worst. In all the possible scenarios I created, I always looked my best, sinfully irresistible with a sexy little number and smelling like he just picked me from a garden of roses.

"You must be tired," Damian whispers from behind me, his deep sultry voice making my body shiver, and I just want to lean into him, but I feel like shit, probably look and smell like it too, so I distract myself by looking around.

His home is nothing like I pictured.

I don't know what it is I expected from the man who used to work for my family, but it's not a pretty two-story Victorian home nestled in a picturesque neighborhood. The house stands tall with classic architecture that hints at its deep history and a well-maintained little garden at the front adorned with colorful flowers and lush greenery. The place is well taken care of. I wonder if he's lived alone all this time or if he's ever shared this home with someone else.

A girlfriend perhaps.

A wife!

I shake my head, fighting to rid my head of thoughts of him with someone else.

Damian is mine!

I turn around to find the man removing his work boots and I swallow hard at the sight of the heavily veined hand working the shoelaces. My eyes track his massive arm and up to his chiseled face. Thoughts of someone else having access to this has jealousy burning my throat.

This place is so well kept, it gives off warm and cozy atmosphere. The furniture with warm tones is well kept, made cozier by the fading sunlight streaming through the windows, casting a gentle glow into the room. The walls are adorned with family photos that carry a sense of nostalgia in them, but nothing including a possible former girlfriend or wife.

No way he has someone now, or he wouldn't have kissed me the way he did. He would not have touched me or said any of the words he had if he was already seeing someone else.

All the cards are laid bare, but it's hard to convince myself that someone like Damian would want to be with someone like me. I've been the invisible daughter all my life, remaining unseen by the people who are supposed to love me. How could someone like Damian ever really want me when my own parents don't?

His eyes shoot up to mine, and I am startled by the heat I read in them. "Where did you go?"

"Huh?"

“You seemed lost for a second, like you were deeply contemplating something,” he says, getting up. “You’re not thinking of going back to your family, are you?”

“No, but I—”

“Because there is no way in hell I am sending you back to them,” he spits, his eyes darkening with anger, and I can read the hate in them. I should be scared, terrified of this man who hates a family I am part of, but I am not.

He has every reason to hate us. Although I was barely a teen when Damian started working for our family, I was old enough to realize how my parents treated him was not right, but it wasn’t personal. Not really. It’s no excuse, but my parents were both born with a silver spoon and have always been conscious of social classes, treating everyone beneath their status with little respect. It’s a wonder my sister and I did not pick up their bad habits.

Even so, Damian had every right to feel slighted.

“I’m sorry,” I whisper, knowing it’ll do little to make up for what he went through.

His eyes narrow on mine. “Why are you sorry?”

“For how my family treated you back then. My parents—”

“Should be the ones to apologize, not you,” he growls, his eyes firing up as he jumps to his feet.

My eyes trail over him and, good Lord, he is massive. Every time I see him at his full height, I still get startled by his size, and it doesn’t matter that he was also tall back then. My mind just can’t reconcile the tall lanky twenty-year-old with this man built like a tank.

Damian's dark eyes are on mine as he takes a step forward. My heart races at the darkness in his expression as he closes the distance between us. I back up a step, my breath whooshing out when my back connects with the wall.

"Damian," I whisper when he steps up to me, his massive form locking me in place.

"You want to know why I left out of the blue, huh?" he hisses, his eyes cold and empty. "Your parents accused me of stealing a family heirloom from the house and called the cops on me."

My lips part in shock. "W-what?"

"They didn't just falsely accuse me of stealing, but they let the cops arrest me and throw me in jail for a year. It was just after the accident that killed my parents, when I had no one," he growls, his voice much deeper and colder than before. "Do you think a simple sorry is going to cut it?"

Oh God!

Oh no. This is bad.

I open my lips to apologize again, but one look at him, and I swallow back my words. There is no fixing what my parents did to him with a simple apology, but ... maybe ...

I shake my head, my eyes dropping to my feet as I push back the idea swirling in my brain. I've already made a wrong judgment call today as it is, and it cost a home and almost cost me my life, but ...

Good Lord, I want to fix this so bad. Only then will Damian be able to move on. Only then will he be able to look at me and not see the people who robbed him of his freedom in his time of grief.



I raise my trembling fingers tentatively to his chest, touching him as one would pet an angry lion, afraid that it'll rip off their hand, but hoping it leans into their caress.

“My father is a proud man, and my mother, well, she would rather sell all her most treasured jewelry before she admits to her mistakes, but ...” I swallow hard, struggling to get the words out as Damian stares down at me. “I’m here.”

“What?”

“I’m part of the family you hate, and looking at me probably reminds you of people you would rather not remember, so I want to apologize for them.”

“I told you ...”

“A simple sorry won’t cut it,” I whisper, swallowing down my nerves. “So, take me instead.”

“What?”

“Punish me instead,” I murmur, meeting those cold dark eyes I have loved for years. “If it helps you heal even a little, let me make up for their mistakes. I can take it.”

Take me.

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There is a long silence following my words, but his eyes stay on mine. I expect to hear some form of protest from him, but all he does is smooth a finger over my cheek before grabbing my chin.

“Don’t tempt me, princess,” he threatens, but his words come out breathily, and his eyes are hungry as he trails them over

my face and body.

I gasp, not at the endearment but the way he says it. He used to call me princess back then too, except it was said in a mocking tone, but now, it carries so much heat and desire in it that my legs grow weak. That simple word robs me of my ability to breathe. My lungs threaten to collapse from holding my breath, but I can't help myself.

Damian guides my chin until I am staring at him, my lips parting in a gasp when I read the desire swimming in his gaze. I whimper out his name when he runs his thumb over the pulse in my neck, his hungry eyes running over my body.

“You don't want me, not now when I have so much pent-up frustration at running into your family.”

My heart flutters, and not with the fear his words are probably hoping to invoke but from the promise behind his eyes. His eyes are almost black now; how can the heat in them still be directed at me when I look like this?

My panties are soaked—have been since he kissed me—and my body is so warm and achy all over, it feels like I am going to explode any second.

I want it too. Crave him like my next breath.

“It's okay,” I whisper, “You can have me.”

I gasp when he closes a hand over my throat, squeezing as he runs his hungry eyes over me. “Punish you?” he whispers, leaning in and brushing his lips teasingly over mine only to push back when I lean in. “You have no fucking idea what you are asking for, little girl.”

My stomach flips at his words, and my lips part in a gasp when he presses his erection against my stomach. He is still dressed in his heavy work clothes, and the fact that I can feel the heavy press of his erection should scare me, but ...

This is Damian.

This is the boy-turned-man that I have wanted for years. I haven't let another touch or kiss me because, like some hopeless fool, I held out for him.

I waited.

I can take whatever it is he wants me to. He wields so much power over my body with his heavy masculine presence.

"Damian," I moan when he tips my head back, kissing a path down my chin, his teasing lips sending a throb between my legs. His lips graze the sensitive spot under my earlobe, and a shudder visibly wracks my body. I'm sensitive all over, have been for a while now, and I can't hold back. My pulse is racing, and I need ...

I need ...

"Tell me, princess," he growls, slipping his free hand into my top and up my back. "Are you anything like the rest of your family? A stuck-up little brat, snobbish to the mere help?"

"Oh!" I cry when his hand cups my breasts in his massive palm.

"Does it turn you on, having the errand boy touch you like this?" he growls. "I bet you are dripping wet. Do all the rich brats like you enjoy having their tight little bodies touched by thick calloused hands, or is it just you?"

He lets go of my throat, combs his fingers into my hair, and winds his fist around the strands, tugging hard. “Answer me!”

Liquid heat slicks my folds at his command, and my sex pulses with need, desperate for his touch ... for anything to relieve this ache.

I whimper. “Please ...”

“Fuck!” Damian growls before his lips press over mine, and I open my mouth with a moan, letting him in. The kiss is intoxicating, the slide of lips downright sinful, but I can’t help myself as I lean into him, giving in to the overwhelming feeling I have longed for—craved—for so long. The kiss is demanding and hungry, my whimpered moans mixing with his deep ones.

My toes curl in pleasure when our tongues touch, whining wantonly against him when he deepens the kiss, sweeping his tongue over mine until we’re both out of breath, but I need this—need him more than oxygen in my lungs.

Damian draws back from the kiss, trailing his lips down my neck as he rubs my nipple with his thumb. My brain melts as he kisses a path down my chest, pushing my top up as his warm mouth closes over my puckered nipple. He drags his tongue over me, his whiskered jaw brushing the sensitive skin of my breasts and sending a storm between my legs.

My eyes widen in shock when he drops to his knees, his eyes on mine as his fingers work on the buttons on my shorts. “I bet you are used to this, huh?”

“What?” I whisper, mind dazed with pleasure.

“Someone on their knees for you,” he hisses before letting out a dry laugh. “You are part of the Greene family, of course, you are used to someone on their knees, worshipping the very ground to walk on.”

A stab of pain shoots through my chest, and I look away before he can read the hurt in my eyes.

It’s okay.

He’s angry. I can fix it.

I’ll do whatever it takes to help him feel better. My family hurt him; I’ll take the brunt of his pain and frustration.

I gasp when he shoves the shorts down my thighs along with my panties, leaving me exposed. I step out of them, my face heating up at the thought of exposing myself this way to him, but he doesn’t let me close my thighs when I try to. Instead, he pushes them open, running his dark hungry eyes over my sex.

“Fuck me, you are dripping, princess.” He groans, trailing a hand up my inner thigh. “Your pussy is dripping with your juices. I bet it tastes like honey, soft and creamy.”

There is little warning before he grinds his face against my sex and his mouth is on me, lapping at the wetness with a deep growl like he’s starved. I thought I was ready for anything, but nothing could have prepared me for the hot sensation that shoots up my spine to the tips of my hair.

Oh, God.

How have I survived this long without feeling those calloused hands tightening on my skin as the man drags his hungry mouth over my sex, his rough beard brushing against my skin as his tongue bathes me in long hungry licks.

My hands drop to his hair, and I grab a fistful of it as a tremble wracks my body, making it hard for me to stand straight. I cry out when Damian grabs my thigh and hoists it up onto his shoulder without so much as moving his head from between my thighs.

“Damian ... Yes!”

My head drops back against the wall when his lips close over my clit, sucking the sensitive bud into his mouth, and it’s all so new. This feeling is as new as it is raw, sinful, and lewd.

I can’t think beyond his name and how he’s making me feel. The noises he’s making at the back of his throat as he drags his tongue over my sex vibrate through my body, sending my toes curling with pleasure.

“Look at you,” he rasps, his voice heavy. “Who would have thought the errand boy would have a Greene at their mercy, begging for his touch?”

I cry out when he drags his thumb over my slit, rubbing at the slickness before moving it over my clit, causing my abdomen to tighten.

“Damian!” I scream, tugging hard at his hair.

“Look at me,” he growls.

My eyes shoot open, I have no idea when I even closed them. There is a hardness in his gaze when my dazed eyes lock on his, something dark, almost terrifying in them.

He leans back in, his mouth replacing his finger as he closes his mouth around my clit, sucking it between his lips with the intensity of a starved man, causing a tremble to rock my body.

My lips part in a scream as pleasure ripples through me from the roots of my messy hair to the tips of my toes. I chant his name, riding his face as my body shakes and my sex trembles until it becomes too much.

I am still shaking when Damian lowers my thigh from his shoulder and gets up, tugging down his zipper and pulling out his massive cock. The room is silent, except for the sound of our harsh breathing as he jerks his cock, his dark eyes on mine. I swallow back a whimper when he brushes his thickness between my legs.

“I could fuck you right here,” he grits out, jerking his cock furiously. “Just one push, and I would be inside your virgin little pussy.”

His jaw flexes, his muscles drawn tight as he lets out a loud bellow a second before I feel his warm seed coat my sex. His groans are loud as he spills a long stream of cum over me, bathing me with his seed, spurt after spurt, and marking me as his.

When it is over, Damian drops his forehead on my shoulder, but I can still feel the tension vibrating through his body.

Instead of relief and the blissful feeling of finally having the only man I have ever loved, I am overwhelmed by guilt. The feeling overshadows everything else, sending a deep ache to my chest.

God, I am supposed to be apologizing with my body, and yet, the man is only bringing me pleasure in a moment when I expected anything but. A stray tear falls down my cheek, and once they start, there is no stopping.

How dare I enjoy his touch, revel in the blissful feeling this man has brought me after all the pain my family has caused him? Pain I reminded him of today.

It's all my fault.

It's because I was selfish and wanted to have a stupid Thanksgiving dinner. If I hadn't tried to make that dinner in the first place, then Damian wouldn't have had to come to my rescue. He wouldn't have run into the same people that hurt him years ago.

I sniff back the tears, but it's useless now.

The damage has been done. There is no fixing this.





## *Chapter Six*

*Damian*

I've fucked up.

I am known as a man with the self-control of a saint and not even the men at work get to me with their teasing, but tonight, I let that slip.

I was angry and frustrated at the life I have had to live just because of some arrogant people, and I took it out on the wrong person. She was there, perfect as ever, staring up at me with her innocent green eyes, begging me to take her.

Punish her.

I wince and close my eyes, fighting to shut out the cruel words I threw her way while she bared herself to me the way she had. The memory of her naked body with her top bunched up on her chest, her perfect tits heaving up and down with my cum leaking down her thighs is enough to make my cock hard, but all that is overshadowed by her teary eyes.

She was trembling, her pretty green eyes wet with tears as she asked me to show her where she could clean up, and at that moment, I wanted to drop to my knees and apologize for being such an asshole to her.

I chop hard on the baby carrots, ignoring the ones that jump off the counter to the floor to escape their cruel end, but I hardly pay attention to them, my mind too far gone to worry about anything but the woman I hurt with my words.

You are a part of the Greene family, of course you are used to someone on their knees worshipping the very ground to walk on.

Fucking hell!

We're under the same roof, but I can still feel the distance between us.

My eyes stray to the door, willing her to join me in the kitchen. It's been two hours since she went up to shower, and she hasn't come back down. During that time, I grabbed a quick shower too and started on the Thanksgiving dinner I promised her.

She has to have smelled the sweet aroma of the stuffed turkey cooking in the oven, right?

She has to know that I didn't mean any of the words I said, and this is me making up for all that. Making her the Thanksgiving dinner she wanted.

I look expectantly at the kitchen door, but she's still not down yet. I don't blame her for hiding upstairs, but I hate that she is not with me. Every passing second feels like torture when I don't know just how much damage my words may have done to us.

"Fuck!" I curse, stabbing a baby carrot into the chopping board and breaking it into two, but I don't pay it any mind as I back up from the kitchen counter. My heart is hammering in my chest at the thought of Camilla finally realizing what an asshole I am and leaving.

I can't lose her.

Not over my grudge against her family or my fierce temper.  
Not over anything.

The soft patter on the floor signaling rushed footsteps headed to the kitchen has me perking up, and I look up just as a wide-eyed Camilla runs in. Her feet are bare and she has a towel around her wet hair. The robe she has on is not tied properly, revealing tantalizing glimpses of her wet naked body.

Desire swells in my chest, threatening to burst out, and I just want to draw her into my arms and lock her in. The need to protect her from everyone, including myself, is strong, and as she stands just outside the kitchen, looking like a fairy straight out of a story, I realize there is no losing her.

“Damian, are you okay?” she asks breathily. “I heard a shout, did you hurt yourself?”

I can't take my eyes off her, and the bits of skin exposed by the robe are enough to have my cock perking up again, and in seconds, I am as hard as steel. I haven't felt the mildest attraction to any woman in years, and all it takes is for this one to look at me and I am a goner.

“Damian?” Camilla says, blinking up at me with her pretty moss-green eyes. There is concern written all over her face as she approaches me as one would a caged animal. I wait until she's close enough before wrapping my arm around her waist and drawing her flush against me.

“Your eyes are swollen,” I whisper, my chest tightening painfully because I know why she's been crying, and it's my fault. I run a finger over her cheeks, brushing at the soft skin and pushing back the wet hair sticking to her face. “I'm sorry.”

Her brows wrinkle in confusion. “W-why are you sorry?”

“All the things I said to you, comparing you to your stuck-up parents ...”

“It’s okay.”

“It’s not,” I say through gritted teeth, cupping her cheek in my palm. “I was wrong to say those things, and I want you to know I didn’t mean any of it. I know what you went through with them. You deserve none of the blame. You were the only thing in that house that made it bearable. You’re the reason I stayed.”

She gasps, wrapping her arms around my shoulders, her cheeks flushing pink when our eyes lock in a heated gaze.

“You stayed for me?”

“Of course, I did. You looked at me like I was worthy. So, if you say sorry one more time, princess, you are not going to like what I do to you.”

Her eyes light up, and her lips lift in a shy smile. “Oh, yeah?”

I drop my hands to her ass and hoist her up on the countertop before stepping between her thighs. My balls are throbbing with the need for release, but I ignore them. “How about we call it even, huh? I’m making you dinner to make up for my error.”

“Stuffed turkey?” she asks, her eyes lighting up, and I realize I will do anything, roast a fucking turkey every day for the rest of my life, if it gets her to keep smiling at me like that.

I nod. “I was about to get started on the roasted root vegetables when you walked in.”

Her eyes shift from mine to the mess of carrots on the counter before they shift back to me. “Is that where all the banging was coming from?”

“Carrots are harder to chop than they look.”

“I bet,” she snarks, her lips parting with a moan when I slip my hand into her robe and wrap my arm around her waist. Her eyelashes flutter as her perfect tits heave up and down with her breaths. Her head falls back when I drop my lips to her neck, my balls drawing tight when I smell my soap on her skin.

Fucking hell!

We can't do this here. I should put her down and do this later, but I can't draw my face from her neck. I can't stop trailing my lips down along her smooth skin, and her little whimpers aren't exactly helping with my control.

I push the robe back, exposing the swell of her breasts and those perfectly erect nipples that have my mouth watering. A hoarse sound escapes my lips when she slips her fingers into my hair, pulling me down to her heaving chest, but I resist taking the rosy beads into my hungry mouth. There is no stopping when I start, so I simply lay a soft kiss over the valley of her breast before straightening up.

Fuck!

It's a test of my control the way she responds to my touch, giving herself fully to me, and it sends my head spinning.

I want her. Christ, it has been only a few hours since I reunited with her. But it feels like we've been like this forever. I already know what she tastes like, how her little pussy

clenches around my tongue and her body trembles against mine.

“Damian,” she whines, pushing her supple breasts against me needily. “Please, I need you.”

“I know, princess,” I grit out, fighting the urge to give into my desire and just fuck her where we stand, but I am not going to repeat my earlier mistake. When I do take Camilla—and it’ll be tonight—it’ll be in my bed where I’ll worship her body like she deserves.

“Please,” she whispers, leaning in and pressing her lips against mine, and my control shatters.

I am too weak to resist her. I let my fingers travel up her back as I kiss her, licking at the seam of her lips until she’s opened up. It’s meant to be a simple kiss, but she digs her nails into my shoulder, her little whimpers urging me to deepen the kiss. I thrust my tongue into her mouth, groaning deeply. I draw her closer into my arms, my heart drumming hard in my chest, as I pour everything into the kiss.

My apology, desire, need ... promise.

I break the kiss with a low growl. “Fuck!”

Camilla is trembling, and I am tempted to give into my desire to fuck her right here in the kitchen. It takes every bit of control I have to hold back.

“Red or white?” I ask, brushing my lips against her temple.

“Huh?” she says, her eyes dazed when they lock on mine.

“I have both wines. Which one do you want to have as I finish up on dinner?”

“Red, please.”

“Good, I’ll get to that, but meanwhile, why don’t you go dress and then join me in the kitchen when you are done?”

I push back from her, and her eyes drop to the massive tent in my sweatpants. It’s clear just how much I need her, and if I am to get through making us dinner, I need a moment for my raging erection to go down. With her around, dressed in nothing but my robe, her perfect tits on full display, it’s a wonder I still have any control left.

“Okay,” she says with a smile. “I’ll find something from your closet to change into.”

I watch her leave the kitchen, and it’s not until she’s left that I drop my arms over the counter, pondering just how I am going to get through dinner without touching her.





# *Chapter Seven*

*Camilla*

“Do you have something you are thankful for this year?”

The words slip out before I know what I am saying, and I have to blame the wine. After dinner and cleaning the dishes, Damian suggested we settle down and watch a movie over another glass of wine.

My belly is full from the most amazing dinner I have ever had, my head is a little dizzy from the wine, and the smile on my face hasn't dropped once.

Is this how it's supposed to feel?

I've never spent Thanksgiving with someone that actually wanted to be there, and this is an experience I want to relive every year. Every night if possible ...

“Meeting you,” Damian drawls, rubbing circles on my stomach with his index finger. He is resting against the couch and I am lying over his massive body and neither of us has brought up the hard rod of his manhood pressed against my ass.

“What else?” I ask, turning around and resting my hands on his chest to look at his ridiculously handsome face.

“Getting to you in time. I can't imagine a life without you.”

My heart tugs in my chest, my cheeks flushing. How can he simply throw words like that in the air and expect me not to

fall deeper in love with him? It might be the wine talking, but in all fairness, he's barely drunk one glass, saying he needs to be sober in case he gets a call from work.

I don't have the same problem. My body is deliciously warm, and I am suddenly feeling brave tonight.

"Well, I will tell you what I am thankful for," I whisper, sucking in a sharp breath when his hand falls on my ass, massaging me with his massive palm.

"Go ahead, what are you thankful for?"

"Having someone to spend Thanksgiving with," I start, swatting his chest when he slips his hand under his t-shirt that I'm wearing like a dress and palms my naked ass. "Hey, I am having a serious conversation here."

"I can multitask; it's you who's distracted."

I huff in annoyance, but he can tell I am loving every bit of this. "My family has always hosted a Christmas dinner at the company every year, so I never had to spend that holiday alone, but every Thanksgiving ... Oh!"

A hot shiver wracks my body, and I moan when a finger grazes my sex. My nipples pucker painfully as he carries on with the teasing, the smirk on his face signaling just how much he is enjoying this.

"Go on," he urges.

"Huh?" I blink dazedly at him, confused by what exactly he is asking of me. My sex is warm and achy, throbbing with need, and my nipples are so stiff, they're practically poking holes at the t-shirt.

“You were saying something about Thanksgiving and spending it alone.”

“Oh, yeah ... I ... Hmmm.”

My mind is mush. A reaction I have come to associate with his touch. Every time I feel his fingers on me, I lose my train of thought, and I can't think beyond the hands caressing their way up my body.

“You don't have to worry about being ignored ever again,” he whispers, running his calloused hand possessively over my back. I whimper when he runs his finger over my center, dragging the middle one through the valley of my sex and stroking gently to part my folds. “I'll always be here and not just for the holidays.”

I drop my head to his chest as he continues to tease me, and when he grazes my clit, I jerk against him as a quiver ripples through my body. He rubs circles over the sensitive bud, slowly at first and then faster until I am whimpering in his arms.

“I love how you react to my touch,” he says roughly, moving his finger to my damp entrance. “I could spend all night long teasing your tight cunt just to hear your little whimpers.”

I cry out when he slips the tip of his finger into my tight channel and starts to stroke it in and out of my drenched sex. He rolls his hips, rubbing his erection against my thigh, but I am too lost in pleasure to focus on his massive cock. His finger pumps in and out of my wet channel, the sound obscene even to my own ears, but I am too far gone to be embarrassed.

“Oh, God!” I cry out, rocking against him, seeking relief.

“Look at me.” He slips his free hand into my hair and tugs my head from his chest, so I am looking into his heated eyes. “I am going to kiss your little pussy and lap at your juices. You want that, right?”

“Please,” I whimper. My clit throbs with need at the memory of his lips bathing my sex earlier. Him on his knees, pleasuring me in ways I’ve only dared imagine, sends a rush of wetness to my sex.

Damian sits up, shifting us, so I am the one lying on my back before wedging himself between my knees. The TV is still playing the Hallmark movie I made him put on, but it’s all static in my ears. Even that goes away when his lips brush against mine in a possessive kiss. He groans deeply as he deepens the kiss, his tongue seeking my taste over and over until my mind falls into a hazy state.

The kiss lasts all of a few seconds as his lips skate over my jaw, his teeth grazing the sensitive skin before raking them down my neck until I am crying for more.

“You are mine,” he says hoarsely, kissing the valley of my breasts. “You, this body, this virgin pussy, it’s all fucking mine!”

“Yes,” I cry out when his mouth closes over a nipple, sucking the sensitive bud gently. I whine into his touch, combing my fingers into his thick brown hair and pushing him against me. He gives the same attention to the other nipple before kissing a path down my stomach.

He lifts my thigh over his shoulder, exposing my damp sex to his eyes, but I am too far gone in desire to care how vulnerable

and open this leaves me. I should feel embarrassed ... shy ... a little scared, but this is Damian.

Perhaps later, when I recover my brain cells and the alcohol buzz cools off, I'll think back to this wanton moment and shudder in shame, but right now, I need him.

Every part of him.

“Want you,” he says raggedly, brushing his lips against my thigh. “I haven’t been able to get your creamy juices from my mind. I could spend a lifetime between your legs, lapping at your little cunt until the taste is permanent on my taste buds.” He rubs his thumb over my folds a second before he leans down and runs his wet tongue over the valley of my sex.

A scream tears from my lips, and my clit trembles from the move, but he is not done. His fingers tighten around my thigh as he laps at my sex, sending a delicious heat shooting up my spine that spreads to the roots of my hair.

He’s done this before. He did this earlier, but it feels different. More intense with how much he’s lapping at my sex like a starved beast, rubbing at my clit with the tip of his tongue up and down and then side to side until I am thrashing on the couch.

“Damian ... more,” I sob, lifting my hips to meet his tongue, and when he slips a finger into my drenched entrance, I lose it. My head falls back and my lips part in a scream as an earth-shattering orgasm tears through me, sinking its teeth into me and sending dark spots to the corner of my eyes. My sex clenches and pulsates hard around his finger as he continues to thrust through the orgasm.

My body is still shaking when Damian lowers my leg from his shoulder and sits up, drawing his t-shirt over his shoulders to expose chiseled muscles covered with tattoos.

His eyes are on mine as he strips away his sweats to reveal his massive cock. It's hard and thick, and it doesn't register until he's kneeling between me, that thing is going inside of me.

No way is he going to fit.

"I can still taste you on my tongue, princess," he rasps deeply, and I blink dazedly at him, his hungry eyes locking on mine as he licks at the moisture on his lips. His mouth and beard are wet, glistening with my juices, but he doesn't seem to mind as he settles between my legs.

I gasp when he pushes his cock against my damp entrance.

"Damian, it's not going to fit."

"Relax for me, princess. It's going to be all right."

I whimper when he pushes his head into my tight channel.

"But it's too big."

I've heard horror stories about first times from my college friends, and they all described in chilling detail how much it was going to hurt. If I wasn't madly in love with Damian, I don't think I would brave this.

"Damian!" A scream rips from my lungs when Damian tears through my barrier with a roar, burying his cock inside of me without warning. It all happens so fast that I don't even register the pain at first, and when I do, it's not the bone-cracking pain that's been described to me.

"Fuck me!" he growls, his muscles drawn tight. "You are so fucking tight, princess, fuck. Are you okay?"

I nod at his words, unsure of what to say. The pain has dulled to a throb, but it's the way that he's watching me, like I am the most precious thing in the world, that sends warmth flooding my veins.

"I'll make it better," Damian says, dropping a hand between us, and I cry out when he swirls his thumb over my clit, rubbing in circles until I am sobbing for more.

His lips drop to mine as he pulls his cock out before thrusting back in hard enough to move the couch. The kiss is more of a press of lips, breathing harshly against each other as he starts pounding into me, his finger moving faster to match his hips.

"Mine," he rasps harshly, slamming into me brutally, his movements speeding up by the second and forcing me to wrap my arms around his shoulders for support. "Going to bury my seed so deep inside of you and get you pregnant."

"Oh, God," I whimper. I shouldn't like it, and the fact that I am not on birth control should scare me, but it doesn't. The thought of getting pregnant by Damian sends my back arching and my body pressing up against him as he slams into my tight channel.

He shoves my thighs further apart, rolling his hips faster until I am sobbing for my release. My sex trembles with every slam; every thrust sends me closer to an edge I'm not prepared for. A tingle begins in my stomach, building up slowly and intensely until it explodes into a million little pieces.

"Damian," I sob, a tremble wracking my body as he hammers into me with desperate intensity. "I'm so close. Please ... Oh!"



He drops his hand back between us, rubbing at my clit in circles until I'm writhing, blinded by flashes of bright light. I clamp down on him hard, pulling him over the edge with me, and he comes with a roar, flooding me with rope after rope of his warm seed. He moans deeply as his shaft jerks inside of me moments before he falls on top of me.

"You are mine," he growls into my ear, kissing my temple before burying his face in my neck. "No one else gets to have you. No one!"

I run a weak hand over his back, reveling in the muscles I feel as I wait for my heart to stop hammering in my chest and for my senses to start working again. It takes a couple of minutes, and when they do, it's to hear the sound of the doorbell ringing through the house.

Damian seems to be dozing off, and his breathing has turned soft. I hate the thought of disturbing him, but the person at the door won't let up.

"Ugh, I am going to kill them," he groans.

"I thought you were asleep," I whisper, rubbing a hand down his back.

"Almost. I haven't slept in almost forty hours."

I consider telling him to ignore whoever is at the door, but then Damian's phone starts ringing somewhere in the house, leaving him no choice but to get up. I watch him slip into his sweats before deciding I might as well get up as well.

My eyes draw in confusion when Damian doesn't immediately run to his phone or the door. Instead, he strokes a hand down

my cheek, brushing my hair back as his eyes stare deeply into mine.

“Let’s get you cleaned up, okay?” he says a second before he leans down and lifts me into his arms. I gasp, quickly wrapping my arms around his shoulders as he carries me out of the room.

The doorbell won’t stop ringing, and I notice Damian’s jaw tick with anger, but he doesn’t say anything as he carries me to the bathroom. He sits me on the toilet before moving to the vanity cabinets.

“Damian, you can go answer the door. I’ll—”

“No, I’ll do it,” he says grabbing a clean towel and running it under the sink. He walks back to me and drops to his knees. My cheeks flush tomato red when he begins to run it between my thighs. “Are you sore? I have some pain meds if you—”

“N-no,” I hurry to say, flushing impossibly deeper. “I’m fine.”

“It’s okay to tell me if it hurts, princess. I’ll draw you a bath and ...”

“No, really. It’s okay.”

He pins me with his dark gaze before shaking his head. I watch in both mortification and love as he cleans me up before leaving to find me another shirt to change into.

Once alone, I can’t help how my heart swells in my chest. I never in a million years thought I would end up with Damian’s affection. Sure, he tolerated me following him around as a kid; he even seemed to enjoy my company sometimes. But it was never anything like this. Now not only did I get to have a

proper Thanksgiving, I got to have it with my first and only love.

Now that I have experienced Thanksgiving, I have a new dream.

One that involves a white gown, a flower bouquet, a set of matching rings, and of course, Damian.



## *Chapter Eight*

*Damian*

There is a scowl on my face as I push open the door to reveal the last people I want to see, and behind them, two cops.

Behind the two cops is Camilla's twin and someone I assume is the fiancé Camilla mentioned, considering the protective arm he has wrapped around her waist.

I ignore everyone else and focus on the cops. "How can I help you, Officers?" I ask, not bothering to even plaster on a fake smile.

It's clear as day in their eyes that they don't want to be here, and I don't plan on wasting their time. The rest of them can camp on the front porch all night for all I care.

"You animal!" Mrs. Greene yells, running a disgusted look over my naked torso. "Where is my little girl? I know you have her."

I don't bother paying attention to the hysterical woman, choosing instead to focus on the cops, who no doubt are having their time wasted by this family. It seems like a hobby of theirs to focus on anything but what actually needs their attention.

"Mr. Sharpe?" the taller of the two officers asks, stepping forward. "We received a report that you kidnapped a girl from her home after rescuing her from a fire. Is there a Camilla Greene inside your residence?"

I breathe out a sigh and shake my head at the ridiculousness of the situation, but really, it doesn't shock me that the Greens would go to these lengths just to inconvenience me.

“Arrest him, Officers. He is a dangerous man with a record!” Mr. Greene demands, and I clench my fist at the reminder of the fact that I served time in prison. How fucking dare he bring that up now. I step forward to show him the error of his ways and give them a proper fucking reason to arrest me when a hand clamps over mine a second before Camilla steps up beside me.

“See? I told you this ... this animal kidnapped my precious baby,” Mrs. Greene yells, pointing her finger at me.

I see it the second it registers in the cops' eyes and the annoyance that crosses their faces. “Ma'am, is your daughter a minor?”

“She's twenty-one; we're twins,” someone says from behind the cops, and we all turn to look at the redhead standing behind them. Her hair looks much darker compared to her sister's in the sunlight.

The cops note something down before looking up at Camilla's twin. “Does your sister have an intellectual disability or has she displayed any signs of mental distress lately?”

Silence falls and tension hangs heavy in the air, so thick it could be chopped with a knife. Of course, they have no fucking idea whether or not Camilla has been in any mental distress lately, because none of them were paying attention to her!

Fucking hypocrites.

Camilla chuckles beside me. It's as dry as sawdust, but it gets everyone's attention. "Officers, there seems to be a misunderstanding here," she says, digging her fingers into my skin. "I promise you that I am of legal adult age, of sound mind, and came here willingly. No one kidnapped me, and I can leave any time I want."

"Cami—"

"Mom, please, I am sure everyone is tired after the day we've had. Hell, I almost died and could sure use some rest," she says with a laugh, but no one follows. "I appreciate your concern and apologize for wasting your time, Officers."

The men nod before adding, "Well then, we'll still need your ID to make a report. Would you mind getting that for us?"

"I lost it in the fire, but I am sure I can find something if it can wait a day or two."

"Right," the taller of the cops says. "I saw the report on the fire. Just stop by the station before the end of the week to give a statement, if you would." And with that, they're off, leaving Camilla and me with my future in-laws from hell.

There is a long silence before Camilla's father steps forward, his eyes angry as they meet his daughter's. "I am giving you two options, Camilla. Come home with us this instant, or I am cutting you off!"

I laugh at the threat. Really, it's pathetic. Knowing Camilla, a small gesture of concern over her wellbeing instead of a threat would have softened her resolve, but it seems her parents still don't know their own daughter.

"I'm staying," she says quietly.

“Camilla!” the man yells, and I step down from the stairway, eyes narrowed on the older man.

“I need you to get off my fucking property before I get my shotgun.”

“You wouldn’t ...”

I raise a single brow at the man, daring him to test me. Heck, I don’t even need a shotgun to get the job done. I am built like a tank, years of lifting heavy fire equipment will do that to a person. All he has to do is make the wrong move, and I won’t blink before pummeling his face into the pavement if only to punish him for how miserable he’s made my woman.

He already has the daughter he cares about, why the fuck is he here ruining the time Camilla and I could be cuddled in bed as we make plans for our future, snowballing names we’ll give all five of our babies? We could even adopt a cat or a dog.

“Camilla, this man is a criminal! He’s been to prison!” her mother shouts.

Camilla looks over at me, a question in her eyes. I turn toward her, making her my sole focus. “It’s true. I was in prison for a year awaiting trial for a theft charge. I couldn’t pay my bail, so I had to stay locked up until my hearing. But the case was dismissed for lack of evidence.”

I turn to look at her parents, but I continue speaking to Camilla. “Your parents are the ones that pressed charges. They claimed I stole an emerald brooch from your mother’s jewelry box.”

Camilla gasps. “That’s why you disappeared without saying goodbye?”



I nod in confirmation. “I’d wanted to, but I wasn’t given the chance.”

“As if we’d let a no-good thief speak to our daughter!” her father shouts in outrage.

“What a minute,” Camilla says, looking between her parents, then meeting her sister’s eyes. “I can only think of one brooch of Mom’s that has emeralds. Is that the one she loaned to Mrs. Coleman before her daughter’s wedding when we were in seventh grade? I remember because she went on and on about how it clashed with the wedding colors.”

Kat snaps her fingers, then turns to her mother. “You’re right, Cami. Mom? Is that the brooch he’s talking about? Didn’t Mrs. Coleman take forever to give it back to you?”

Mrs. Greene sniffs imperiously. “I don’t know what you’re talking about,” she snaps, but it’s clear she’s lying, and I’m suddenly wishing those cops had stuck around a little longer. Had she seriously ruined my life over a piece of jewelry she herself had loaned to a friend?

Camilla’s hand clamps harder around my arm, and I force myself to take a steadying breath. While my life may not have gone as smoothly as I’d hoped it would, it’s led me here, to this spot, with Camilla. That’s all that matters right now.

“Dad, Mom, I think we should leave,” her twin says, drawing me from my thoughts. “It’s already late, and I don’t think you’ll get Cami to come with us without someone getting hurt.”

She gets it.

Perhaps it's because of the silent man standing closely next to her that she can understand her sister's refusal to leave.

"This is not over!" Mr. Greene says with a glare before storming away to the car parked on the curb. I wait until they've all driven away before walking back into the house.

Camilla's hands are cold and shaky when I take them. I hold them between my hands, watching her stare down at the floor. "Don't even dare think of apologizing."

Her eyes shoot up to mine. "How did you guess that's what I was going to do?"

"Because I know you," I whisper, brushing a stray curl from her face. "Your parents are assholes, and whatever issues I have with them shouldn't affect you in any way."

"But—"

"But nothing," I say with a yawn. "We still haven't finished watching the movie. How about we head to bed and finish it up there?"

Her eyes light up at my suggestion, and she grips my hand tightly as we walk upstairs to the master bedroom. My eyes are already drooping as we climb into bed, but she seems wide awake, grabbing the remote to restart the movie where we left off.

We settle in bed, and she sits up to watch the movie, and I lay my heavy head on her lap. Camilla combs her fingers through my hair, massaging my scalp, and I feel myself fall deeper into sleep. I always have to take meds and work out a little to exhaust my brain into resting, but I don't need to do any of that tonight.

“What do you think about Dahlia?” I say groggily, my eyes closed and head blissfully silent.

“Huh? Who’s that?”

“Our daughter,” I say. “I’ve always loved the name. We should definitely call our daughter Dahlia. I bet she’ll grow to be as beautiful as her mother.”

The hand in my hair stills, and I open my eyes to look up at her. “Damian ...”

“You don’t like the name?”

Her eyes fill up with tears as she stares down at me. “It’s such a cheesy name. The kids will tease her for it, but ... are you sure?”

“Am I positive I want to name our daughter Dahlia, or am I positive I have fallen in love with you and want to get married the second I hold my eyes open for longer than a few seconds?”

“All of it?” she says with a sob.

“I’m sure,” I say, lifting a hand to her nape and pulling her down for a kiss. “I love you, Camilla Greene, and I want to marry you, give you my last name, and have an army of kids with you. I want all of it. If you say yes, then that’ll be the one thing I’m thankful for every year for the rest of my life.”

“Yes,” she whispers, choking back a sob. “Christ, I love you, Damian. I always have.”

And always will.



# *Epilogue*

*Camilla*

*Seven Years Later*

Something is wrong.

I stop what I am doing and listen, but it's awfully quiet. I haven't had a quiet moment in this house for six of the seven amazing years of my marriage. My husband is a fairly quiet man, so it constantly confuses me how we got the loudest kids in the universe. Our twin five-year-old balls of energy haven't known a moment of silence in their young lives, and since our daughter, Dahlia, was born, the house has officially become a circus.

But right now, it's suspiciously quiet.

I grab the diaper bag and sling it over my arm before picking up Dahlia from the crib and rushing out of the room. Usually, I get help with the kids from my husband and a part-time nanny, but I gave her the day off to spend Thanksgiving with her family despite her insistence that she could stay if I needed her. Our kind nanny is older with adult kids, but I could tell she really wanted to spend the weekend with her family. Just as I will always want to spend the holidays with mine. Being a mother and taking care of the family is the greatest joy of my life, and when I'd talked to Damian about being a full-time

mother and wife, he was fully on board with it, promising to support me in whatever it is I decided to do.

Our relationship with my family is still strained, though getting better. Once she learned of the accusations my mother had made against Damian, Kat made it her mission to locate the brooch in question. She'd found it in my mother's jewelry box, just as we'd suspected. Defending Damian was the kindest thing my twin has ever done for me, and we've only grown closer in the years since.

Far too many years had passed for my mother to face charges for filing a false report, but Damian, with my blessing, sued my parents for damages. He won a hefty sum from them. Since then, we've all managed to move on. While they won't win any parent of the year awards anytime soon, my mom and dad have tried to make amends for the sake of their grandchildren.

"Mommy, look!" the kids call out, and I follow their voices to the backyard, panic swelling in my chest as I approach them.

The boys are only ever silent if they're causing trouble or something is wrong.

I step through the glass door and stop, my heart dropping to my stomach as I stare at my sons' little dirt-covered faces. In their little fingers are the delicate marigolds, I'd planted last month.

"Mommy, we got you flowers." The innocent grins on their faces softens the blow a little, and I breathe out a sigh, staring sorrowfully at the little flowers that were just beginning to take root.

“They’re lovely,” I say through the lump in my throat. “I love them. Now go wash your hands; we’re going to see Daddy.”

At the mention of their father, the flowers are shoved at me, and the boys run back into the house, their little feet trailing mud in their wake. I pack up our things in the car, and minutes later, I’m strapping the kids in and we’re off. I pick up donuts from the bakery and throw in a few more sweets before driving to the fire station.

Damian is waiting for me outside, although I didn’t tell him when we’d be getting here.

“Daddy!” Allan screams, noticing him first before Alex joins in, and soon, I have two restless kids who can’t wait to get out of the car, and one sleeping baby.

The reunion is one for the movies. The kind where the father has been deployed overseas and he’s seeing the kids for the first time in ten months rather than ten hours. There is a wide smile on Damian’s ridiculously handsome face as he watches me approach, and I can’t help but be floored by the love I read in his eyes. The seven years of our marriage have been the best of my life, and when he promised to always be there, he meant every single word he said. When he got promoted to fire chief last year, a little part of me was relieved I wouldn’t have to worry about him running into burning buildings every day.

“Hey, princess,” he says, kissing my temple before dropping one on our sleeping daughter.

“Hey, handsome. Slow day?”

“We love slow days,” he says with a smirk. “I figure people decided to leave the cooking to the experts for once.”

“Funny.” I smack his shoulder, but there is a smile on my face. “Maybe I should just leave with the creamy goodness I bought from the bakery.”

“Oh, I know the kind of creamy goodness I want melting in my mouth.”

“Damian,” I scold, slapping his chest as I look around, panicked, but the twins are already running into the station with Gary, one of the firemen, chasing after them teasingly.

“What?” he says with a smirk. “I haven’t touched my wife in ten hours. I want you.”

His voice is low, mindful of our sleeping daughter, but it carries a sultry note to it that has my panties flooding with heat.

“Damian, not here,” I whisper, biting my lip.

He smirks as he takes the baby carrier from me, grabbing my hand with the other. “Let’s find somewhere for Dahlia to nap.”

We’ve no sooner walked into the station than Lucy, Damian’s secretary hurries over and whisks Dahlia away from us, claiming to need all the baby cuddles. Damian just shakes his head with a laugh and leads me into his office, locking the door behind us. I walk around his office as he does so, stopping by the window that faces the street. I’m still standing there when my husband steps up behind me. A shiver wracks my body, my sex clenching in need when he pushes my hair to the side and lowers his lips to my nape.

“I missed you,” he whispers against my skin, raking his lips over the column of my neck and soaking my panties further



with his deep voice. “You have no idea what you do to me, do you, princess?”

“Damian!” I gasp when he slides his hands over my waist and up my chest, cupping my breasts with his large, calloused palms. A wet rush of heat floods my sex, and I whimper, palming my mouth just in time to mute the sound. “We shouldn’t be doing this here.”

“Oh, baby, you know that only makes me want to do it more,” he groans desperately. “We’ll be quiet, I promise.”

My knees buckle when he slips his free hand under my dress, slipping his finger past my thong and into my hot sex. He grunts deeply when he finds me wet, thrusting his middle finger into me before adding another. I drop my head against the cool window as his thick digits fuck me roughly until I am sobbing for his cock.

“You’re so fucking wet for me,” he growls, drawing his fingers from my sex, and my cheeks flush when I spy him dragging his tongue over his glistening fingers. “Hmm, you taste too fucking delicious, baby. Better than any donut. Just the right amount of sugar and salt.”

“Damian, fuck me, please.”

“I thought you said—”

“Damian!” I hiss, narrowing my eyes at him when he smirks, but he reaches for his buckle. My breath accelerates in anticipation, my knees growing weak and my sex trembling with the need to feel him inside of me. We made love before he left for work last night, but it feels like forever since I’ve felt his thick cock inside me. “I need you.”

He buries his fingers into my hair as he guides his throbbing erection into my sex, pushing every inch into me tortuously slow until he is fully buried in my womanhood. He rolls his hips a little before pulling out, and when he thrusts back in, it's with so much force a scream tears out of me, but he catches it just in time, clapping his palm over my mouth as he begins to rut me like a beast. He takes me with such hunger, such strength that all I can do is hold on and enjoy the ride, which proves to be challenging as we try not to make a sound.

“Your pussy is so fucking tight, princess,” he grunts into my ear, dropping his hand between my legs and rubbing circles on my clit. “So fucking wet and tight for me. I could spend all day just fucking this hot cunt until I've planted another baby in you.”

Oh God!

My sex clenches, and my muscles tense up a second before a tremble wracks my body, and then I fall. Pleasure shoots up my spine as he pounds me through the orgasm, and soon, he's falling too as he seizes up, and with a muted growl, fills me with ropes of his warm seed.

“I love you,” he breathes into my skin, lazily rocking into my channel and burying his seed deeper inside me. “I love you so fucking much, Cami. Always will.”

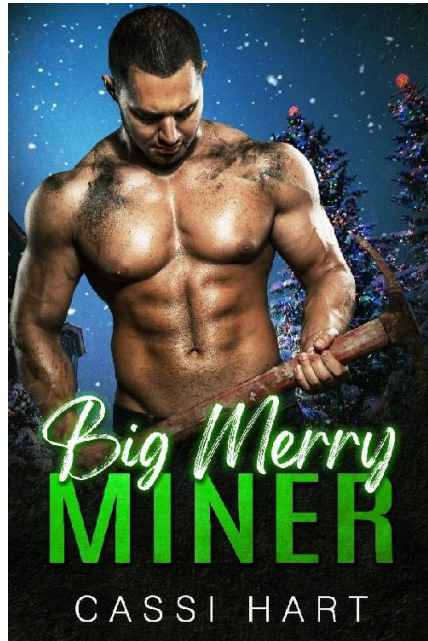
A shudder wracks his body as he thrusts into me one last time before pulling out and turning me around. His lips are on mine the second I face him, hungry and demanding as he licks into my mouth.

“I love you too,” I whisper into the kiss, my body already trembling for more. I know we shouldn't be doing this, but it's

hard to think rationally around this man. Not that I would want it any other way. Years of loving him have shown me just how impossible that is.

~The End

## *Up Next...*



### *Lucia*

I work hard to make sure I'm ready to take over the family business, but it never seems to matter to my family as much as my relationship status. Now that I'm visiting them for Christmas, I feel like I'm caught between a rock and a hard place.

You see, in a moment of panic, I told them that I was finally bringing someone home to meet them. The catch? I don't actually have anyone to bring home! What am I going to do? Just find a random person in this little mountain town an hour or two away from the cabin they rented for the holiday? Could I ever be that lucky?

### *Matt*

I wasn't looking to do much with time I got off for the holiday. My job is physically demanding and the rest could do me good. And then I run into this young woman in the parking lot of a local coffee shop. It looks like she needs help, and I'm more than happy to assist. But when she asks if I'll be her boyfriend for the weekend, I know I'm being given an opportunity I can't refuse. A girl like Lucia would never give a guy like me a second look on a normal day, but I'm never going to tell a damsel in distress "no" when she needs help. How bad could this family she's dreading to see be?

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[An Innocent Crush](#)

[Plated for the Chef](#)

[Tempting My Stepbrother](#)

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*Seeing Double Twin Sister Series:*

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## *Free Book*

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## *The Kingpin's Obsession*

*Alice*

**I saw something I shouldn't have, and my life is in danger.**

The police won't listen, and I have no choice but to seek help at Benedetti's, a bar known for its criminal clientele. But I'm barely inside the door before a dark eyed devil drags me back out and demands to know why I'm there. I shouldn't trust him, but I don't have a choice when he's the only one willing to help me.

*Too late*, I learn who he really is, and now I'm left to wonder... when this is all over, will he save my life only to break my heart?



## *About the Author*

Cassi lives to write brazen OTT, insta-love, short stories, about possessive alphas and the women they love. Stories that will leave you satisfied, and maybe blushing a little. Cassi loves pedicures, being pampered in any way possible, her darling golden Princess, amazing coffee, and traveling too anywhere warm.



*Cassi H*  *rt*