



BOSSSED

BY

3 BILLIONAIRE BROTHERS

AN AGE GAP REVERSE HAREM ROMANCE

K. C. CROWNE

**BOSSED BY THREE
BILLIONAIRE BROTHERS**

A CONTEMPORARY REVERSE HAREM ROMANCE

K.C. CROWNE

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DESCRIPTION

Cold. Ruthless. Killer.

I am King of the Nicolaevich Bratva.

Respected and feared by all.

I get what I want - and what I want most is Sandra Antonov.

But the last thing I ever imagined desiring...

Was making *her* my Queen.

And I'll give my Queen all her little heart desires.

Except for one thing: Her freedom.

Sandra Antonov:

Here's some advice you never asked for:

Don't sleep with your captor.

Andrei Nicolaevich is the farthest thing from kind.

He's cruel, he's controlling, he's arrogant.

And now, according to the test in my hand...

He's the father of my baby.

This is Andrei Nicolaevich's story and a fully standalone romance in the Bratva Billionaire Series.. The Nicolaevichs are rivals to the Antonovs. Follow these brothers as they rule their city and the hearts of their women. If you enjoy billionaire, boss, Bratva romance suspense with unexpected twists and turns you're sure to love the Nicolaevich and Antonov brothers.

CHAPTER 1

“O K, which twin is which again?”

Even through the din of the airport bar, I could hear the wicked cackle of my best friend Amy loud and clear.

“What’s so funny?” I took another sip of my virgin Bloody Mary and sat back, suddenly feeling totally overwhelmed by the whole thing.

Was I really about to get on a plane to spend my summer working as a nanny in the freaking French Riviera?

Amy, her pretty face beaming through my phone, regained her composure.

“Nothing. Just that you’re acting like you’re studying for the bar or something.”

“Well, I like to be informed. Especially when I’m on the verge of starting a job as big as this.” I took one more sip of my drink, letting the rich, savory taste linger on my palate for a moment before swallowing it down. Part of me wanted to order another one, asking the bartender not to hold the booze. But I knew myself well enough to know that booze and planes didn’t mix.

“Also, any information you could possibly want to know about the guys is on social media. If you had one of those platforms, and I mean *any one of those* platforms, you could read up on my dad and uncles all on your own. You know, like a normal person?”

I laughed, Amy smiling along with me over FaceTime. “Come on, you know I’m anything *but* normal. And social media is a total waste of time. Like, you’re telling me that I should be putting pictures of myself online so people can, what, click a little heart next to it so my dopamine goes up for a second? Please. Oh! And that’s not even getting into the idea of some perv doing you know what while looking at them.” I shuddered.

I sat back, casting a glance out of one of the many towering windows of the terminal, watching as a huge plane slowly moved through the darkness of night, the lights on its wings flashing as it pulled away from its gate and started toward the runway.

“I know that look,” Amy said. “That’s the major self-doubt expression.”

“Oh my God, is it that obvious?”

She grinned. “Only because I’ve known you for so long. What’s up?”

“Just thinking about the timing of all this. I feel like I majorly screwed things up by taking this job.”

“How? I mean, a summer in the French Riviera? Most people would not consider that a screw up in the slightest.”

“Yeah, but most people wouldn’t be putting off the opportunity of a lifetime in taking it.”

She made a *pssh* noise, waving her hand through the air.

“Oh, come on. You know the MET is dying to have you work for them.”

“You say that like I’m some well-established artist and not someone fresh out of college with an art history degree in hand, landing her first job.”

She held up two fingers. “That’s *two* degrees in hand—English too, girlie. Don’t sell yourself short.” Amy sat back in her chair, grabbing a big, red mug of tea and lifting it to her lips. “And besides, you asked if it’d be possible for you to wait

until the end of summer to start, and they were totally fine with it.”

“Yeah, but what if... what if it’s a test or something, you know?”

She tilted her head to the side in amused confusion. “A test?”

“Right! Like, they want to see just how eager I am to start. So, even though they said starting at the end of summer would be fine, I actually already failed the test.”

Amy let out a laugh loud enough to catch the attention of nearby bar patrons even through the tinny speaker of my phone.

“You’re being so paranoid. Think about it—it’d be way less work to just not offer you the job at all. No, that assistant curator position is yours, so stop talking yourself out of it.”

Right after she finished speaking, a text popped in from the top of my screen. My stomach clenched when I saw that it was from my ex, Mark.

Can we talk for five minutes? Please?

The look on my face must’ve given it away because an expression of concern appeared immediately on Amy’s features.

“Oh no,” she said. “What’s he saying now?”

I let out a snort, shaking my head as I tried to figure out if I should say anything back to him. As I did, another message popped in.

Just five minutes. I just want to ask you one question. Please.

The message was followed up by one smiling emoji and a pair of hearts. I guessed that was his way of trying to make the text less tense, but it only served to make his request even more unsettling.

“He’s trying to get me to talk to him,” I said. “Doing the nice guy act again.”

She scoffed. “Well, lucky for us, we both know by this point that the nice guy act is just that—an act—before he goes into his crazy person routine. Maybe it’s time to block his number and be done with it?”

I sighed, setting my phone down just as another message came in. That time I didn’t even bother reading it, instead swiping the message away the second it appeared.

“I’m hoping that once he realizes that I’m gone for the summer he’ll lose interest. If he doesn’t, at least I’ll be thousands of miles away and then in New York when I get back.”

“Right. Mark’s in the past, and your attention should be totally on the future. Seriously, the MET? You should be out of your mind with excitement!”

I grinned. Thankfully, Mark didn’t text again, which allowed my thoughts to return to where they needed to be.

“I still can’t believe it, it’s like they made some mistake or something.”

“Imposter Syndrome 101, my friend. Listen, I’ve known you for forever which means I’ve had a chance to see up close and personal just how amazingly talented you are, and how hard you bust your butt when you need to get something done. Of course they’d want to hire you!”

My cheeks tinged a bit red. I’d never been good at taking compliments.

“Thanks, Aim.”

“Well, sure. The point is that you shouldn’t, not even for a second, be thinking that you don’t deserve the amazing things that are happening to you.”

“Thanks. I mean it, really. But you’re going to give me a huge head if you don’t stop.”

She laughed. “OK, fine.”

“And besides, instead of you puffing up my ego, I ought to be asking you more about your family, you know, since I’m going to be staying with them all summer.”

“OK, my family...” She trailed off, as if not quite sure where to begin. “Dad, you already know enough about him.”

I laughed. “Yes. Sam Bradshaw, tech genius, billionaire, extraordinaire, and all that.”

Amy giggled. “Yeah, that about sums it up.”

I opened my mouth to ask about her uncles, but the sight of someone sitting on the far side of the lounge stopped me.

The man was tall, with broad shoulders and sandy-blond hair framing a face of perfect angles and a strong jaw. His eyes were narrow, though his mouth carried a sly smile. He was dressed in a dark green Henley shirt and navy chinos, the buttons of his shirt opened enough to expose a hint of square, solid pecs, his sleeves rolled up around thick, toned forearms.

He flicked his fingers up in a cool, casual sort of way to get the bartender’s attention. She hurried over, a tinge of blush to her cheeks that suggested she’d also noticed how good-looking he was.

“Hey, Gen? Yo, Gen!”

I shook my head quickly, coming back to the moment.

“Oh! Hey, sorry.”

Amy grinned. “What does he look like?”

“What?”

She laughed. “You heard me. I’d know that look anywhere, that’s the ‘an insanely hot guy just walked into the room’ look. So, what does he look like?”

“There’s no insanely hot guy.” I’d never been a good liar. “OK, then! I need to get my head straight for the flight. I’ll text you when I’ve got reception again.”

Another laugh. “OK. But if you can’t seal the deal with him, send him my way. You know, give him my Insta or something, as in Instagram.”

“Alright, alright. I get it.”

“Fly safe!”

We said our goodbyes then hung up. I let out a sigh, the intensity of the situation weighing on me. In several hours, I'd be thousands of miles away on a very different part of the planet, spending the summer with three men and being a nanny to a two-year-old little boy. It was a bit scary, but a lesson I'd learned long ago was that the best things in life were often a little terrifying at first.

Laughter sounded from the other side of the bar, and I looked up to see that the source was the stupidly handsome guy and the bartender. He'd said something that had her in stitches, that sly, sexy smile on his face as if he had her right where he wanted her.

The longer I stared at the guy the more familiar he seemed. But how the hell was that possible? There was no way we'd met before. Surely, I'd remember a face like that.

Right in the middle of my gawking, he lifted his drink and flicked his eyes over to mine, the corner of his mouth curling as if he knew he'd caught me admiring him. Being the smooth operator I was, my own eyes went wide in shock for a split second as I clumsily reached for my phone, nearly spilling my drink in the process. Phone in hand, I swiped the screen open and tried my best to make it look like I was in the middle of checking something.

I didn't dare look up.

Moments passed as I scrolled around on my news app, wondering if Amy was right—maybe I did need some kind of social media presence. I'd hated the idea of it, having my life broadcast out into the open, there for anyone to see. Just the thought felt strange.

Suddenly, a deep voice cut through the low din of the bar.

“Mind if I join you?”

My heart seized up, my eyes going wide once more and my fingers freezing where they were over the phone keyboard.

I brought my gaze up slowly. The man I'd been ogling was standing a few feet away from me, that knowing smirk still on his face. However good-looking he'd appeared from across the

bar, up close and personal was on another freaking level. It was like looking up at a statue of a Greek god or something.

“Um, sure!”

He chuckled a bit, as if sensing my awkwardness and finding it more than a little amusing. The man moved into the chair next to me with total smoothness, a stark contrast to how skittish I was being.

He sat back, the picture of total confidence. “Couldn’t help but notice you were about done with that Bloody Mary.”

“Huh?” Without thinking, I leaned forward and wrapped my lips around the straw, sucking up the last dregs and making a loud sound. “Oh, I guess I was.”

“Mind if I get you another? Bartender’s topping off mine at the moment.”

“Uh, alright. Another sounds great.”

He smiled and nodded before turning his attention to the bartender and raising his fingers again. She hurried over, an expectant look on her face as if part of her hoped he might pop the freaking question right then and there. Her face fell a bit when she noticed that he was talking to me.

“I’ll take my next one over here. And for her...” He casually pointed his raised fingers in my direction. “Another Bloody Mary?”

I liked that he was actually asking what I wanted instead of trying to pull off some alpha male thing that I’d dealt with on so many dates. I gave the matter a bit of consideration, and quickly decided that another jug of tomato juice in my belly was the last thing I wanted.

“Vodka and club soda with a twist of lime, please.” I had my “no drinks before a flight” rule, but all the same, I desperately needed something to calm my nerves.

The bartender nodded and was off. Once she was gone, I decided to finally put the awkwardness to bed by actually introducing myself like a normal person.

I offered him my hand. “Genevieve West. But everyone calls me Gen.”

At the mere mention of my name, the expression on his face turned to something very different. He regarded me with a strange, flummoxed look, as if he couldn’t believe what I’d said.

“Did you just say Genevieve West?” he asked.

“I did. Not a fan of the name or something?”

“That’s not it at all. It’s a beautiful name, actually. Just that I’ve been sitting over on the other side of the bar trying to figure out why the hell you look so damn familiar. As soon as you said your name, I realized why.”

He took my hand. “Name’s Sean Bradshaw. And I believe we’re going to be spending the summer together.”

CHAPTER 2

I enjoyed the expression of total shock on her face.

Her *gorgeous* face, that is. Her hair was long, silky and dark; her cheekbones high; her skin olive with a complexion that was flawless and glowing; her eyes big and brown and framed with long lashes. It'd been impossible not to notice her when I'd arrived at the airport bar, and the second I'd laid eyes on her, I knew I'd have to get to know her better.

Hell, I'd wanted more than to get to know her better; my real plan had been to seduce her.

"You're *who*?" her voice was lovely, lilting and confident all at once.

I had to admit, I was a little surprised. Hadn't she done her research beforehand?

"I'm Sean, Amy's uncle. You don't recognize me?"

Even with her olive skin tone, it was easy to make out her embarrassed blush. "Actually, you did look a bit familiar but I couldn't place why. Now I see the resemblance to Amy's dad."

"Ah, yes. But I'm much better looking, right?"

We both smiled, a pleasant silence falling over the two of us. I watched her throat work as she swallowed another sip of her drink. The sight was almost mesmerizing.

I was eager to get to know more about her. Sam had performed the phone interview, so Gen was a big question mark to me. Though she and my niece had been friends for

years, I had been traveling so much that I'd never actually met the beauty.

“So, how are you feeling about the summer?”

She flicked up her eyebrows and glanced aside as if I'd just asked a difficult question.

“Funny you should ask. It's what I was talking to Amy about just a bit ago.”

“Don't tell me you're having second thoughts?” I spoke the words in a joking tone, but there was a measure of seriousness behind them.

“No, it's not that. Believe me, I'm more than eager to get away for a time.”

“Then what's the issue? Maybe it's something I can help with.”

She smiled softly, as if appreciating my offer to help. “Sitting here in the airport really made it dawn on me what I'm getting myself into.”

“Never done the au pair thing before?”

“I babysat once when I was a kid.”

“And how'd that go?”

“Set off the smoke alarm making a frozen pizza. Couldn't figure out how to turn it off, so the fire department ended up coming. Parents had to cut date night short.”

I laughed. “I'm guessing you didn't bring this up in the interview.”

“Now, do I look like the dishonest type?”

I gave her face a once-over. She might've been speaking in jest, but Gen did have quite an honest face.

“Not at all.”

She gave me a playful wag of her finger. “And don't you forget it. I told Sam. He found it more amusing than anything else.”

“And what did you say to him that got you the job?”

“Oh, maybe just a few words about how I’ve spent the last few years monomaniacally fixated on school and graduating at the top of my class.”

“And did you?”

She nodded. “For both my undergrad and my Masters.”

“Very nice. Well, working hard is the way to Sam’s heart.”

“That’s what he said. He was especially intrigued by my family history, how I came from nothing and ended up with a master’s from NYU.”

“Hell, now you’ve piqued *my* interest.”

She smiled. “Does that mean I’m going to have a second interview?”

“Nah. If Sam gave you the stamp of approval, that’s more than good enough for me. But that doesn’t mean I don’t want to know more about you.” In a few short minutes of conversation, I’d found myself totally wrapped up in Gen. It took all the restraint I had to not hit on her, to not lavish her with sweet words until I had a chance to see what she had on underneath those skintight jeans.

Needless to say, a stunt like that would surely complicate the working relationship I’d be having with my au pair. I needed to keep myself in check.

Another pleasant silence fell, this one interrupted by the buzz of her phone on the bar. She leaned over, her eyes flashing wide as she read the number on the screen.

“Shoot. Normally I’d never take a call in the middle of a conversation like this, but it’s the MET.”

“The MET? As in the museum?”

She nodded. “As in the museum. I’m starting a job there at the end of the summer.”

It was yet another trait of hers to be impressed by. “Shit. Then don’t let me keep you.”

As Gen hurried past me, it was impossible to not turn around and sneak a peek at how she looked in those jeans from

behind. Sure enough, she was curvy in all the right places—an athletic sort of toned that made it clear she took pride in her fitness.

Hard as it was to do, I pulled my eyes away from her and back to my drink. I glanced up to see the bartender sneaking a furtive glance at me. I'd only been flirting with her to pass the time. Being around Gen, even for a few minutes, was more than enough to make every other woman around seem almost drab in comparison.

I glanced over my shoulder one more time, spotting Gen standing off to the side, still in the middle of her phone conversation. I took my own phone out of my pocket, seeing that a text from Sam had come in to our group convo.

Yo! You on the plane yet or what?

I grinned, eager to share what had happened.

Hey, you guys seen Gen yet?

Sam's response came quickly. *Uh, yeah, she's my daughter's best friend. I've met her, remember?*

Seth, my twin, replied. *Just on Amy's social media. Cute girl.*

The pics don't do her justice, bro, I said.

I glanced over my shoulder and spotted Gen coming back toward me.

She slid back into her seat. "All good?" I asked.

"Yeah." I could tell she was relieved. "They just wanted some information for my HR file, no big deal."

I tapped my finger on the bar, readying myself to ask my question. "I have an idea. I was about to tell my brothers that I bumped into you here, but I thought it'd be more fun to take a selfie."

Her eyes lit up in a way that was absolutely irresistible. "Ok. And we have to send it to Amy, too."

Without wasting another moment, I scooted my chair over and wrapped my arm around her shoulder. Gen moved in

close, her lilac scent wrapping around me in a way that was totally intoxicating. It took all the concentration I had to snap the damn photo.

I sent the picture to my brothers and added the caption, “Feeling a little less upset that you guys took the private jet.”

Suddenly, a voice came over the bar speakers.

“Attention passengers for United flight one-five-four to Nice, France, we are now beginning boarding at gate seventeen.”

“That’s our cue,” I said. “Speaking of which, where you sitting?”

Gen reached into her purse and took out her ticket. “Seat B, row twenty-five.”

“Are you serious?” I asked. “Sam, you cheap bastard.”

“Huh? What’s wrong?”

“First of all, you’re in the middle seat. Not sure how much flying you’ve done, but nine hours in flight sandwiched between two strangers isn’t the way to do it.”

She waved her hand through the air. “Oh, I don’t mind one bit. I’m just grateful that Sam offered to take care of it.”

“He’s a billionaire—of course he can take care of it. But Sam’s kind of, well, you know the old saying about how you don’t get rich by spending money; you get rich by saving it? My brother takes that a little too far at times. Here, give me your ticket.”

“What? Why?”

“Because I’m upgrading you to first class. And next to me, if possible.”

I started toward the gate, Gen hurrying after me.

“Seriously, you don’t have to do that.”

“Of course I do,” I replied, flashing her a smile.

“I mean, don’t get me wrong, it’s super nice of you to offer. But at the same time, it feels really... excessive.”

I laughed. “Gen, you’re spending the summer with three billionaires, you’re going to have to get used to excessive, not to mention us taking care of things for you.”

I arrived at the gate, not giving her a chance to say another word. Gen stood next to me with her lips pursed as I switched the ticket, putting the difference on my Black card.

“Done!” I said, handing her over the new ticket.

“Thanks,” she said. “I mean it.”

“Have you ever flown first class before?” I asked.

“Never once.”

“Then this will be a treat. Come on.”

CHAPTER 3

I couldn't help it. I had a huge grin on my face the entire time as the flight attendant led Sean and me to our seats in the first-class cabin. He'd been able to get me a seat next to him, though there was still a wide aisle between us.

It was total luxury, with huge, spacious seats that stretched out into a reclining position, personal TV's, and even little shelves to put things so I didn't need to keep all of my stuff crammed on the tray table.

"Anything I can bring you while we wait to take off?" Maybe it was just my imagination, but it seemed like the staff was more polite in first class.

"Champagne," I said boldly and I heard Sean chuckle.

"Make that two, please," Sean piped up.

"Of course."

She left with a smile, and I took another moment to stare at the seat, still in disbelief that it was mine. Sean smoothly took my carry-on bag and loaded it effortlessly into the storage area above my seat. I raised a finger of protest, but by the time the deed was done. I hadn't managed to get out even a single word.

"Looks nice, but the best part is actually sitting in it." Sean teased.

I turned to watch him plop down into his seat, folding his hands behind his head with a smirk on his face. "Oh yeah, that's the stuff."

I was more careful in my approach, gingerly maneuvering to sit down as if I were going to break something. The chair was heaven—soft, light brown leather that I just sank into. It was so damn comfy, in fact, that I couldn't help but let out a long, satisfied sigh.

The flight attendant reappeared, handing each of us a glass of champagne and I turned to see Sean leaning toward me in preparation for a toast.

“What're we drinking to?”

He glanced aside, narrowing his eyes in thought as he considered the matter. “Now, that's a damn good question. How about... to trying new things?”

I grinned. “I like that.”

We reached across the wide aisle and tapped rims before I raised the glass of bubbly my lips, the drink so tasty that I let out a moan of appreciation. The rest of the passengers filed on, and within ten minutes of receiving our drinks, the pilot came on the PA system to let us know we were about to take off.

The view outside my window afforded me an amazing view of New York below. I watched it as we took off, the sprawl of the orange lights seemingly endless. I smiled as I sipped my drink, knowing that I'd be back in a few months to start my dream career.

Sean let me know that he was going to be spending the flight sleeping or taking care of odds and ends on his laptop.

“You're going to be working? Isn't the whole point of early retirement that you don't have to do that anymore?”

He chuckled. “Well, none of us ever really stopped working. We all have side projects that keep us busy. I'd go crazy otherwise.”

Sure enough, within minutes he had his MacBook out on his table, his expression serious as he worked away on whatever. What he'd said made a certain amount of sense—you didn't get to be a billionaire by being lazy. Unless, of course, you were born into it.

He worked and I sipped, eventually grabbing the blanket from the little compartment underneath the TV and wrapping it around me. It was heavenly, a total contrast to the rough, scratchy blanket from the flight into Newark.

Once I was nice and comfy, I pulled up the movie selection on the TV, picking out *The Princess Bride*, one of my go-to comfort movies, and sipping my champagne as I watched. Now and then out of the corner of my eye I'd glance over at Sean, who'd long finished his bubbly and had moved back to whiskey. As he sipped his drink and worked, I had to admit the serious, focused expression on his face was kind of sexy.

Get it together Genevieve. You absolutely cannot be thinking those kinds of thoughts. Sean might be hot, but that doesn't matter. You're going there to do a job.

I let the thought settle in my mind. Even though I knew it was the truth, I still couldn't help stealing glances of my bestie's hot uncle. He was handsome and funny and charming, with a high-energy attitude that was totally infectious. I'd simply have to learn to appreciate all that in a platonic context, as hard as that seemed in the moment.

I finished the movie and enjoyed a surprisingly good dinner for an airplane meal. With a full stomach, my eyes started to feel heavy. I switched off the TV and reclined my seat, sinking further into the soft leather as I fell asleep with thoughts of the adventure to come.



A chime woke me up. I blinked hard, sitting up and looking around at my surroundings. The sight of the first-class cabin was surreal, and it took me a moment to realize where the heck I was. I caught sight of Sean in his seat, the laptop still open in front of him.

“Morning!” he said, tilting the screen of his MacBook down. “How’re you feeling?”

“Surprisingly refreshed.”

“Good to hear. A hell of a lot better than having two people jamming their elbows into you back there. Private plane’s better, sure, but this is the next best thing.”

I took another look at his setup—the glass of whiskey was gone and replaced by a cup of steaming coffee, but other than that it didn’t look any different than when I’d dozed off.

“Have you even slept?”

His fingers moved over the keyboard for a moment as he typed up a final thought. When he was done, he looked up at me with an expression of confusion on his face.

“Huh? Oh, I don’t really need much sleep.” Sean closed his MacBook and took a sip of his coffee, nodding to the window to my left. “I closed your shade so the sun wouldn’t wake you, but you’re kind of missing a killer view. Check it out.”

I stretched my arms, cracking my joints and smiling in satisfaction. The flight attendant came by, offering me some coffee. That in hand, I turned back toward the window and pulled open the shade.

I gasped at the sight. Down below was a long, endless coast, the shimmering blue of the water a perfect contrast to the green of the land, a narrow band of white forming the beach border between the two. I spotted little towns here and there, no doubt wonderful little coastal places with the salt of the sea in the air.

“That’s the French Riviera you’re looking at. Pretty, huh?”

“Pretty” seemed like the understatement to end all understatements. I couldn’t believe how *gorgeous* that little piece of France was, the sun hitting the water in just the right way to give the entire vista a sparkling glow as if I were looking at not Earth, but a little slice of Heaven.

“Louveciennes is down there?” I asked, referring to the seaside town where the men lived.

He grinned. “You’ve done your homework. And yes, it’s down there, just north of Nice. We’ll be landing about half an hour from there and will take a car the rest of the way.”

The pilot came onto the PA, informing the passengers that we were just about to start our descent. I kept my eyes glued to the landscape as it grew bigger and bigger in view, and I was able to make out the detail of the rolling, emerald-green hills and the winding streets of the little French towns.

We landed quickly, touching down at a small airport outside of Nice. We rolled down the runway, parking at a gate and coming to a stop. With a soft chime, the flight was over.

I was suddenly giddy. The nervousness I'd felt was gone, replaced by an eagerness to get out of the plane and take in the sights. I turned and was greeted with the sight of Sean in front of me, having already slipped out of his seat to grab my bag. He reached up as he pulled the bag out, the bottom of his shirt rising above his waistline and giving a lovely view of his hip notches and abs. I stared for a moment, the hint of his physique so sexy that I felt myself getting a little wet at just the glimpse I'd been afforded.

"Here you are." His voice snapped me out of my daze, Sean placing my bag on the side of my seat before flashing me a smile. "Shall we?"

I shook my head, coming back to the moment. "We shall."

Sean offered me his hand and I took it, the sensation of his warm, rough skin sending another fresh wave of arousal through me. He might've been a tech guy, but the texture of his hand reminded me of what a carpenter's might feel like, the skin calloused in just the right way to let me know he was no softie.

He helped me out of my seat and I stretched one last time before heading down the aisle and off the plane. The gate attendants greeted us with friendly *bonjours* as we stepped into the terminal, the building clean and sleek. Sean fired something back at them in what appeared to be perfect French, the attendants laughing good-naturedly as he flashed them a grin.

Of course, he speaks perfect French, I thought.

“Alright.” He put his hands on his hips. “I fucking hate airports. You fly private for long enough, and you get all kinds of spoiled.”

“Is your car here?” I stepped to his side, noticing again just how damn tall he was. He was easily just shy of six-and-a-half feet.

“Nah, we’re not driving. Got someone picking us up. Come on.” He gave me a wink before starting off, slinging his black leather bag over his shoulder and hurrying down the length of the terminal. I struggled to keep up, his long legs making me have to practically run in order to keep up with his pace.

We reached the baggage claim, Sean swiftly moving over to the carousel and effortlessly scooping off his bag, then mine, when I pointed it out. Once that was done, he led me over to a waiting area where a collection of men in sharp, dark suits waited with signs.

There was one driver that stood out, however. Instead of the stuffy black suits that the others wore, he was dressed in a casual white button-up and dark blue slacks, a bit of scruff on his face and his eyes hidden behind sunglasses that were both clearly expensive and slightly gaudy. He was tall and slender and he grinned as Sean approached, the two embracing for a quick, back-slapping hug and quickly conversing in French to one another.

When he turned his attention to me, the man whipped off his sunglasses and regarded me with an expression that bordered on disbelief.

“This is her?” he asked, his English fluent but tinged with a heavy accent. Before waiting for Sean to respond, he swooped in and took my hand, bringing it to his lips and placing a quick, polite kiss on my knuckles. “Mademoiselle, you have no idea how much of a pleasure it is to make your acquaintance. My name is Georges, and if you need anything, I am but your humble servant.”

I couldn’t help but chuckle at how over-the-top his introduction was.

“Nice to meet you, Georges. I’m Genevieve, but everyone calls me Gen.”

He placed his hands on his heart and leaned back a bit, as if I’d struck him with an arrow.

“Gen,” he repeated. “Gorgeous, simply *magnifique*. Now, Gen, when I say if you need anything, I mean it. You need a ride to the beach, I’m your *homme*. Or, if you need a handsome Frenchman to accompany you around town and show you the finer points of Louveciennes, I would be more than happy to have you on my arm.”

Sean laughed, shaking his head as he came over and clapped his big hand down on Georges’ shoulder. “Alright, Lothario, we’ve just had a long flight, so let’s give her a little time to recover before you give her the full Georges treatment.”

“Ah, but of course.” He slipped on his sunglasses before coming over to take the bags from my hands. “Let us be on our way then—daylight’s burning, as you Americans say.”

Sean gave me a knowing smile, and I couldn’t help but laugh at what had just happened. The three of us headed out of the small airport, the air fresh and the sun revitalizing me the instant it touched my face. I stopped for a moment, closing my eyes and smiling as the warmth beamed down on me.

“Ah, there it is,” Georges said. “The magic of *l’aire Francaise*.”

“No kidding,” Sean added. “You spend enough time in New York and you start to feel like your lungs are coated in gunk.”

I opened my eyes, feeling restored as I started off again.

“It’s so *fresh* here,” I said.

“You are not the first to notice the restorative powers of the French Mediterranean air.” Georges turned around as he spoke, walking backward as he led us toward a small parking lot where a handful of luxury vehicles were situated. “Ever since this region was populated thousands of years ago, people noticed that there was something in the air here that fills one

with a certain vitality. You will feel ten years younger just walking around.”

Georges led us to a sleek, black luxury car long enough to have a cab area in back where two rows of seats faced one another. He loaded our bags into the trunk after opening the side doors for Sean and me.

Sean guided me into the car, placing his hand on the small of my back in such a way that chills ran up my spine, my pussy clenching at his touch. For a moment, despite the warm, sweet air that wrapped around me, there was nothing in the world but the two of us and his hand just above my ass.

I shook my head, coming back to the moment, the sound of Georges opening and closing the driver’s door snapping me out of my horny daze.

The cab of the car was sleek and almost futuristic, the seats dark and smooth enough to look like they were made of obsidian, with two screens on each side, and a bar bordered with soft, white light.

“Something to drink?” Sean asked as he reached for the bar. “A little early for my tastes, but I won’t judge.”

“You wouldn’t judge if your new au pair got sloshed on her way to the first day at work?” I spoke with a wry smile.

He laughed, pulling out a can of coconut La Croix. “OK, maybe I’d judge a little.”

“No booze. But one of those looks tasty.”

“You got it.”

He tossed me a can and I cracked it open, taking a sip.

“Alright!” Georges rolled down the partition as he spoke. “Now, the drive to the estate should take no longer than thirty minutes. If you wish, I can give you a brief introduction to the area as we go, or, if you like, I can keep my mouth shut and you can just relax.”

“I’d love to know about the area,” I said. “If you don’t mind, Sean.”

He nodded. “Georges knows his stuff, I’ll give him that.”

“So kind of you, Sean.” Georges grinned as he slipped on his designer shades. “*On y va!*”

He started the engine, the car growling to life as he pulled out of the spot and onto the road.

“Now,” Georges began as we drove among the rolling hills, “The first thing you need to know about this gorgeous little part of the Earth that I call home, is that there are two geographic features of importance. The first is, of course, the Mediterranean to the south. Believe me, you will be getting very acquainted with it from the estate. But in addition to the sea, there are the mountains. We are just below the Alps, and the famous rugged hillsides are the southern foothills of this range.”

He went on. I focused intensely, only breaking my attention to take in the sights of the charming little towns and villages through which we passed.

“The climate here... *c’est parfait*. It is warm and sunny, with mild winters and summers just hot enough to be interesting. The natural beauty of the region cannot be beat, and just a short time here will make you more than aware of just why the French Riviera, or the *Cote d’Azur*, as we call it, is one of the most popular tourist destinations in the world.”

We drove a bit more, passing through adorable little towns that looked like something out of another time. I wanted to visit them all, to sit on the patios of their cafes with an espresso and watch the world go by.

“Of course, *le Cote d’Azur* is not just natural beauty, though we have it in abundance. There is also the lifestyle here, the glamor and chic nature of the region. There are luxurious resorts, high-end boutiques, and the best food you will ever taste in your life. There are the beaches and nightlife and cultural events, anything and everything you could possibly want. Nice, Cannes, Monaco—all amazing cities worth your time. But if sleepy, seaside towns are more to your taste, I recommend Antibes, Saint-Tropez, and Menton.”

“What about the town where we’re staying?” I asked. “Louveciennes?”

“Ah, Louveciennes. Now, this town is not just any town; it is the town where none other than yours truly was born.”

“Which makes it the most important town in the world, you see,” Sean added with a grin.

“Correct!” Georges added. “Now you are getting it. But if you want to know other bits of interest about it, we can start with the name. French speaker or no, I am sure you have noticed that the town’s name is not French at all. Louveciennes is an Italian name and reflects the history of the place as having gone back and forth between the two nations over the centuries. When you see the town yourself, you will understand right away why it would be considered a place worth fighting over.”

We drove on, Georges explaining more of the finer points of the area, the road gently curving through the hilly terrain. After twenty minutes or so of driving, during which I spent just about the entire time practically drooling over the vista, we approached a region that dripped money. Huge estates jutted out of the sides of the hills, the water shimmering in the distance. There was no doubt that it was the place where the most well-to-do of the well-to-do called home.

“And there she is down there,” Georges said. “Louveciennes herself.”

I looked out the window, gasping at the sight down below. The view from the road looked out over a towering drop down, the sea endless in the distance. Down on the coast, a perfect view of a medium-sized village clustered around the edge of the land. Even from our height I could see the layout of the town, a half-circle-shaped place centered around a large plaza, dots of people filling the streets.

“This is amazing,” I said. “So beautiful it almost seems unreal.”

“Well, I would say get used to it,” Georges replied. “But I have spent nearly my entire life here and I still have not yet

gotten used to it. I think such a thing is impossible in a place like this.”

I glanced over at Sean, who was in the middle of typing something on his phone, possibly letting the other guys know we were almost there. My stomach tensed in anticipation, and I couldn't help but grin as we drove down the narrow lane with the sea to our left and the gorgeous hillside estates to our right.

Minutes later, we took a turn onto an even smaller road lined with tall trees. We drove deeper into the hills, soon coming up on a large, ornate gate with the letters “BB” in large, elegant, gold script.

“Bradshaw Brothers,” I whispered, a tinge of wonder in my voice.

“That's right,” Sean replied, tucking away his phone. “We're here.”

CHAPTER 4

Georges pressed a button on the keypad of the gate, and the doors opened smoothly and slowly. My heart began to race with anticipation at the sights that lay beyond. Georges pulled through, giving me my first glimpse of the property.

The main building caught my eye right away, the structure perched in the hills overlooking the sea. The sleek, angular lines of the home were a striking contrast to the rugged hills, the glass facades giving me the impression that I was approaching a palace of the future.

The art major in me drank in the sight of the building, appreciating the clean lines and sharp angles. It was impossible not to notice the attention to detail in every bit of its design. The facades were tilted forward somewhat, giving the impression the building was on the verge of leaping into the ocean.

The interplay of shadow and light caught my eye, the stark white frame of the building seeming to glow under the basking rays of sunlight, casting patterns on the ground below. It was striking, and I smiled at the idea of the architect designing the place, taking the time to create such an effect.

As we pulled up to the house, the magnitude of the estate captured my attention. The lawn was perfectly manicured, the color an even green. There was a sculpted garden, and even a sparkling infinity pool that seemed to spill off the edge of the hill.

The effect was incredible, a vast estate that somehow seemed hidden and remote. There were a few other buildings on the grounds, one that looked to be a pool house, another a guest house. A warehouse-like structure gave me the impression of a garage.

“I take it by the look on your face that you like what you see,” Sean said as Georges pulled the car to a halt in front of the house.

“It’s... I don’t even know what to say. You guys really know how to live.”

Sean chuckled. “Come on, I’m eager to show you around.”

He opened the door and slid out, turning smoothly and offering me his hand as he stood up. I took it, that same tenseness taking hold deep inside at the sensation of his skin against mine. I wanted him to do more with those hands, to put them all over my body, between my legs...

Focus on the job. Focus on the freaking job.

I came to my senses as I stepped out, the enormous building looming before me. As Georges grabbed the bags, I made my way over to the far end of the estate near the infinity pool. The view was astounding. Directly below were other grand estates, the hill declining all the way to Louveciennes in the distance, the beach just before that.

“Now, we look like we’re a bit of a distance from the beach,” Sean said as he came over to where I was standing. “But see that path down there?” He pointed off to the side, to a small, gated area. “Hop in one of the golf carts and you’ll be on the beach in five minutes, takes you right around the town. And yes, our section of the beach is private.” He then pointed to another path that went up higher into the hills. “And right up there is the most beautiful damn view you’ve ever seen waiting for you. It’s just another quick drive in the golf cart, or a nice little thirty-minute hike—whichever you’re in the mood for.”

I gave myself another moment to wrap my head around everything.

“This is going to take some time to get used to,” I said. “I’ve spent the last couple of years crammed into a sock-drawer-sized apartment in Chinatown with two other girls.”

“You’ll have time, don’t worry. Getting used to living like this was kind of an adjustment for me too, to be honest. But anyway, come on, let’s let my brothers know we’re here.”

I took one more look at the incredible view before me, wanting to burn the sight into my memory before the two of us turned and started back toward the house.

“So, you all live here together, right?”

He flashed me a knowing grin. “Think it’s a little weird that three grown men all share the same house like this?”

My cheeks tinged red. “No, I don’t think it’s weird. More... unconventional.”

“Unconventional is a nice way to call something weird. I’d accept eccentric, too.”

I laughed, Sean joining me. “I mean, it’s not something you see every day.”

“I admit that it’s a little strange. But we had been working closely together so much for so long that we more or less lived together anyway. We’d work at Sam’s house from dawn to dusk, crashing there when we were totally exhausted then waking up to do it all over again. Eventually it got to the point where it seemed stupid for Seth and me to have our own places. So, we built this.” He swept his hand toward the house. “It works for us—there’s so much damn room here that we’ll go entire days without bumping into each other.”

“And Bobby likes it?”

He grinned. “He loves it. When we had this place built, he was right smack dab in the middle of our thinking. None of us could imagine what it might be like for a kid his age to lose both of his parents, so we wanted to build a home where he’d be comfortable, with lots of space to play.”

“What happened to his parents?” My eyes flashed as soon as I asked the question. “Sorry, I don’t mean to pry if it’s none

of my business.”

“No, this is all of your business. You’re going to be here for the summer, so you should know what’s up. What did Sam tell you about Bobby?”

“Just that he was who I’d be taking care of, that he’d only been here for a few months, that you guys were all crazy about him but didn’t think you had the time for him that he deserved.”

“All true. We’re all very busy and still trying to figure out how to tie things up so that we can find a routine that works for all of us, Bobby most importantly. We’re finding our footing, but all the same, we wanted someone who could focus on the little guy one hundred percent, give him the attention he needs while we work out the rest of it.”

He rubbed the back of his neck with his hand while looking away, as if trying to find the right words to say. Or, perhaps, gathering the nerve to bring up a difficult topic. Georges and a pair of attendants who’d emerged from the house were busy unloading our bags and taking them in.

“His parents, Jared and Cindy... hurts to even talk about them.”

I shook my head. “You don’t need to discuss it if it’s painful.”

“No, you should know. Sam only told you that they passed, right?”

“Right. But not how.”

“Car accident. They were heading up the 405 north of Santa Monica, got caught in a sudden storm and hydroplaned. Car spun out of control and they slammed right into a jackknifing semi. Both passed away on the spot.”

“Oh my God. That’s horrible.”

He nodded. “Can’t imagine a worse tragedy. Thank God Bobby wasn’t with them.” He paused, taking a moment to compose himself, as if the thought of anything happening to Bobby, even in a hypothetical, was too much for him to bear.

“Anyway, Cindy was the head of our legal department, which meant she was close with us, close enough that Sam was Bobby’s godfather. And they had no other family that they trusted.”

“So now he’s here with you guys.”

Sean smiled. “Yeah, he is. Crazy how he’s only been here for a short time, but all the same I can’t imagine life without him. Kids are kind of magical that way, huh?”

The way he spoke and the smile on his face left no doubt about how he felt about Bobby. Before we could continue the conversation, however, a voice coming through a speaker filled the air.

“You guys going to chat out there all day, or are you going to come in and say hi?”

I laughed, recognizing Sam’s voice.

“Sorry!” Sean waved his hand through the air. “Just showing our guest around a bit.”

“Come on in and take a load off,” spoke another voice, just as deep as the rest. “Got some grub in here waiting for you.”

Sean swept his hand toward the front doors. “Shall we?”

“Let’s.”

Together we made our way to the front doors of the estate, Sean pushing them open as he faced me.

I gasped when I stepped into the house, the interior just as impressive as the exterior. Natural light poured into the vast, open rooms, making it look like the place was glowing. Several pieces of art—a mixture of modern and classical—were placed so that they blended seamlessly with the sleek, minimalist style of the house, making it clear they’d been chosen carefully.

Truth be told, the place was so nice that I couldn’t help but feel a little embarrassed in my jeans and sweatshirt and ratty Chuck Taylors. Not to mention how disheveled I felt after the long flight.

Staff members zipped here and there, some taking the bags upstairs and others tidying up.

“You have a staff?”

Sean nodded. “Fifteen altogether. None of us have ever been live-in-help sorts of guys, so when we first moved into this place we tried to keep it clean and organized all on our own. After a week of that and realizing we were spending ninety percent of our waking hours dusting, we changed courses. Staff housing is behind the main complex—you’ll see it when you get the grand tour.”

After he finished speaking, the faint sound of talking in the distance let me know that I was about to meet the other two men. Sure enough, two figures appeared around the corner.

The first was a man who looked exactly like Sean, at least, in terms of face structure and build. He had the same strong jaw, the same piercing hazel eyes, the same sensual mouth and slim nose. The main difference was easy to notice—unlike Sean with his longer, tousled hair, this man’s was close-cropped, almost military-style. Rather than Sean’s easy smile, his expression was more serious, as if sizing me up as he approached. He was dressed in neatly pressed clothes, his slacks dark and his white button-up crisp, black dress shoes polished to a mirrored shine. I knew right away that it was Seth, Sean’s twin.

Next came Amy’s dad. Sam Bradshaw was tall, an inch or so taller than his brothers. His build was long and lean, with the sort of toned physique that one might expect from a swimmer or biker. His hair was the same color as his brothers’, though threaded with silver. He wore a neatly trimmed beard that framed his strong jaw.

With his stylish, silver-rimmed glasses and neatly parted hair, he gave off a slightly nerdy vibe, but nerdy in the sexy, bookish sort of way. He was dressed in an off-white T-shirt with a little pocket on the chest, the sleeves clinging to his toned arms, grayish-blue linen pants, a pair of oak-colored driving loafers on his feet.

I'd always found Amy's dad particularly attractive but seeing him in that atmosphere made him even more so.

Bobby was adorable. He was in Sam's arms, clinging to his godfather like a monkey, his hair a brilliant, golden blonde and his eyes the bluest I'd ever seen. He regarded me with an uncertain expression, holding Sam close as he took in the sight of me. I'd only seen pictures of the little guy, but just one look at him in person was enough to make my heart melt.

"And there's the woman we've all be waiting on." Sam spoke with a warm, inviting smile on his face. He set Bobby down, the little guy continuing to watch me silently. "We're so glad you could make it." He extended his hand, and I shook it.

Seth stepped over. His movements were more deliberate, a heaviness to them that suggested he knew how to carry himself. He didn't smile as he approached, and I couldn't quite tell if he wore a seriousness that was based on skepticism, or one borne from apprehension.

"Seth Bradshaw. Nice to finally meet you."

I took his hand, which had the same rough texture as Sean's. "Same."

Bobby had finally gathered up the nerve to move closer to me. He didn't say anything, just continued looking up at me with those big, blue eyes. I squatted down, eager to get a closer look at that adorable little face of his.

"Hey, cutie pie!" I waved to him. "My name's Genevieve. But you can just call me Gen."

Bobby didn't say anything, instead, he continued to stare.

"He's not much of a talker." Sam came over as he spoke, giving Bobby a friendly hair muss.

"Yeah," Sean added. "He's a man of few words."

Seth crossed his arms and leaned against the wall behind him. "Milestones say that he should be hitting a few dozen words by now. So far, we've got nothing from him but baby babble, and that's on a good day."

Sam pursed his lips. “Now, we all know by now that milestones are just guidelines. Nothing to worry about if he’s not hitting one. He’s a big guy for his age, and he was moving around on his own two feet far sooner than Amy was.”

Sean nodded, flashing his trademark big, friendly grin. “Right! Every kid’s different.”

I could sense that it was a conversation that the guys had likely had a few times already, each of them sharing a look between one another that seemed to silently say that now wasn’t the time to have it again.

Sam cleared his throat. “Anyway, we don’t need to give you the full tour and everything just yet. You’ve just come in from a long flight, and you’re almost certainly jetlagged. How about you take a few hours to yourself, get unpacked or catch a little nap.”

“Sounds perfect.” I glanced down at Bobby, watching as he took in a big, full yawn. “Speaking of naps, I think this little guy might be ready for one.”

Sam checked his watch. “You’re right, it’s looking about that time. You’re more than welcome to put him down.”

Seth nodded. “Sounds like as good a time as any to introduce her to Mathilde. She can show her to the nursery, then to her room.”

“Mathilde?” I asked.

“Head of the staff,” Sean replied. “About the best head housekeeper anyone could hope for.”

A voice called from a room across the first floor tinged with a heavy, French accent. “My ears are burning!”

“And she always seems to know when she’s being talked about.” Sam grinned as he spoke.

Before any of us could say another word, a woman appeared in the entry hall. She was short and stout, her outfit comprised of black pants and a plain, powder-blue frock, a pair of comfortable sneakers on her feet. Her hair was silver, pulled back into a tight bun that contrasted with her soft

jawline and fleshy, friendly face. Not a single hair was out of place, not a bit of dirt or grime on her clothes. She stood with her hands folded together, her posture one of confident competence.

“I see the newest member of the staff has *arrivé*.” Her green eyes glanced up and down my body, Mathilde making no effort to hide the fact that she was giving me a stern once-over. “Welcome to the Bradshaw estate. My name is Mathilde Bonaventure.”

“Pleasure to meet you,” I replied.

She nodded to Bobby. “Let us put the *petit homme* down, and I will show you to your room.”

“Perfect.” Without wasting another moment, I squatted down to Bobby. “Ready to hit the sack, buddy?”

He nodded without saying a word, instead rubbing his eyes in a totally adorable way. I opened my arms and he walked into them, and I scooped him off the ground. He wasted no time resting his little head on my shoulder. I could feel his body relaxing, preparing to rest, and my heart was melting. I was going to fall for the little guy very quickly, I could already tell.

“Come with me,” Mathilde replied. “His room is on the second floor.”

The guys came over, all of them doting a bit on Bobby before we headed upstairs to his room.

“Make yourself at home. Rest, take a dip in the pool, watch TV, whatever. We’re doing dinner at seven. If you’re up to it, we’d love to have you there. Again, welcome. Already got a damn good feeling about you, Gen.”

Seth merely nodded. He definitely seemed to be a bit more reserved about me than his brothers.

Might have to win that one over, I thought.

“Come along, girl,” Mathilde said, nodding up the stairs. “That boy isn’t going to get any lighter.”

Bobby was already dozing off, the little man barely able to keep his eyes open as he rested his head on my shoulder. Mathilde and I made our way up the stairs and, sure enough, Bobby seemed to grow heavier and heavier with each step.

“That one has always been big for his age,” she said, glancing over her shoulder at me. “Since I have known him, at least.”

“I’ll say.”

“You will get strong shoulders lugging him around, trust me.” To prove her point, she reached over with her right hand and slapped her left shoulder, a solid sound filling the air, as if she were smacking a big sack of flour. “He is growing up just fine, the only problem is that he needs to start talking. You ask me, too many men around. He needs a woman’s touch, a bit of tenderness, if he is going to open up, *tu comprends?*”

“Makes sense.”

Truth be told, I wasn’t sure if a feminine touch was what he needed to start talking, or if I’d be the one to provide it. Fact of the matter was that Mathilde didn’t seem like the type of woman who took kindly to being disagreed with.

We reached the second of the three floors of the home, the long, sleek hallway intersecting with three others, each turn leading to more rooms. I was beginning to see what Sean meant when he said the place was more than big enough for all of them. We passed a few other members of the staff, all of whom were busy cleaning or bringing whatever supplies they carried here and there.

“What do you think of the Bradshaw’s?” Mathilde asked.

“They seem very nice.”

She laughed. “Nice is what one says about people they do not know how else to describe. At any rate, the three of them are all good men. They can be tough and exacting in their own ways, but I am sure that you will find your way to navigate your relationship with the three of them.”

The strange way she emphasized *navigate* gave me pause. However, I didn’t have time to ask her what exactly she’d

meant by that. She stopped in front of an open door and a quick glance inside revealed that the room was Bobby's.

The room was adorable, big and spacious with long windows that looked out over the green landscape of the back stretch of the estate, a gorgeous, sculpted garden right in the center. The walls were painted a light blue with fire trucks, construction equipment and various other worker vehicles sketched into them.

“Press this button here.” Mathilde gestured to a small electronic panel next to the door. “Watch.”

She pressed one button and then another on the screen, the window dimming as if someone somewhere were filling it with ink, the room becoming as dark as a cave.

“I just changed him before you got here, so you need not worry about that. Go ahead and put him down.”

I nodded before gently slipping Bobby out of his shoes and bringing him over to his crib. As I moved, the back of my neck began to tingle in that unmistakable way that let me know Mathilde was watching me carefully, observing my technique.

“Alright, buddy. Nap time.” I gently laid him down, Bobby opening his arms in his sleepy state and grabbing a stuffed dinosaur nearby, hugging it closely. Luckily, I didn't need to do much... once he was down, he was out. I pulled the blanket over him and watched for a few moments to make sure he didn't rouse.

“That is good.” Mathilde placed her hand on my shoulder and nodded toward the door, the two of us leaving. Once we were out in the hallway and the door was shut, she began again. “There is a monitor, and I will make sure to have that linked to your phone. For now, let me take you to your room. Just this way.”

Mathilde turned on her heels and began down the hall. Despite her being shorter than me, along with several decades older, she moved with surprising speed. Even though I was no longer lugging around a forty-pound toddler, it was still a bit of a struggle to keep up.

“As you can see,” she said, gesturing to the halls around her, “Our team works diligently keeping this place as clean as can be. The Bradshaw’s prefer a neat and orderly environment, and we strive to keep it to their satisfaction.”

She was right. The place was spotless, as if no one even lived there.

“While your duties will be with Bobby, I will still expect you to strive to conduct yourself in an unobtrusive fashion. Do not leave messes when it can be helped and pick up after yourself. There is staff to clean the kitchen, but that does not mean you shouldn’t clean up after yourself should you decide to prepare your own food.”

“Sounds reasonable.”

We reached the door at the very end of the hall and Mathilde turned around to face me. She stood with poise, as if guarding the room from me, not willing to let me pass until she’d said what was on her mind.

“Your arrangement with the Bradshaw’s... it is most unusual. Joining our staff is typically quite a process. But Mr. Sam seems to have been rather impressed by you over the course of a simple phone call and I know you have a friendship with his daughter as well. Regardless, you will be staying here in the main house but that doesn’t mean you are not under my supervision.”

“Of course,” I agreed, though I wasn’t sure what she was getting at.

“If you have issues or concerns, come to me. The Bradshaw’s are very busy. You are here to help with Bobby and to make their lives a little easier.”

“That’s right. And I want to be a solid member of the team.”

She nodded slowly, as if I’d given her the answer she’d wanted to hear.

“I say this to you because, living here with the family and not in the staff house, you will have a bit more independence.

Do not take advantage of it, and do not squander the trust they have placed in you. We are *claire*?”

“Oui. I mean, yes.”

One more nod accompanied by a small, knowing smile, and she turned back to the door and pulled it open.

I gasped at the room on the other side. It was huge, the colors clean whites, the outside walls entirely glass. There was a sleek desk on one side, a huge, soft-looking bed on the other, and a large walk-in closet. I craned my neck to see an ensuite bathroom, with a tub and shower and plenty of space. The view from the windows was sweeping, looking out over the front stretch of the property. I hurried over, looking down at the green grass below, then to the infinity pool, then to the town and beach and sea beyond.

“As you can see, this room is quite spare. You will be here for a few months, however, so feel free to spruce it up as you see fit. Your bags have been placed in the walk-in closet. And the panel here by the door controls lights for the room and the tint of the window. *Regarde.*”

I turned to watch her access the panel, bringing up a small menu. A few taps, and the windows darkened the same way the ones in Bobby’s room had, pure darkness descending. Another tap and the darkness faded, light returning.

“The rooms are soundproof and have built-in speaker systems that you can connect your devices to. And it is voice activated. Just speak to the room, and it will do what you want. There are other odds and ends to learn about the *technologie* of the house, but you look like a smart girl—I’m sure you can figure them out on your own. Now, if you do not mind...”

“Thanks, Mathilde. I’m happy to be here.”

She gave me one more skeptical look. “Yes, well just do your job and I am sure we will all get along just fine.”

With that, she shut the door and left.

I stepped over to the bed and fell back onto it, a smile spreading across my face.

“Um, room? Can you open a window?”

A soft chime sounded, followed by one of the windows nearest to me swinging open a bit, fresh, salty air wafting in.

Laying there, I thought about the Bradshaw brothers. It was crazy how handsome all of them were. Sean was a stunner, but so were Seth and Sam. None of that mattered, however. I was there to do a job, not to get involved with anyone. But that didn't mean I couldn't notice how good-looking they were.

“Can you set an alarm for two hours from now?”

Another chime. Over on the panel, an alarm for the time requested displayed for a moment.

I closed my eyes, the sea air drifting over me, my body relaxing into the softness of the bed. What this summer had in store for me, I could only guess, but I was sure as hell excited.

CHAPTER 5

Espresso was something of a daily ritual for me. I'd always been a bit of a coffee fiend, really. Ever since I was a boy, not even a teenager, putting together my first PCs in the basement of the house where I grew up in Des Moines, I'd been drinking the stuff. I'd sneak into the kitchen after Mom and Dad had gone to bed, preparing myself a pot—or sometimes two—which I'd drink as I tinkered around.

Now that I was older, my coffee consumption habits were a bit different.

I stood in the vast expanse of my kitchen, my eyes on the gleaming, silver hand of my La Marzocco espresso machine. Espresso machines had always been fascinating to me, almost computer-like in their complexity. I pressed the start button on the machine, and it hummed to life in response. Once it was on, I carefully measured out eighteen grams of single-origin Intelligentsia coffee, this particular bean from the highlands of Ethiopia.

Beans in hand, I placed them into my Mazzer grinder, a powerful machine capable of grinding the beans to the exacting consistency that I wanted. As I prepared to scoop the beans, however, I found myself pausing, staring off into space in the way I did when an idea came into my mind that I couldn't shake.

I wasn't thinking of my projects, this time.

I was thinking of Genevieve.

There'd been no doubt that she was something special; I'd discovered that much the few times that I had met her through my daughter. And over the course of our phone call, she'd impressed me even more. She was bright and thoughtful, and the CV that she had sent to me prior to the call made it clear that she possessed the responsibility and industriousness that a job like taking care of Bobby would require.

The only problem being because she was so damn beautiful, she was bound to be a distraction. A very taboo one on so many levels. Not only was she in our employ, but she was also my daughter's best friend. Had I made a mistake in bringing her over for the summer? I cleared my throat, looking out across the sea as I liked to do when I needed to straighten out my mind.

Coffee. It was early afternoon, my usual time for another espresso. I turned my focus back to the task at hand.

Next up was grinding the beans. I sealed the lid and pressed the button to start. I watched as the machine whirred to life, the grinder transforming the beans into a fine powder, my eyes flicking over to the digital readout that displayed the precise weight.

Once that was done, I moved the espresso over to a portafilter, tamping the grounds inside with a quick flick of my wrist. Muscle memory guided my movements with practiced ease as I snugly fit the portafilter into the espresso machine's holder.

The beans ready to go, I placed my cup, a delicate, handcrafted clay vessel made by a Japanese artisan, into position, and hit the start button. The machine hummed to life, and as soon as I was freed from the work of preparing, my mind again went to Gen. I found my thoughts lingering on the way she looked in those jeans, her hips round and practically straining against the denim. I thought of her lips, plump and full, situated underneath her button nose.

Only a soft *ding* from the machine snapped me out of my thoughts. I lifted the cup from its position, gazing down into

the oak-colored froth of the espresso. The scent was lovely, rich and complex and earthy, and I took a slow sip.

Delicious.

“You done yet?”

My eyes flashed as I turned around, nearly spilling my drink onto my hand. Sean stood at one of the entrances to the enormous kitchen, his arms folded across his chest as he regarded me with a grin.

“I swear,” I said, shaking my head. “It’s like you get sick pleasure out of breaking my concentration.”

“Only a little.” He stepped over to the towering stainless-steel fridge, pulling out a can of Liquid Death and cracking it open. “And besides, I waited until you were done making it, didn’t I?”

I took another sip of my espresso before answering, letting the flavor linger on my tongue before swallowing it down.

“Plus,” he raised his finger. “We were going to talk about business stuff after welcoming Gen.”

He had a point. “You’re right. Where’s Seth?”

“In his office.”

I cleared my throat and spoke. “House, please locate Seth and let him know that we’re meeting in my office right away.”

A series of soft, blue lights illuminated in the particular pattern they did whenever a message had been received.

“Let’s go.” I nodded to Sean, and we were off.

Our offices were all on the third floor. Sean and I made our way there, Seth stepping out of his own office just as we passed.

“There a reason why we’re meeting in *your* office?” he asked as he joined us. “I was already in mine.”

“Mine’s nicer,” I replied with a grin. “And the view’s better.”

Seth chuckled a bit to himself, he well knew by now that there was no point in arguing with his older brother.

We stepped into my office, the clean, orderly nature of it setting my mind at ease right away. It was a large space, affording a sweeping view over the estate and a panoramic across the coast through the wall-to-wall floor-to-ceiling windows.

Sean took a swig of his water and plopped into one of the Barcelona chairs in the sitting area. Seth did the same, easing slowly and deliberately onto the couch. I sat on the edge of my desk, throwing back the last sip of my espresso and carefully setting down the cup before beginning.

“So, we’ve got a few things to discuss. Let’s start with the most pressing, the newest member of the staff.” I nodded to Sean. “I’ve been able to spend brief amounts of time with her through Amy, but you had a full nine plus hours with her on the flight. What’s your impression?”

“Hope you found out something because she’s got nothing online,” Seth said. “I know you guys were against hiring a PI to find out more about her, but still. How the hell does a woman her age have *zero* social media presence?”

Sean shrugged. “Does it matter why? Maybe she prefers to keep her private life private.”

“Is that the impression you got from her?” I asked. “Amy has mentioned to me before that Gen is not a fan of social media.”

“In a matter of speaking. She’s not weird or standoffish or anything like that. But she most definitely isn’t the type of woman to spend an entire flight taking selfies.”

“That’s good. We want a nanny who’s more focused on Bobby than on her Instagram follower count. What else did you learn about her?”

Sean leaned back, putting his feet up on the glass coffee table. Normally, I would’ve told him to take them right off. But I was far more concerned with the subject at hand.

“Nothing that you didn’t already know. She’s a good person, smart and sweet, driven and all that shit.” He grinned. “Oh, and she’s *fucking gorgeous*.”

Seth snorted, shaking his head, but he didn’t dispute Sean.

“Not to mention the way she was with Bobby. You guys saw the way he went right up to her, he *never* does that with anyone he doesn’t know.”

“And the way she picked him up,” Seth added. “Like she’d already done it a million times.”

“Yeah, I was impressed with her. In fact, I’ve been debating whether or not to take her out, show her around Louveciennes.” Sean said.

“No.” My tone was sharp.

“Yeah, not a good idea,” Seth agreed.

“Are you guys serious?” Sean took his feet off the coffee table and sat forward.

“Dead serious,” I said. “We hired her and brought her all the way here to a foreign country to do a *job*, not to be your arm candy out on the town. None of us will be wining and dining her, seducing her, or anything else.”

Sean grinned. “You say that like either of you could.”

“Faster than you could,” Seth shot back, the corner of his mouth curling in such a way that made it clear he’d be up for the challenge.

I raised my palm. “Easy. Like I said, none of us is getting into any of that.”

“Why not?” Sean asked. “I spent practically an entire day with her, she was totally into me.” He shrugged, a shit-eating grin on his face. “Then again, what woman isn’t?”

I laughed, Sean displaying his famous cocky attitude. “Spoken like a true narcissist.”

“Hey, just because I’m aware when a woman’s putting her interest out there it doesn’t mean I’m a narcissist.”

“Isn’t that right there another narcissist trait?” Seth asked, pointing his finger in Sean’s direction as he addressed the question to me. “You know, being a narcissist but *thinking* they’re not?”

“Pretty sure you’re right about that,” I replied, allowing myself a small smirk.

“Hey, hey let’s not get into armchair psychoanalysis,” Sean said. “If we’re keeping our hands off Gen, then so be it. Just saying that she was definitely picking up what I was putting down, is all.”

He leaned forward, a crafty expression on his face.

“But you guys have to admit that she’s something special, right? Come on, I could see the looks in your eyes when she stepped through the front door.”

Seth and I shared a look that made it clear we were both in agreement. I couldn’t stop thinking about her, and it was almost unnerving.

“What if there is something unique about her?” Sean went on. “What if she’s the one, the one that *it* could work with.”

It was too much to think about right then and I raised my palm.

“Maybe there is something to discuss here,” I said. “But now’s not the time for it. Let’s allow her to settle in a bit, give ourselves a chance to see if she’s even a good fit for the job. Maybe, and I mean *maybe*, we can revisit the issue later. But for now, it’s tabled.”

Sean opened his mouth, as if he wanted to get in a word of protest. Wisely, he closed it and sat back.

“Besides,” I went on. “You were in New York for a reason. How’d the meeting with the producers go?”

Sean, having grown a bit bored with the tech world over the last few years, had decided to make a pivot into another passion of his—film. He’d loved movies ever since he was a kid, spending every free moment he could watching black-

and-white arthouse features or whatever other obscure titles he could get his hands on.

A few months back, he'd told us he wanted to form his own production company. Though Sean was more than willing to hit the ground running, Seth and I had convinced him to start by actually getting to know the film business, to work with investors and producers on projects that were already in the works so he could see how the production business actually operated. So, that's what he'd gone to New York to do.

"It was good," he said. "Damn good, actually. The production company's called D55, and their thing is those slow-burn, art-house horror flicks. You remember *Entombment*, that one that took home two Oscars last year? That was them."

"And they're down with working alongside a chucklehead like you?" Seth asked with a smirk.

"They would *love* to work with a chucklehead like me. At first, I was convinced they'd agree with whatever the hell I wanted as long as I was cutting them checks. But when I laid some ideas on them for this new feature they're putting together, they actually seemed interested."

"You sure they were producers and not actors who were acting like they were interested?" Seth added, following his words up with a laugh.

"The fact of the matter is that I'm already learning a ton about how the biz works. I'm learning so much, in fact, that I'm thinking about a trip out to LA."

"Can't you take care of business from here?"

"I can handle some things over Zoom, sure. But with the time difference and all that, I really need to be there in person. Plus, if I'm going to be working my way into the film industry, I'm going to need to shake hands and rub shoulders with the big dogs. Can't do that over a computer screen."

Seth leaned in. "When are you thinking of going?"

Sean grinned. "Why, you already miss me?"

“I’m just thinking about my next trip. Got some VCs up in Silicon Valley who’ve been showing some interest in the new ray tracing software I’ve been working on. They want me to come in, show it to them in person. Thinking that if you’re heading to the West Coast that it’d make sense for me to come with you.”

“Aw, a little twin trip?” Sean asked with another shit-eating grin. “That’d be so damn cute.”

Seth let out a bark of a laugh. “Shut up, asshole.”

“I’ve got some projects I’m working on, too,” I said. “It’s looking like this summer’s going to be busy for all three of us. Couldn’t have been a better time for Gen to show up. Anyway, let’s get our next few weeks planned out as best we can. All three of us need to make some time for Bobby and Gen as well if she needs help getting her footing here. Dinner’s at seven, so be ready.”

With that, the twins headed out, the two of them busting each other’s balls as usual.

Gen came into my thoughts once more, and what she made me think of was hardly pure. I kept finding myself imagining slipping her out of those tight jeans, putting my hands all over—and between—those no-doubt gorgeous as hell legs of hers.

I ran my hand through my hair, frustrated with myself for getting so distracted. Biking might be in order, or at the very least, a hard session in the gym.

I’d need something to keep my mind off her. Otherwise, there was a damn good chance the beautiful young woman who’d just joined our home for the summer would be all that I’d think about.

CHAPTER 6

A pair of hands were all over me, touching me in just the way I wanted... the sensation was almost too much to bear.

The bed we were all in was different. It was bigger, more than big enough to accommodate all of us and the sorts of activities we were looking to get into.

“Does that feel good, baby?” Sean was right in front of me, his shirt off and nothing on his muscular frame other than a pair of skin-tight, black boxer briefs. His hands were on my thighs, squeezing them firmly as he moved up.

“So... so good. But I think you can do a little more.”

How had Sean and I being in bed together even come about? Everything had been a blur. One moment we were alone, Bobby down for his nap. The next, we were close enough for me to feel the heat of his breath. Next, his hands were on my hips, pulling me near enough that I could feel his hard length pressing against my middle.

It'd been so hazy and strange, but God, I'd wanted it. The only thing I could remember clearly was Sean putting my hand in his and leading me through the enormous halls of the estate, taking me all the way to his bedroom.

We'd kissed like mad, indulging in the sexual tension that had been building from the moment we'd seen one another at the airport lounge. I pulled off his shirt, revealing his mouth-watering sculpted body. He'd pulled off mine then came after me with all the intensity of an animal ready to rut.

He and I were nearly naked and alone in bed together, our lips locked as he began to touch and tease me between my legs through my panties.

“More,” I said. “I need more.”

To make it abundantly clear what I had in mind, I reached down and placed my hand on his cock, feeling its stiff, hard length through his underwear. I stroked it slowly, feeling the outline of his shaft and head, teasing it with my fingertips. He growled with pleasure, letting me know that he liked what I was doing.

“I’ll give you more.” He grinned as he uttered the words, his fingertips slipping under the fabric of my panties and touching me in precisely the way I wanted. The sensation of his fingers against my clit was so intense that it caused me to ignore for a moment the thick, hard cock I had in my hand.

“Oh... oh my God.” I squirmed against him, guiding Sean’s touch to where it needed to be. I finally got my bearings and reached underneath the elastic waistband of his boxer briefs, taking hold of his cock. He was hard as a rock, his tip dripping with precum. I pulled down his underwear and exposed him, placing one hand on his balls and the other on his length.

Sean wrapped his arm around me, his bicep so thick and warm that I wanted to scream with delight.

“You know that I’ve been thinking about this since the moment I spotted you drinking that Bloody Mary.”

“Is that right?”

“Sure is. Seeing the way you worked that straw made me wonder what else you could do with those sexy lips of yours.”

A surge of arousal blasted up my body as he spoke. I moaned, pressing my back against the solid wall of his chest. I wanted more.

“Well then, maybe I will show you what else my lips can do.” I leaned back, speaking right into his ear.

“Got something I want to ask you.”

“Sure. Anything.”

“How would you feel about having some company for what we’re about to do?”

“Company?”

He pursed his lips for a second. “I could tell you what I mean. But how about I show you instead?”

“Sure.”

He flashed me a smile before turning toward the door. “Yo, guys! Come on in!”

With that, the bedroom door opened, a pair of hulking figures entering the room that I recognized right away—Sam and Seth.

“My brothers and I, we do things a little different around here. You ever been shared before?”

My eyes flashed with surprise. There I was, nearly naked, with three brothers all around me. As shocked as I was initially, I felt OK with it. Hell, the way Sam and Seth regarded me, pure hunger in their eyes, made me more than OK with it.

“What do you want to do?” I asked, my gaze flicking back and forth between the two brothers in front of me.

“That’s all up to you, beautiful,” Sam replied. “We’re here for you.”

Seth nodded. “We have an arrangement, and this arrangement comes with some rules. First one is, the woman’s pleasure is top priority.”

I should’ve been taken aback, overwhelmed. I wasn’t. I was, however, more turned on than I’d ever been in my life.

Sean kissed the curve of my neck, the sensation of his lips against my skin enough to make me break out in tingles.

“How about this,” he spoke. “You and I keep doing what we were doing. And, if it’s cool with you, the guys can watch. We’ll have our fun, and if you want more, you can have more.”

I took a deep breath, my breasts rising and falling, Sean placing his hands on my belly and moving up until he had my tits in his grasp. Though it seemed so completely forbidden, there was no denying how fucking turned on I was at the idea of each man taking his turn with me.

“Let them watch.”

“You got it.”

Time seemed to jump forward. Just like that, I was on my back, my legs in the air, Sean holding one of my ankles in each hand. His powerful, muscular body was at work before me, tensing and flexing with each thrust of his thick, hard cock into me. The pleasure was like nothing else, his prick stretching me out, filling me full.

Through the intensity of it all, I was able to look over and see Sam and Seth watching, arousal written all over their handsome faces. I could see that they were hard, their broad chests rising and falling with deep, slow breaths. As Sean drove into me over and over, I could practically feel their desire, their yearning for me to give the word to rise from their seats and join the fun.

I smiled, realizing that all three of them at once was just what I wanted.

A soft chime sounded through the room, blue lights dimming and glowing like a pulse as I opened my eyes. I sat up, looking around to see that I was still in my bedroom, the alarm going off, the sea air still gently blowing in through the slightly opened window.

A dream. It'd been a freaking *dream*.

All the same, I was turned on like mad. My mind kept flashing back to images from the dream, Sean putting his hands all over me, splitting me in half with his big, thick cock as his brothers watched, eager for their chance to do the same thing.

It was so bad, totally wrong. All the same, that only made it sexier.

A knock sounded at the bedroom door, the sound totally interrupting me as I was lost in my own head, giving me a jump. I gasped, placing my hand on my chest.

“Yes?”

“Hey. It’s Seth.”

My face turned so hot that there was no doubt in my mind that I was red as could be. One of the men I’d just been fantasizing about was at the door, and I was still wet from how turned on I’d been from my fantasy. Part of me wanted to tell him I was busy. I mean, how the hell was I supposed to look him in the eye with what had been on my mind? If he knew that I’d been not only fantasizing about him, but him *and* his brothers, he’d probably think I was a freak, one that he didn’t want anywhere near him or his family. Besides, Seth seemed like the slowest one to warm up to me.

“Just a sec!” I took a quick look in the large, rectangular mirror above the dresser, slipping my hair behind my ear. I hurried over to the door and pulled it open.

There he was, leaning against the wall looking relaxed and even a little blasé. To make matters worse, he was dressed in a sleeveless shirt and gym shorts, the powerful muscles of his arms on full display, along with his thick, tree-trunk-like thighs. His skin glistened with sweat from the workout he’d likely just finished.

“Hey.” He looked me over, and I could sense by the expression on his face that he’d sensed something was up.

God, can he tell how horny I am just by looking at me?

“Did I come at a bad time?”

I shook my head. “No, not at all. Just still kind of dazed from my nap. You know, jetlag and all that.”

He nodded slowly, not seeming to doubt my words at all. “Understandable. Anyway, I came up here to let you know that we’re about thirty minutes out from dinner. But if you need a little more time to rest, we can easily push it back. No rush at all.”

“No, thirty minutes should be fine. I need a few minutes to freshen up, is all. God, and I haven’t even taken a shower.”

“The bathtub in there’s huge if you want to soak.”

I smiled, the idea of a long, leisurely soak in the tub about the most heavenly thing I could imagine. Maybe that, a glass of wine, and a nice view of the sea.

“Looks like you’re into the idea.”

“Huh?” I realized that I’d gotten so carried away with my fantasizing that it was showing on my face. “Well, sure. But I like to take baths at the end of the day when I’m ready for bed. You know, when you can just hop naked right from the bath into a towel then under the sheets.”

My eyes flashed as soon as the words left my mouth.

I did not just put the idea of me naked into the head of my boss. Seriously, Gen?

Seth was totally unflappable. He chuckled, a small grin forming on his lips. “That’s one way to do it. Seriously though, there’s no rush if you want to relax a bit more.”

My face turned a deep red. As I stood there, I was the most confusing combination of aroused and embarrassed. “I just need to take a shower is all. Thirty minutes should be fine.”

Another good-natured chuckle. “Sure. You change your mind, go ahead and use the house computer. You know how it works, right?”

“Mathilde just showed me the basics.”

“Figures. Mathilde’s an old-fashioned kind of woman, not crazy about tech. Let me show you.” He gestured toward my room. “You mind if I come in?”

“Not at all.”

I moved to the side, Seth nodding to me as he stepped in. His scent was heavenly, just the right amount of sweat to put his delicious pheromones in the air. He stopped in the middle of the room and turned around.

“So, the house computer is linked to every room, and its voice activated. You can use the panel, but this is a hell of a lot easier. It uses cameras and facial recognition to recognize people, build a profile so it can track them.”

“Um, that sounds a little creepy.”

“Trust me, it makes sense in a house this size. And you don’t need to worry about the cameras—they’re not seen by anyone and the footage auto-deletes each week unless there’s something specific we need to see, like Sam trying to figure out where he misplaced his car keys for the hundredth time.” He grinned, and I did the same. “Anyway, watch this. Yo, house!” A soft blue light illuminated from the central ceiling light. “That means it’s active. You want to stop the command, just say, ‘house, cancel’.”

As soon as he said the words, the blue light turned off.

“See?”

“Very cool.”

“Thanks. I designed it.”

I raised an eyebrow. “Impressive.”

“You know how they say that necessity is the mother of invention? Well, in this case, the necessity was trying to find my dumbass brothers in this huge house. Speaking of dumbasses...” He tilted his head up. “Yo, house.” The blue light returned. “Find my dumbass brother Sean and put him on speaker.”

The blue light blinked.

“Yeah?” Sean’s voice came through the speakers, crystal-clear as if he were there with us. “What’s up?”

“Hey, Sean,” Seth said. “You’re a dumbass.”

“Very funny. You know, I could’ve been in the middle of something important, bro.”

“Were you?”

“Actually, yes. I was trying to decide between steak and chicken for dinner. Gen, what’re you in the mood for?”

“Hm. Well, I eat a ton of chicken, so maybe steak? And medium-rare for mine?”

“A woman after my own heart. Now, to my dumbass brother, anything else I can do for you?”

“Not a thing.”

“Then bye. Dumbass.”

I laughed, the light turning from blue to white as the chat ended.

“There you have it. Want to give it a try?”

“Sure. Hey, house?” The blue light returned. “Where is... Bobby?”

“Bobby is in the nursery.” The voice was a calm, English-accented woman’s. “Would you like me to contact him for you?”

“No thank you,” I said. The light went back to white.

“Speaking of old Bobs,” he said. “I should probably check on the little dude. Take your time. And if you need anything, just let me or any of the guys know.”

“Sounds good. Thanks, Seth.”

He nodded, but strangely, he didn’t leave. Instead, he stood there for a moment, an odd expression on his face as if something else were on his mind. Then his eyes turned back to me, tension between us building by the second. My gaze flicked down to his broad shoulders, then his thick arms. Once more my pussy clenched, and I was getting wetter and wetter.

He shook his head, as if snapping out of a daze.

“Uh, anyway, I’ll leave you to it. See you at dinner.”

He turned and hurried out of the room, my eyes going right down to his ass in those black Nike shorts.

When he shut the door and I was alone once more, I let out a long sigh, plopping on the edge of the bed. There was no doubt in my mind that the tension that had been building between us was of a sexual nature.

I found myself wondering what would've happened if Seth had made a move. A grin formed, I knew the answer. The only question was if he'd give me what we both wanted.

CHAPTER 7

My encounter with Gen had been far too close for comfort. As I made my way down the hall away from her room, my cock half-stiff, I was in shock at how close I'd come to giving into what I'd wanted from the moment I'd laid eyes on her.

Goddamn, had she looked good. Her flushed face, her sleepy eyes, her parted lips... I'd wanted nothing more than to push her onto the bed, shut the door, and fuck her brains out. Feelings like those weren't common with me. But there was something about Gen that brought them out.

What was it about her? Sure, she was stunning, quite possibly the most beautiful woman I'd ever laid eyes on. But there was something more to her than that, something I couldn't quite put my finger on. Whatever it was, all I could think about was indulging my desire, taking her for myself.

When I reached the door to Bobby's room, I took a few moments to compose myself. I could hear the little man babbling on the other side, a smile taking hold as it always did whenever I was around him.

I opened the door and entered. Bobby was there, along with Liza, one of the members of the house staff. Liza was tall and trim, with short black hair and a long face. She loved Bobby, and never passed up the chance to play with him.

"What is this?" Liza held up a toy dinosaur, Bobby's favorite kind of animal.

He didn't respond with words, instead he stood up, stomped his foot, and let out a big roar. I laughed, folding my arms over my chest and leaning against the door.

"And what is this?" she held up a stuffed dolphin. Again, Bobby didn't respond with words, instead swooshing his palm through the air in the way a dolphin might move through the water.

At this point, Bobby noticed that I was in the room. His blue eyes flashed, and he hurried over to me with his arms outstretched.

"There's my man!" I opened my arms to greet him, pulling the guy into a big hug. "You having fun with Miss Liza?"

He stepped back, nodding slowly without saying a word.

"How's he been?" I gave Bobby's shoulder one more squeeze as I stood up.

"*Excellente*," she replied. "I happened by as he woke up, and figured I'd take the chance to give him a little more time to practice speaking."

I glanced down at Bobby, who'd already gone back to his toys. The issue of him not speaking had been weighing on our minds heavily for the last couple of months.

"I know what you're thinking." Liza smiled as she spoke. "But trust me when I say now is too soon to worry about such things. My oldest, Thomas, didn't say his first word until he was just over two."

"Bobby's just over two."

She pursed her lips. "I understand. But every child learns at his or her own pace, and you have to remember that he's suffered a trauma with his parents suddenly being gone from him. The important thing is that he understands you. He knows what a dolphin is, knows what a dinosaur is, and so on. Only a matter of time before he starts talking." Another smile. "And take it from me, once they start chatting away part of you will miss those days when they only babbled and laughed."

I smiled back at her, glancing down at Bobby as he played.

“Thanks for your help, Liza.”

“*Mon plaisir*. If you’d like me to spend a little more time with him, I’d be more than happy to. I only ask that you let Mathilde know that you request I do so. I’m supposed to be tidying the hall and she’s a little bit of a stickler when it comes to staying on task.”

“Thanks, but I can take it from here.”

She nodded. “Of course.” Liza turned to Bobby. “Bye-bye my little man.”

He waved at her, the closest he came to real communication. Liza gave me one more polite, professional smile as she stepped out, leaving Bobby and me alone. I watched him for a time as he played with a fire truck in one hand and a dinosaur in the other, knocking them together in some kind of animal-vs-machine battle.

“What’s going on here, bud?” I went over and sat cross-legged in front of him.

Bobby responded by holding up his fire truck and letting out a babble that sounded like “burrow trah,” which I supposed was a little like fire truck.

“Very cool. Mind if I play?”

He smiled, showing off all his baby teeth as he dropped the fire truck onto my lap and held up the dinosaur. I picked up the truck and started where he’d left off, getting into a playful fight with his dinosaur. It wasn’t long before he wanted to do something else, setting down his toy and heading over to his big box filled with other toys, taking out a big, plastic package of Legos and opening it, turning the bag over and dumping it onto the floor.

We sat like that, snapping pieces together, Bobby occasionally babbling to me, as if explaining or narrating what he was doing.

Still no words. I tried to tell myself over and over again that it wasn't a big deal—that's what our speech language pathologist had made certain to reassure us of.

All the same, I couldn't help but wonder if the reason he wasn't speaking was because the three of us were doing something wrong. Sam was a dad, but Sean and I had been figuring it out as we went along, building the plane mid-flight, as Sam had once said. He'd assured us that we were doing great, that Bobby was coming up just fine.

Still, the boy had lost his parents. No way that hadn't affected him profoundly. That grief had to be down there somewhere.

Bobby interrupted me, opening his mouth and pointing to his belly, making a *uh!* Sound. It was his go-to way of letting us know he was hungry.

“Ready for dinner, bud?” I asked.

He repeated the gesture and noise, this time hopping to his feet and heading to the door.

“Easy, dude!” I sprang to my feet. “Give your geriatric pops some time to catch up!”

When he reached the door he stuck out his little hand toward me, wanting me to take it. I happily did, the two of us heading out of the room and into the hall. In the far distance I could hear the pipes working in the way they did when one of the showers was running, the sound putting the image of Gen into my head.

I imagined her in the shower, her perfect body soaped up, her hands moving over her curves as she washed herself. It was distracting. I did my best to put the image out of my mind as I went down the hallway with Bobby, the kid taking his little steps as he held my hand tight.

The water shut off as we walked. As we reached the top of the stairs, I heard a door open all the way down the hall and Gen stepped out, smiling as she laid eyes on us.

“Hey! Heading down to dinner?” The hallway was so long and vast that her voice echoed.

“Sure are.”

Bobby looked at her then looked up at me. Still smiling, Gen bounded over to us. Her hair was still damp, slicked back behind her ears. She wore a light, flitty sundress with a red and purple floral pattern, looking like something out of a dream. Light poured into the hall from the window at the end, casting her in an ethereal glow.

Once she reached us, she dropped down to her knees in front of Bobby. Her position gave me a nearly complete top-down view of her cleavage, and it took all the restraint I had to look away and not stare like some kind of horny frat bro.

“What’s up, big guy?” Her voice was warm and friendly as she spoke to Bobby. “Ready for some dinner?”

He pointed to his belly again, Gen laughing.

“I’ll take that as a yes.”

She sprang back up to her feet, her breasts bouncing a bit. “I’m starving. It just hit me while I was taking my shower. Something about flying really brings the ravenous appetite out, you know?”

“I know exactly what you mean. Takes all the restraint I have not to spend international flights pigging out the whole time.”

She smiled in my direction, showing off a sliver of perfect, white teeth. “Glad we’re on the same page.” Gen turned her attention down to Bobby. “And what’re you in the mood for, big guy?”

He responded by pointing at his mouth.

“Whatever they’re making, huh?” she replied. “I like that attitude.”

“Not too picky of an eater,” I said. “Thank heaven for small miracles.”

Bobby carefully made his way toward the top of the stairs, turning toward Gen and offering his hand to her, making a little grunt.

“You want me to help you down?” She squatted in front of him, placing her hands on her knees.

Bobby nodded in response.

“Well, I’d be happy to. Let’s go, handsome.”

She rose, taking his hand. I stepped aside, watching as the two of them made their way down the stairs slowly and carefully. I couldn’t help but allow myself a small smile as they stepped, Gen keeping a close eye on him and offering words of encouragement with each footfall.

When they reached the bottom, Bobby turned around with a big, beaming smile on his face, clapping his little hands. Gen and I applauded, Gen dropping down to give him a big hug.

“I knew you could do it!” she said.

I mussed Bobby’s hair when I reached the bottom, scooping him off the ground and carrying him close.

“Nice work, bud. I think we’ve earned our dinner with that.”

Gen flashed me a smile as we started toward the kitchen. Once more, the two of them showed a quick bond that I couldn’t believe.

“You alright over there?” she asked as we walked.

“Yeah. Just got a lot on my mind.”

And I did. Gen was going to change all of our lives, I could feel it.

CHAPTER 8

The last three days had been total fucking torture. No other way to put it. Sure, Gen had been about the best damn nanny the three of us could've hoped for. She was great with Bobby, no, exceptional, actually.

There was just one problem—every time I saw her, I wanted to rip her damn clothes off.

At first, the fact that she was in our employ had worked as a deterrent, a good way to put up a bit of professional distance between her and me and take off the table the idea of anything sexual happening between us.

That worked for two days, tops. After that, all I'd been doing was fantasizing about her, imagining what it'd be like to slide my hand up those sundresses she loved to wear, to watch her eyes go wide with surprise and arousal as I touched her.

It was so inappropriate, but, of course, that only made the fantasy hotter.

I was in the gym one afternoon, trying to work out some of the tension building inside of me with some heavy lifting. Rush played on the state-of-the-art PA system throughout the gym, the band one of my nerdiest and guiltiest pleasures. Sun poured in through the floor-to-ceiling windows, the afternoon light hitting the sea in the distance with an incredible glitter.

It should've been all I needed to not think about her.

Nope. Not good enough. The more I lifted, the harder blood pumped through me, the more I wanted her.

What a damn mess.

I put up the final bench rep right as the last chord of *Tom Sawyer* hit, sweat dripping down my forehead.

“House, turn off the music. And open the glass nearest to me.”

The soft blue light that indicated the message had been received illuminated for a moment. The room went quiet, one of the big floor-to-ceiling glass panels slowly sliding open. Cool, sea air carried into the gym, hitting me just right.

I sat there for a moment, listening to the crash of the water on the shore in the distance, closing my eyes and letting the sea air reinvigorate me as it always did. I felt a hell of a lot better, just like I did after every workout.

All the same, Gen was still on my mind. My desire for her hadn't faded in the slightest. Hell, my blood pumping hard from the workout only made it even more intense. I was going to have to find some way to keep it in check.

I got up, stretching my arms and thinking about the post-workout shower. Our gym had a small locker room area with showers and a sauna, but I'd forgotten a change of clothes. Wiping my forehead with my towel one more time, I headed out of the room toward the elevator, taking it up to my floor.

I was greeted by one of my favorite sounds in the world upon stepping out of the elevator—Bobby laughing. Sure enough, his nursery door was open down the hall. A smile on my face, I stepped over to the partially opened door and glanced inside. Gen was in there, sitting on her knees in front of Bobby. I watched them play for a moment, my heart warming at the sight of the two of them having their fun.

“OK, you ready to talk to big sister Amy?”

Bobby didn't say anything, but he did smile.

“Alright, I'll get her on the line.”

Amy. The mere mention of my niece made my gut tense. Hearing her name made me keenly aware of the fact that she was Gen's best friend. So, when I was fantasizing about

putting my hand up Gen's dress, I was fantasizing about doing that to *my niece's best friend*.

That put things into another perspective and made me think about how young Gen was. Amy wasn't quite half my age, but she was pretty damn close. Seth and I were forty-two, which put me nearly two decades older than her twenty-five years. It was wrong to be fantasizing about a woman that young who'd just barely graduated from college.

But I couldn't stop.

Only Amy's face appearing on the screen on the wall snapped me out of my dangerous thinking. She grinned broadly at the sight of Bobby.

"Hey, little dude!" she waved her hand enthusiastically. "What's up?"

Bobby responded by getting up and toddling over to her, waving his hand when he was closer to the screen.

"What's up, how are things going?"

"Hey, Aim," Gen said, giving a quick wave of her own. "Not too much is up, actually. Well, other than staying in the most amazing house I've ever seen with the cutest little man I've ever met. Seriously, I can't believe this place."

"It's something, huh? I mean, that view from the backyard over the Mediterranean... wow."

"No kidding. The weather is perfect, and the sea air makes you feel refreshed with every breath, it's amazing." She scooped over to Bobby, wrapping her arm around his little shoulders. "And I can't wait to explore the beaches with this guy."

"Oh, he loves the water," Amy replied. "That means be careful—once he's at the beach, it's a whole production to get him to leave. The kid could live there if the guys let him." She glanced aside, as if not sure how to say what she had next on her mind. "Speaking of the guys, how are you all getting along? Are my dad and my uncles being cool?"

I was already feeling like an eavesdropper, so I wasn't about to stand there while Gen talked about me and my brothers. I made my presence known by knocking on the door frame.

“Yo! Not interrupting anything, am I?”

“Uncle Sean!” Amy's voice went up five octaves like it always did when she was excited, my niece letting out a high-pitched squeal that could've broken glass.

“Whoa!” Gen put her hands over Bobby's ears. “You're going to pop the kid's eardrums!”

I laughed as I plopped down next to Bobby and Gen. It was impossible not to notice how damn good she smelled, like lavender and pure vanilla pheromones pouring out of her.”

Amy laughed, shaking her head. “Seriously, it's good to see you! You know, you guys are all pretty hard to get a hold of considering how you're supposed to be retired.”

I grinned. “Come on, you know we're only technically retired.”

“That's what I'm here for.” Gen put her hands on Bobby's shoulders as he plopped down on her lap.

“And I was just asking about you three,” Amy said. “You taking good care of my best friend over there?”

“I think we're treating her right,” I said. “Been here for three days and she's already impressing me.” I glanced over at Bobby, who was still seated on Gen's lap. “Speaking of impressed, Bob here's crazy about her.”

“I can see that,” Amy replied. “Not sure I've ever seen the little guy that close with someone after so short of a time.”

“Yep. Hell, the kid took a month to stop hiding behind Sam's leg whenever I came in the room. With Gen, well, what can I say? She's a natural!”

Gen's olive cheeks tinged red. “You guys, seriously. I'm not doing anything special. Kid probably likes the smell of my body wash or something.”

“Now, now, don’t sell yourself short,” I replied, giving her a little friendly chiding. “It’s more than just your body wash, though I have to admit, that does smell pretty good. You’re great with the kid. I have to admit, I had my doubts about a live-in nanny, but those vanished on day two.”

A crafty smile formed on Amy’s mouth. “Or maybe the little guy has a crush on you.”

Gen laughed. “I’m pretty sure this kid’s going to grow up to be a heartbreaker.”

Amy glanced offscreen for a brief moment, letting out a sigh. “Alright, workday’s starting over here. Got to let you guys go.”

“Yeah, I should get back to it,” Gen replied.

We said our goodbyes and I love you’s and ended the call. Bobby clambered off Gen’s lap and went over to one of his stack of toys, an expression of total focus on his face as he began playing.

“Speaking of work,” I began. “There was something I wanted to talk to you about.”

Gen cocked her head to the side as she turned to me, a sly smile on her face. “Not firing me already, are you? And here I was just getting settled in.”

The mere idea of firing Gen was enough to make me laugh. “You kidding? I’m already half-convinced we need to hold onto you for dear life. What I wanted to talk to you about was taking time off.”

“Little early for vacation planning. Just being here feels like I’m on one.”

“You say that now, but work is work. If you keep at it with no breaks, you’re going to get burnt out. And believe me, I’ve seen more than a few burnouts in tech. They’re not pretty.”

“Well, tech is a very high stress field.”

“Right. What I’m getting at though, is to take some breaks so burnout doesn’t even become an issue. With that in mind, I

think you should pick at least one day out of the week and make it your day off.”

“*At least* one day?”

“Most normal people get two days off a week.”

“That’s assuming I’ve ever considered myself normal. I’ve spent the last two years studying my butt off for my Masters, not to mention the obscene amount of hours I had to put into my portfolio to have the MET even *think* about hiring me.”

I grinned. “Then you’re in good company. The reason I know about burnout so well is because my brothers and I are all workaholics, to put it mildly. I used to work every single day until about ten years ago when I realized how unsustainable that was. For me, it’s Sunday. End of the week, no work at all. What about you? What’s your day?”

She pursed her lips and looked aside. “What’s today?”

“Monday.”

“Well, I *have* been wanting to check out the beach. And then there’s that amazing pool out there...”

“Wait, you’re telling me you haven’t gone for a swim once since you’ve been here?”

She shook her head. “Been busy looking after this little man. Not complaining at all, mind you. And after he’s down for the night, it’s time to do more research for the MET job.”

“Then how about Tuesday? Take your day off tomorrow.”

Gen smiled. “That actually sounds kind of nice.”

“The guys and I can easily look after Bobby one day a week. Hell, we were doing every day before you came along.” I checked my watch, seeing that it was a little after three. “How about you start now? I’ll watch Bobby and you get to catching up on your relaxing.”

She pursed her lips and shook her head. “No way. I can at least finish the day with him.”

I grinned. “Come on, it’s a beautiful day, and you know that pool’s calling to you. Would it make it any easier if I told

you it was boss's orders?"

She glanced away, her tongue moving across her lip in indecision. It was insanely sexy.

"Well, if the boss is ordering me..."

"Then it's done. Yo, Bobby! Want to hit the park?"

He turned on his heels, his big, bright blue eyes flashing with excitement as he nodded, a huge smile on his face. Bobby may not have been much of a talker yet, but he knew what he liked.

"Then let's move. Gen, the rest of the day is yours. Hit the pool, take a nap—whatever you're in the mood for."

She pursed her lips again, drumming her fingers on her knee. Finally, she spoke. "I have to hit that pool. Then maybe a beach day tomorrow."

"Whatever makes you happy."

With that, Gen rose and gave Bobby a big hug, letting him know that she'd be at the pool if he wanted to say hi. Once she was gone, I picked up Bobby and headed upstairs with him to put together the toddler backpack for a trip to the park.

As I stepped into my room to grab a few things for myself, I opened my balcony door and peered out.

Gen hadn't wasted a moment before getting into her swimsuit and heading out for a dip. She was dressed in an orange bikini that complimented her olive tone perfectly, a thin wrap around her waist transparent enough that I could make out the luscious curves of her hips.

It was enough to make my jaw hang down like some kind of cartoon character. I watched as she pulled off the wrap, setting it on one of the deck chairs before stepping down into the water. It was impossible to look away. She made her way gingerly down the stairs leading into the pool, vanishing below the surface of the rippling waves. She swam with total grace, moving like she'd been born underwater. After a few laps, she swam to the edge and placed her hands on the side, pushing

herself up. Water cascaded down her body, her dark hair slicked against her upper back.

I shook my head, realizing that I'd been totally hypnotized by what I was watching. If not for the awareness that I needed to be keeping an eye on the little guy, I probably could've stared all day.

Bobby was distracted by one of his firetruck toys, rolling it back and forth on the bed.

“You ready to head out, bud?”

He nodded, reaching his arms out to me as I approached. I scooped him off the bed, grabbing the backpack and slinging it over my shoulder as we headed out. I did my best to push the image of Gen in her bikini out of my mind, but something told me that was all I'd be thinking about.

CHAPTER 9

However gorgeous it'd looked from a distance, the azure-blue waters of the Mediterranean were even more striking in person. Just watching the waves crash onto the shore was more engaging than the trashy romance book I was reading. So, I set it down next to me and let my eyes linger on the waves, the cool wind blowing over my barely covered body.

The beach was heavenly. The guys were all back at the house, taking turns with Bobby for the day. I'd tried to tell them that I could wait another week before taking my first day off, but they were hearing nothing of it.

After watching the waves for a time, I rolled over and undid the back of my top. The beach was private—not a soul to be seen—and part of me wanted to really go for it and lay there topless. But the idea of one of the guys coming down and spotting me with my boobs out in the open made me reconsider that particular idea.

Then again, would it be so bad? Maybe one of them could come join you, wearing nothing but his swimsuit. He'd offer to lotion up your back, his hands slowly making their way around... Hey, maybe all three of them could do it...

And just like that, I was making myself horny right there on the beach.

The fantasies had been bad. The dream I'd had during my nap the day I arrived had unleashed something inside of me, and it seemed like any free moment I'd had since then my

mind went back to the scenario I'd envisioned, of one of them pounding me while the other two watched.

It was so wrong, so, why the hell couldn't I get it out of my head?

Forgetting that I wasn't wearing a top, and so overcome by the fantasies running through me, I began to roll over.

"Hey, Gen!"

A familiar voice called out to me, and I stopped mid-roll, my eyes going wide with surprise. A glance over my shoulder revealed Sean coming down the path from the house. He was dressed in nothing but a pair of very short red swim trunks, the fit tight enough to show off the thick, powerful muscles of his legs, not to mention his tight bulge.

My pussy tingled at the sight of him. In the middle of my panic at the idea of nearly showing Sean my boobs on accident, I realized that he'd most likely arrived, realized what I was about to do, and called out to let me know someone was there.

His hazel eyes were hidden behind a pair of black Clubmasters, and a small Nike beach bag was slung over his shoulder.

"Not cramping your style here, am I?" he asked as he approached. "I know this is your day off and all."

"The more the merrier." I was happy to see him. All the same, I made sure to reach behind me and tie the back of my bikini top before sitting up. Still, I couldn't help but wonder what might happen if I were to simply sit up and show him my half-naked body.

The impropriety would be off the freaking charts. All the same, I couldn't help but imagine what he would say, what he might do. Would Sean be totally scandalized, covering his eyes while telling me I was fired?

Or would something else happen? Would his cock go hard, straining the red fabric of his short swim trunks causing him to step over to me and take my breasts into his hands, rubbing my

nipples until they went hard, then lower down to my height and kiss me hard and deep?

“You OK?”

Once more, his voice brought me back into the moment. I smiled awkwardly, running my hand through my hair.

“Just thinking about getting back to work tomorrow.” A lie, but what the hell was I supposed to say, that I’d been fantasizing about him taking me right there on the beach?

He smiled, shaking his head. “Man, you’re even worse at this day off thing than I am. The whole idea is that you’re not supposed to be thinking about tomorrow.”

“I know, I know. I’ve been trying to do the whole mindfulness thing, living in the moment and all that. But it’s hard when you’ve got a million different things running through your head.”

He gestured to the sand next to me, indicating that he wanted to know if I was OK with him joining. I nodded, and he opened his bag, taking out a beach blanket and rolling it out on the sand, sitting down next to me.

I couldn’t help but admire his body. His physique was lean, but powerful-looking; muscular, but not big and bulky. His muscles were clearly defined, and there wasn’t a drop of fat on him.

When I realized I was once again staring, I cleared my throat and looked away, my cheeks reddening as I said a silent thanks that my own eyes were hidden behind sunglasses. If he noticed that I was looking, he didn’t say anything. Instead, he glanced over to the sea, taking in a deep breath that made his powerful upper body expand and contract.

“I get it, I do. That was part of the whole reason why we got this place.” He nodded behind him toward the estate, visible just beyond the cliffside.

“How do you mean?”

“Our places were in Silicon Valley, but all of us spent just as much time bouncing around between San Francisco, LA

and New York. When we finally finished the sale of Duotronix and had to figure out our next step, we were unanimous about getting out of the city and going someplace quiet and peaceful.”

I glanced back to the sea. “I think you did a good job.”

“Thanks, I think we did too. But man, I should’ve known that we were all going to start working again before too long. Sure enough, Sam got his investments, Seth his new tech projects, and me with my movie stuff. We had a nice break, but it’s looking like the city is calling us once more.”

He shook his head.

“Sorry. You’re trying to relax and here I am going on about work stuff.”

I smiled. “No, it’s fine. I like to hear about what you guys are up to around here.”

“Well, lucky for you, we like to talk about ourselves,” he said with a laugh.

We shared a look after he spoke, the sounds of the sea filling the air. My gaze moved down to his lips, and once more I found myself thinking about kissing him, of putting my hands on those solid muscles.

I knew I had to get away from him before I did something really stupid.

“I’m thinking of heading back soon,” I said. “But I’m going to take another dip in the water first.”

I rose and started toward the sea. Maybe it was all in my head, but I was certain as I walked that I could feel his eyes on me, his gaze tracing the outline of my body, lingering on my hips and ass.

Maybe I was imagining things. All the same, I couldn’t help but smile at the idea of him looking at me, imagining what he wanted to do to me in the same way I was imagining what I wanted to do to him.

I stepped into the water, slightly chilly compared to the warmth of the pool. I grew more accustomed to it the further I

submerged myself, eventually getting so deep into the blue that I was able to dunk my head beneath the surface. It was just what I needed to get my mind off of Sean. I pushed up from the sand beneath my feet, floating in the water and allowing the gentle surf to swish me here and there. The sensation was perfect. I was in nature's hands, and my mind went blank as I let the waves carry me.

When I'd had enough, I turned back toward the shore and swam until I could stand again. I wiped the salty water from my eyes, smoothing my hair back and using my hands as a squeegee. I could see Sean, still seated where he'd been when I'd left, the silver rectangle of a MacBook on his lap.

"Now, now, now." I wagged my finger playfully at him as I approached. "Wasn't the whole point of coming out here to get away from all that?"

"I know, I know." He raised his palms. "But there's this script I've been dying to read and the writers just got back to me with the latest edits."

"You can take the workaholic out of the city..."

Just then a cool breeze gusted over the sand, chilly enough to make the water on my body turn cold. Sean noticed my shiver, his eyebrows crinkling in concern. Without waiting a second, he grabbed a towel and hopped up, coming over to me with long, effortless strides.

He pulled the towel over my head and wrapped it around me with maybe a little more force than he'd intended, causing me to stumble a bit toward him. I lost my balance, taking a clumsy foot forward and bumping right into his chest.

"Oof!" The word shot out of my mouth, muffled by the muscles I was pressed against.

"Shit!" Sean clamped his hands down firmly onto my shoulders, stopping my stumble and holding me in place. "You alright?"

I looked up slowly, letting my gaze linger on his perfect body. My eyes went to his neck, then his chin, then his lips, then his eyes. Sean seemed larger than life. I couldn't do

anything but stand there completely and totally under his spell.

Neither of us said a word, his hands still on my shoulders, the sound of the waves crashing against the shore. I was so turned on I could hardly stand it. There was no doubt in my mind that if he were to lean in and kiss me, I would've eagerly accepted it. That hungry, sensual look in his eyes suggested that was exactly what he wanted, too.

“I really should get back to the house.”

His words broke the spell, allowing me to blink hard and come to my senses.

“Yeah, sure.”

“Keep the towel. Take your time here and just relax, OK?”

“Yeah. OK.”

He flashed me one more smile before bending over to grab his things, smoothly scooping them up and putting them back into his bag before walking off. When he was near the bend leading back onto the path up to the house, he waved at me one more time over his shoulder before disappearing.

All I could do was stand there, wondering what the hell had just happened.

CHAPTER 10

I groaned when my workshop alarm went off, the noise signaling that I'd been working for three hours straight. I was frustrated, wanting to keep going on the server I'd been tinkering with. However, I'd been around the block enough times to know working without taking a break was a recipe for diminishing returns.

After years of tweaking, I'd figured out that three hours was the maximum amount of time I could spend plugging away before needing to get up to stretch my legs and refill my coffee. My basement workshop was windowless to prevent glare and soundproof to prevent noise intrusions, making it the perfect place to work. Problem was it was also the perfect place to lose all sense of the world outside of it.

I hit the "sleep" button for my workstation, the monitor turning off, then I rose and stretched my back, my joints popping in a deeply satisfying way. Once my coffee cup was in hand, I turned away from my desk. My workshop was something of a mess, the many tables covered in computer parts and other miscellaneous tech gear. I made a mental note to clean it up before heading up the stairs.

The light made me wince as soon as I opened the door.

"Aw, someone coming up out of his cave?" My eyes adjusted enough to see Sean seated at the kitchen island, his laptop open in front of him and a cup of steaming coffee close at hand.

“You know, I’ll never understand how someone who uses Macs has the cojones to say anything smartass to anyone else.” I gave him a playful shove to the shoulder as I passed, setting my eyes on the nearly full coffee pot.

“Hey, they’re easy to use. But you have fun with your virus box.”

I laughed, stepping over to the coffee pot and refilling my mug.

“Am I seeing this right?” he asked, watching me pour. “Is the guy who takes twenty minutes to precision-grind refilling his cup from the noble yet common coffeepot?”

“Caffeine is caffeine. I’m right in the middle of the virtual station optimization for the new OS I’ve been working on, so the good stuff’s going to have to wait.” I glanced over at him, noticing that he was in his swimsuit, a towel draped over his shoulders. “Weren’t you going to the beach?”

“Yeah but I bumped into Gen down there. She was doing a little sunbathing and relaxing, so I decided to give her some privacy. It’s her day off, right? Figured she didn’t want to spend it having her ear talked off by me.”

Neither myself nor my brothers had ever been the type to lie. All the same, I had the distinct impression that there was no small amount of bullshit to his words. Sean was hiding something from me.

I decided not to pry, instead taking a sip of my coffee and looking out of the picture window over the sink, the view going all the way down to Louveciennes . As much as I wanted to spend the rest of the day downstairs, I knew I ought to get out of the house, enjoy a little of the fine weather. A trip into town to grab a few things for dinner sounded nice, a marinara dish on my mind.

Bobby’s babbling flowed in from down the hall and I turned just in time to watch as Seth and Bobby entered, the boy in my brother’s arms.

“Hey, you two! What’s up?”

“Not much.” Seth set Bobby down, and he wasted no time hurrying over to the fridge. I went over to him, placing my hand on his before he had a chance to bang on the fridge door. “I was going to give the little man some lunch, but it’s looking like he’s trying to beat me to it.”

I chuckled, scooping Bobby up and holding him as I pulled open the door. Bobby’s meals were prepared by Elaine, our personal chef. She made them ahead of time, placing them in containers for us to easily grab. I chose the one with the current day’s label and checked it out, seeing that the meal was comprised of a bit of chicken, some snap peas, and fresh fruit.

As I carried Bobby over to his booster seat at the kitchen table, I asked my brothers, “So, everyone adjusting fine to the newest member of the staff?”

Sean’s eyes flashed in a strange way that made it clear there was something going on that had to do with Gen. It didn’t take a brilliant mind to sus out that there was a damn good chance something had happened on the beach.

Had he gone against our agreement, unable to hold out for even a week before putting the moves on her? The mere idea sent a fresh wave of anger running through me that he’d do something so stupid, so self-centered. But I wasn’t about to blow up on him right there in front of Bobby.

“Sure are.” Seth broke the silence as he poured a mug of coffee. “I have to admit, I had my doubts when she first signed on, but damn if she isn’t great with the little guy.”

Bobby smiled as he ate his sliced-up chicken. Since he wasn’t talking, it was hard to say just how much he understood. I had the sense, however, that he knew we were discussing Gen, and that the adorable smile on his face was Bobby’s way of adding his take to the conversation.

“Yeah,” Sean said. “No complaints so far.”

He was being a hell of a lot more terse than usual, and right then I decided that we were going to have a conversation about it.

“Hey house? Can you find Mathilde?”

“Mathilde?” Sean asked. “What do you want with her?”

“Yes,” came Mathilde’s voice through the speaker.

“Mind coming to the kitchen and watching Bobby while he eats? Guys and I are going to have a grown-up conversation.”

“*D’accord*. I will be there in one moment.”

Seth flashed me an expression of confusion. “What’s the story? What do you want to talk about?”

I gave myself a moment to think of how I wanted to put it. “I just... want to make sure we’re all aware of some ground rules about how things are going to go with—”

I didn’t get a chance to finish. The back door to the kitchen opened, Gen stepping into the room.

Holy *shit* did she look good. She was dressed in an orange bikini, a see-through wrap around her waist that was somehow even sexier than if she’d only been wearing the bikini. Her middle was slim, her hips wide, her full breasts jiggling with each step. To make matters worse, her skin shimmered from where she hadn’t dried off the seawater.

She was stunning. So much so that I nearly let my mug slip out of my hand.

The smile faded from her face as she entered, glancing back and forth between the three of us.

“Sorry, did I walk into the middle of something?”

“Nope,” I said. A bit of a bend of the truth, but it wasn’t entirely false. We were *about* to be in the middle of something, but we hadn’t started quite yet. “Well, kind of. I was asking the guys how they liked having you around as part of the team.”

The smile returned. “Well, if I would’ve known that I’d be walking into the middle of an evaluation, I’d have worn something a little more professional.”

Her words had the inadvertent effect of drawing attention to what she was wearing, as little as it might’ve been. My eyes

automatically flicked down to her body, and I chided myself internally the moment they did.

“No evaluation,” I said. “Seems like we’re all pretty unanimous feeling that you’re doing a killer job so far.”

Her cheeks turned a tinge of red in that irresistible way. “Well, thanks. Happy to be a part of the team.”

“And I was about to talk about dinner, too. We usually have the staff make something, but I was thinking about doing it myself tonight. You a fan of pasta?”

“I would most definitely say that I’m a fan of pasta.”

“Perfect. I’ll be going into town in an hour or so, please put anything you’d like me to pick up on the fridge markerboard.” I glanced over at the other guys. Seth’s mouth was in a flat line, and I could sense that he was trying his best not to let his eyes wander. Sean looked like he wasn’t quite sure what to do with himself.

It was even more proof that we needed to talk about what was going on with Gen. The kind of tension I was seeing on Sean’s face wasn’t like him. I’d seen him put the moves on women he was interested in before, it was almost second nature to the guy. The more I thought about it, the more I got the impression that he was struggling with having to hold back, trying his best to keep himself in check.

“Great, will do. Gonna hop in the shower in the meantime, and I’ll think about if there’s anything I need. Thanks.”

With that, she waved a quick goodbye and started out of the kitchen. Right as she reached the middle of the room, however, Bobby dropped his fork and reached out for her with such intensity that he nearly fell out of his booster seat. He grunted as he reached, his little face tight with frustration that he couldn’t reach her.

“Aw, what’s wrong, cutie pie? You want to say hi?”

She hurried over to him, scooping Bobby out of his seat. The frustration melted from his face the moment he was in her arms. Once more, I couldn’t get over how natural she looked

with him, how it seemed like taking care of him was second nature.

“Now Gen,” Sean said, finally getting his bearings. “You know it’s your day off, right? No work allowed.”

A warm smile came over her face. “Come on, with a kid like Bobby it’s hardly even work.”

A throat-clearing sounded, alerting us that Mathilde had arrived, the expression she wore one of all business, as usual.

“Looks like the Bobby situation is all under control, *non?*” she asked. “If you no longer have need of me, I’m more than happy to get back to what I was doing.”

“No, we still need you,” I said. “We were just telling Gen that a day off means a day off.”

Gen made a playfully pouty face. “Oh, OK. We’ll see each other at dinner, alright cutie?”

Bobby nodded affirmatively as Mathilde came over to take him from her.

“*Allons-y*, Bobby,” she said once he was in her arms. “Let’s go outside for a little playtime, *oui?*”

Bobby seemed fine, but as he left the kitchen with Mathilde it was impossible to not notice the look of longing on his face, his eyes locked on Gen.

“It’s going to be really hard to not pay attention to the kid on my day off,” she said. “But I guess I’ll have to do my best.”

She smiled one last time before starting out of the room. Gen carried the scent of the sea on her as she passed, and the way it mixed with her natural smell was almost too much to take. I closed my eyes for a moment as she moved past, savoring the aroma.

When I opened my eyes, I was greeted with the sight of both Sean and Seth looking in the direction she’d gone.

“And that right there’s what I’ve been wanting to talk to you guys about.”

“What?” Sean asked.

“You know what—the way you were both staring at her ass like horny teenagers. What the hell did I say to you guys? We’re not doing *anything* with her. Gen’s here to take care of Bobby, not to be eye candy for us, let alone anything more than that.” I turned my attention to Sean. “And I want to know right now what the hell happened on the beach. You’re acting strange, and don’t try to pretend you’re not.”

Sean pursed his lips and glanced away for a moment, as if not sure how to put it. A surge of anger flashed through me.

“Sean, you better not tell me that something happened between you two down there.”

He held up his hands. “Easy, alright? That’s the whole thing, *nothing* happened down there.”

I raised an eyebrow. “Nothing? As in nothing at all?”

“Kind of.”

I crossed my arms over my chest. “Not a fan of cryptic talking.”

“I went down to the beach, not realizing she was there. As soon as I saw her, I knew it was a good idea for me to get out of there. Or, at least, to keep my distance. So, I pulled out my laptop and started working. So far, so good. That is, until she came out of the sea, water pouring off her body, her bikini clinging to her curves...”

He trailed off, shaking his head as if the mental image of her had returned and he couldn’t believe what he’d seen.

“Focus, dude.” Seth brought him back to the moment.

“Still, I kept in mind what we’d agreed on, that nothing could happen between us. But she was shivering when she came out of the water, and, well, what can I say? My gentlemanly instincts took over.”

Seth let out a loud laugh at that one. “Sure, you’re a real gentleman.”

“I’m serious! She was cold and I had a towel. I wasn’t going to just sit there with my laptop and do nothing. It was totally instinctual, no thinking involved.”

“Oh, I’m sure that’s the case,” Seth added with a grin.

I held up my hand, letting the guys know that I wasn’t in the mood for their bickering.

“We were standing close, *really* close, like close enough that I could feel her breath on my skin.” He raised a finger. “Now, you guys have no idea how much I wanted her right then. It took all the damn restraint I had to not go in for the kiss. But I didn’t. Why? Because we had an agreement. So, realizing that I was only freaking human, I grabbed my things and headed back.”

“You headed back,” I said. “And that was it?”

“Yep. Scout’s honor. I grabbed my shit and got the hell out of there so as not to risk anything happening between the two of us. So, when she showed up here in that same damn bikini, yeah, I got a little taken aback. You guys saw her, how could I not be?”

Seth and I shared a look that suggested we could see where he was coming from. I sighed, shaking my head and taking off my glasses, running my hand through my hair.

“And did she say anything?” I asked. “Anything that might give you an indication she had a sense of what was going on?”

“Look I don’t want to sound too full of myself here, but I’m pretty damn sure that if I had kissed her, we’d have ended up doing a hell of a lot more than just that.”

While I did want to give Sean the business for being a cocky little shit, he did have a way with women, we all did, really. Women responded to Sean’s outgoing personality, Seth’s intensity and sardonic sense of humor, and my calm, in-control nature.

“Alright,” I said. “I need to talk to her.”

“What?” Seth and Sean replied at the same time.

“Talk to her?” Sean asked.

“About what?” Seth added.

“About what happened on the beach.”

“But *nothing* happened on the beach,” Sean said. “That’s the whole point.”

“You’re wrong. You guys nearly kissed—that’s something. If Gen’s going to work with us, she’s going to need to feel comfortable, and having lingering sexual tension in the air is the last thing we need if we want to achieve that.”

“Then let me talk to her,” Sean said. “I was the one that was there with her, after all.”

Seth laughed. “And risk it happening again? Bad idea.”

Sean let out a sigh, seeming to understand that his twin was right. “Fine. Guess it needs to be done by someone other than me.”

I nodded, pleased that we’d come to an agreement.

“Good. Then I’m going to run my errands, give Gen a little time to decompress. In the meantime, I want you both to make yourselves scarce. Work, hang out in your rooms, the gym, whatever. Just give her space.”

The guys signaled their approval. With that, I left the kitchen.

I was pleased with the plan. Gen needed reassurance, to know that her clients weren’t drooling after her behind her back. All the same, I had a thought I couldn’t shake... if we *did* all want her in the way that was becoming increasingly obvious, and she wanted the same, why not give in?

My cock shifted as the thought of having her squirming underneath me appeared in my mind.

CHAPTER 11

Gen hadn't come out of her room since returning from the beach. Part of me worried that she'd been able to pick up on the strange tension between the three of us.

I hoped that wasn't the case.

I was in the middle of some laps in the basement Olympic pool, going back and forth through the water and trying my hardest to get the mental image of her in that orange-sherbet-colored bikini out of my head.

It wasn't working. By the time my muscles were worn out and I wasn't able to do one more single lap even if I'd wanted, I'd accepted that there was no quitting this woman, no getting her out of my head. With what little strength I had left, I pushed myself out of the pool and grabbed my towel, heading to the locker room.

I'd planned on only taking a quick shower, just long enough to wash the chlorine off me. The second I was in there, however, I found my hand moving down, taking hold of my half-hard cock and stroking slowly.

I leaned forward, resting my free hand on the cool shower tile and closing my eyes. Gen was right there in the forefront of my mind, a sensual smile on her face as she reached slowly behind her to undo the tie of her bikini top.

My hand moved over my cock, stroking it as I focused on the fantasy. Gen took off her top, her gorgeous eyes locked on mine as she let her full, round tits fall from it. Her breasts were

the perfect size for a big pair of hands like mine, her nipples a dark pink.

She stood there in nothing but her bikini bottoms, moving her hands along the round curves of her hips.

“What are you waiting for? Take what you want.”

I could feel the orgasm rising from the base of my cock. A few more strokes and I’d unload for sure.

I didn’t. Instead, I took my hand from my shaft, the orgasm that had been right on the verge gradually receding.

I reached forward to the shower controls, turning the water from hot to ice cold, letting out a groan as the freezing water hit me like a damn truck. It didn’t feel good, but it sure as hell got the job done of pushing the wrong kinds of thoughts out of my head.

When I’d had enough, I turned off the water and grabbed a towel, drying myself off as I made my way over to my gym bag.

As I dressed, I had a thought. Sam wanted to have the conversation with Gen all on his own, which made a certain kind of sense. One-on-one was better than three-on-one, and if the sexual tension between her and Sean had been as intense as I’d imagined, keeping those two apart would be a smart move.

The more I considered the matter, however, the more I’d come around to the idea that maybe it would be better to discuss it together. I had my reasoning but wanted to share my thoughts with Sam and Sean before continuing to think on it.

“Hey, house? Can you locate Sam and Sean, let them know I want to meet on the back patio?”

The blue lights grew and dimmed in response, and I headed off.

I grabbed a can of La Croix on the way through the kitchen, spotting a pair of grocery bags on the counter that let me know Sam had returned from his errands. Sure enough, he and Sean were on the back patio waiting for me.

“What’s up?” Sam asked.

I cracked open my can and took a sip. “Had some thoughts about the upcoming chat with Gen.”

Sean nodded. “Same here.”

Sam crossed his arms over his chest and leaned against one of the pillars. The view from the patio was killer, hard to ignore it no matter how many times I’d been out there. The green of the neatly trimmed lawn led to the perfect, shimmering rectangle of the infinity pool, the enormous sea in the background.

“Sean, go first,” I said.

“Yeah. So, I think we should talk to her about this together.”

“Share your reasoning,” Sam said.

I suppressed a chuckle at his words. It was such a Sam thing to say. The man loved logic, and that was a big part of the reason he was so damn good at his work.

“Well, I don’t have a bullet-pointed chart for you. But I’m just thinking that this issue involves all of us, which means we should all be a part of the conversation. Especially since there’s tension between her and me—that’s not going to go away if I’m hanging in the background letting my big brother handle the hard stuff.”

Sam rubbed his chin with his hand, a signal that Sean had made a good point and Sam was considering it. I decided to pick it up from there.

“I get that three of us talking to her at the same time might be much. But if there’s one thing I’ve learned about Gen so far, it’s that she’s no wimp, and she’s not afraid to speak her mind. If three of us sitting down with her to talk doesn’t feel right to her, she’ll let us know.”

Sam remained silent, still rubbing his chin.

Finally, he spoke. “I can see the line of reasoning. We all sit down with her and get the subject out in the open, apologize for any weirdness and let her know that we’re going to focus on being professional. If there are any issues, if she

has any concerns, we can deal with them in the moment rather than trying to plan for everything in advance.” He took another moment to give himself a second to consider any other contingencies, then nodded. “Let’s do it. Ready?”

“Ready.” Sean and I spoke the word at the same time.

The three of us left the patio, making our way to the stairs then up to Gen’s floor. Not one of us said a word as we walked, each focused on the conversation ahead. I knew, and I was sure the rest of the guys did too, that there was a damn good chance the chat would end with Gen turning in her letter of resignation and hightailing it out of the horny brother mansion as fast as she could. We needed to be prepared for anything.

A tinge of tension formed in my gut as we approached the door to her room.

“Alright,” Sam said, stopping in front of us and speaking in a low voice. “We’re going to all say our peace but let me go first. Don’t want to overwhelm her right out the gate with the three of us all talking over one another.”

“Seems reasonable,” I said.

As Sam raised his fist to knock, we all heard the same thing at the same time, a noise that was no doubt intended to be very private.

Sam froze, glancing back at the two of us.

“You hear that?” he whispered.

“Of course I heard it!” Sean fired back in a sharp whisper of his own. “How could you not?”

I raised my palms. “Hold on, it may not be what we think it is.”

Sean cocked his head to the side. “Are you serious?”

“Yeah. Could’ve been, you know, a sigh of relief or something. Maybe she just took off her shoes.”

Sean’s eyes went wide. “Listen, I don’t know what the fuck it sounds like when you take off your shoes, but that

noise was definitely a certain kind of—”

Before he could finish, another soft, pleased sigh came through the door.

Sam nodded, as if he'd obtained all the information he needed. “We should get out of here, give her some privacy.”

“Oh... *Oh, Sean.*”

Sean's eyebrows arched. “Did she really just say my name?”

“Sure as hell sounded like it to me,” Sam replied. “Guess it's not up for debate what she's using for, uh, inspiration.”

The surprise faded, a cocky smirk forming on Sean's lips. “In that case, maybe *I* should handle this conversation on my own. I'll catch up with you guys later, let you know how it went.”

Neither I nor Sam had a chance to reply, as another moan came from behind the door.

“*Sean... Sam...*”

Sam blinked hard, as if taking a moment to process what he'd just heard.

“OK. Wow.”

“Looks like we need to retool this conversation,” I said.

Sean scrunched his forehead, making a put-on frowny face. “You need a minute, bro? I mean, you might be feeling a little left out.”

“*Seth... please...*”

Sam nodded, as if he'd heard all he'd needed to. “My office. Right now.”

We didn't argue the point. Together, we hurried down the hall and up the stairs, not saying a word to one another until we were safe in Sam's office, the door shut and locked. Once there, Seth and I dropped into our chairs, Sam going for a bottle of whiskey from his bar and pouring us all a glass.

“Thanks,” I said, taking mine as he brought it over.

Sean grinned. “You guys want to do a cheers? Say, to being the three men Gen can’t stop thinking about? Or moaning about?”

“Cute,” I said, Sam easing into his chair as I spoke. “But seriously, this is some shit we need to figure out.”

Sean appeared confused. “What’s to figure out? I mean, this might’ve been a little complicated if she wanted only one of us, but she clearly wants all three. Seems like the easiest thing in the world to me.”

“We all have her,” I finished Sean’s thought, putting it right there in the open.

“No,” Sam’s voice was deep and low, dropping the word like an iron weight. “We *don’t* all have her.”

Sean took a sip, leaning forward as he did before speaking. “What? Why the hell not? I mean, it’s not like we haven’t shared women before.” Sean flicked his eyes over to me.

“Yep.”

“And we all know from experience that the hardest part is finding out whether or not the girl’s on board for sharing. In this case, we already know! It’s a no-brainer if you ask me.”

Sam shook his head, not seeming swayed by the argument. “No. We’re not doing it.”

“You want to explain why?” Sean asked.

The thing with the three of us was that Sam usually had seniority, veto power, one could say. We didn’t ask “how high” when he said “jump,” but his voice carried quite a bit of weight. Needless to say, if he wasn’t on board with Gen, it wasn’t going to happen.

“It’s a good question,” I added. “Sean’s got a point about how it makes things a hell of a lot easier if we already know how she feels.”

“I’ll tell you why.” Sam sat back, holding his drink on his lap. “Can either of you tell me what the women we’ve shared have in common?”

“All sexy as hell,” Sean quickly replied, a smile on his face.

“All educated,” I added. “Independent. Open-minded.”

“Very true on all counts,” Sam said. “But there’s something more fundamental, something you both are missing even though it’s right in front of your faces.”

Sean and I shared an expression of confusion.

Then it hit me.

“None of them worked for us.”

Sam nodded slowly. “That’s right. They were all women we met through outside of any household social connections. And that meant when it came time to end things, we could do it cleanly. Gen, on the other hand, is not only working for us, she’s in charge of Bobby.”

“Right,” I said. “If things got messy, we’d have to let her go.”

“Or she’d quit,” Sam replied. “Last thing I want is for Bobby to have to be ripped away from the first nanny he’s had, especially one he seems so fond of.”

Sean sighed, running his hand through his hair. “You know, there’s another difference between her and the other women—she’s a hell of a lot younger than any of them.”

I thought the statement over. Sure enough, he was right.

I shook my head, taking a drink. “Fuck.”

Sam nodded in a way that made it clear the notion had already occurred to him. “Gen isn’t some random woman we’ve recently met; she works for us, she’s very young, and she’s my daughter’s best friend. I’ve known her since she was a teenager. The idea that we’re all sitting around discussing her in a sexual manner doesn’t feel right.”

He took another drink, seeming to let what he just said settle in his mind. “As we can all see, the situation is getting stickier by the moment.”

“It’ll be getting sticky if we’re lucky, too,” Sean said.

Sam shot him a hard look that shut him up without a word. In spite of myself I couldn't help but chuckle.

Sean went on. "Listen, all I'm saying is that if she wants to do it, who the hell are we to be unaccommodating?"

Sam let out a loud laugh at that. "Oh, so it's all about her, huh? How altruistic of you."

Sean shrugged, shifting his weight from one side to the other. "Well, I think it goes without saying that we all want her like crazy. Right?"

I said nothing, Sam and I sharing a look that indicated we agreed with Sean. The point made, we turned our attention back to him.

"So, if we want her, and she wants us, then what's the problem?"

"We just discussed the problems," Sam said. "Emphasis on *problems*, plural. It's too much of a bad idea. End of discussion."

Now, that would normally be it. Sam had unspoken veto power, and when he put his foot down, it was typically the end of the discussion. But Gen had me thinking differently. I didn't want the debate to end just like that.

"No," I said. "Conversation's not over."

Sam cocked his head to the side. "Is that right?"

"That's right. We're interested in her, she's interested in us. And do you think we're going to go through this whole summer ignoring these feelings? No, they're going to build and build and build until they explode. Sam, you're good about keeping a level head, keeping yourself in check. But you can't honestly tell me that you'll be able to spend the entire summer down in your workshop, can you?"

He said nothing, his eyes on mine.

"And Sean, you *already* came close to screwing her right there on the damn beach!"

Sean nodded.

I swept my hand toward the hallway. “And she’s down in her room touching herself thinking about not one, not two, but *all* of us! I know we’re left-brained kinds of guys, but do we really think this is an issue that we can just shove in a drawer and forget about like an old graphics card?”

Neither of my brothers said a word. I went on.

“We all want her, she wants us. You ask me, it’s better to confront this issue head-on, as a group, than to let it build and build until one of us inevitably cracks. Gen’s gorgeous, she’s smart, she’s independent, she fits every damn criterion we’ve had for a woman we’ve shared, and then some. I say we see this through.”

Sam took in a slow breath. I could sense that my words had affected him, given him something to think about. Sean, on the other hand, was all smiles.

“I’m with you.”

We both turned to Sam, waiting eagerly for his response. He sipped his bourbon slowly for a moment before setting his glass down on the table before him.

“Alright. But it’s her choice.”

CHAPTER 12

Taking those final few steps off the path leading from the house to the town of Louveciennes was magical.

The moment I stepped onto the cobblestone streets of the town, I could feel the weight of its history and witness the gorgeous blend of French and Italian influence that made it so unique. The warm breeze from the Mediterranean flowed down the winding streets, carrying with it the scent of sea salt and picking up the warm, inviting smells of freshly baked pastries from the local boulangeries. It seemed no matter where you stood, you could hear the sound of waves crashing against the rocky shore at the town's coastal border.

The architecture was a mix of pastel-colored buildings with shuttered windows and ornate iron balconies, the narrow streets curving this way and that, revealing hidden gardens and charming squares with fountains and cafés. A small castle could be seen perched on a hill overlooking the town, the turrets and ramparts hinting at Louveciennes' history of conquest and conflict, of being passed back and forth between one great power and another.

Down by the harbor, fishing boats bobbed next to luxury yachts in the sparkling turquoise waters, wealth and tradition living side-by-side. Old stone buildings along the waterfront had been converted into shops and restaurants, serving fare like bouillabaisse and fresh oysters to both wealthy visitors and townspeople. All I could think about as I walked along the waterfront pushing Bobby in his stroller was sipping a glass of chilled rosé and watching the sun set over the sea.

The place was a gem, and I couldn't wait to spend the next few months exploring Louveciennes and finding out its secrets, not to mention scarfing down the delicious-looking food I spotted on the tables of hungry diners on outdoor patios or in the windows of the shops.

However, as I walked, Bobby pointing here and there, taking in all the amazing sights of the town, there was one thing on my mind above all else.

Scratch that—three things.

Just the thought of the guys was enough to make exhaustion settle over me like a weighted gravity blanket. My grip still on the handles of the stroller, I leaned against one of the stone buildings and looked out onto the water, hoping it would clear my mind.

Bobby spotted a playground up ahead, pointing toward it with an enthusiastic grunt.

“You want to get out and stretch your legs a bit, buddy?” I craned my head around the front of the stroller to see him. Bobby replied with an eager nod, making me wonder how far his speaking was lagging behind his obviously high comprehension. “Alright, let's do it.”

I pushed him along the path, my eyes bouncing from one well-dressed person to another. There were plenty of rich people in Louveciennes decked out in the latest high-fashion trends, but it struck me how even the regular folk who lived there seemed to have an amazing sense of style as well, not a single pair of Lululemon leggings to be found. Well, except on me.

By the time we reached the playground Bobby was chomping at the bit to get out.

“Alright, big guy, easy,” I said, squatting down in front of his stroller to undo the clasps.

Once freed, he practically leaped out of the stroller and ran out, making his way onto the playground and running around like a madman. Plenty of other kids were there, their chic moms sipping coffee, their eyes hidden behind sunglasses as

they chatted to one another in French. A passing coffee cart smelled amazing, so I ordered a latte and sipped, allowing myself to think as I watched Bobby play.

What the hell was I going to do? My mind drifted back to earlier, how I'd had a little fun while entertaining the idea of being with all three of them at the same time. I'd imagined my mouth moving from one set of lips to another, one man's cock buried deep inside as another licked my nipples, six big, rough hands caressing my body...

Just like that, I was turned on again. I'd felt so damn guilty that I'd insisted on giving up the rest of my day off and taking Bobby into town.

I sipped my coffee and focused, not wanting my mind to drift yet again. The situation was terrible. I was spending the rest of the summer with these guys, and already I was touching myself with them in mind, thinking about them constantly.

To make matters worse, these weren't three random men. Nope, they were the dad and uncles of my best friend. What would Amy say if she were to find out that I was having such thoughts about her family? She'd never want to talk to me again.

I finished my latte, watching as Bobby swooshed down the slide. The whole matter was bizarre, and only the strangeness of it prevented me from totally obsessing.

I wanted all of them. I wanted Sam and Sean and Seth, all three, together. The near incident at the beach had made it abundantly clear that it was only a matter of time before I gave in to my desires, did something stupid that I couldn't take back.

The more I thought about it, the more I wondered if telling them might actually be the right call. The idea sounded crazy at first. The more I considered it, however, the more sense it made.

First of all, it was insane to think that being with the three of them might actually happen. As much as I wanted it, there was no way the guys would be down for it. All the same,

maybe a little radical honesty would do the trick. I could speak with them and tell them that I had a little crush on all three of them, and that I wanted to get it out in the open so we could work past it.

The more I thought about it, the more sense it made. The matter was going to come out one way or another, for sure. But if I preempted an awkward situation, told them straight away and in clear terms what was going on, that would at least diffuse the tension.

If it went well, the guys would laugh, shaking their heads at their silly little nanny who'd developed a crush on three older men. I'd laugh too and with any luck, we'd be able to put it all behind us and focus on the summer ahead.

Bobby finished up at the playground, barely having the energy to make it back over to the stroller. Once he was strapped in, I started us back to the estate, determination on my face at the certainty of what needed to be done.

CHAPTER 13

The conversation wasn't going to be easy. In fact, I wasn't looking forward to it at all. I'd cracked open a bottle of wine so we could have another drink while we waited for Gen to come home.

At least the view was killer. The elevation of the third floor of the estate, along with the huge windows of my office, afforded an incredible display of the sun setting over the western coast. Wild oranges and reds filled the sky, stars already twinkling above. The sight was stunning enough for me to temporarily forget that a difficult conversation was on the horizon.

The door to my office opened, and I turned to see it was Sean. Seth was already there, doing a bit of work on his laptop in the seating area, his wine close at hand.

"What's up?" I asked. "Is she back?"

"Yeah, she's back. Told her that we wanted to talk in the office." He stepped over to the bottle of wine and scooped it up, heading over to the bar to pour himself a glass.

Seth sat back. "And?"

"She's coming. Bobby was wiped, asleep on her shoulder. She said she'd put him down then come join us."

Sean leaned against one of my bookshelves, glass of wine in hand. "Look, worst-case scenario is that we have to let her go. The idea of letting her go doesn't make me happy, but if it needs to be done, then it needs to be done."

“Wrong,” I said. “Worst-case scenario is that we have to let her go, then she tells my daughter what happened.”

Sean pursed his lips, realizing that he’d forgotten that small detail.

“Look, it doesn’t matter, not right now, at least. Whatever good or bad thing comes out of all this, we handle it when it happens, and not a second before. No sense in getting worried about worst-case scenarios that haven’t even come to pass.”

The guys nodded in agreement and I found my mind drifting to the mental image of Gen with Bobby, of her carrying the sleeping boy into his bedroom. I imagined her gently setting him down, changing him slowly and quietly so as not to wake him. Then, when she was done, she would place him in his crib, tucking one of his stuffed animals by his side so he could wrap his arms around it as he slept.

“You OK over there, bro?” Sean’s voice brought me back to reality.

“Yeah. Fine. Just thinking about how hard it’d be to lose her as a nanny.”

Sean smirked. “Not following your own rules, huh?”

“No, I guess not.”

Before the conversation had a chance to go on further, a soft knock sounded at the door.

“We ready?” I asked.

“Ready.”

“Come in!”

Gen was dressed in a pair of black leggings and an off-white T-shirt. While the leggings hugged her curves in a way that was extremely appealing, thankfully her outfit covered up more than that orange bikini she had on earlier. Her face was flushed from the sun, and she seemed a bit unsure of herself as she stepped into the office.

“Hey,” I said. “Good to see you.”

She shut the door slowly and softly, turning back to us with a worried expression on her face.

“You guys wanted to talk to me?”

Seth rose, making his way over to her. “Yeah, we did. Want to sit down?”

She nodded without saying a word. Seth put his hand on her upper back, guiding her over to the sitting area. There was more than enough space there for all of us without feeling crowded.

“Wine?” Sean asked.

Another nod. “Yeah. That’d be great.”

Sean hurried over to the bar, pouring her a glass of wine as I went to join them in the sitting area. Sean was there seconds later, Gen taking the glass from his hands and bringing it to her mouth for a long sip. Before any of us could say a word, she spoke.

“I have something kind of difficult to talk about with you guys.” Her voice hitched as she spoke, as if she might cry at any moment. The guys and I shared a look, all of us noticing what was going on.

Sean, emotionally-in-tune guy that he was, reached over and placed his hand on hers.

“Don’t worry about it, whatever it is. Just take a deep breath and find the words.”

She forced a small smile before taking another sip.

“It’s... I don’t know if I can work here any longer.”

CHAPTER 14

I'd felt so damn cool and confident when I'd returned to the house. I felt totally ready to march into that office and tell the guys what was what, to lay the terms out in clear-as-day detail and let them know the score.

The moment I'd put Bobby to bed, however, watching his adorable little face as he slept, knowing that there was a chance that by morning I'd never see him again... I knew it was going to be a hell of a lot harder than I'd thought.

The feeling was compounded when I'd actually arrived in the office, seeing the three of them all there waiting for me. It was too much. Thankfully, they were ready to be accommodating.

I sipped my wine, staring down into the dark, red pool in my glass. Part of me wanted to throw it back like a shot, hoping that by the time it kicked in my confidence would return. Another part of me knew I needed to be clear-headed as I could be.

I looked up from my wine, seeing the three brothers sitting around me, all wearing the same expression of concern. I appreciated how they were all patiently waiting for me to speak. All the same, I couldn't take feeling surrounded like that. I rose from my seat, glass of wine in hand, and stepped over to the desk.

The view was insane. Down below I could see the enormous stretch of the property, the beach beyond and

Louveciennes to the east. The sun had nearly entirely set in the west, the sky looking as if it were on fire.

I sipped, facing away from the guys as I struggled to compose myself. I couldn't calm my thoughts, couldn't think rationally. All I wanted was to kiss all three, to let them do whatever they wanted with me. Strangely, that realization made it all the clearer what I needed to say.

Taking a breath, I turned around to face them. They were still seated, still with the same expressions of calm empathy. It felt as if there were nothing I could say to make them angry.

"Why?" Sam asked finally. "What's wrong?"

Sean rose from his seat, likely to come over to comfort me. Before he could do more than lean his body forward to take a step, I raised my palm to stop him. The truth of the matter was that I wanted him to be near me—I wanted all three of them to be near me. But I also knew that their nearness would make it a hell of a lot harder to say what needed to be said.

Sean nodded in understanding, slowly sitting back down.

"It's OK," he said. "Whatever it is."

"Right. No hard feelings about anything," Seth added.

I took one more deep breath, knowing there was nothing to do but get right to the heart of the matter.

"The truth is that I have a crazy, burning, overwhelming desire for all of you."

There it was. The words tumbled out of my mouth, and they were out in the open, no way to take them back.

"And being around you guys is hard. Not hard because I feel awkward or uncomfortable or anything like that, but hard because I want all of you. I know it sounds strange, insane, in fact, but that's how I feel. I don't know for how much longer I can control myself. And on top of that, I don't want to be the type of person to pit brother against brother. That's not who I am."

I took another breath and continued.

“I know that there’s no way to resolve this situation. I mean, what the hell would we even do? Would you guys share me or something? I came here to talk to you guys knowing there was nothing to be done other than me leaving. And I’m pretty sure that’s what you three wanted to talk about with me, right?”

One more sigh. “But the fact of the matter is that even though I’ve only been here for a little while, I love it here. You three are amazing, and I already feel so attached to Bobby. Just the thought of leaving him behind and never seeing him again...” Tears formed in my eyes. I quickly wiped them away. “But what I want doesn’t matter, what *does* matter is what’s best for him. And I’m sure you guys don’t want your kid around some weirdo lady who’s fantasizing about his dads.”

I ran my hands through my hair, feeling like I couldn’t control the emotions pouring out of me.

“So, that’s it. That’s all I have to say. I’d like to be able to say goodbye to Bobby. But if you guys want me out of here as quickly as possible, I’ll understand. Just tell me what you want me to do.”

The three of them shared a look. It was a sight I was already used to, the brothers regarding one another in silence, as if speaking to each other telepathically. Then they turned their eyes back to me.

“It’s not like that at all, Gen,” Seth said.

“Right,” Sean added. “You’re wrong.”

“Huh?” I couldn’t summon the brainpower to think of anything else to say.

Seth smiled—something I didn’t see the otherwise serious brother do all that often.

“We all want you too.”

I said nothing, my eyes going wide. I blinked hard, unable to process what I’d heard.

“You... *what?*”

Sam gestured to the open seat where I'd been before I'd stood up and started speaking.

"Care to sit down? If you want your space, that's fine. But we'd like to explain to you what kind of relationships we like."

I was confused. They almost seemed relieved. I sipped my wine again, slowly going over to join them. Once I was back in my seat, I no longer felt tense, or like I needed space.

"I'll get right to the point," Sam began. "My brothers and I... this isn't the first time we've done something like this."

"What do you mean?" I leaned forward as I asked the question.

"We've shared women," Seth said. "Quite a few times, actually."

"Shared?"

Sean smiled. "Yep. We've always been close, even when we were kids. And as we grew up, our lives becoming more and more intermingled with us going into business together, we eventually found that our love lives did the same thing."

"We're three different men," Sam said. "But as it turns out, we all have the same taste in women—smart, beautiful, fiercely independent, like you. One of us would start dating a woman with those traits, and it wouldn't be long before the others took notice of her."

I was taken aback by what I was hearing. "And... they just go along with it?"

Sean laughed. "Not all of them. And it's taken a long time for us to figure out the best way to make such a situation work."

"What about jealousy?" I asked. "Isn't that a problem with you guys?"

"Not at all," Sam said. "Never once have we had a fight about possessions, achievements, or women. We share."

It was so much to take in. I didn't know what to say.

I took another long sip of my wine, the booze finally doing some work and calming me down a little.

“OK. Maybe there’s no drama between the three of you, but what about with the women?”

“The women we choose, choose us too. It’s got to be totally mutual, or it doesn’t work.”

“And it doesn’t get messy when it ends?” I asked.

Seth shook his head. “Not that we’ve had happen. Usually, the relationship runs its course because the women we’re attracted to are as busy and ambitious as us. It comes to a natural end.”

“Like with you,” Sean said. “You’re here for the summer and that’s it. The four of us could have our fun, then when it’s time for you to go back, we part on good terms.”

“And we keep things professional if it ends between us before then,” Seth said. “You want to make a clean break before the job is done, so be it. We’ll sit down and talk about it, work it out.”

It all sounded good, almost *too* good, in fact.

That’s when something else occurred to me.

“What if, and I don’t want to sound too full of myself here, but what if this thing becomes more than just physical? More than just fun? What if feelings emerge here?”

Sam leaned in. “We’ve got a way of doing things around here—both in work and romance—and that is we don’t worry about things *before* they happen, we take care of them *if* they do. In other words, real feelings and emotions are an important matter to keep in mind. An arrangement like this requires personal awareness of how one feels all of the time. If you start to have feelings that go beyond physical, then you need to make us aware. And vice-versa.”

I let out a whoosh of air, the intensity of the conversation washing over me. Needing a drink, I raised my glass only to find it empty. Sean had already gotten up, returning with the bottle of wine in hand. He leaned over, pouring me a glass.

I sipped the wine and when the glass was empty, my eyes began jumping from one brother to the next, the lust building inside of me to the point where it felt as if my pants might fly off on their own accord.

I knew what I wanted.

“OK. So how does this work?”

Sam grinned.

“We’d love to show you.”

CHAPTER 15

I was in a state of shock as I left the office with the guys. After all, I'd stepped into the room thinking I was turning in my resignation but ended up leaving it to be pleased by three gorgeous men. The world felt strange around me, like it was spinning. The guys must've sensed how I felt, as they walked slowly, Sean keeping his hand on the small of my back.

"Which room?" Seth asked.

"Mine," Sean quickly said.

"Not a chance," Sam replied. "We'll have to spend fifteen minutes cleaning your dirty underwear off the ground before we can start."

Sean scoffed. "Come on. I know my room isn't the OCD paradise of yours, Sam, but it's not *that* dirty."

"Let me put it to you this way," Sam said. "How long do you want to wait before we can get started?"

Sean pursed his lips. "Fine. I get your point. I don't want to wait a second longer than we have to."

He glanced back at me, flashing that same, sensual, smoldering smile he had when he was refilling my wine. Just like before, it sent a wave of arousal through me, the effect so intense that I nearly dropped to my knees right then and there.

"Sam's bedroom it is," Seth said.

We took a right turn down another hall, soon arriving in a huge bedroom with an angled ceiling, the view just as stunning

as that of the rest of the rooms in the house. The space was minimally, but tastefully appointed, the dominant colors white and light gray. The windows were open, sea air flowing into the room.

Most importantly, the bed was gigantic—more than enough space for the three of us to have our fun.

Sam shut the door once we were inside, the latch clicking shut. By that point the anticipation was so intense that I could hardly think straight. I was no pushover in the bedroom, but the situation was so unlike anything I'd ever done before that I was going to have to let the brothers take the lead.

There was something undeniably sexy about that though. Totally giving myself over to three men who knew what they were doing, putting my body, literally, in good hands. I was beyond eager for it.

Sam turned to me, an expression of concern on his face. “Now, we should ask if you've ever been with multiple partners before?” It was like he was reading my mind, anticipating what I might be thinking.

“Never once. Not even close.”

Sean stepped in front of me, putting his hands on my hips. His touch alone was enough to make me melt.

“Then we'll handle everything. But if there's anything you want that you're not getting, please speak up.”

Another pulse of arousal rushed through me.

“Some women prefer a safe word,” Seth added. “Just something they can say to let us know if they're feeling overwhelmed or anything like that.”

“I'll tell you if anything comes up. Clear and direct communication.”

“Sounds perfect,” Sam said. “Now, the only question is, where would you like to begin?”

The three men stood in front of me, each of them as enticing as the next. My pussy clenched at the sight of them, at

how eager they were to please me, eager to make me feel good.

“How about... a kiss?”

Seth stepped over to me, putting his hands on my hips. His touch was different, a bit more insistent, a bit more aggressive. I liked it.

He gazed down at me with those striking hazel eyes, the same that both his brothers possessed. I felt small in the best way possible standing before him, and without thinking, I licked my lips in anticipation of the kiss about to come.

“Come ‘ere.” With those words, he leaned in and kissed me, and that started it all.

I melted into him right away, his kiss as aggressive as his touch, his stubble tickling my face in a way I loved. Seth pulled me against his hard, solid body, my mouth opening to accept his tongue, the bit of whiskey he’d been drinking still present.

I wrapped my arms around him, Seth pulling my hips against his own, letting me feel his hardness. I moaned at the sensation of his big, hard cock pressed against me, and all I wanted was to see it, to have it inside of me.

I turned to Sean. He grinned.

“About damn time we get to finish what we started back in Newark.”

He was right, there’d been an undeniable tension between us since our meeting at the airport bar. Sean and I both seemed to understand that there was a damn good chance we’d have acted on it if we hadn’t found out who the other one was.

He stepped in front of me, putting his hands on my middle. Sean wasn’t content with just touching me, however. He took my T-shirt and pulled it up, exposing my midriff and then my bra. Once it was off, he whipped the shirt into the corner of the room.

“Goddamn, you’re sexy.”

He shook his head as if in disbelief. Then he went in for the kiss.

Sean's kiss was different in a way that I couldn't quite put my finger on. While Seth's kiss had been rough and aggressive, Sean's was more playful, a bit more sensual. Even as I kissed him, as I felt his tongue move over mine, I couldn't decide which one I liked more, or even if I'd be able to choose.

As I kissed him, I returned the favor with the shirt. I grabbed his and undid the buttons one at a time, exposing more and more of his gorgeous body. He smiled through the kiss as I undressed him, and soon I had the shirt off, tossing it aside in the same way he'd done to mine.

I placed my hands on his chest, my pussy becoming even wetter at the sensation of his solid pecs underneath my touch. We kissed harder, and with each second that passed it became clearer that, if left undisturbed, we'd be naked underneath the sheets in less than a minute.

I gathered my senses, pulling away from him a bit.

"Time for big brother's turn," I said, turning my attention to Sam.

His hands went around me as we embraced, his fingers easily opening the clasp of my bra. He pulled it off slowly as we kissed, his smooth, freshly shaven cheek feeling like heaven against mine. Sam took off my bra and let it drop to the ground, my nipples going hard right away.

I lingered in the kiss, loving the way Sam's hands moved up my body, how they felt cupping my breasts and teasing my nipples. When he pulled his hands and lips away, I was beyond ready for more.

"What next?" I asked, looking the three brothers over.

"The possibilities are endless, really," Seth said. "And we're here to please you."

As I stood before the men, I had a flashback of my dream, the one where Sean and I were in bed together, the brothers watching as we made love.

“I think I’d like to start with one. When I’m ready, the rest of you can join in. Does that work?”

“Works great,” Seth said. “We love to watch.”

Sean offered his hand to me and I took it, his touch inviting. Together, we made our way over to the bed as the other brothers grabbed chairs and placed them nearby for viewing. They sat as Sean and I stood at the end of the bed.

“God, you’re about the sexiest thing I’ve ever seen in my life,” shaking his head as he said the words. “I can’t wait to be inside you.”

“The feeling is more than mutual.”

He put his hands on my hips, pulling me against the visible erection that strained the fabric of his pants. We kissed hard and deeply, this time slipping one another out of our clothes until I was in nothing but my panties and him in only his skintight, charcoal gray boxer briefs.

I reached down, grabbing his cock through his underwear and stroking it, Sean letting out a groan of pleasure. He leaned in and kissed me along my neck, goosebumps breaking out all over. Sean placed his hand between my thighs, squeezing the soft flesh and moving up slowly, pulling my panties to the side and teasing my pussy.

“Oh... oh!” The words exploded out of me, the pleasure from his touch so intense and sudden. My knees went weak underneath me. Sensing this, Sean wrapped his arm around my waist, guiding me over to the bed where I sat down.

“This is a good position,” he said, nodding. “Stay just like this.”

He lowered himself to my eye level, coming in for another kiss as he took hold of the side of my panties and carefully slid them down my thighs. Once they were off, he dropped the rest of the way down and spread my legs, positioning himself between them.

He wasted no time getting to work kissing my inner thighs, each press of his lips against my skin sending a fresh wave of intensity through me. I watched as he inched closer to my

pussy, watched as his mouth moved from my thighs to my lips. He kissed my pussy up and down before spreading me open.

The sensation of his tongue against my clit was beyond compare. He flicked his eyes up at me as he licked, and even though the lower half of his face was quite busy, I could make out the cocky expression, the look with those eyes that let me know he understood that he was damn good at what he was doing.

I moaned, squirming my hips a bit as he ate me, the delight building in me. It was so much, in fact, that I couldn't help but fall backward onto the bed. I let my head roll to the side and opened my eyes. Sam and Seth were seated next to the bed slowly stroking themselves, just like in my dream. Their eyes burned with intense sensuality, and I could see both were eager for their turn.

Sean continued to eat me out with expert skill, bringing me closer and closer to orgasm. I sat up a bit, enough to reach forward and weave my fingers into his thick, long hair, holding his head in place as he licked and fingered me.

My back arched and I let out a wild cry as he made me come, the orgasm ripping through me. The pleasure was like hot liquid moving through my body, seeming to pull me down into a hot pool of sexual ecstasy.

When the orgasm faded, Sean rose from between my legs. His lips were glistening with my juices, and he wiped them away with the back of his hand. By this point his cock seemed ready to burst through his underwear.

“Take those off,” I said, my eyes locked onto his cock.

Sean's cock sprang out of his boxer briefs, long and thick and gorgeous, a bit of curly, dark hair at the base.

“Like what you see, gorgeous?” he asked with a grin, as if he knew what he was packing.

“Very much so. But more than that, I'd like to see what you can do with it.”

He moved over top of me with surprising speed, letting me know that his physique wasn't just for show. His cock lined up

at my entrance as we kissed again, and I couldn't resist taking hold of his length and stroking it.

"Forgot to ask," Seth said, his low voice filling the air. "Do we need protection? Because there's some close at hand."

I pulled my lips away from Sean's to shake my head and speak. "No. I'm on the pill. As long as you guys are OK."

"We're serious about our health," Sam said. "And very careful about these sorts of things. You don't need to worry about any of that."

The matter addressed and done with, I turned my attention back to Sean. He had his big cock by the base, ready to plunge it in deep.

"Say the word, gorgeous."

"Please. Please give it to me."

That was all he needed to hear. Sean closed the distance between us, his head spreading my lips as he entered me. He knew what he was working with, and when he pushed inside, he did it carefully, making sure not to go too hard.

I closed my eyes and moaned, focusing on the way his cock stretched me out, how he buried himself inside me. The sensation was unlike anything else I'd ever felt, this perfect combination of too much and just enough. Pleasure ebbed and flowed out of me as he pushed himself to the root, and when he was fully inside, I finally managed to open my eyes and take in the sight of him between my legs.

Sean propped himself up onto his thick, powerful arms, allowing just the right angle to pull back and drive inside once more. This time he entered me with more ease, my pussy stretched out around his cock, my arousal making me slick enough to accommodate him.

Watching his powerful body at work was a true pleasure. His tight, toned physique allowed me a full view of his muscles tensing and flexing, a sly grin on his face that suggested he knew just how good he was making me feel.

I rolled my head to the side as he drove into me, my eyes on the other two brothers. They were both watching as before, sitting still and taking in the sights and sounds before them. I felt more comfortable by that point, ready for more.

“What do you guys usually do next?”

“Depends on how much you feel like you can handle,” Sam said.

Seth nodded. “And if you’re good at... multitasking.”

I grinned, having a sense of what they had in mind. “I’m more than willing to give it a try. Come on over, boys. But make sure you’re not wearing anything when you do.”

Sean still moving inside of me, I watched as Seth and Sam stripped down to nothing. Their bodies were just as gorgeous and sculpted as Sean’s, Sam’s chest dusted with just the right amount of salt and pepper hair. I wanted them so badly that it hurt. Their cocks were perfection, both thick and long and hard.

They split up, Seth moving to one side of the bed and Sam to the other. I was so eager to see what they had in mind.

“Bring her over here, Sean,” Seth said.

“You got it.” Sean slid out of me, my body yearning for him to be back inside the second he pulled out. He put his hands on my hips, scooching me over to the other side of the bed, closer to Seth, right near his cock.

“You take care of Seth while I take care of you,” Sean said.

I licked my lips, the sight of the perfect prick in front of me absolutely enticing.

I opened my mouth as Sean slid back inside of me, taking a moment to wonder if I’d even be able to get my lips around Seth’s cock.

“Oh...*fuck*.” I moaned as Sean bottomed me out again, his hips pushing into me slow and deep. The pleasure building by the second made the task of giving his brother oral a little more challenging, but I went for it.

I took Seth by the base, opening my mouth and taking the head inside. There was a bit of precum on the end, the taste salty and perfect. I licked it off with my tongue, smiling as I held him inside of my mouth.

I stayed like that for a time, my tongue moving slowly over his head as I tasted every nook and cranny of his ridge. Seth growled with pleasure like some kind of a wild animal, and I looked up to let him see my eyes, my mouth full of him. He loomed over me like a statue, his powerful physique looking practically godlike from that perspective.

Just as I wondered what Sam had in mind, I felt the sensation of a mouth wrapping around my left breast. I turned for long enough to see what was happening, that Sam was going to work on the rest of my body, making sure not a single inch of me was left unattended.

He licked my nipples as I sucked Seth, Sean still pounding away between my legs. The triple-sensations were almost too much to bear, another orgasm building.

When it released, my moans pouring out of my mouth over Seth's cock, all I could do was give myself over to the pleasure. My body shook, the feeling of Sam's mouth on my tits bringing the feelings to another level. Sean let out a hard grunt, one that let me know he was coming right along with me. I felt his cock pulse inside as he drained, shooting his seed down deep.

“What's next?”

CHAPTER 16

Seth answered my question by grabbing my hips and flipping me over, my ass sticking into the air. Once I was in position, he climbed onto his knees behind me. I turned around, watching as the spent Sean moved out of the way, falling back into one of the chairs next to the bed. His big, powerful chest rose and fell, his muscles sheened with sweat. And he had a big, pleased grin on his face.

I didn't spend much time lingering on the sight of him though. The pressure of Seth's cock against my pussy grabbed my full attention. As he moved his head past my lips, all I could do was grip the bed sheets hard, letting out another moan as he worked inch after inch into me.

Seth gripped my hips hard, holding me in place as he drove deep at a nice, steady rhythm, the sounds of flesh on flesh filling the air, my breasts swinging underneath me. Sam had moved to the side of the bed, sitting against the pillows.

"You know, you're even more beautiful when you're getting fucked," he said.

I never in a million years could've imagined how much of a turn on it'd be for two men to watch me have sex. But it *was*. Being there on all fours, Seth rutting against me, his brothers watching me, their eyes moving slowly over my body as I rocked back and forth from the force of Seth's thrusts... it was enough to make me hotter than I already was.

Navigating the three men presented a challenge, but the guys all seemed to know what they were doing. I loved being

in their hands, being able to relax and give myself over to their particular kind of expertise.

Another orgasm built as Seth pounded me hard, my eyes half-closing and a steady series of *oh-oh-ohs* coming from me. Sam watched, his eyes burning with intensity as he took hold of his cock, stroking his hand up and down slowly. I locked my gaze with his, the idea of Sam touching himself to climax bringing me to another level of arousal.

He had other ideas, however. Sam scooted forward on the bed, coming over in front of me and leaning back.

“Bring that gorgeous mouth of yours over here,” he said.

I crawled over, inching closer to Sam’s prick, Seth moving along with me, keeping his cock buried deep inside. Once I was near enough, I leaned forward, lowering myself onto Sam.

I balanced carefully, wrapping my hand around his cock as I began licking his end, tasting his saltiness, glancing up to see him watching me with those steely hazel eyes.

After a bit of teasing, I took him into my mouth, wrapping my lips around him. The forward momentum of Seth’s thrusts pushed me down onto Sam’s cock, bringing more inches into my mouth.

It was heaven. I never dreamed I’d be the kind of girl who’d enjoy being filled at both ends, but I knew right away that it was just what I’d been craving. One man taking me from behind while I pleased another, the third brother watching it all eagerly from the side, his muscular body glowing with satisfaction and glistening with sweat from his orgasm... it was all so perfect.

Seth’s thrusts became more insistent, faster and deeper. The orgasm built until it was impossible to ignore, Sam putting gentle pressure on the back of my head as his cock muffled my moans.

“I want to watch you come,” Sam said. “Now.”

I looked up at him and nodded obediently, my mouth full of his manhood.

And that was all it took. The third release, Seth coming at the same time. He let out a deep, throaty grunt, his thrusts slowing down but going deeper into me like stabs as he pumped steams of hot cum inside me. I closed my eyes, focusing on the sensation of his cock erupting in me and Sam's warm, hard prick in my mouth.

Seth pulled out of me, his hot seed dripping down my inner thigh. Sam slid his cock out of my mouth, and I couldn't do anything but collapse into a sweaty, blissed-out heap. I scooped forward a bit, resting my head on Sam's thigh, Seth falling to the side of me and wrapping his arm around my waist.

Silence filled the air, the curtains catching the wind, the salt that traveled on it seeming to rejuvenate me. The sun was mostly down, an orange band over the sea with deep purple above that, stars twinkling above. Sean came over to the bed, climbing onto the open space. He placed his hand on my side, all three of the brothers touching me at once.

It was heaven. We sat in silence as we recovered, my mind still grappling with the reality of what had just happened.

Three guys. I'd been with three guys all at the same time. And it'd been amazing. In fact, though I was still basking in the climax afterglow, all I could think about was doing it again... and again and again and again...

"I think it's time we got cleaned up," Seth said, rolling off the bed and onto his feet. He stepped over to the window, giving me a perfect view of his powerful legs and perfectly sculpted ass. "Might hop in the shower."

Sean rolled off the other side, and I quickly turned to get a peek at his behind, which was just as sexy as his brother's, of course. He stepped over to his pants and fished his phone out, his cock hanging heavy and loose between his thighs. A big, stupid smile on my face, I sat and watched him check his phone. Even doing something as simple as that was absolutely entrancing to watch with a man as fine as him.

"Mathilde is asking if we need her to make dinner."

Sam winced. “Shit. Totally spaced. Guess I got a little distracted.” He reached forward and grabbed my thigh, giving it a squeeze. All I could do was blush and grin.

Seth spoke up. “I was thawing some steaks for tomorrow. How about I cook those tonight, and you do the pasta tomorrow instead?”

“Works for me,” Sam replied. “Gen, that good for you?”

My stomach growled at the mere mention of food. “Sounds amazing. You guys want some help?”

“Not a chance,” Sean said with a smirk, pulling his underwear up and tucking his half-hard manhood inside. Had to admit, I was sad to see it go. “You’re still on your day off, remember?”

I chuckled. “You guys sure aren’t letting me get out of that.”

“No way,” Sam said. “You’re under strict orders to relax.”

Seth pulled his shirt back on. “Alright, I’ll get started, text you guys when I’m done.” Before he left, he came over to me and planted a kiss on my lips. “This was fun. Let’s do it again sometime.”

Sean came over next, giving me a kiss of his own. “Sometime soon.”

“Yeah...” The word sort of trailed out of my mouth in a dreamy tone, my mind totally overwhelmed with the delight of what had just happened. I watched the men leave, Sean shutting the door behind him.

It was just Sam and me. He sat up and stretched, his lean, powerful muscles going taut.

“Was thinking I might take a shower. Care to join? Don’t worry, there’s plenty of space in there.”

“That sounds lovely. Nothing nicer than getting clean after getting good and dirty.”

He grinned. “My thoughts exactly. Come on.”

Sam got up, and before I had a chance to do anything he swooped in and scooped me off the bed. I let out a squeal of surprise and delight as he effortlessly picked me up, carrying me over to the bathroom.

I gasped when I saw the space. It was massive, about half the size of his huge master bedroom. The space was clean and white, windows looking out over the garden and the pool. There was a regular tub, a jacuzzi tub, and at least a third of the room consisted of a big shower with what appeared to have a sitting area, likely for a sauna option.

“House, turn on the shower and set it to warm.”

The blue lights did their thing and I watched as the shower turned on from three separate heads. There was one in the center, and one on each wall beside the glass door that separated the shower area from the rest of the bathroom.

“Three, huh?” I asked as he gently put me on my feet.

“Might actually be doing you a disservice here,” he replied. “Once you’ve showered in a room like this, you won’t want to go back.”

I grinned. “I’m more than willing to take that chance.”

He flashed me a sly smile as he opened the door, mist pouring out of the shower area to greet us.

“Go on,” Sam said.

I stepped through the door, Sam giving my behind a playful squeeze. The air was warm, and when I stepped into the triple-head stream of the shower, it was like nothing else I’d ever experienced.

Each high-pressure jet seemed to hit me in just the right spots, easing the soreness out of my muscles, the sensation as if I were getting three massages at once. I grinned as I turned to Sam, who entered and shut the door behind him.

A thought occurred to me as Sam dipped his head under the water, streams running down his perfect body.

I placed my fingertips on the end of his cock, feeling the water cascade down his length. “We never got our official turn

in there.”

His smile turned heated, sensual. “That’s right. I had ulterior motives in bringing you here.” Sam stepped forward, putting his hand between my thighs, making me gasp. “That is, if my brothers didn’t totally wear you out in there.”

I closed my eyes, squirming on his hand, focusing on the way he spread my lips and teased my clit.

“I think I could rally for another round.” I opened my eyes. “You know, I would’ve been more than happy to let you explode in my mouth.”

“And I would’ve loved to watch it happen, to see you drink every last drop. But damn, did I want to be inside you when I came.”

I stroked him harder, his words sending me over the brink of total arousal.

“Then what’s stopping you?”

“Not a damn thing.”

Sam took his hand away from my pussy, placing his grip on my hips and guiding me over to the wall of the shower. He lifted me up effortlessly, pushing my back against the tile wall as I wrapped my legs around him.

I watched as he drove forward, his cock entering me, splitting me in half in the most wonderful way possible. His powerful legs flexed as he thrust and held me up. Sam grunted as he thrust in and out of me, my shouts of total pleasure filling the air.

It didn’t take long at all before I came one more time, my body shaking in his arms. He held me through it, Sam’s own orgasm arriving soon after. His cock erupted as he let out a deep, primal grunt, his seed spraying deep inside as the others’ had.

When we were done, he held me with one arm and pressed the other against the wall to hold himself up. We both breathed in deeply, restoring ourselves after the exertion. I dropped

down to my feet, Sam leaning in to give me one more deep kiss before stepping away.

“Wait.” I turned to Sam, who was busy lathering his perfect body with sudsy soap. “This is a sharing thing, right? Are the other guys going to get upset that you just had me all to yourself?”

He shook his head. “Not at all. There’s no rule that we all have to be together when we have our fun. We’re all busy, and sometimes our schedules don’t allow for that. So, we like to mix and match, and go according to what you’re in the mood for, of course. You might get three or two or just one of us. Trust me, you don’t have to worry about jealousy or anything like that.”

I smiled, imagining all of the possibilities. The foursome had been fun, but there was something undeniably wonderful about being with Sam one-on-one, something much more intimate.

“Just think about what you want and let us know.” He stepped over to me with soapy hands, placing them on my body and getting me good and clean. “Either way, it’s gonna be a hell of a summer.”

Of that, I had no doubt at all.

CHAPTER 17

That night I had the most wonderful dream. It was of the guys and me lying in bed together, my head resting on Sam's muscular thigh. Sean was to my right, his hand on my forearm, his touch slowly moving back and forth. To my left was Seth, his big hands on my foot as he rubbed the tension out of it.

It wasn't a sex dream. We laid together in peace and quiet, watching the sun come up over the eastern coast. Sea air gently blew in through the open window.

As I laid on the bed surrounded by the guys, I remembered how comfortable I'd felt in the dream, the feeling as if that morning was simply one among many, many others. A soft knock sounded at the door that let us know it was time to begin the day.

When I finally opened my eyes, I couldn't help but smile. One of the windows was open, that delicious ocean breeze flowing into the bedroom. It was hard to imagine how'd I'd ever lived without that scent, that lovely aroma that you could almost feel restore you.

The smile faded quickly, however. I sat up, the droning sound of a lawnmower in the distance. Normally, the room was bathed with golden sunlight when I woke up. That morning, however, it wasn't. I sat up and looked around, trying to figure out what was different.

Suddenly it hit me—the sun was up higher than it normally was, and that could only mean one thing.

I'd slept in. Panic raced through me and I bolted out of bed, my heart pounding hard.

What the hell, Gen? How could you have let this happen?

The monitor. It should've let me know when Bobby had gotten up. On top of that, it had an alarm feature that I'd set for seven AM. Had I forgotten to charge the damn thing? I felt practically sick as I turned around, my eyes latching onto where I normally placed the monitor on the nightstand.

To my surprise, it wasn't there. What the hell had happened?

I was in total panic mode. If I'd slept in, that meant I'd missed the entire freaking first half of the day with Bobby. I'd missed getting him up, I'd missed breakfast, I'd missed starting him off on some activities to burn off his energy.

My phone. No doubt the guys had tried to call to wake me up and figure out what had happened. That was in my usual spot, at least, plugged into the wall near one of the chairs in the room. I rushed over and grabbed it, checking the screen to see how late I'd slept in.

It was a little after nine. I ran my hand through my hair, as I paced back and forth trying to figure out what the hell had happened.

My heart pounding, I hurried to the bathroom with some clothes and threw them on, running a comb through my hair so I didn't look as crazy and frazzled as I felt. After brushing my teeth and putting on my sneakers, I hurried out of the room with my phone in my hand, ready to accept my punishment.

I spotted Mathilde turning the corner down the hallway near the stairs. A scan of her face for any indication what kind of trouble I was in didn't do me any good; the woman was damn hard to read.

"Mathilde?" I asked as I approached.

She paused, raising her eyebrows slightly. While she'd never been rude to me, she was also the type of woman who didn't like to be bothered while in the middle of work.

“Yes?” she asked.

“Do you know where Bobby is?”

She cocked an eyebrow. “Now, I believe the answer to that precise question is your job, *non?*”

My face bloomed red. “Yes. I mean. I know. It’s just that I slept in and the baby monitor’s gone...”

She smiled slightly, a total French, Mona Lisa smile that I couldn’t quite decipher.

“Bobby is with his fathers. They are out in the pool.”

“OK. Good. Thanks.”

She gave me one more strange look before she continued on without another word. I hurried past her, down the stairs and out back to the infinity pool outside. Sure enough, the guys were there with Bobby. Sam was on one of the chairs with his laptop, Seth had his big arms draped over the sides of the pool as he floated in the water, and Sean was with Bobby, throwing the kid up into the air, Bobby making squeals of total joy.

I swallowed and stood up straight, ready for it all to end in the next few minutes. No doubt I was in for the scolding of a lifetime.

I approached the pool with slow, cautious steps. One by one, the guys turned their attention to me.

“Hey.” My voice came out weak.

Sean gave Bobby one more toss before catching the little guy and setting him in the shallow end, Bobby wasting no time doggy paddling around, his floaties keeping him above water. The guys turned to me one by one.

“Hey!” Sean said. “What’s up?”

“Morning,” Seth added as he swam over toward me.

Sam, his eyes hidden behind sunglasses, raised his hand for a moment before turning his attention back to his work.

“There’s breakfast in there,” Seth said. “Some coffee, too.”

I was so nervous that eating was the last thing on my mind.

Sean, seeming to sense that something was wrong, cocked his head to the side as he regarded me.

“You OK?” he asked. “Didn’t sleep well or something?”

I pursed my lips hard for a moment, trying to think of where to begin. Finally, it all tumbled out.

“OK, I’m so, so, so sorry that I slept in this morning. I have *no* idea what happened. I’ve been using the monitor to wake up and for some reason it was gone, but it’s still my fault. I should’ve set my phone as a backup. I screwed up bad, and if you guys want to fire me, I totally get it.”

Silence fell over us, the lawnmower on the other side of the house turning off, no sound in the air but the waves in the distance and Bobby splashing around happily.

Finally, after several agonizing moments, Sam closed his laptop and took off his sunglasses.

“Wait, Sean? Did you send her the text?”

“What text?”

“The one telling her what was going on.”

A thoughtful expression formed on Sean’s handsome face. He glanced up and over a little bit.

“Oh shit. No, I didn’t.”

“Are you serious?” Seth asked.

“Sorry! I know I was supposed to send it, but Bobby got up right away and he wanted to play dinosaurs and... I guess I got a little distracted.”

“The whole idea was to give her a relaxing morning,” Seth said. “Look at the poor woman, does she *look* relaxed?”

Sean turned his attention to me. “Uh, not even a little bit.”

Sam set his laptop aside and sat up. “Why don’t you tell her what’s going on instead of making her stand there in fear for her damn job, Sean?”

“Alright, alright.” Sean sighed. “OK, so the guys and I were talking this morning before Bobby got up, and we thought it’d be nice to give you a few hours to yourself. You know, to relax.”

“Figured you’d need it,” Seth added with a sly smile. “Especially after the kind of night we had.”

Even as nervous as I was, the mention of last night caused my pussy to clench with excitement. The fact that all the guys were shirtless didn’t hurt matters any.

“So,” Sean went on, “I came in and took your monitor, and it’s in my room right now. After that, I was supposed to send you a text to let you know what was going on so you didn’t freak out when you woke up. As you can see that plan went a little awry.”

I closed my eyes for a moment to give myself a second to process everything.

“So... I’m not in trouble?”

“Not at all,” Seth said. “In fact, I was going to ask if you wanted to join us for a swim.”

My heart rate was gradually slowing down. Still, I was having a hard time finding the words.

“Maybe later. I want to get caught up on some emails.”

“Sure. You can take over for lunch then,” Sam added.

“Lunch is fine. Happy to do it.”

“Good,” Sean said. “Go throw something on and join us. And get some coffee and breakfast if you’re in the mood. And, uh, sorry about making you worry.”

I let out a laugh that was half relief and half nervous. “Totally fine. Really. OK, I’ll be right back.”

As eager as I was to spend time with the guys, I needed a moment or two to catch my breath. I hurried into the house, then into the kitchen, poured myself a glass of water, and leaned against the counter, closing my eyes and trying desperately to get my out-of-control pulse to slow down.

Footsteps sounded out, and I opened my eyes to see Mathilde entering the kitchen. She regarded me with an expression of mild confusion, as if she couldn't figure out what the hell was going on with me.

“Are you OK, Gen?”

“Yeah, fine now. Just had a little bit of confusion with the guys.”

She stepped over to the coffee pot and checked to see what was in there. “I have to admit, you seemed rather *enerve* when I saw you. I wanted to ask what was wrong but did not want to force myself into your affairs.”

I smiled, watching as she dumped out the old coffee into the sink and washed out the pot.

“I swear, I have no idea how you *Americains* drink this sort of pot coffee. I mean, it does the job, but it is nothing like a fresh *café*.” Regardless of her thoughts on the matter of filter coffee, she went to work preparing another pot. “You are feeling better now, yes?”

“Much. It was all kind of silly, really. Just a big misunderstanding.”

The coffee pot started percolating once Mathilde had it ready. She turned to me, leaning against the counter and folding her arms. “Would you like to share? If it is none of my business, *je comprends*. But I have to admit, I am curious.”

“No, you should know so you don't think I'm crazy.”

I filled her in on the ridiculousness of the last hour since I'd been up. Mathilde listened with an amused expression. The coffee was done at the same time I was, Mathilde pouring me a cup without me asking.

“You know what the lesson of the story is to me?” she asked when I finished talking.

I poured a bit of milk into my coffee. “What's that?”

“It tells me that you do not know the men very well.”

“How do you mean?” I sipped the coffee, feeling my vitality restored with every sip.

“What I mean is that, well, when you live here long enough working for them, one of the first things you learn is how they work together, look out for one another.”

“Is that right?” I was totally intrigued. The truth of the matter was that I hadn’t had that much of a chance to get to know the guys on a more personal level.

“They are like a unit, all three of them. That is how they operated before you joined the team. One would wake up Bobby, the other would get breakfast ready, the other would make sure diapers and such were stocked. It is as if they share the same mind. When you see it in action, it is very easy to understand how they managed to create such a successful company.”

She smiled and went on. “And it is more than just taking care of matters around the house. They are truly there for one another. Not only one another, but the staff as well. I am sure that one of them spoke to you about taking a day or two off here and there.”

I laughed. “Yep. Said I had to take at least one day off a week.”

“That is because they are looking out for you. They do the same for me and the rest of the staff, noticing when we’ve gone without some time off. They will practically shoo me back to my bungalow when they think I have been working too hard. Not to mention they always remember birthdays, family events, all of that. They are truly very special men.”

The way she warmly smiled as she spoke made it clear her words were coming from the heart. I sipped my coffee, eager to learn more.

“You will enjoy your time here, I know it.”

“I already am. I mean, it’s hard to even wrap my head around how... unreal they seem.”

“Three handsome brothers, all brilliant and kind, they are indeed like something from another world.”

I smiled again, glancing down at my coffee. “I’ve been friends with Amy for a long time. I’ve known Sam, but only heard stories about her amazing uncles. They were both so involved in her life. I remember once she went off to visit Sean for a month during the summer and she told me while she was with him, he treated her like a little princess, even learning how to do a French braid just for her.

“And Sam would always do nice things for her too, like how it was their little tradition to do high tea on her birthday. Oh! And when it came time for her to go to college, I remember her telling me about the conversations she’d had with her Uncle Seth, how she’d wanted to go into STEM but was worried it wasn’t for her.”

“Oh, I bet he had all kinds of things to say about that.”

“He sure did, like ‘*smash that fucking glass ceiling with both fists!*’” We both laughed as I did Amy’s impression of her uncle.

“They are something else. And you know that if you ever need anything, they are there for you.” She checked her watch. “I should get back to work. Help yourself to whatever is in here, of course. There are fresh *patisseries* from town.

With one more smile, Mathilde left the kitchen. When I was alone once more, I stepped over to the covered pastries on the table and looked them over, the arrangement making my mouth water. After some deliberation, I selected a cheese and cherry tart, taking a bite and letting out an *mmm* as the rich flavor took hold.

That and my coffee in hand, I stepped over to one of the windows looking out over the pool. The guys were still playing with Bobby, though I spotted Seth pushing himself out of the water, his muscles glistening. He said something to the guys, grabbing a towel.

He made his way toward the house, and I couldn’t take my eyes off his powerful body, or the way his swimsuit clung to his bulge.

Suddenly, I was hungry for something other than my little tart.

CHAPTER 18

I hadn't been able to get her off my mind.

Something about Gen's outfit—the thin T-shirt, those little gray cloth shorts that showed off her long, perfect legs—had pulled all of my attention away from the morning swim.

"You heading in?" Sean asked from the pool.

"Yeah. Think I'm about done. Gonna hit the weights later and need to save my strength for that."

I heard a snort, and a glance over my shoulder revealed Sean shaking his head in disbelief.

"What?" I asked.

"Nothing." His reply was quick, Bobby splashing around him. "Go on in there and uh, *save your strength*."

I lifted my eyes to Sam, who was already back at work on his computer. If he had any thoughts on the matter, he wasn't sharing them.

"Whatever." I threw up my hand as I made my way back inside.

Fact of the matter was that Sean had my number. When you had a twin, especially one as close as he and I were, hiding intentions wasn't really an option. He'd likely seen the way I'd been looking at Gen and known that I had other things in mind.

Not wanting a scolding from Mathilde, I dried myself off in the back entry area and grabbed my navy-blue T-shirt that

I'd hung up on one of the wall hooks before starting toward Gen's room. It wasn't long before I was approaching her door, which was cracked open just a bit. My cock was already half-hard as I raised my fist to knock.

"Yeah?" came the voice inside. "Who is it?"

"Seth. Mind if I come in?"

"Sure," she replied. "Come on in."

I pushed the door open and there she was, laying stomach-down on the bed with her long, lovely legs in the air, crossed at the ankles. She had her laptop open in front of her, hands hovering over the keys. She glanced over at me.

"What's up?"

I took a couple steps into the room.

"Just wanted to check in on you," I said. "You seemed a little frazzled out there."

She pursed her lips then smiled. "Thanks. I guess I was running around like a crazy person thinking that I'd lost my job because I was careless enough to sleep in."

"Sorry you had to deal with that. Sean's a smart guy, but he can be a bit of a space cadet now and then."

"It's no problem at all." She furrowed her brow for a moment before moving to sit up, setting her laptop aside. "It's just... after last night I've realized how much I love it here with you guys."

"We love having you here too, of course."

She smiled again. I gestured toward the bed to sit down next to her, Gen eagerly nodding.

"And so when I saw what time it was, I was like, God, did I already blow this amazing thing? They'll never trust me again if they think I can't even set a simple alarm."

I sat down next to her, the wonderful scent of her body wrapping around me. She looked so impossibly sexy, so effortlessly hot. It was hard to even focus enough to have a conversation with her.

“You’re not the kind of person to make that mistake,” I said. “That’s why you weren’t responsible. Not to mention that it wouldn’t be the end of the world if you were. We’re not unreasonable like that, we understand that things happen.”

“I appreciate it. And just so it’s out there in the open, I’m really happy to be here working for you guys. This job is, well, unlike any I’ve ever had before. But I love it.”

She chewed her lip slightly, looking me up and down with heated eyes.

I couldn’t take it any longer. Her nearness, her scent, her body... they were making me go mad with desire.

“While we’re getting things out in the open,” I said, “I should tell you that making sure you were OK wasn’t the only thing on my mind when I came up here.”

“Is that right?”

“Mmm- hmm.”

“Tell me what else was in that head of yours, Seth.”

To answer her question, I reached forward and put my hand on her silky, soft thigh. She gasped a bit in surprise, the smile staying on her face.

“Here’s what was on my mind. I was thinking about you in these little shorts of yours. Specifically, finding out what you had on underneath them.” I gently tugged at her shorts.

She licked her lips again, closing her eyes and falling into my touch.

“Maybe you should shut the door before I show you.”

I didn’t waste a second before getting up and stepping over to the door, my cock hard as steel. Once it was shut I turned around to find Gen’s eyes locked onto my manhood.

“Come over here.”

I approached without another word, watching as she swung her legs around to sit on the side of the bed.

“Someone’s in a bossy mood.”

She grinned. “What, you think you’re the only one who’s not afraid of taking what they want?”

“Fair enough.”

I approached, standing right in front of her with my cock at mouth level. Gen looked up at me with those gorgeous, dark eyes and I couldn’t resist leaning down and kissing her. She tasted as good as she looked, my hand under her chin as our tongues played together, the soft sounds of kissing filling the air.

Gen placed her hands on the outsides of my hips, gently slipping her fingertips underneath the waistband of my swim trunks. I broke the kiss, eager to watch what she had in mind. She flashed me a sexy little smile as she pulled the trunks down until the base of my shaft was exposed. Gen moved in as soon as she saw it.

After a bit of teasing, she pulled the shorts down the rest of the way, my erection springing out right in front of her face. She wrapped one hand around the base, leaning in to lick and suck my balls, the pleasure instant.

I watched as her mouth worked, Gen’s hand slowly gliding up and down my length. After more teasing still at the base of my cock, she moved her full, plump lips up along my shaft, kissing every inch she could. When she arrived at the head, she ran her tongue over the ridge of my cock.

It was almost too much to take. The woman knew what she was doing, and part of me wanted to simply let her take me to orgasm with her tongue, to unload in that warm, wet mouth of hers.

“Be careful,” she said, seeming to sense what was on my mind. “Or you won’t get to see what I’ve got on under these shorts.”

I chuckled, sweeping her dark hair out of the way for a better view. “You think I’d finish before making you come over and over?” I asked. “Not a chance in hell.”

She licked my cock a few more times before speaking. “Sounds like a challenge.”

She took me into her mouth, moving up and down, leaving my length glistening. The sight of her at work was beyond compare, and I could already feel the pressure rising at the base of my cock.

But I was a man of my word. Gently, I guided Gen off of me.

“Lay back,” I said, my tone commanding.

She flashed me a smile before doing as I asked, laying back onto the bed. I reached forward, taking hold of those cloth shorts and pulling them down slowly. To my surprise, however, I didn’t reveal a pair of panties. Instead, I exposed a neatly trimmed patch of dark hair above her pussy.

Gen blushed a bit. “I like to sleep naked. And I was kind of in a rush this morning, so...”

I chuckled. “No complaints here.”

Once the shorts were off and tossed aside, I wrapped my arms around her legs and pulled her toward the edge of the bed, dropping down onto my knees and draping her legs over my shoulders. Her pussy was right there before me, a perfect, pink line wet with arousal.

I couldn’t wait to taste her.

I began with a little teasing of my own, kissing along her thighs, slowly moving closer and closer to where I wanted to be, licking her lips as I spread her open, then turning my full attention to her clit.

I licked her slowly with the flat part of my tongue, moans flowing out of her as her juices covered my mouth. It didn’t take long before she really started to squirm, her hips writhing back and forth as she grabbed onto the back of my head and held me in place.

“Just like that, just like that, just like...”

She let out another long moan, her body shaking as I brought her to orgasm. She came hard, the juices flowing from her as the climax exploded through her. I kept my mouth on

her until it faded, then I stood up, my cock so hard I felt as if I might come the second I was inside her.

I grabbed Gen's legs, holding them by the ankles and spreading them apart. She looked up at me with dazed, dreamy eyes as I stood with my prick just grazing her entrance. She pulled off her T-shirt, exposing her ripe, round breasts, her nipples hard.

"Please," she said. "I need you inside of me."

That was all I needed to hear. I stepped into the last few inches, my head spreading her lips as I entered her. With one more pull, I brought her thighs against my middle, my cock pushing the rest of the way into her tight, wet pussy, stretching her out around my thickness.

Her tits bounced beautifully as I thrust into her, her hair tossed around her face. The sight of her spread open in front of me, a full view of my cock thrusting into her over and over again was about the sexiest damn thing I'd ever seen in my life.

I drove into her like a madman, her eyes going wide from the pleasure as I brought her to another orgasm, her whole body shaking once again.

"Please," she moaned. "I want to feel you come inside of me."

"Not until I make you come one more time. Get on your hands and knees."

Another dreamy smile formed on her lips as she flipped over, climbing onto all fours. Her ass was a work of art, a perfect heart shape that tapered into a narrow waist. I took hold of her by the curves as I pushed my cock into her once more.

I bucked into her with all the force I had, cries and moans coming from her lips. I placed my right hand on her right cheek and brought it down hard, spanking her with enough force to send a *crack* through the air and leave a faint, red handprint behind.

“Do it again, please,” she said, looking back at me with hunger in her eyes.

I spanked her with my left, then my right again, each connection bringing more moans out of her. My orgasm was nearly there, and all I wanted was to erupt inside of her, making her come along with me.

“I...I... oh my *God!*”

I got what I wanted. Gen’s pussy gripped me hard as she came, and this time I didn’t hold back. My cock erupted, shooting deep inside of her, the warmth of my seed moving around my length. Her back arched and I reached forward to grab onto her tits as I reached the peak of my orgasm.

We froze together, our bodies tensing in the throes of pleasure, and when it was all over, we collapsed into a heap. I wrapped my arm around her waist, holding her against me.

She smiled over her shoulder once more. “Was it worth the wait to see what was underneath the shorts?”

“Absolutely.”

As I laid there, my eyes drifting around the room, I spotted something familiar on the screen of her half-closed laptop—the familiar Pyramid building in the center of the Louvre.

“Doing a little virtual gallery tour?” I asked, nodding toward the screen.

“Huh?” she rolled over, exposing her gorgeous ass to me as she turned her attention to the screen. “Oh, that.” She laughed as she stretched her long, willowy limbs over to the laptop and grabbed it. She brought it over and opened the screen the rest of the way.

Sure enough, it was the Louvre. The page was for the museum itself, and I couldn’t help but notice the words “employment opportunities” at the top.

“Even though I have a job at the MET, I’m kind of already planning my next move.”

“Makes sense. You want to move up in the art world, right? Maybe run your own gallery someday?”

She smiled, the mere thought seeming to lift her mood into the clouds.

“That’s right. I want my own little gallery in some place like Paris or New York, a spot where I can have the time and resources to find under-the-radar artists who are talented as hell but aren’t getting the attention they deserve.”

Gen sighed, shaking her head. “I must sound like a crazy person. I’m starting a job at the MET, a place where most art majors would kill to work, but I’m already planning five steps ahead.”

“That’s called ambition,” I replied. “It’s important to focus on the task at hand, give it the attention it needs. But what you’re talking about is the attitude that inspires greatness—always looking for the next big thing, always hungry for something more.”

My words seemed to relieve her. “Thanks. You guys would definitely know about that.”

“Never been one for patting myself on the back, but yeah. Sam and Sean and I have never been content with staying still. But that way of being does come with costs.” I nodded to the room around us. “That was kind of what this place was about, giving us a home where we could relax, enjoy the here and now, focus on the present.”

She grinned. “And how did that work out for you?”

“Took us about a month before we started working again.”

Gen laughed. “It’s kind of a curse then, ambition? You can do amazing things, but you always have to stop and focus on the moment when you can.”

“That’s exactly right. Kids are great for that sort of thing. They force you to stop and look at the world through their eyes. There’ve been days when my mind’s been racing, thinking about GPUs and semiconductors and international logistics, and then I’ll see Bobby totally content splashing around in the water and enjoying the sunshine.”

“You’re great with him, by the way. In case you didn’t know. All of you are.”

“Thanks. He’s only been here for a short time, but we already love the kid like crazy.” I placed my hand on hers. “And moments like these. They also help you appreciate the here and now.”

She smiled. As we shared a kiss, a strange, sudden thought occurred to me. Was this becoming more than just lust, more than simple fun?

Was there something deeper building?

I had a feeling I was going to soon find out.

CHAPTER 19

Two weeks later...

I mustered all the focus I had. Not a chance in hell I was going to embarrass myself again. I locked my eyes on the white golf ball before me, trying my hardest to blot everything out of my mind but the ball.

I pulled the club back and took my swing.

No good. Memories from the previous night flooded back into my mind, specifically the moans of pleasure Gen made as I had her bent over in front of me. The distraction was enough to throw my game off, a *thwick* sounding out as I winged the ball.

I winced as I lifted my eyes to watch it sail through the air. It hooked hard to the left, traveling over the small patch of trees between the cliff and the course, then off into the waters of the Mediterranean. An annoyed sigh came out of me as I watched it vanish into the endless blue.

A sudden clap sounded behind me. I turned around to see Sean and Seth, Sean doing the clapping as Seth shook his head.

“Very nice, bro,” Sean said. “That was actually a little less drastic of a hook than the last one. You keep at it, and at this rate you might get one onto the green... in the next fifty swings or so.”

“Funny.” I marched over to the cart and fished out another ball.

“You know,” Seth said. “We don’t have to play all eighteen. We can break now and head to the club for some drinks.”

“We’re doing at least nine,” I said.

“Stubborn as always,” Seth replied with a grin.

“The drinks don’t taste nearly as good unless you’ve earned them.”

I teed the ball, rising and taking a look into the distance. Le Club Provençal, our private golf club, was one of the most beautiful courses I’d ever had the pleasure to play. The Alps rose into the sky to the right, the Mediterranean down below the dramatic cliff faces to the left. The course itself was designed to blend the rustic feel of a French countryside with the neat and orderly sculpting of an American course.

And I was playing the worst goddamn game of my life. The guys and I had spent the evening with Gen, Sean and Seth having returned from their trip to the states earlier in the day. I couldn’t focus on a damn thing, my mind continually flashing back to the highlights of last night. Hell, the entire evening was a highlight.

I imagined Gen on top, her beautiful breasts bouncing up and down as she rode me. I imagined her on her back, my cock plunging into her again and again, her lips wrapped around Seth’s cock as she stroked Sean. I imagined the sensation of her pussy gripping me tightly as we came together, my seed erupting among those silky, tight walls.

“Yo! You there, big bro?”

Fuck. “Yeah, I’m here.”

Seth nodded. “Why don’t you let me cut ahead,” he said, coming over. “Take a sip of water.”

My first instinct was to protest, but I knew he was right. I was too damn preoccupied to focus on the game at the moment.

Sean clapped his hand onto my shoulder as I stepped away from the tee and toward the cart.

“I might be giving you shit,” he said. “But I’m feeling the same way.”

Maybe that was a good moment to talk. I cracked open the cap of a bottle of Topo Chico and took a long sip. Part of me wanted to share what was on my mind, but another part wanted it to remain concealed—my usual way of handling things when it came to emotional matters. All the same, it was eating me up inside to keep it buried.

“What is it?” Sean asked. For the millionth time, I was being reminded that there was no way to keep things hidden from my brothers. “Looks like you’ve got more on your mind than just the fun we had last night.”

I watched as Seth, his attention on the ball, pulled back and swung. The always satisfying sound of the club connecting to the ball rang out, and Sean and I watched in silence as it sailed over the fairway, landing on the green.

Seth flashed us a grin once the ball had settled. “Hope you were taking notes.”

“Nice one,” I said, trying to not sound as distracted as I was.

“OK, seriously,” Sean said. “What’s on your mind?”

Seth’s expression took on a measure of concern as he came over to join us. “Something wrong?” He grabbed his own Topo Chico and cracked it open, holding the cold bottle against his forehead for a moment before drinking.

“No. Maybe. I don’t know.”

Sean crossed his arms and leaned back against the cart. “Not like you to sound so unsure of yourself, big bro.”

“Yeah, you’re right. But unsure is exactly how I feel.”

“You having some doubts about what’s going on between us and Gen?” Seth asked.

“No, not at all. And that’s the problem.”

“You’re going to have to be a little less cryptic than that, Sam,” Sean replied.

He was right. I was dancing around the issue, not wanting to get to the heart of the matter.

I paused, trying to figure out where to begin. “What are your thoughts about Gen? You like her, think she’s insanely attractive, but are you starting to feel like this is going beyond anything we’ve had with other women we’ve shared?”

Neither of the guys said a word. Instead, they shared a long look at one another, the sounds of the waves crashing against the cliff faces rising into the air around us.

Seth was the first to break the silence. “Yeah, I do, in fact. Gen and I had a chance to spend some time together before Sean and I left for the states, and it was good, really good. I felt close to her, and I could tell she felt the same way about me. I was thinking I was crazy, wondering how I could be feeling this strongly about a woman I’d only known for a couple of weeks?”

Sean shifted his weight from one foot to the other, as if he didn’t quite know where to begin.

“Same here. Definitely the same. I’ve been crazy busy with this Hollywood shit so I haven’t had as much of a chance as you guys to spend solo time with her, but I’ve seen the way she is with Bobby. I swear, she’s gotten that kid to open up more in the last couple of weeks than we have over the last few months since he moved in with us.”

Relief tinged through me. “Good to know I’m not alone here.”

“There’s something else,” Seth said. “Maybe I’m overthinking it, I don’t know. But with the other women we’ve shared, I always had the notion that, yeah, we might be having fun, but I knew it’d be ending at some point, right? We’d move on or vice versa, and that’d be that. And I’d be cool with it.”

“But it’s different with Gen,” Sean said, picking up where his twin had left off. “With Gen, it’s like I don’t want her to leave. I don’t want this to end, ever.”

“But that’s just the thing,” I said. “It’s *going to* be over. Gen is only here for the summer. She’s already been here

nearly a month, and she's heading back to the states in the first half of August. You all know how quickly that'll arrive; it'll feel like a week has passed."

The guys shared a look, one that suggested they knew I was speaking the truth.

I went on. "One minute we're having this conversation, then we'll blink and it'll be a day away from her leaving."

Seth took a sip of his drink, glancing away as if in thought. "You're right. But not like there's anything we can do about it. She'll be starting at the MET when she gets back to the states but she's already thinking about her future career at the damn Louvre. You ask me, she's ambitious enough to get it."

Sean nodded. "A woman like her with that kind of ambition, she's probably on the verge of chewing her own foot off bumming around in some lazy seaside town."

I couldn't help but grin as I looked off into the distance, thoughts of Gen on my mind.

"Alright, bro," Sean said. "I know that look."

"What look?" I asked, being jokingly innocent about it.

"*The* look," Seth said. "The one we've seen a million times. The one where you act like you've arrived at some amazing conclusion that your little brothers just haven't picked up on."

"Just saying, I think we're selling ourselves short here."

"How do you mean?" Sean asked.

"First of all, let's cut the bullshit and just say what's on all of our minds—we're all falling for her, and hard."

The twins shared a look, accepting that I'd just spoken the truth.

"Sure," Seth said. "But what of it?"

"Like I said, selling ourselves short. If we're falling for her, there's a damn good chance that she's falling for us."

“Could be,” Seth replied. “Could be that she’s trying to come to grips with how eager she is to start her career and with how she feels about us.”

“How she feels about us,” Sean said. “As in falling in love with us.”

Seth cocked his head to the side. “You serious? You think she’s falling in love with *all* of us?”

“I never said that” Sean quickly replied. “But... maybe.”

I jumped in. “I don’t know. Gen’s got a big heart in her, that’s for damn sure, a heart that’s big enough to love all three of us.”

“True,” Seth agreed. “But she’s also practical-minded, not one to get carried away with sentiment.”

“And what does that mean for us?” Sean asked.

“Means I think that if she does give in to love, she’s going to play it safe and keep it focused on only one of us.”

“I agree,” I said. “That’s a big part of the reason why I’ve been expending a huge amount of mental energy keeping my emotions in check. Last thing I want is to fall head over heels for someone who doesn’t feel the same way.”

“So, you think she’ll pick one of us,” Sean repeated. “That brings an important question to mind... which one?”

The three of us said nothing, instead glancing over at one another. The guys and I had done so much sharing over the years that it went without saying we wouldn’t be getting jealous of one another.

And that meant this could be fun.

Sean grinned. “A bet. I think we need to make this interesting.”

I snorted, smirking as I rolled my eyes. “You serious?”

“Sure am. It’s not like there’s going to be hard feelings about her between us, right? If she’s going to pick one of us, we ought to have some fun with it.”

“You think this is a smart idea, though?” Seth asked. “She might not take too kindly to finding out we’re making bets about her heart.”

Sean shrugged. “Not really. Not like we’re trying to influence her one way or another. She’s going to make this decision on her own. Besides, we’re not going to tell her about the bet. It’ll be between the three of us.”

I sighed. “OK let’s do it? Say... twenty-five K?”

Sean grinned. “Now we’re talking.” He stepped over to me and offered his free hand. I took it and shook. Next, he approached Seth.

“I don’t know,” Seth said.

“Come on bro, don’t be a spoilsport.”

“It’s only fun if we’re all three in on it,” I said.

Seth snorted and shook his head. “Fine, fine.”

Handshakes were exchanged all around.

CHAPTER 20

“One thing,” I said as we drove back to the house. I was energized from the game and the bet, eager to see it through. “I want to take her out.”

Sam glanced back at me over his shoulder from the drivers’ seat. “Take her out?”

“Yeah. I mean, you guys have both gotten to spend quality time with her, right? Seth, you did before we left for the states, and Sam, you had her all to yourself the whole time we were gone.”

“Well, technically. But I was in the workshop half the time and she was with Bobby. We got the chance to spend a few evenings together, but it’s not like we passed the week gazing into one another’s eyes.”

“Still, if we’re going to be betting to see who she picks, then it’s only fair we level the playing field and all of us has the same chance to make an impression.”

“Why does this all sound fishy to me?” Seth asked.

“Because you’re the most cynical of the three of us,” I replied with a grin. “And you can’t see something as simple as me wanting to spend more time with a woman I care about without thinking that I have some sort of angle.”

Seth let out a sharp, quick laugh, as if he knew I had his number. “Yeah, fine. Fair enough.”

We drove the rest of the way home, spotting Gen and Bobby in the garden as we approached. The sight of her sitting

among the trees and flowers, sunlight streaming in through the branches, a big smile on her face as she played with our boy made me really feel I was falling hard for her.

“Let me out here,” I said. “Going to talk to her about tonight.”

“Good luck,” Seth replied with a smirk. “Hopefully she doesn’t shut your ass down.”

“Ha, ha.”

Sam stopped and I opened the door, hopping out and making my way over to the garden. The weather had cooled down somewhat, and I was eager as hell to get our plans into motion.

“Hey!” I waved as I approached. Bobby waved back and I smiled.

“I sure hope his non-verbal communication is a stepping stone to being on the verge of finally talking,” I said, excitement building in me at the idea.

She grinned. “Get ready. I’ve got a feeling Bobby’s going to have a heck of a lot to say when he finally gets to it.” We watched as Bobby stepped over to some nearby flowers, brushing them gently with his hand and giggling as they bounced back. “What’s up?” she asked. “You look like you’ve got something you want to talk about.”

“I wanted to see if you were free tonight.”

She raised an eyebrow. “Free? Well, I’ve got this bub to worry about.”

“True, but I’m thinking we could get the guys to finish off his day. They can get him dinner, bathed, and handle the bedtime routine.”

“And for what reason?”

“Because I want to take you out.”

She smiled. “Is that right?”

“Yep.”

“What’d you have in mind?”

“You kidding? And spoil the surprise? Not to mention I, uh, haven’t decided yet.”

She laughed. “That’s a problem.”

“Not for me. When you’re a man as quick on his feet as I am, it’s no trouble at all to whip up a hell of a night. All I ask is that you be dressed and ready to go by, let’s say six-thirty?”

She bit down on her lower lip indecisively, the expression so goddamn sexy that it made me want to scoop Gen off her feet and take her straight to the nearest bedroom.

“Mmm, OK. You’ve got my interest.”

“Perfect. See you at six-thirty.”



Standing in front of the floor-length mirror in my bedroom, I gave myself a final once-over. I was dressed in a pair of navy slacks with a faint windowpane pattern, a white button-up with the neck undone, and a pair of Polo suede loafers. It was the perfect blend of casual and formal.

Most importantly, it was nearly time to get going. I checked my phone, seeing that a text from the rental company had arrived letting me know that everything was in order for the evening ahead. I grinned, the arrangements coming together perfectly for an evening she’d hopefully never forget.

I slipped on my Patek-Phillipe watch and headed downstairs. The guys were with Bobby in the kitchen, chatting to one another as Bobby sat in his booster seat nearby chomping happily on a carrot.

“Looking sharp.” Seth gave me a once-over, nodding in approval.

“Busting out the fancy shoes,” Sam added. “See, it’s possible for you to clean up nice.”

I laughed, giving him a playful shove as I headed over to Bobby. “Yes, I can look halfway decent when I want to.”

“Emphasis on the halfway part,” Seth quipped.

That got another laugh out of me, and this time I snatched up one of the steamed carrots from the colander and tossed it in Seth’s direction. To my surprise, he caught it as it sailed over and popped it into his mouth, giving it a big crunch to make sure I saw that he had it.

A grin still on my face, I squatted down next to Bobby. “You going to be good tonight?” I asked. He nodded, but his attention was entirely on his food.

Before any of us could bust one another’s balls anymore, the sound of heels on the tile floor caught our attention. When I turned around to see Gen, my damn jaw nearly hit the floor.

She was a spectacle to behold, a vision of total elegance and beauty that would give anyone pause. Her dark, lustrous hair was styled in an updo, delicate tendrils cascading around her face and framing her striking features. Her makeup was expertly applied, just enough to accentuate her natural beauty.

And her dress... what the hell could I even say about her dress? It was long and black, the perfect blend of casual and chic, highlighting the captivating silhouette of her figure. The fabric seemed to flow like a breeze as she moved, emphasizing her effortless grace and poise. She exuded confidence and allure, the small smile playing on her face suggesting that she had an idea of just how good she looked, the effect she was having on us.

“You boys certainly sound like you’re all having fun in here,” she said with a smile.

“Just a little brotherly ribbing,” Seth said. “I have to admit, I’m feeling a little jealous now.” He glanced at her in a way that made it clear what he had on his mind.

“Easy, tiger,” Sam said. “Tonight’s about Sean and Gen getting a little time together. Though I can easily empathize with how you feel.”

“Easy tiger to both of you,” I said. “And in case you’re not picking up on what the guys are getting at, Gen, you look freaking amazing.”

She blushed a bit. “Thanks. Truth be told, I wasn’t even sure if I needed to bring a dress and nice heels. Glad I did.”

“We’re *all* glad you did,” Sam replied with a wink.

“Alright, alright,” I said. “Enough already, you horndogs. I stepped over to Gen, her beauty seeming to grow the closer I drew. “Seriously, you look amazing.”

“Thanks. And I’m ready to go if you are.” She glanced over my shoulder at Bobby. “Actually, I need to say goodbye to the little man before we head out.”

“I insist.”

She hurried around me, her eyes wide with excitement as she approached Bobby and squatted down next to him. “Alright, buddy, I’m heading out for the night with your Uncle Sean. Any chance I can get a big hug before I go?”

Bobby happily complied, spreading his chubby little arms and pulling her into an embrace. It was beyond cute, and just another testament to the bond she had with our boy.

“Have fun, you two,” Sam said, a cheeky expression on his face.

“Yeah,” Seth added. “Don’t do anything we wouldn’t do.”

I laughed as Gen and I headed out of the kitchen.

“So,” she asked once we were alone. “What’s the big plan for tonight?”

We stepped out of the front doors of the house, the air still warm, the sun beginning to dip over the western coast.

“Wait here,” I said. “Be right back.”

“Sure.” The small smile on her lips made it clear she was intrigued.

I stepped away, heading over to the garage. There were over a dozen cars in total, and I had just the one in mind for a

drive into town—our brand-new 2023 Aston-Martin DBS. The car was like something out of a dream, sleek and demure, the color a ghostly silver, the engine a hellcat-roaring V12. I grabbed the FOB and rushed over to the gorgeous piece of craftsmanship and slipped into the spaceship-like interior.

I took a moment to appreciate the ride before gunning the engine, the boom of the mechanism filling the space. I pulled carefully out of the garage and onto the driveway, spotting Gen waiting for me.

“Need a lift?” I asked with a grin as I pulled up next to her.

“Now, this is something else.” She put her hands on her hips and bent down to give the car a closer look. “Beats the heck out of my 2002 Toyota.”

“Listen to this.”

I gunned the engine, her eyes going wide at the power.

“Wow.”

“We hit the right angle and this engine will take us to the damn moon.”

She laughed. “And is that what you have planned for tonight?”

“I don’t know, you’ll have to get in and find out.” I replied with a wink.

With that, I hopped out of the car and placed my hand on the small of her back, leading her around the vehicle and over to the passenger seat. I opened the door and she gracefully moved inside, the scent of her perfume absolutely driving me mad with desire.

Part of me wanted to say screw it to the date, to pull the car back into the garage and have some fun in the backseat. And when she fastened the seatbelt between her breasts, making them more prominent, I about lost it.

“Shall we?” It took all the restraint I had to keep my cool.

“Let’s.” Gen flashed me a smile. “So, can I ask where the first destination is?”

“You sure can. We’re headed to a little place in town called L’Amour en Provence. You like oysters?”

“Sure do. I could eat a million of them.”

“I might hold you to that. Anyway, this place has them fresh from the sea—best you’ll ever eat in your life. Thought we’d begin there, have some appetizers with a little wine to start us off, then... well, you’ll just have to wait and find out the rest.”

“You’ve got my attention.”

A pleased grin on my face, I turned my focus back to the road. I loved the drive into town, short as it might’ve been. A winding road led through the foothills of the Alps, the lights from various mansions visible in the distance. After one final turn, the town of Louveciennes opened up before us, the sea vast beyond the shore of the village it was tucked against.

Out of the corner of my eye, I could see her smile, excitement all over her face.

CHAPTER 21

“**Y**ou want another round?” The mischievous glint in Sean’s eye clued me in right away as to what his answer was.

“I couldn’t. Seriously. I might explode.” And the tone in my voice made it clear I was ready for him to talk me into it.

Sean chuckled, raising two fingers a little above his head in order to catch the waitress’s attention. Once the waitress was near, Sean said something to her in perfect French, and she nodded before heading off.

“You didn’t get more, did you?” I glanced down at the big bowl of empty oyster shells in front of me, scarcely believing that I’d polished off as many as I had.

“Of course, I did. That’s the great thing about oysters, you can suck down as many as you want. Pretty sure I could eat every last one in the Mediterranean if you gave me half the chance.”

“At this rate, I’m starting to think you might pull it off.”

L’Amour en Provence was just as lovely as Sean had led me to believe. It reminded me of something I’d seen on a postcard as we approached, the warm glow of the fading light washing over the charming little restaurant nestled on a quiet street corner. The air around the place was thick with the scents of delicious food mingling with the fresh flowers from the park next door.

The interior was adorned with simple, yet elegant décor, with the perfect sort of warm, low lighting to create a cozy and

inviting ambience. The windows were open, allowing the evening sea breeze to flow throughout the place. As the sky faded from a deep blue to a burning orange over the sea, the restaurant took on something of a magical quality, the service staff lighting candles on the tables, the flames casting a gentle, orange glow that flickered upon the faces of the patrons.

That evening, however, there was only one face I was interested in. Sean and I had sipped delicious white wine while nibbling on some bread and cheese, our meal and conversation only interrupted by the waitress refilling our wine or putting down a fresh plate of oysters.

“You know, I can’t believe this is only just the start of the night,” I said, punctuating my words with a sip of wine.

“Is that right?”

“Yep. Back in the states it seemed like guys didn’t even know what a date was. If you were really lucky, they’d take you to their favorite dive bar or whichever place had the cheapest shot-and-beer combo. I mean, it’s not like I expect a fancy dinner or anything, more that it was like they were scared to show they were interested, like caring might scare me off or something.”

“That’s kid’s stuff,” he replied. “When you get a little older, you’re not afraid to show someone you care.”

I smiled, his words sending a tinge of warmth through me.

“It’s kind of a moot point, anyway. It’s not like I was going on tons of dates to begin with.”

He scrunched his forehead, cocking his head to the side in disbelief. “You serious? I’d think a woman like you would have guys chasing you around Manhattan to take you out.”

“Not when you’re as busy with school as I was. I did the occasional Bumble or Hinge thing, but after five or so times of spending my evening getting ready only to be disappointed, it kind of wears down the enthusiasm for dating. And then there was Mark...”

I trailed off, stopping myself as I realized I’d nearly gone into detail about my shitty ex. Last thing I wanted was to spoil

the mood with bad relationship talk.

“Mark?”

“He’s no one. I mean, not no one, just an ex.”

Sean regarded me with an expression of mild concern. “You seem like you want to talk about it.”

“Yes and no.” I sighed, frustrated with how I hadn’t finished sorting out my feelings on the subject.

Sean leaned forward, placing his hand on mine. “Listen, you don’t need to talk about anything you don’t want to. But I don’t ever want you to think that there’s anything you need to hide because you’re worried about being judged. I’m taking you out because I want to spend time with you, and learning about who you are, and where you come from is part of all that.”

I couldn’t help but smile at his words. As much as I loved Sean’s lighthearted, humorous nature, I was equally glad to see a more serious side of him.

“And I speak for all of us in case you were wondering. We want you to be who you are.” He grinned. “Bring your whole self to work, as they say.”

I laughed. “OK. I’ll try not to bore you with the details.”

“Gen, I’m pretty sure it would be impossible for you to bore me.”

Another smile. He squeezed my hand one more time before releasing it and taking a sip of wine.

I took a deep breath, trying to figure out where to begin.

“So, Mark. He and I met at a party one of my classmates threw, this cocktail party on her apartment rooftop in Williamsburg. He seemed so charming at first—funny and kind and possessing qualities one typically looks for in a partner. We drank, talking and laughing, Manhattan glittering in the background as the rest of the party seemed to fade away.”

“Picture-perfect New York romance.”

“So it seemed at first. Mark managed to keep up the charming, sweet act for about a month before cracks started to show. Of course it was totally obvious in hindsight. He was nice, but *too* nice. It’s good to have a positive mood, but that doesn’t mean you’re not allowed to get upset every now and then. But with him, there were times when something would happen that should’ve made him mad, but he’d just grit his teeth and grin, act like it was no big deal.”

“Not possible to keep your emotions in check like that. Eventually, they’re going to come out.” Sean spoke the words with the knowing tone of someone who’d either been through that sort of thing or seen it first-hand.

“You’re right about that. From the get-go he was insistent, wanting to know where I was and what I was doing and who I was doing it with. And he’d get on my case if I didn’t return texts fast enough, things like that. At first, I just thought it was annoying.”

“But then something happened.”

“Something happened. I bumped into this old classmate of mine, Josh. Nothing ever happened between us, he was just a cool guy. I was done with classes for the day, so we decided to grab a drink and catch up. Mark texted me while Josh and I were hanging out, and I planned on getting back to him later. Big mistake. Josh and I had only been hanging out for two hours, but I checked my phone after I saw, like, twenty texts. I called Mark and he blew up at me, certain I was cheating on him. When I told him I was hanging out with a guy friend, that was all he needed to completely come unglued.”

“Paranoid prick,” Sean shook his head. “The thing guys like that don’t get is the most important ingredient for a relationship is trust. You get all possessive like that and you’re going to drive the other person away.”

Sean was a smart guy. I was seeing it more and more with each word he spoke.

“Now that I’m a little older and wiser, I agree with you. But at the time, God I was so naive, I guess I thought he was just showing how he cared, in his own way. But it only got

worse from there. He was convinced he couldn't trust me, always checking in and demanding to know where I was. Eventually, I got sick and tired of it, told him one night about five months in that we were done."

"Good." Sean seemed genuinely relieved that I'd kicked Mark to the curb.

"I knew I'd made the right decision. But that didn't stop Mark from his possessive bullshit. He kept calling and texting, alternating between anger and this pathetic 'poor me' routine. And since he knew where I lived, I was sure he'd been hanging around my apartment. I thought I saw him once, but by that point he had me so paranoid that I might've just been seeing things."

Sean leaned in. "Wait, this all happened recently?"

"Yep. Within the last six months."

"So, this asshole is still bothering you?" A tinge of anger edged Sean's words.

"He'll text every now and then, but that's it. He doesn't know where I am if you're worried about him bothering you guys."

"I'm not worried about us, I'm worried about *you*. If there's anything we can do to help."

He glanced away, taking a sip of his wine as he did his best to force back his anger. The waitress arrived, replacing our plates of empty oyster shells with fresh ones. By the time she was gone, Sean had worked through his anger.

"Just saying," he said. "You don't have to put up with that."

"Thanks. I appreciate it, I really do. But I'm thinking he'll burn himself out in time. How long can someone keep up with something like that?"

Sean let out a wry chuckle. "You'd be surprised."

A beat of silence fell. It wasn't the bad kind, but the sort of natural silence between two people comfortable with one another as their conversation changed tracks.

“Anyway, thanks for letting me vent a little. Sorry if it put a damper on the mood.”

He shook his head. “Not at all. I said I wanted to learn more about you, and I meant it. Learning more about someone means the good parts and the bad, you know.”

It was strange. I would’ve been certain that blabbing about past relationship problems would be a surefire way to get any guy to run away screaming, figuring I was too much baggage to deal with. But with Sean, that wasn’t the case at all. If anything, I felt closer to him than I had before I shared my history.

He switched the conversation to lighthearted topics and, sure enough, we plowed through the rest of the wine and the oysters. By the time we were done, I felt rejuvenated, ready for the night to continue.

“So, I hope you’re up for a walk.”

“Some fresh air sounds like heaven. Where are we going?”

A smirk spread across his handsome face. “How many times am I going to have to tell you not to try and spoil the surprise?”

I matched his smile with one of my own as he called for the check. Within a few minutes we were out of there, my arm wrapped around Sean’s as we made our way through the town. Louveciennes at night was just as beautiful as the day, flame-illuminated streetlamps high above, windows with families sitting down for dinner, and couples like us walking down the curved, cobblestone streets. A handful of bars and cafés were still open, the places lively with customers. A distinct lack of light pollution offered a gorgeous view of the moon and stars above.

“Well, I don’t know what you’ve got planned for the rest of the night,” I said. “But so far, it’s been perfect.”

He laughed, nodding ahead toward a street that took us to the harbor. Several boats of varying sizes were moored, including an extremely impressive yacht.

“That’s where we’re headed. Come on.”

My steps quickened to keep up with the strides of his long legs, and soon we were at the edge of the harbor.

“Going for a boat ride?” I asked.

“We sure are. And that’s the one we’re taking.” He nodded toward not just any boat, but the damn yacht.

“Wait, are you serious? We’re taking *that*?”

“Sure are. I mean, it *is* ours, after all.”

I chuckled. “Should’ve figured you guys would have a boat like that. You *do* live on the Cote D’Azur.”

“Never get much of a chance to take it out. Come on, let’s get on board. Dinner awaits.”

“Dinner? After all the oysters we just ate?”

He smiled. “That was just the appetizer.”

He offered his arm once more, and I took it. We passed several beautiful boats as we made our way further into the harbor, eagerness building inside of me with each step.

“She’s called *Arcadia*,” Sean said as we approached the onboard ramp. “Hundred meters, two decks, and all the amenities you could possibly want.”

A member of the ship’s crew awaited at the top of the ramp, greeting us with a pair of champagne flutes and a smile. We each took a glass as we approached.

“Right this way, please,” the crewmember said, gesturing toward a flight of steps leading to an upper deck. “We’re ready to get underway. And dinner should be done in about thirty minutes.”

“Excellent,” Sean replied.

Drinks in hand, we made our way up the stairs. I couldn’t believe what I was looking at. The deck was huge, and the glimpses inside of the vessel gave the impression that it was less a boat and more a floating mansion. The place was such a level of luxury that it practically made me dizzy.

We reached the top, the view looking out onto the harbor and the rest of the town. I could even see the estate from where I stood. Of course, there was a small, round table set for two.

“A dinner at sea.”

I shook my head, in disbelief at it all.

“I don’t know what to say.”

“Say you’re still hungry.”

I laughed. “Oh, I can still eat.”

“A woman after my own heart,” he said before turning to the crew member. “Please, tell Captain Dupont to take us underway.”

The crewman nodded before heading off.

“Nothing like enjoying a little bubbly while looking out over the city.”

“You don’t need to talk me into it,” I replied with a smile.

He placed his free hand on the small of my back, leading me over to the railing facing the water. The rumbling engine of the vessel growled even louder, the yacht pulling slowly out of the harbor and into the sea.

“Now, we need to think of something to drink to.”

We pulled out further into the ocean, the coast vast and gorgeous to the north. It was so pretty, in fact, that I found myself momentarily distracted from the champagne and the company. A big city appeared in the distance, lights covering the coastline.

“That’s Nice over there,” Sean said. “Maybe we can stop in for breakfast.”

I grinned. “Oh? Does that mean you think we’re going to be spending the night together?”

A handsome, cocky smile appeared on his lips. “Had a good feeling that’d be the case.”

I wanted to tell him to cool his jets, to at least *pretend* that I wasn't itching to get him into bed as much as he was with me. But damn, as I stood on the deck of that amazing yacht, the French coast brilliant and beautiful, a glass of champagne in my hands, and a stunning, wonderful man in front of me, it seemed ludicrous to hide what I wanted.

"In that case," I said. "Why don't we cheers to checking out the lower deck?"

He raised his eyebrows slightly, and I could tell he was more than a little intrigued. "Dinner won't be ready for a while. I think a tour might very well be in order."

We raised our glasses and tapped rims, each of us taking a sip before Sean offered me his hand and led me to the stairs. As we made our way, I was greeted with a stunning, sleek, and futuristic interior. The walls were made of curved glass, offering an unobstructed view of the sea outside. The soft white LED lights that lined the walls provided a calming ambiance, and the reflective surfaces gave the impression of an endless space.

To my left, I saw a spacious seating area with sleek, white leather sofas and armchairs that contrasted the black marble flooring. The furnishings were all minimalist and designed with clean lines, giving the space an uncluttered and modern feel. The wall-mounted flat-screen TV was integrated seamlessly into the wall, and the speakers were hidden behind the ceiling panels.

As we continued down the hallway, I saw a sophisticated dining area with a long white lacquered table and silver metal chairs with black leather cushions. The table was set with geometrically shaped plates and silverware, and the crystal glasses were arranged symmetrically on the table. The floor-to-ceiling windows provided a panoramic view of the ocean, making it feel as if one were dining directly on the water.

The bedroom, on the other hand, was what I was really interested in. We stepped inside and shut the door, the two of us setting our glasses down right away and rushing into one another's arms. Sean and I kissed hard and deeply, and I

couldn't help but grin through the kiss as he led me over to the bed, the lights dimming low as we slipped one another out of our clothes.

CHAPTER 22

Days later...

“**A**lrigh**t**, bud, you ready to do this?”

Bobby, floaties around his arms, responded with a nod and an expression of adorable determination on his face. I stood a few feet away from him in the shallow end of the pool, my arms open wide.

“Just paddle like this,” I said, splashing my arms in the water. “Super easy, I know you can do it.”

Bobby nodded again, the smile fading from his face as if he were concentrating and psyching himself up. When he was ready, he began splashing his arms. At first, he stayed in place. But after a little bit of encouragement, he slowly but surely began to move toward me.

“There you go, bud!” I said, grinning with excitement. “You’re doing it!”

My eager tone made him all the more intent on reaching me. He splashed and splashed, letting out big laughs as he swam over to me. I pulled him into a big hug and lifted him into the air.

“There you go, big guy!” I shouted, giving him a little toss and catching him. “I knew you could do it!”

Bobby had been making huge strides in his swimming over the last couple of weeks. The guys could get him into his

floaties and into the pool, but having Bobby cross much distance was another matter. I'd been taking a soft touch, encouraging him to swim a few feet here and there, and having great success.

"Nice!" I turned to see Sean coming out of the pool house, dressed in nothing but a tight pair of short, blue swim trunks, the fabric hugging his bulge, his gorgeous, sculpted body on full display. "You're turning this little guy into a hell of a swimmer!"

He stepped over to the edge of the deep end and jumped in, a huge splash exploding from where he hit the water, Bobby letting out wild peals of laughter as the water touched him. I watched Sean swim under the water, moving effortlessly before popping up right in front of Bobby, who got a huge kick out of it, of course.

My phone went off as Sean and Bobby splashed around, and I swam over to check it, a smile taking hold.

Reminder: Call Amy when it's not bedtime HER time

While I'd been having the time of my life with Bobby and the brothers, I'd have been lying if I were to say that I wasn't starting to miss the states a little, especially Aim. It'd been a week or so since we'd spoken, and every time I remembered to call her it was too late her time.

"Hey, Sean!" I called over my shoulder as I set my phone back down.

"What's up?"

"You mind if I head inside? I've been meaning to call Amy for, like, a week."

"Not at all. I love spending time with this guy," Sean said.

I thanked him and wrapped a towel around myself, drying off as I headed into the house. I spotted Sam in the changing room, wearing nothing but a thin, white robe over a pair of swim trunks.

"How're the lessons going?" he asked.

“He’s doing great, to be honest. A little encouragement and he’s off to the races.”

Sam smiled, pleased with the news. “It doesn’t hurt that he clearly adores you and wants to do whatever you do.”

I returned the smile. “The kid’s a natural, if you ask me.”

Sam grinned then checked his diving watch. “Going to start dinner in a little bit—thinking of BBQing tonight. Sound good to you?”

The idea of eating some burgers with Bobby and the guys outdoors while we took dips in the pool and enjoyed the perfect weather sounded amazing.

“I’ll take it by the smile on your face that you’re a fan of the idea,” he said. “Burgers and brats, all shipped in from the states. France does amazing food, but they can’t quite do up grill items like us Yanks. Seth’s in town grabbing a few other things.”

I laughed. “Can’t wait. Anyway, I’m going to call Amy, check in with her.”

The smile faded from his face, replaced by one more thoughtful.

“What’s up?” I asked.

“Nothing. Just that I tried to get in touch with her yesterday and today but haven’t heard back. It’s not like her to go off the radar, even for a little while and especially when I’m texting her pics of Bobby.”

“Are you worried?”

“When you’re a parent, it’s impossible not to worry. But she’s a big girl. I sometimes need to remind myself that she’s well within her rights to not have to check in with me every day.” He shook his head, as if coming to his senses. “Anyway, tell her I said hi if you happen to get in touch.”

“Yeah, will do.” I replied, the guilt of what was going on creeping up again. If Amy found out what we’d been up to... I couldn’t bear the thought of knowing what it would do to her

but at the same time, I couldn't stop either. I was addicted to the guys and the pleasure they provided me.

With that, he was gone. Once I was dried off and wearing my robe, I went in the house and into the common room. I plopped onto the big, white couch, putting up my feet and calling Amy on FaceTime. It rang and rang, a big smile on my face at the idea of catching up with my friend. But there was no answer. I dropped the phone onto my stomach, wondering if there *was* something going on with Amy. Sam was right—she was usually really easy to get a hold of.

I folded my hands behind my head, wondering what was going on. Like Sam, I found myself a little worried about her. Being so many miles away made me feel out of reach if anything were to happen with her or my family or anyone else I cared about. How the hell did Sam do it?

After a bit of ruminating, I sprang from the couch and headed upstairs to my room. One of the windows looked out over the pool, and I watched as Sean and Bobby splashed around, Sean cheering Bobby on as he doggy-paddled here and there. Sam was seated at one of the small tables near the pool, a book opened in front of him.

I couldn't help but smile as Sean and Bobby played in the pool. Really, I was just so happy for the little guy. Bobby had gone through a tragedy that he couldn't possibly understand at such a young age that would typically leave a kid's life confused and uncertain. Thankfully, he was in the care of three men who loved him like crazy, who'd be there for him no matter what.

I took my eyes away from the window and fell back onto the bed, giving myself a few moments to relax. I didn't have much of a chance to do so before a soft knock sounded at my bedroom door.

“Who is it?” I asked.

“Sam.”

I grinned as I opened my eyes. A quick glance down revealed that my robe was open, nothing but my black bikini

underneath.

“Come in.”

The door opened slowly, Sam standing there with a sexy little smirk on his face. I rolled over to my side, one hand holding up my head, the other on my hip.

“Something I can help you with, boss?” the playful smile I wore let him know exactly what was on my mind.

He stepped into the room, shutting the door softly behind him. Sam was still in his robe and swimsuit, my eyes moving slowly over his gorgeous body.

“There is,” he said. “See, I went out there and tried to get some reading done.”

“Yeah? Anything good?”

“No way to know. The thing is, when I sat down and opened the book, I knew right away that I wasn’t going to be able to concentrate.”

“Guys out there too loud?”

He shook his head. “Nope. I’m used to dealing with that kind of noise. What I’m *not* used to dealing with, is a gorgeous young woman in a very revealing bikini.”

I grinned. “You mean this kind of bikini?” I swept my hand down my body.

He stepped over to me. “That’s the one. A swimsuit like that makes it impossible to be around you without wanting to peel it right off and...” He trailed off, as if wanting to leave the rest of his words to my imagination.

“Peel it off and what?” I wanted to hear him say it. Sam was a wild animal in bed, but when it came to his words, he was a little more on the reserved side. The idea of him talking dirty to me was enough to make my pussy soaked right then and there.

Before he had a chance to answer, the blue light brightened and dimmed in the room.

“Front door,” spoke the calm house voice.

“That important?” I asked.

He shook his head. “Have it set to let me know whenever someone comes in the front. I’m sure it’s just Seth back from downtown.” Sam turned his attention back to me, back to my body. “Now, where were we?”

“You were just telling me what you wanted to do with this bikini of mine.” I slipped my finger under the cup of my right breast, moving it aside and letting him get a little peak of what was underneath.

He shook his head, with a sexy grin. “God, you’ve got about the most perfect tits I’ve ever seen in my life.” He dropped down a bit, leaning forward and taking my nipple into his mouth. Sam licked and sucked me, my nipple going hard at the impossibly sexy sensation of it being teased by the tip of his tongue. I moaned, running my hand through his hair.

Another knock sounded at the bedroom door. My eyes went wide, and I silently pulled back and stared at Sam.

“Who’s there?” I asked.

“Couple of guys who don’t want to miss out on the fun.” I recognized the voice right away as belonging to Seth.

“What do you say?” Sam asked with a smirk. “Want to make this a group activity?”

“How could I resist an offer like that?” I asked. “Come on in.”

The door opened revealing Seth and Sean standing there. Sean was, like Sam, dressed in a swimsuit and robe. Seth wore a white linen shirt with the buttons halfway done and a pair of blue shorts that hit well above the knees. Both looked good enough to eat as they stepped into the room and shut the door behind them.

“Before you ask, since I know you will, Bobby’s down for a nap. We played around for a little bit longer before his eyes started closing while we were still in the water.” Sean told Sam.

When Seth pulled off his shirt and Sean slipped out of his robe, my attention was fully on their gorgeous bodies.

“Now,” Sean said, putting his hands on his hips. “What was going on when we barged in?”

“I was right in the middle of giving some attention to Gen’s perfect tits,” Sam replied.

Seth’s eyes went right to my breasts. “Perfect is right. About the finest damn pair I’ve ever seen.”

There was something about the way they complimented me that always managed to make me blush. Suddenly, the blue house light illuminated then dimmed like before.

“Front door.”

The guys regarded each other with a curious expression.

“We expecting someone?” Sean asked as he took a seat next to me.

“Not that I know of,” Seth replied.

Sam glanced away for a moment, considering the matter. “Probably one of the staff coming in through the front doors for whatever reason.” He looked over at me to explain. “They’re usually in and out through the side entrances, but they’ll come in through the main doors if they need to.”

Sean clamped his hand down hard on his brother’s shoulder. “Don’t worry about it, man. We’re all here, and we’re about to have some fun.”

“Now, where was I?” Sam said as he leaned back down to my breasts.

He began kissing my collarbone, Sean turning my head to kiss me hard and deep, just the way I wanted. Seth kneeled in front of me, kissing my legs and making his way up my thighs.

I closed my eyes, kissing Sean as Sam moved toward my breasts and Seth closer and closer to my inner thighs. A big, stupid smile formed on my lips, the idea of spending a long,

lovely, lazy hour or so with my guys about the best thing I could imagine.

That's what I thought, at least, until the door opened.

"Dad?"

We froze, my eyes going wide at the familiar voice.

No way.

No *freaking* way.

I turned slowly, knowing who I was about to see.

Amy was there, in the flesh, standing in the doorway with an expression of total shock on her face.

"Gen? What the fuck is going on?"

CHAPTER 23

Shit.

There I was, sitting on the bed next to Gen, my daughter standing at the entrance to the bedroom with her eyes wide as saucers.

How the hell was I going to explain this to her? There was no possibility of, “it isn’t what it looks like.”

“What’s going on here?” she asked, total disbelief to her voice. Before I could get out even a word, she closed her eyes and raised her palm. “No. *No*. I don’t want to know. I just need to...”

She couldn’t even finish the sentence. Amy forced open her eyes, as if she wanted to make sure she was really seeing what was right in front of her, then hurried from the room as quickly as she could, her footfalls quieting as she ran down the hall.

“Holy shit.” Seth sat back on his heels, running his hand through his hair. “Did that really just happen?”

Sean didn’t reply at first, instead springing up and hurrying over to his robe, grabbing it and throwing it on. Once he was dressed, he tossed my robe over.

“It really just happened,” he finally answered his twin.

“We need to talk to her,” I added. “Now.”

I turned to Gen, who was sitting still, looking stunned.

“You can stay here,” I said, placing my hand on her shoulder. “We’ll go talk to her.”

She blinked hard, as if coming to her senses, then lifted her eyes to me. “No. I need to be there too. I am just as much a part of this as you guys are.”

My brothers and I shared a quick look, all of us trying to figure out if it was the right call. My gut tightened with anticipation of the conversation to come. How was I supposed to talk to my own daughter about this? As I thought it over, I internally said a small thanks to no one in particular about how we hadn’t been in the middle of anything more explicit than kissing and light touching. The thought of Amy walking in on anything more than that was enough to turn my stomach.

“Come on,” I said, getting up and making my way to the door. “We need to talk to her, we need to set things right.”

Gen grabbed a sweatshirt and pair of joggers, throwing them on over her bikini as we headed out.

“What the fuck are we going to say to her?” Sean asked, his voice a low whisper. “She saw what she saw.”

Seth glanced over at me without a word, his expression making it clear that he knew Sean was right. Lying to my daughter was off the table from the beginning, of course, but even if I were the kind of guy to do that, there would be no way to pull the wool over her eyes about what she had seen.

We had to lead with the truth, an admission that what she thought she’d seen was exactly what it was. How she would take that, I could only guess.

The four of us headed down the hall, passing one of the staff who let us know that Amy was downstairs in the kitchen. My gut tightened once more, but I pushed past it as we hurried along in silence.

Amy was seated at the kitchen bar with a glass of tap water in front of her, a faraway expression on her face. She didn’t even look in our direction as we entered. I stepped over to one door then the other, shutting them one by one. We were going to need some major privacy for the conversation ahead.

I decided to take point, stepping forward and speaking first. In spite of everything that had happened, I was still happy to see my daughter. Months sometimes passed without us seeing one another in person, and I still couldn't get over how much more like a grown, confident woman she became in between each of her visits.

“Amy...”

Her eyes flicked up to me, the faraway expression fading and replaced by one of tight anger.

“What? What the fuck are you going to say to me about what I just saw?” She snorted, looking us over. “Glad to see you all decided to put on more clothes for this little chitchat.”

I raised my finger. “You're mad, I get it. But you're not going to talk to me or your uncles like that.”

Amy pursed her lips—she knew she'd stepped out of line by speaking to me the way she had.

“How about talking to Gen, then?” she asked. “Can I tell my friend that she's a backstabber who threw away all the trust I had for her with... *what she did?*” She said the last three words a bit awkwardly, which I understood. How the hell was a daughter supposed to describe what she'd just seen?

“Amy.” Gen stepped forward hesitantly, her arm extended as if she were trying to tame a wild animal.

Amy narrowed her eyes again. “Not a word out of you. Not a fucking word.” She scoffed, shaking her head. “You've got some balls to even *think* about talking to me right now, Gen. It makes me sick to even look at you.”

Amy sat up, regaining some of her composure. “Look at you. Look at all of you. The four of you having some kind of sick orgy. Is that what was going on? You were all *together?*”

I paused for a moment, trying to figure out the best way to describe what was happening between us.

“It's not as trashy as you're making it sound. We're all seeing Gen.”

Amy sat back. “God, I think I'm going to be sick.”

“This is something we’ve been doing a long time, Aim,” Sean said. “Dating the same woman at the same time. Everything’s out in the open, and everything’s consensual. It might seem strange on the outside, but it works.”

“Is that supposed to make me feel better?” Amy asked, her eyes flashing with anger. “The idea that you three are here having some weird swinger thing going on with whatever woman you can talk into it?” A thought suddenly took hold. “Wait, is that why you guys are here? You moved to France to build a compound where you could have this sick shit happen and no one would know?”

“That’s not it at all,” Seth said. “We didn’t have this kind of arrangement planned when we moved out here.”

Amy let out a sarcastic laugh. “Oh, so you just all sort of fell into it? That makes me feel much better.”

I couldn’t help but let out a sigh. I wasn’t frustrated with Amy. She was perfectly within her rights to be upset about what was happening, about what she’d just learned. What I was really frustrated with was how my brothers and I had gotten so far into the lifestyle without taking the time to discuss how it might look to other people, how it would affect others, like Amy. I didn’t care about the opinion of others, I only cared about what my daughter thought.

I pushed those thoughts out of my head, trying to focus on the moment before us.

“You know what’s *really* crazy, Dad?” Amy asked. “Remember when I was a teenager and starting to get into boys, and you were totally controlling about my dating life?”

“Controlling?” I repeated the word with a tone of disbelief. “I wasn’t controlling at all. I said you couldn’t date until you were sixteen and I made sure I met any guy you were involved with. Pretty reasonable if you ask me.”

“Reasonable until you look at all *this*.” She stuck out her hand toward us. “You were insistent that I be little miss proper, while you and your freaking *brothers*, my *uncles*, were living this kind of lifestyle. I mean, how long has this even been

going on?” Her eyes flashed with realization, her hands shooting to her mouth. “How do I even know that you’re my dad? For all I know, you guys could’ve had some kind of weird thing going on with Mom, too!”

I raised my palm, trying my best to calm her down. “No, that’s not true. We didn’t start this until after we moved to France. I’m your dad, and that’s all there is to it.”

The truth of the matter was that her accusation hurt me a little bit. I was quick to set those feelings aside, however. In that moment, her feelings were what was important, not mine.

“Aim,” Gen said, taking a hesitant step forward. “I... I don’t know what to say. It’s just that—”

“Shut up!” The words came out with a razor-sharp edge. “Just shut up, OK? I don’t want to hear any crap out of your mouth. Seriously, what the hell is even going on with you four? Are you all in love with Gen or something?”

I opened my mouth to speak, but nothing came out.

Was it true?

Were we falling in love with her?

My brothers didn’t say a word either, making me wonder if they were just as confused by the question as I was.

Amy took one slow sip of water, tears streaming down her face that she quickly wiped away. After a moment, she stood up.

“I don’t want to hear anymore. I *can’t* hear anymore. I... can’t...”

She hurried toward the door furthest away, turning toward us before leaving the kitchen.

“I don’t want to speak to any of you. Not for a long, long while.”

With that, she left, and the four of us stood dumbfounded, wondering what the hell we were going to do next.

CHAPTER 24

I knew I should've given Amy her space, but I couldn't help it. After coming to my senses there in the kitchen, I ran out of the room, leaving through the same door from which Amy had left.

"Gen!" Sam called out. "Don't."

Maybe he was right, maybe I was making a bad call. Didn't matter. I needed to talk to Amy, needed to tell her how sorry I was that she'd walked in on what she had.

I hurried through the first floor of the house, spotting the front door as it slowly closed on its own. Rushing over, I grabbed the door and stepped through, spotting a small, dark blue car parked down the main driveway.

Amy was there, opening the trunk and tossing the luggage she'd obviously brought in with her.

"Amy!"

"Leave me alone!" she didn't even look back at me as she slammed the trunk shut. "I don't want to hear anything you have to say!"

There was nothing in her tone that suggested she was in the mood for conversation. Instead, she stormed around the car, got in, and slammed the door shut. The guys approached, all coming to a stop next to me. I hoped that one of them would speak up and utter the magic words, whatever they might be, that would make Amy stop what she was doing.

Instead, we watched in silence as she started the engine and drove off. As far as I could tell, she didn't so much as glance back over her shoulder at us. Amy pulled around the bend, the noise of the engine growing quieter as she departed.

"That went badly." Sean broke the silence, sharing the most obvious possible assessment of the situation.

"No shit," Seth replied.

Sam shook his head. "Not a chance I'm letting her go like that."

"What're you going to do?" Seth asked. "Get into a high-speed chase with her? Not a good idea to drive when you're both emotional like this."

Sam cleared his throat and spoke. "House, lock the gate at the end of the driveway."

"Gate is locked," came the reply from a nearby speaker.

"Wait, are you serious?" Sean asked. "You locked her in?"

Sam shot him a hard look. "You really think I'm going to let my daughter drive off like that? I need to talk to her."

Seth formed his mouth into a hard line. "Bro, I get it, I do. But we know Amy almost as well as you do, enough to know that she's not going to sit there while you lecture her. She needs to cool down, have some time to process things."

"She can process it later. Right now, she's driving out of my life, possibly forever."

Without another word, Sam turned and began running toward the garage, disappearing inside.

"No sense in trying to talk him out of it," Seth said.

"Should we go with him?" Sean asked.

Seth shook his head. "Nah. We all show up she's going to feel trapped again, start lashing out. Not a good idea for Sam to do what he's doing, but let's not make it any worse."

Sam pulled out of the garage in a black luxury car, starting down the driveway and vanishing around the bend toward the

gate. Once he was gone, the guys turned to me.

“How are you?” Sean asked. “I realize it’s a stupid question after what just happened, but still.”

I let out a sigh, pure despondency running through me. Truth of the matter was that I wanted to drop to my knees and cry.

“I’m fine.”

“You’re not fine,” Seth said. “I can tell by the way you look right now.”

There was no sense in trying to lie. I felt like total shit. All the same, I didn’t want *my* feelings to be the center of attention. The situation with Amy was more important than that.

“I need to be alone right now,” I said. “We can talk about it later.”

The guys shared a look, as if trying to decide if it was a good idea to leave me alone.

“Take some time,” Sean said finally. “We’re here if you want to talk, OK?”

I swallowed. “OK.”

I hurried into the house, tears pouring from my eyes the second I was alone. I spotted a few members of the staff, and, not wanting to put on a dramatic display in front of them, I quickly wiped my eyes and hurried upstairs. My first instinct was to go to my room, but when I remembered that was where Amy had walked in on us, the idea of being in there again was enough to make me sick to my stomach.

I had no idea where I was going to go to be alone, instead running up the stairs with no clear destination in mind. Sam was gone, which meant that his office was empty. Maybe he’d have a problem with me going in there alone but I didn’t care. I ran down the hall, hurrying into his office and shutting the door behind me.

Once I was finally by myself, I dropped to my knees and let out the tears that had been building. I sobbed like a

madwoman, unable to believe what had just occurred. It all felt like some horrible dream, the worst possible thing that could've happened—happened. Amy had not only found out about us, but she'd *walked in on it*.

When I'd cried all I could, I wiped the tears away to look up and see Sam's computer on his desk. I rose, moving toward it and noticing that security camera footage was on the monitor. An idea occurred to me, and I hurried behind his desk and scanned the screen. The huge monitor was broken up into nine frames, all different parts of the house. With shaking hands, I touched the arrow key on the keyboard and cycled through the different cameras. After a minute or two, I landed on the one I wanted—the camera covering the front gate. Sure enough, Amy and Sam were there, standing outside of their parked cars as the two of them were deep in discussion.

I didn't need sound to understand that the conversation wasn't a good one; both of their faces were marked with anger, Sam standing with his arms crossed and Amy's hands flailing around as she tore into him. My curiosity got the better of me as I watched and I moved the mouse cursor to expand the screen and unmute the camera.

"...me go *now!*" Amy yelled. "You're locking me in! This is imprisonment!"

"Amy, you need to calm down," Sam said. "Please, we need to talk about this."

"What's there to talk about? You *and* those freakshow brothers of yours screwed my best friend. Well, *former* best friend." I deserved it, but God, it hurt like hell to hear her talk about me that way.

"There's got to be a way we can work past this," Sam said. "Let's just calm down and talk it over, alright?"

Amy scoffed. "Figures that you can't turn off that computer brain of yours for two seconds to see this from my perspective. You're standing there acting like I'm some irrational idiot who can't see past my emotions. Trust me, I've been dealing with that crap since I was a little kid."

“I understand where you’re coming from. All the same, I can’t just let you run off like this. Where are you even going to go?”

“What difference does it make to you? I’ll get a hotel then fly back to the states. I came here to surprise all of you, but I was the one who ended up being surprised. It looks like you’d all rather have your privacy so you, Gen, and your brothers can continue whatever gross shit it is you’ve been up to.”

“Bobby,” Sam said. “You can’t come all this way and not at least say hi to him. The kid’s crazy about you.”

The mention of Bobby was enough to give her pause. After a moment, however, she shook her head.

“No. He doesn’t even know that I’m here. Just don’t say anything to him and he won’t be upset. Now, open this gate for me. You’re not going to talk me into staying. The longer you keep me here trying to convince me of how I’m supposed to feel, the madder I’m getting. Let me go!”

Sam looked defeated, and I could tell that a big part of him didn’t want to let her leave.

Finally, he sighed, shaking his head. “House, open the front gates.”

The gate opened slowly. Amy didn’t waste a second rushing into her car, slamming the door, and driving off. Sam stood still, watching her leave, the gate shutting behind her. After a time, he gave up, accepting that Amy was gone, at least for the time being. He climbed back into his car and pulled around, heading back to the house.

I knew I’d already seen too much, that I’d listened to a private conversation. All the same, I wanted to know what the guys thoughts were when I wasn’t around. I glanced over at the small bar in the room, rushing to it and pouring myself some wine.

I took a sip, turning toward the windows and trying to let the view calm me down. I pulled in one deep breath and exhaled, then another, sipping my wine, hoping it would help ease my mind. When I was ready, I sat back down at the desk

and began cycling through the cameras, trying to find where the guys were.

After a few clicks, I brought up the camera for the library. The guys stood among towering white bookshelves packed with colorful spines, chairs here and there and a big fireplace in the back. I clicked the sound icon, turning it on.

“Guess that’s the end of the bet,” Sean said.

Right away, his words captured my attention. The *bet*?

Seth put his hand on Sean’s shoulder, giving him a shove. “Are you serious, dude? After what just happened, *that’s* what’s on your mind?”

“Just trying to inject a little levity, you know? What else is there to talk about with Amy? She’s pissed, and rightly so. Sam tried to talk to her, and it didn’t go over well at all. But she’s family, and family doesn’t get ripped apart that easily, not even over something like this.”

“Your point?” Sam asked.

“My point is that if Amy’s going to ever get over this, the only thing that’ll do it is time. I know it’s not fun to let her just leave like but chasing her down is only going to make her more upset.”

Sam sighed, shaking his head. “Yeah, that’s Amy. She’ll do the opposite just to take a stand. Not to say that she doesn’t have a right to be pissed about what happened.”

“That’s what I’m saying,” Sean said. “She’s got reason to be mad, and the best we can do is let her calm down. So, in the meantime, we should talk about the bet.”

“Why?” Seth asked. “Are you saying that our wager with Gen is over now?”

I cocked my head to the side, trying to figure out what the hell was going on. They had a bet going about me? The whole situation with Amy had been totally bizarre, almost surreal. Hearing the guys talking about some bet involving me brought it to a new level of weirdness.

“That’s exactly what I’m saying,” Sam said in his usual cool, calm voice. “The wager was to see which one of us she would pick. I’d say everything that she’s shown so far indicates that she has no intention of doing that.”

“Then what are you saying?” Sean asked.

“I’m saying it looks like she’s chosen all of us,” replied Sam.

A few moments of silence passed. “Yeah,” Sean said finally. “I guess you’re right.” He smiled and nodded as if pleased by the revelation. “Why would she want only one of us? I mean, we’re all pretty great, right?”

I didn’t want to hear another word. I turned off the sound and sat back in the seat, trying to process what I’d just learned.

They placed a bet on which one of them I’d fall for? The idea made me sick, like I was a pawn in some dumb, immature game.

Between that and the total, absolute mess with Amy, it was the final straw. I was done with all of it—done with that place and done with all of them. I spotted a pad of monogrammed paper on Sam’s desk, a pen next to it. Paper and pen in hand, I quickly wrote a letter of resignation.

I sat back and looked it over. The note was short and sweet, maybe a little terse. I mentioned Amy, how I couldn’t believe that I’d lost my best friend because of my libido. And, of course, I mentioned the bet.

But there was just one thing. I didn’t want to give it to them in person. When I decided I was done with them, I was *done*.

I folded the paper and tucked it into my back pocket, following it with a sip of wine. I’d leave the paper on the kitchen counter when everyone had gone to bed and slip out. Leaving without a word felt a bit extreme, but after the news of the bet, I didn’t even want to look at those guys again. It’d kill me to leave Bobby without saying goodbye, but I couldn’t spend another day there. On top of being totally grossed out by

what I'd learned, I was damn sure they'd try to talk me into staying.

I had to leave. And it had to be immediately. My summer in France was about to come to a sudden end.

CHAPTER 25

The slip out had gone according to plan. I'd kept my distance from the guys that night, which hadn't been too hard to do; after what'd gone down that day, no one had really been in the mood for conversation.

Once the guys were all in bed, it was a simple matter of packing my things and heading out. The house at night was strange—the staff in their housing quarters, the place completely quiet, the modern look of the mansion making it feel like a starship sailing silently through space.

It'd hurt like hell when I'd taken my last look at Bobby. I hadn't been able to resist stopping by his room and peeking in, watching the little man sleep. He'd had nothing to do with any of it, just a poor kid caught up in a crazy situation he couldn't possibly understand. After sneaking quietly into his room and planting a soft kiss on his chubby little cheek, I was off, tears in my eyes.

Unsure whether or not the house would alert my departure, I cautiously slipped out one of the side doors where the staff went in and out of. From there the path around the house led down to the beach, which was a twenty-minute walk from Louveciennes. There, bag at my side, I'd stopped into a small bar and ordered myself a glass of wine while I waited for my taxi. From there, it was a quick drive to Nice.

"I don't understand. You're leaving already?" Mom was confused. The next afternoon I was at the airport, sitting in one of the lounges with Mom and Dad on the line. "What's the story? You've been there for what, a month, a little more?"

I opened my mouth to reply but realized that I'd been so wrapped up in what was going on with the guys and Amy that I hadn't taken the time to come up with a story. I mean, what was I supposed to say? That I'd been enjoying a sensual, exciting foursome situation with my bosses and it'd gone all kinds of sideways when Amy had walked in on us? Not a freaking chance in hell I could tell my parents that.

"She's moving on to her next adventure!" Dad said. "We shouldn't grill her right before she's about to take an international flight home."

Relief washed over me at the idea of not having to explain everything then and there. I didn't like having to lie to Mom and Dad, but there was simply no way I could tell them the real reason I was cutting my summer in France short. A ten-hour flight would be more than enough time to come up with something.

"You're right," Mom replied. "It's just so sudden and unexpected. A summer in France sounded like heaven."

"Some stuff came up," I said. "It just made more sense to come back early, you know?"

"Is everything OK?" Mom asked. "Those guys you were working with... they weren't *weird* or anything, were they?"

How the hell was I supposed to answer *that* question?

"I'm kind of tired, Mom. Mind if we talk about this when I'm back in the states?"

"Let's let her relax, hon," Dad added. "I'm sure she'll tell us everything when she's back."

"I know," Mom said before asking, "Did you have to pay for your own plane ticket? And where are you planning on staying when you get back to the city?"

"That's... kind of what I wanted to talk to you guys about."

"Say no more, kiddo," Dad replied. "You've got your job at the MET to worry about." A pause. "That's still on, right?"

“Right.” I smiled as I said the word, pleased that I still had something great to look forward to.

“Then say no more,” Dad said. “Get on your flight, relax, listen to some podcasts or whatever helps clear your mind. While you’re up there, we’ll take care of everything. Thinking we can get you set up with an Airbnb in the Village for a while, then we’ll look at more permanent options once you’re settled in.”

“An Airbnb in the Village?” Mom asked. “Talk about rolling out the red carpet.”

“She’s starting her career. Nothing’s too good for my little girl. Last thing we want is for her to be worried about living in some flophouse with roaches crawling everywhere.”

“Good point, I suppose. And your father’s right—try to relax on the flight home and come back refreshed, get settled in before starting at the MET. We can talk more after, OK?”

“Thanks, guys. I really appreciate it, seriously. And I love you both.”

“Same to you,” Dad said. “Check your email, I’ll forward the place’s information to you. And don’t take the subway when you land! Get an Uber.”

“Dad, I can handle the subway.”

“And it worries me that you can. Last time I was in New York I saw a guy on the F sitting by himself with no pants on singing *Row, Row, Row Your Boat*. Not the kind of thing I want my little girl to be around.”

I laughed, the three of us saying our goodbyes to one another. I released a long sigh when the call was over, my attention going to the drink in front of me. I’d planned on having a cocktail when I’d sat down at the airport lounge, but as soon as I’d had the menu in front of me I realized that not a single boozy drink sounded good at all. In fact, I’d been having weird stomach issues all day.

Probably because you just flew the coop from your job with three extremely powerful billionaires. Not the best thing for nerves.

Speaking of which, I hadn't received a single text or call from the guys that day. Maybe they were so upset that they knew they'd have nothing good to say to me.

The bartender came over, placing a chicken Caesar salad—the only thing that sounded good—in front of me, along with a refill of my club soda and lime. My stomach had been so damn queasy that something bubbly seemed essential to calm it down before my flight. I held my phone in front of me to do a little scrolling while I ate, but it was so hard to resist checking for emails or texts from the guys. Not wanting to look at it anymore, I tucked my phone into my pocket before taking a couple more bites of my salad, then pushed off my chair to head over to the nearby newsstand for something to read.

The din of the airport swirling around me, I scanned the trashy romance paperback books, some of them in French, some in English. A smile formed on my lips as I looked them over, the idea of settling into something tawdry for the flight back strangely appealing. I wanted to be totally detached from the world while I was up in the air, to be able to put the strange events of the past month behind me.

Down at my feet were a few stacks of tabloids. That kind of stuff had never been my thing, but I gave them a look over anyway.

Suddenly, my heart stopped.

“No way,” I said out loud to no one in particular.

I squatted down and snatched the paper tabloid from the stack, the world blurring around me as I looked at the cover. I was sure I was seeing things. After all, how the hell else could I be on the cover of a tabloid?

But it was me, clear as day. There were a few photos, one of me dressed in my bikini on the beach standing very close to Sean. It took a moment, but I realized the shot was from the day we'd nearly kissed. Along with that photo, there was one of me and Sean on the yacht, one of me, Seth and Sam lounging by the pool, and a couple of faraway shots of the house.

The title, however, was the worst part: “Billionaire Brothers Boffing the Babysitter.”

My hands shook as I read it. After a moment, I managed to collect myself enough to look around, to see if anyone had possibly noticed that *I* was the one on the cover. When the coast was clear, I did my best to walk casually back to the lounge, taking my seat in front of my drink and salad. The idea of eating, however, was the last thing on my mind. Instead, I opened the paper and read the article, trying to ignore my heart beating so hard that I worried it might explode.

I scanned through the piece. To my surprise, it contained correct information—not only did it explain that the brothers and I were all involved in a four-person polyamory situation, it also mentioned how Amy had arrived and walked in on us. There was even a picture, taken from a distance, of Amy and Sam in the middle of their argument. How the *hell* had they gotten that?

There was nothing about me leaving, which suggested that the article had been put out before that morning. I had no doubt though, that if the person who’d taken the photos knew about all of the other details, they were well aware that I had left, and that information would soon be out there as well.

I felt dizzy, sick to my stomach. I blinked hard, trying to focus and work through the dizziness and nausea. The light touch of a hand on my shoulder brought me back to the moment. I turned to see the man next to me, a middle-aged guy with graying hair and a kind face, regarding me with concern.

“Miss,” he said, his voice tinged with a French accent. “Are you alright?”

“I’m...” Before I could finish the sentence, I looked down to see that the tabloid was still open, a picture of me front and center. Without another word, I grabbed the paper and folded it quickly, bounding out of my seat and hurrying toward the ladies’ room.

I ran to the bathroom, finding an empty stall and dropping to my knees in front of the toilet, throwing up what little

happened to be in my stomach.

I threw up until I was coughing, my face red. Afterward, I pushed myself off the ground and left the stall, gathering what little poise I had left to stand in front of the mirror and wash up. Thankfully, none of the other women in the bathroom paid me any attention.

After I'd composed myself as best I could, I left the bathroom, finding the nearest empty bench and spreading the tabloid out on top of it. Once that was done, I took one picture after another, then attached them to a text to all of the brothers.

You guys need to fix this.

My thumb hovered over the send button for a moment, a tinge of hesitation running through me. If the guys hadn't yet seen the photos, their worlds were about to be rocked.

I hit send.

CHAPTER 26

I was fuming. Fucking *fuming*. I held a copy of the printout from the texts that Gen had shared with us, the photos clear as day.

“Any luck?” Sam spoke to Sean, the three of us in Sam’s office as we tried to get our heads wrapped around the events of the day. First, we’d woken up to discover that Gen had flown the coop in the middle of the night. Then, we’d learned that the four of us were front-page fodder for some shitty British tabloid.

“None at all,” Sean said, seated on the couch with his phone in his hands, shaking his head as he regarded it. “Not a text, not a call.”

“Makes sense,” Sam said. “She might be on her flight right now.” Sam was trying to play it cool, but there was no doubt that he was good and pissed off about what had happened.

The Gen situation, we could understand. Shit had gone totally sideways, and it wasn’t unreasonable that she’d felt overwhelmed by the whole thing. The tabloid issue, on the other hand, made us furious. I couldn’t stop imagining getting my hands on the paparazzi who’d taken the photos, wringing his fucking neck for putting ours and Gen’s personal business in the open like that.

Sean tossed his phone onto the table, shaking his head in frustration. “Listen, I know it doesn’t do a damn bit of good to think this way, but I’d hoped we’d gotten away from all this shit when we moved here.”

He was right. When the guys and I still lived in Cali, the press being in our business was part of life. Self-made billionaires seemed to be a hot topic of interest for the thousands of millennials moving to California in order to create their own utopia and build their empires. Tech jobs were hot and many were curious to learn of how we made our money, looking to follow suit. The dark side of it all was they were also interested in our private lives, hoping to catch us doing something that society would frown upon. So the press vultures were constantly in our business, hoping to satisfy the curiosity of gossip mongers while making a name for themselves. So, when we'd made the decision to get away from all of that, finding a home where we could live without fear of getting pictures snapped was a huge consideration. We thought we'd found it in France but clearly we were mistaken.

“Well, we did get a reprieve,” Sam said. “For a time.”

I stepped over to the pictures once more where they lay on Sam's desk.

“But these aren't random shots of us just anywhere. They are private moments taken where no paparazzi should've been or even known we were there to snap them.”

Sam and Sean regarded one another with the same look of concern, and it was clear they knew precisely what I was talking about. We had a traitor in our midst.

“Who?” Sean asked. “Who would stab us in the back and take pictures like this?”

“They might not have been the one taking the pictures,” Sam added. “Maybe they've got someone who they clue in when anything's going on.”

I paced back and forth slowly, trying to get an idea or two of who it could be. “It has to be a member of the staff. They're the only ones other than us and Gen who know what's happening on a day-to-day basis in the house. If they'd known the exact moment when Amy arrived, they could've either snapped pictures from a distance or told their cohort when and where to be.”

The idea of someone inside the house betraying us was enough to take my rage to another level. I did my best to push it aside, to ignore how badly I wanted to put my goddamn fist through the wall.

It wasn't me I was worried about—it was Gen. Despite her skipping out on us, I couldn't bring myself to be upset with her. The last thing she needed was all of her dirty laundry out in the open the way it was.

Sam raised his palm. "Let's take this one matter at a time. No need to get overwhelmed trying to sort out multiple problems at once."

"You're right," I agreed. "What's first?"

"Gen," Sam said. "Let's figure out what we want to do about her." He took a moment to look away and think. "I don't know about you guys, but I'm not pissed off. If anything, I'm willing to cut her a ton of slack, in spite of her leaving in the middle of the damn night."

Sean and I shared a look. We were in total agreement.

"Yeah," I said. "She got wrapped up in everything that was going on, then panicked when things got crazy."

Sean took in a deep breath and let it out. "Don't get me wrong, she's an adult and can make her own decisions. But what she'd found herself in the middle of—a goddamn four-way relationship with her bosses—I get why she freaked out."

Sam let out a wry snort. "A four-way relationship with her best friend's dad and uncles. Really, I'm surprised she didn't freak out sooner."

"Right," I said. "And I have to admit... I'm kind of hoping she changes her mind and comes back here."

Sam nodded. "Same here. But we can't count on that happening. In the meantime, we need to let her know that there aren't any hard feelings and that we've got her back with all this tabloid bullshit. I know we'd been planning on paying her a lump sum at the end, so I'm thinking we give her that, plus a small bonus for her hard work."

Sean spoke. "I agree. She'll see that and know we're not mad at her. Might smooth things over a little."

"Then it's settled," I said. "If she's in the air now, let's get her the money ASAP so it'll be there when she lands. That way she'll have one less thing to worry about."

"Bet you anything she flew to New York," Sean added. "She's going to need all the cash she can get if she's going to start off there with her feet on the ground."

Sam slid into his desk chair and began typing. He turned back to us after a few clicks of the mouse. "Just emailed my accountant. It's still daytime in the states, so he should be able to get right on it as soon as he sees the email."

Sean dusted his hands. "Done and done. Now there's the little matter of figuring out who's the damn turncoat in our household."

Before either of us could say another word, a soft knock sounded at the door.

"Come in!" Sam called out.

The door opened slowly. On the other side was Mathilde, Bobby in her arms, the boy's head on her shoulder.

The sight of the kid hurt like hell. Bobby had woken up that morning excited to see Gen. At first, he didn't seem to understand that she was gone, looking all over the house for where she might be. Slowly, it dawned on him that she'd left.

He hadn't taken it well at all. Bobby had been damn near inconsolable all day, refusing to touch his food or be alone. Gen had made it clear in her note that she felt terrible about leaving him, and I believed her. The two were crazy about each other, and her leaving the way she did only made it clearer that she'd felt she had no other option.

"I hope I am not interrupting anything." Mathilde stepped into the room as she spoke. "But he is not sleeping a wink. I believe he is still upset from... well, I do not want to even say her name, for fear of making him feel even worse."

I went over to her, extending my arms. “Come here, buddy,” I said, taking the little guy out of Mathilde’s hold and giving him a squeeze. He wrapped his arms around my shoulders, his face still red from the last cry he’d had about Gen.

He sniffled as I held him, raising his arm toward the door and pointing. “Gen.”

It was the first word we’d ever heard him say, but it was hard to celebrate in that moment.

“Gen’s not here,” I said. “She’s gone.”

He said nothing, his big, blue eyes wet with tears.

“I thought he might want a little bit of time with you three,” Mathilde said, glancing over at the desk and the pictures atop it as she spoke. “Please let me know when you would like to have me put him back to bed.”

“Thanks, Mathilde,” Sam said.

She nodded, leaving without another word.

“Thinking he might sleep in my room tonight,” Sam uttered.

“That’s a good idea,” replied Sean.

Bobby’s eyelids became heavy as I held him, his head resting on my shoulder.

“Amy,” Sean said. “I almost forgot about her in all of this.”

“Amy will come around when she’s ready to come around,” Sam said. “No sense in pushing her into anything.” He lifted up one of the pictures. “This is what we need to be concerned with right now.”

“We’re going to find out who took those goddamn pictures. And when we do, they’re going to pay.”

CHAPTER 27

It was the following day, and I'd barely left the Airbnb since I'd made it into New York. I was too damn sick, my stomach barely able to keep any food down.

The chime of my phone sounded as I lay in bed. With a groan, I rolled over and saw that it was a text from my dad.

OK, so I found a doctor right down the road from you. She's a GP, and her Google rating is top-notch.

Of course, when I'd off-handedly mentioned to Mom and Dad that I wasn't feeling well, they'd dropped everything to locate a doctor to find out what was wrong. Didn't matter that I'd told them that it was almost certainly nothing, probably just my body being stressed from the traveling. At least it distracted them from asking more details about why I'd left France so suddenly.

They'd eventually want to know more, and I still had to figure out what to tell them. There was no possible way I could say that their little girl had been the plaything of three brothers, all of them taking their turns with me, making me come over and over again...

And just like that, I was horny. I sat up, shaking my head in a vain attempt to clear the dirty thoughts from my mind. The fact of the matter was I already missed them. Sure, they were jerks for making that disgusting bet of theirs, and I was certain I'd done the right thing in leaving. But there was no pretending that the experiences those men gave me weren't the best times I'd ever had in the bedroom.

How the hell was I supposed to go back to the barely-anything sex life I'd had before after being with three men at once, all of them experts in pleasing me? I'd have to, though. The Bradshaw Brothers were officially a thing of the past.

I fired off a quick response to Dad, letting him know that I'd fill him in after the appointment. I rose and stretched, taking a look around at my Airbnb. The cozy studio apartment was filled with natural light that streamed in through the large window overlooking the street below. The walls were painted a soft shade of blue that made the room feel calm and serene.

Despite the compact size, the space was thoughtfully laid out, with a comfortable bed nestled in the corner and a small kitchenette along one wall. The bathroom was small, but clean and modern, with fresh towels and toiletries neatly arranged on a shelf.

I loved the little touches that made the space feel special, like the vintage rug that added a pop of color to the room, and the collection of books on the shelf, all inviting me to read. There was even a small table and chair where I could work on my laptop or enjoy a cup of coffee. Dad had booked the place for a couple of weeks while I figured out my next step, but I was more than happy to be there for the time being.

When I was ready for the appointment, I stepped out of my Airbnb and took a deep breath of the warm, morning air. The sun was shining and the streets were alive with the hustle and bustle of New York City. I took a moment to appreciate the charming brownstones and tree-lined streets of the West Village as I started down the sidewalk.

Despite the beauty around me, my mind was preoccupied with thoughts of my upcoming doctor's appointment. Luckily, the office was located just down the street. I checked my phone nervously for the time, hoping I wouldn't be late. I knew on a conscious level that it was nothing, that the doctor would diagnose my stomach issues as nerves, and that would be that. All the same, deep down I worried it might not be that simple.

As I continued my walk, I noticed the colorful storefronts and charming cafes that lined the street. The smells of fresh coffee and pastries mingled in the air, making my stomach growl. I made a mental note to stop for a quick breakfast on my way back from the appointment.

The closer I got to the doctor's office, the more my nerves began to mount. I tried to shake off the jitters and focus on the sights and sounds of the city, taking in the beeping of car horns, the chatter of people on the street, and the clack of heels on the pavement. I stood in front of the office, the noises beginning to shift from a pleasant din to an overwhelming cacophony. My stomach tightened with tension and I quickly turned to the office door to pull it open and step inside.

Thankfully, the office was calm and quiet. One other person was there in the small, well-appointed waiting room, along with a middle-aged woman behind the front desk. She raised her eyebrows and smiled as I entered, letting me know I was welcome.

"Hey." The word came out of my mouth meekly as I approached. "Appointment for Gen West?"

She nodded, turning her attention to the computer on her desk.

"Got you right here." She handed me a clipboard with some paperwork on it. "If you could fill this out while you wait, please. And the bill's already been taken care of, so we don't need to discuss any of that."

"Thank you."

I was so grateful for my parents' help and made a mental note as I sat down to at least send them a card or something. The forms were basic health history questions and didn't take much time at all to fill out. I handed them back to the receptionist, my phone chiming as I sat back down. I slipped it out of my pocket, expecting to see a text from Mom or Dad.

Instead, there was a message from my PayPal app letting me know I had some money. I opened the app and loaded my account, my eyes going wide when I realized that not only did

I have *some* money, but I had a lot of it. The sender spot showed that the money was from the Bradshaws.

I glanced away, trying to do the mental math. As I considered the possibility that it might've been a mistake, I glanced down at the note that'd come along with the money.

Salary plus a little extra for your hard work. Thanks again.

I looked up, more than a little confused. The guys had paid me what I'd earned, which was nice, but expected. Why the bonus? Why on earth would they have given me extra money when I'd left without warning?

"Miss West?"

The receptionist calling my name pulled me back into the moment.

"Coming!"

After shoving my phone back into my pocket, I bounded out of my chair and toward the hall leading further back into the offices. A nurse met me, and over the course of the next ten minutes or so she took all my vitals. Once in the exam room, she started the process of asking me why I was there.

"I've been getting sick out of nowhere, unable to keep food down at all. And I'll get dizzy now and then and..." I smiled, trying to put on a non-worried face. "It's probably nothing, right? I just flew in from France yesterday after leaving a stressful situation. I'm guessing my body is just reacting to it all."

The nurse smiled in a noncommittal sort of way. "Very well could be." She tapped on her iPad a couple of times before looking back up at me. "But let's see what we can find out before we jump to any conclusions, OK?"

"Yeah, sure. Sounds good."

She asked some basic questions and it wasn't long before she arrived at the little matter of my sex life.

"Are you sexually active?"

"I have been over the past few weeks, yes."

“And did you and your partner use any kind of protection?”

“Well, I’m on the pill.”

She nodded, tapping in more information then telling me she’d be right back. She left the room briefly and returned with a small cup in her hands.

“What’s that?”

“I’ll need a urine sample for a pregnancy test.”

My eyes bugged out, and I blinked hard a few times.

“A... pregnancy test? Why?”

“Just to be on the safe side. Your symptoms sound like early pregnancy so we want to take that off the table if we can.”

I scoffed. “There’s no way I could be pregnant.” I stopped, thinking back hard over the last month or so and realizing that I’d gotten so wrapped up with Bobby and the guys and the fun of France that I very well might’ve been a little lax with taking my pills.

“Well the pill isn’t one-hundred percent,” the nurse said with a sympathetic smile.

“Right,” I grumbled. The nurse helped me off the exam table, then led me back into the hall and to a small, private bathroom. Once I was there alone, the door shut, I took a moment to process what was going on.

I peed in the cup and washed my hands before stepping out and handing the sample to the nurse. She ushered me back into the exam room and told me to sit tight for a bit.

After what seemed like an hour, but was probably only five minutes, the doctor stepped into the room and smiled.

“Well, Miss West, it looks like our mystery is solved. You’re pregnant.”

CHAPTER 28

One week later...

I hadn't spared a single expense in getting to the bottom of who'd betrayed us.

Now I knew. Only thing was, I couldn't believe it.

I sat slightly dumbfounded in front of my computer, the email from one of the private investigators open in front of me. There, plain as day, featuring pictures and texts, was the culprit.

Mathilde.

Pure anger ran through me. The idea of someone who'd been so close to us, someone who we trusted in our home, with our child, would stab us in the back like that.

I closed my eyes, sipping my whiskey and turning toward the inky black night visible through the windows of my office. As much as I wanted to let my rage run wild, to bring her into my office and chew her out, throw her to the damn wolves, giving into my emotions had never been my style. Not to mention it was an issue that needed to be discussed with my brothers before doing anything drastic.

"House, call Sean and Seth and ask them to come to my office." The blue light illuminated and dimmed in response. I spent the next few minutes going over the information again, making sure that what I was looking at was real.

There was no getting around it—Mathilde had sold us out.

Seth came into the office first, Sean a few seconds later.

“What’s up?” Sean asked, performing his usual routine of pouring himself a glass of whiskey then plopping down on the couch.

Seth was more reserved. I could tell that he’d sensed something was amiss. He stood with his hands behind his back, his brow knitted in concern.

“You’ve heard back from the PI.” There was total confidence in his words. “What’d he say?”

Sean leaned forward, holding his drink between his knees. “We know who the traitor is?”

I nodded. “Yeah. Let me show you.”

I tapped a few keys, casting my monitor to the big screen over the fireplace. I put up the documents from the PI, one after another. The most damning was one of Mathilde in a café down in Louveciennes, meeting with a pair of sketchy-looking men.

“Holy shit,” Sean said. “It was *Mathilde*?”

“Yep,” I replied.

I turned my attention to Seth, watching his jaw work in anger.

“She’s fucking done,” he said. “*Done*. I don’t care what her motives were, she’s *done*.”

Sean shook his head, seeming more in disbelief than anything else. “How the hell could she do this to us? We’ve been nothing but good to her. We pay her a damn good salary with benefits, give her amazing accommodations. And it’s not like we treat her like some servant—she’s practically family.”

Sean had a good point. “As far as I can tell, there’s one of two reasons why she might do something like this. The first is that she’s greedy, she got offered some money to sell us out and wasn’t thinking about anything more than her next payday.

If that's the case, she's definitely done. We call the cops, make her pay for what she did."

Seth cocked his head to the side. "Don't tell me that what you're going to say next might involve an explanation. Come on, Sam—what possible and acceptable excuse could she have for betraying us like this?"

I shook my head. "I don't know. I suppose the fact of her being as close to us as she was while being absolutely fucking conniving and we had no idea is just hard for me to wrap my head around. This is a woman we trust with Bobby's life. And now that Gen's gone, she's back to being the head of his care."

"I just can't imagine what possible reasons she'd have," Sean said. "What would justify something like this?"

"Let's find out. She's still here, right?"

Seth nodded. "Just saw her right before I came up. She's still in the kitchen cleaning up dinner. Almost done, I think."

"Then let's do this." I cleared my throat. "House, call Mathilde and tell her to come to my office." The lights responded.

It didn't take long at all before a soft knock sounded at the door. I tapped a key on the keyboard, turning off the screen over the fireplace.

"Come in."

Just the sight of Mathilde was enough to send a spike of rage through me. I sipped my whiskey and worked through the anger, not wanting to blow up at her just yet.

She stepped into the room, a look of total innocence on her face. "What is going on?" I guessed by the expressions plastered on our faces it didn't take a genius to realize that she'd walked into something bad.

I started it off.

"Mathilde, I'm not one to bullshit. So, I'm going to ask you one question—are you unhappy working for us?"

Her eyes flashed. What she said next was of the utmost importance. She was either going to lie or come clean.

“No. Is there something wrong?”

I sighed in disappointment, turning to the guys and seeing that they wore the same expression. I tapped the key to turn the screen over the fireplace back on.

Mathilde turned to see what was on it, the look on her face falling when the reason for the meeting became clear. Moments hung in the air, and I had no doubt she was beginning to realize how screwed she was. Finally, she turned back to me, panic on her face.

“It is not what it looks like.”

I snorted, unable to believe that.

“Not what it looks like?” Seth asked, his words tinged with anger. “How the hell is it not what it looks like? We’ve got photos of you meeting with some tabloid assholes.”

“Not to mention that we looked into your texts, found clear proof that you were communicating with people associated with the tabloid who released the photos.”

Her eyes flashed with indignant anger. “You went through my texts?”

I raised my palm. “Spare me the outrage. We only went to those lengths when we had proof that you were the one who did it. Now, here’s the deal—you’re fired—that’s not up for debate. What *is* up for discussion is whether or not we call the police and press charges. Unless you’ve got a damn good excuse for all of this.”

Her eyes flashed again, the anger melting away, replaced by pure panic. “I have a reason!”

“Let’s hear it.”

She pursed her lips together for a moment, tears forming in her eyes.

“It is my grandson, Gerard.”

“What about him?” I asked.

She closed her eyes, tears trickling down that she quickly wiped away.

“Over the spring,” she began. “There were protests in Paris, protests he was involved in. I told him time and time again to not get involved in such things, that they would only lead to trouble. But you know how young men are.”

When we said nothing, she continued.

“Anyway, he became wrapped up in this bad news group, hoodlums who vandalized government buildings. One day, during these protests, he and the group attacked one of the buildings with, how you say, Molotov cocktails.”

“Good God,” I said.

More tears formed in her eyes, and she wiped them away as quickly as she could.

“He told me this, knowing that he would be in such trouble if he were found out. Thankfully, there was no one in the building, and the fires had been put out before any major damage could be done. All the same, if it were to be discovered that he was the one who had committed the crime, there would be terrible consequences.”

“And let me guess,” Sean said. “The tabloids had a picture showing that Gerard was involved in the crime and used it to blackmail you into finding dirt on us.”

Her face was blank for a long moment, as if she were trying to process what we’d just said, and the enormity of her situation. Then, out of nowhere, the waterworks flowed again.

“That is correct,” she said. “I did not know what else to do. All I was thinking about was Gerard, how his life would be over before it began because of some stupid mistake he made. What else was a *grandmere* to do?”

I sighed.

“Mathilde, you’re in serious trouble, you know that?”

She nodded. “I know, I understand.”

“We need some time to think this over. But if you try to run, we will call the police.”

She nodded. “Of course. And for what it is worth, I am so, so sorry.” Without another word, she turned and hurried out of the room, heavy sobs taking over as she left.

I let out another sigh once she was gone. “Fucking hell. Of course, it couldn’t be as simple as her just selling us out for money.”

“That’s assuming she’s not feeding us a load of bullshit,” Seth said. “Are you taking her at her word?”

“Seemed authentic to me,” Sean replied.

“Same here. You’ve got to be an especially skilled liar to pull off that kind of deceit.” I slid into my chair, taking another sip of whiskey. “Either way, I think we’re all in agreement that Mathilde’s done working here.”

My brothers nodded their approval in response.

“And I want to double check her story. I’ll put my PI on it, see what he can dig up. I’ll have Mathilde give me the name of whoever her contact was at the tabloid. If her story pans out, I’m fine with putting a little pressure on those paparazzi vermin to leave the kid alone. That can be her thanks for the years of service.”

“Works for me,” Seth said.

“Same here.”

“Good. Now, we just need to figure out what to—”

Before I could finish, my phone buzzed to life with a text. I leaned forward to see that it was from Amy, a swipe of the screen revealing a picture of the tabloid.

My stomach sank as I read the text.

Now everyone knows. My life is over!

CHAPTER 29

We were going to New York.

“You’re sure about this?” Seth asked as he clicked his seatbelt closed.

I laughed, clicking my own belt shut. “Hell of a time to be asking that when we’re about ten minutes away from wheels up.”

He shot me a wry look in response. “Yeah, I know. Just thinking that we’re going to see the two people who definitely don’t want to see us.”

Sam lifted his eyes from his phone. “Amy seems open to at least talking, assuming the subject is finding a way to make this better. Gen, on the other hand...”

The idea of never seeing Gen again was enough to make me sick to my stomach. But damned if she didn’t have the right to feel that way. She’d found out about the stupid little bet we’d made, and I could totally understand her being pissed about it. What we would even say to make things right, assuming she was willing to give us the chance to speak to her, I could only guess.

The engines spun up, the pilot turning the plane on the runway. I took a moment to appreciate the private jet. The interior was impressive. The soft leather seats were the epitome of comfort, and the polished metal accents throughout the cabin added a touch of sophistication. I was already looking forward to relaxing in the spacious lounge area, complete with a large, flat-screen TV and a fully stocked bar.

“Remember when we decided on building the house?” I asked, speaking over my shoulder. “Whole idea was that we’d have an oasis away from the rest of the world. Guess that doesn’t work when you bring the drama with you.”

Seth chuckled in agreement.

“Any word from Mathilde?” I asked.

“Same old,” Sam said. “Bobby’s down, and she’ll be there until we get back.”

We’d sat down with Mathilde, given her the terms. She’d be done when we got back, and in return for us not pressing charges, she’d give us all the info she had on the tabloid she’d been working with. We’d added one more term, that she’d stay with Bobby while we were in New York, one she was more than happy to accept. We’d debated bringing him along, but staying with Mathilde seemed the best course of action. We didn’t want to drag him into any of our drama.

It was all such a mess. Once we took off and were steady in the air, Sam wasted no time taking out his laptop and working on one thing or another—no doubt his way of keeping his mind occupied while we were en route. Seth kept his gaze on the window, seeming deep in thought.

I, on the other hand, decided on some rest. I closed my eyes and settled in, thoughts of Amy and Gen weighing heavily on my mind. The next twenty-four hours were going to be some of the most important in all of our lives.

CHAPTER 30

I held the phone in my hands, Amy's number on the screen.

I had to talk to her, to try to make things right. All the same, the idea of calling her was enough to make my stomach feel like a cold, lead ball was inside of it, weighing me down.

I was on the roof of my five-story apartment building, the West Village sprawling out around me, the towers of the Financial District looming large to the south.

It was the perfect New York summer day, warm but not hot.

I placed my hand on my belly as I stood on the rooftop, still unable to believe that I was pregnant. The test at the doctor's had been positive, and the bloodwork confirmed it.

With one more deep, steeling breath, I tapped the button to call her. It rang once, then twice, then three times. As much as I knew we needed to talk, relief washed over me at the idea of her not picking up.

Right in the middle of the fourth ring, however, she answered.

"Hello?" The word came out in a low, serious tone, flat with no feeling.

"Amy?" My heart beat faster.

"Yeah."

I couldn't help it, I started crying right then and there, tears flowing as the words stuck in my throat.

“Is everything OK?” she asked, sounding genuinely concerned.

I sniffled, wiping my eyes on the sleeve of my shirt. “Are you kidding? Yes, you picked up!”

A bit of silence fell before she spoke again. “I did. But don’t get me wrong, I’m still mad Gen. I just don’t understand.”

“I know. You have all the right in the world to be pissed off at me for what happened.” I took a breath and tried to come up with something a little more rational to say.

“I’m so sorry, Amy. I never meant to hurt you, and I’m so mad at myself for doing what I did without thinking about the consequences. It was stupid and selfish of me, and if you never want to see me again, I’d understand. But even so, even if this is the last time we talk, I just want you to know that I truly am sorry, and that I love you and miss you, and I now feel like there’s this huge hole in my life that’s Amy-shaped. That’s all. I love you.”

As the words finished tumbling out of my mouth, I realized that there was nothing more that I could say. It was totally up to Amy to either accept my apology or tell me to screw off. All I could do was wait for her answer.

“You really had to have all three of them, huh?”

“I don’t even know how to answer that. I just know how weird it must be for you.”

“You’re telling me. It’s going to be burned into my brain for the rest of my life. Like walking in on your parents but ten times worse somehow.”

“I don’t want to push things too hard,” I said. “But... do you think you could ever forgive me?”

“I don’t know. Honestly, I don’t know. I was mad when it all happened, madder than I’ve ever been. I felt betrayed. But the more I thought about it, the more I realized I didn’t have a leg to stand on.”

“What do you mean?”

“It wasn’t like you were hooking up with a boyfriend of mine or something. You were—God, it still feels so weird to say this—hooking up with my dad and uncles. As in, you were all adults doing something you had all agreed to. That’s the case, right? They hadn’t pressured you into anything you didn’t want to do?”

“Not at all. If anything, they were extremely cool about making sure I was comfortable with everything.”

She let out a puff of air through her nose. “Yeah, that sounds like them alright. And the more I thought about it, the more I realized that my reasons for being upset didn’t have anything to do with you. I was mad that Dad was with *anyone*, you know what I mean? I guess part of me had hoped that he’d carry the torch for my mom for the rest of his life, as selfish as that might sound. I know he’d dated other women but seeing it for myself made it all the more real.”

I said nothing, letting her get it all out, sensing that’s what she needed.

“I know that’s a selfish reason. Then, after that, I thought about how gross it had been to see you all together like that, about to, well, I still don’t even want to think about it.” She laughed after saying that, and so did I. “But on the flight home, I started to think that even though that’s not for me, it doesn’t make it wrong.”

“Trust me, I had *no* idea I’d be down for a situation like that. I don’t want to sound like a cliché here, but it all just kind of... happened.”

“Yeah?”

“Yeah. Don’t worry, I won’t give you all the details.”

“Please don’t.” We both laughed again.

“But your dad and uncles are amazing people. They’re warm and kind, and the way they are with Bobby... I can’t even believe it. They took that kid into their home and their lives and treat him like their own. You ask me, I just think they all have a lot of love to give—doesn’t matter to them that it’s all for the same woman.”

“They’ve always been like that,” she replied. “I obviously had no idea about the, um, you know. But they’ve always worked together, shared everything, and never stepped on each other’s toes about it. Makes sense that they’d feel the same way about dating.”

Just then, the buzzer to the front door rang out. I quickly checked the camera, seeing that it was someone wearing a hoodie, packages stacked under their arms.

“I’m glad you’re being understanding,” I said as I headed down to the door to get the packages. “Honestly, I wouldn’t blame you if you weren’t.”

“What am I going to do? Throw away my relationship with my dad, uncles, *and* best friend because they’re doing something that I have a hard time with? Like I said, all of you are cool with what’s happening. No reason I can’t be, too.”

“Thanks, Aim. I don’t know what else to say other than that I love you like crazy.”

“I love you, too, weird as you might be.” We both laughed again, and I made my way to the front door. “OK, so I should let you go. We can talk later.”

“Sounds great. Take all the time you need with this, no rush.”

She gasped. “Oh my God. I forgot to tell you.”

“What?”

“Dad and the guys, they’re coming to New York.”

My eyes went wide. I quickly looked through the glass of the front door, holding up a finger to the delivery guy. His hoodie was pulled down, but I could see that he gave me a quick nod to let me know that he’d seen me.

“Are you serious? They’re coming here? When?”

“Today. Like, in a couple of hours. They’re on the plane now.”

“You’re kidding.”

“Nope. We’re going to meet later, but I’m not sure if they are going to try and reach out to you. I’m guessing that if they didn’t tell you they were coming that they were going to give you some space. But who knows.”

“OK, thanks for letting me know.”

“I’ll let you go,” she said. “Think about what you want to do, OK? And let’s be in touch.”

“Thanks. And yeah, that sounds good. Here, I’m going to pin you the place where I’m staying. I’m apartment 1B. Come by whenever you want.”

“That’d be great. See you before too long.”

I smiled. “Sounds perfect.”

I slipped the phone into the pocket of my leggings, trying to process the news I’d just received. But first things first, I needed to answer the damn door. I’d ordered a few things from Amazon, some prenatal vitamins and such.

I opened the door and began talking right away. “Oh my God, I’m so sorry for keeping you waiting. I’m sure you’ve got a million places to be. Just needed to finish the call I was on.”

The man didn’t answer. He was dressed in jeans, a black hoodie, and sneakers. Nothing about his outfit suggested a uniform.

He threw down the packages. Before I had a chance to react, he lifted his head, pulling back his hoodie and revealing his face.

I gasped. “Mark, what the hell are you doing here?”

“Hey, whore.”

With a sneer on his face, he shoved his way into the hall, leaping onto me and covering my mouth with his hand before I could even manage to scream.

CHAPTER 31

Mark shoved me into my apartment hard enough to send me slamming into the ground, my phone falling out of my leggings with a clatter.

Panic ran through me, along with the pain of landing on the cool tile floor.

I was still trying to process what the hell was happening, but even through the chaos I knew that I needed to get to my phone, to call someone.

“Get your ass back here!” Mark’s growling voice filled the space as I struggled to my feet.

I ran. There wasn’t much space to run, but I did it anyway, hurrying as quickly as I could toward my phone. Mark’s boots boomed on the floor as he cut the distance between us. My heart racing, I bent over and scooped up my phone, turning around just in time to watch him pouncing at me.

I moved to the side just in time, Mark slamming into the wall behind me hard.

“Fuck!”

With shaking hands, I opened my phone as I rushed toward my bathroom, pulling up Amy’s number and calling.

“Oh, no you fucking don’t!” Mark growled, running toward me after regaining his balance.

Cries of panic shot out of me as I turned into the room, desperate to shut the door behind me. But I was too late. Mark grabbed me right as I tried to close it. Once he had me, he

wrenched the phone from my hand and whipped it against the apartment wall as hard as he could, a sickening *crack* sounding out as it crashed into the wall.

“No phone calls,” he said, pulling me into the living room. “This is a conversation between you and me.”

He shoved me one more time. Despite the adrenaline strength running through me, Mark was far more powerful. I stumbled forward, tripping and slamming into the coffee table, the cheap wood cracking underneath me, more pain blasting through my body as I landed.

I rolled over, groaning. I wanted to cry and scream and do anything I could to get help.

“Now,” Mark said. “Are you ready to listen?”

He had a head of wild, curly blonde hair that seemed to have a life of its own. It was unkempt and disheveled, as if he hadn’t bothered to run a comb through it for days. His eyes were wide and unblinking, with an unhinged look that made me feel scared out of my mind.

He had a lean build and stood tall, but his posture was tense, as if he were ready to pounce again at any moment. His fists were clenched tightly at his sides, and his shoulders were hunched up toward his ears. It was impossible to ignore the danger coming from him, as if he were a coiled snake waiting to strike.

“What do you want, Mark?” I asked, wiping away tears.

He snorted. “Look at you, playing dumb as always. You really have no idea why I’m here?”

“I don’t. Please, just let me go. Or we can even go someplace public and talk about this.”

Mark let out a derisive laugh, shaking his head in disbelief. “Are you fucking kidding me? What, you want to go down the street to Starbucks so you can scream your head off the moment we’re out in public? Not a chance.”

With that, he reached into his pocket, pulling out a folded-up newspaper article and throwing it at me. I didn’t need to

look at it to know it was the tabloid.

“I always knew you had it in you,” he said. “But I guess being the dumb fuck that I am thought you’d be able to keep a handle on your whore-ish impulses. Look at you now, a fuck toy for some billionaires.” He squatted down in front of me, putting his hands on his knees. “How do they do it? All at once? God, I don’t even want to know what you look like when they’re done having their fun with you.”

“Please... please...” I sounded pathetic, but it was all I could say. My body ached from the pain of getting yanked around and thrown to the ground. I was worried he may have hurt my baby.

“Is that how you beg for it from them?” he asked. “*Please, please, give it to me, Bradshaw boys?*’ Pathetic. I should’ve known better than to be so good to you when you really wanted nothing more than to be a piece of meat for whoever had the most money. They pay you, too? Send you out the door with a little spending money tucked into your underwear?” He raised his hand as if to strike me.

“Mark, please, I’m pregnant.”

As soon as the words came out of my mouth I knew they’d been a mistake to say. The rage that instantly appeared in his eyes told me I’d really fucked up.

“You’re... *what?*”

No going back. “I’m pregnant. Please, don’t hurt me or my baby. Please.”

He stayed still and quiet, reminding me right away of a calm before a storm. Then, with incredible and frightening speed and power, he lunged toward me, yanking me off the ground by my wrist and pulling me to my feet.

“You fucking slut!” He pulled me toward the door, wrenching it open and practically dragging me out into the hallway, his hand clamped over my mouth. I used what little strength I had left to struggle, to try and break free, to no avail.

He pulled me out onto the city street and I looked up to see the red and blue flashing of an NYPD police car pulling around the block. One came from up ahead, another from the opposite direction. The pair of cars screeched to a halt, police officers bursting forth.

Everything that happened next was hazy and a little dream-like. The cops, guns drawn, shouted commands to Mark. He yelled something back, then shoved me as hard as he could. I launched from him, stumbling forward in the direction of a lamppost, my head bouncing off of it with a hard *thunk*, the world going black all around me.

CHAPTER 32

I'd slept restlessly the entire flight, my mind entirely on Gen.

We were stuck in some of the worst New York traffic I'd ever encountered in my life. The streets were packed tightly, the cars lurching forward by an inch or two, enough to make you queasy.

"We'll be there soon," Sean said, reaching over and slapping my knee. "Until then, just try to enjoy the ride."

Seth let out a wry laugh. "Yeah, nothing like being stuck in this shit. Pretty sure we could walk faster." He waved his hand toward the scene around us, the din of honking horns faint through the windows of our chauffeured car. We were in midtown, the towers of the area rising up into the clouds overhead.

"Less than an hour here and I'm already remembering why the hell we moved to France," I said, craning my neck to get a glimpse of the skyscrapers around us. "How on earth does anyone live like this?"

"No kidding," Seth added. "Millions of people all around you at all hours. And no five-minute walk to the beach."

"Here's what I'm thinking," I said. "When we talk to Amy, we do our best to get her through what's going on. If that works, we can plant the idea in her head of moving out of this damn city."

"Let's not get ahead of ourselves," Seth stated. "This is all assuming she actually wants to talk about all of this."

Sean nodded. “And then there’s the matter of Gen.”

Silence fell in the car. Amy, as upset as she might’ve been, at least had offered an olive branch. Gen, on the other hand, was still an unknown element. She’d made no effort to say she’d wanted to see us. Hell, we didn’t even know where in the city she was staying. There was a damn good chance that we’d leave without getting a chance to say a single word to her.

I turned my attention to the window once more, watching the people of the city making their way up and down the busy sidewalks of Midtown.

My phone buzzed in my pocket.

“Hm, text from Amy.” I muttered as I took my phone out, glancing over at Sean and Seth. Sure enough, they both had their phones in their hands.

“Shit,” Seth said. “Shit, shit.”

“What the hell?” Sean asked, his eyes on his phone.

I checked the screen. Amy had sent us a group text.

Something happened to Gen. She’s hurt. In the hospital right now. She’s in Saint Vincent’s in the West Village.

Without a word, I called Amy.

“Dad?”

“Where are you? What’s going on?”

She was panting, trying desperately to catch her breath. “She got hurt.”

I held back my impatience at the lack of details. No doubt Amy was in shock, not thinking clearly.

“What happened?”

“This crazy ex of hers showed up and tried to take her. She fell and hit her head and got knocked out. I’m going to the hospital right now.”

“OK. Amy, just try to calm down as best you can. We’re in Midtown right now, OK? Traffic’s rough, but we’re going to

get there as quickly as we're able."

"OK. Just... just get here soon."

The call ended, my attention going to my brothers, then to the traffic all around us. It was clear that there was no way we'd be able to make it to the hospital with any kind of urgency and we were only about two miles away.

I pressed the speaker for the front compartment to talk to the driver.

"We're going the rest of the way on foot. Take the car to our townhome."

"Yes sir, Mr. Bradshaw."

With that, the three of us burst out of the car and into the warm, afternoon air. We didn't share a single word before running, heading south, each of us saying a silent prayer that Gen was OK.

CHAPTER 33

The pain in my head felt like a small but incredible, powerful train had slammed into me at full speed. I groaned, trying to roll over, my eyes still closed.

Before I could make it all the way, a hand came down gently on my shoulder.

“Easy, easy.”

I groaned again, my senses coming back enough for me to realize where I was.

My eyes shot open. I was in a small and sparsely appointed hospital room, the single window looking out over a small green space that appeared to be a picnic area of the hospital. To my right was a kindly-looking nurse with warm features, middle-aged, a slender build and bright blonde hair.

“What happened?”

“Tell me what you can remember,” she said. “It’s good after a head injury to think a little bit, get things working again.”

I placed my fingertips on my forehead, trying my best to jog my memory.

Mark.

“Where is he?” I asked, sitting up.

The nurse placed her hand on my forearm. “He’s in custody. According to the police, he tried to get you into his car.”

“And then I fell. Rather, he pushed me. I remember now.”

“That’s right. Took quite a tumble. Luckily, you hit your forehead. Head injuries aren’t pleasant, but if you’re going to have one, best to take it to the thickest part of your skull. You have a very mild concussion, along with some abrasions on your right arm.”

“From when he threw me into the table.”

At that moment, another thought occurred to me, one that made my blood run cold.

“Oh my God. My baby.”

She raised her hand. “They’re fine. When we ran your bloodwork and saw that you were pregnant it was the first thing we checked. Don’t worry, they’re OK.”

I must’ve still been recovering from the injury. No way I was hearing her right.

“I’m sorry, you said *they*?”

The nurse gave a quick nod. “That’s right. We ran an ultrasound while you were out and heard three heartbeats, all sounding healthy.”

I sat up slowly, trying to process what I was hearing. “You said *three*?”

The nurse smiled. “I’m guessing you didn’t know?”

I shook my head, the pain shooting through the top of my skull. “No, I only found out earlier today that I was pregnant.”

“Well then, I’m sure this is all quite a shock.”

“You can say that again. When can I go?”

She smiled. “Plan is to keep you overnight for observation. With concussions, we want to be on the safe side—especially with three little ones in there.”

“Thank you.”

“Now, would you like me to send in your visitors?”

“Visitors?” I asked, confused.

“Yes, your friend Amy is here with three very handsome men.”

My heart leapt. “Please. And thank you.”

“Of course.”

I couldn’t help it. I cried at the sight of them, big, ugly tears of total happiness.

“There she is!” Sean called out, his hair as adorable and wild as ever, a friendly smile on his face as he rushed over to give me a hug.

“Easy,” Amy said. “She’s in rough shape.”

Sam came over, with his usual serious, scanning expression. “How are you feeling? We heard what happened, and—”

Seth, an expression of tight anger on his face, spoke up. “You don’t need to worry about that scum ball. He’s gonna be locked up for a long, long time.”

Relief washed over me at the idea of Mark being out of my life forever.

“I missed you guys,” I said. “I was pissed, still kind of am, but I missed you all like crazy.”

“Feeling’s more than mutual,” Amy said. “And now we’re all here.”

“Oh, and you’re not staying the night here,” Sam said. “We’re making arrangements to have you brought to our penthouse on the Upper West Side.”

“We’ll have a private doctor stay overnight to observe and make sure you’re on the mend,” Sean said.

“That is,” Seth added. “Assuming you *want* to come with us.”

I said nothing, my eyes moving over their faces, a slight tension hanging in the air.

“There’s something we need to say first,” Sam said. “Before you answer the question.”

“We’re sorry,” Sean stated. “About the bet. It was stupid and immature of us, and there’s no excuse for playing with your feelings like that.”

“We’re competitive with one another,” Seth added. “Always have been. But that’s no excuse. We didn’t treat you with the respect you deserve.”

Sam crossed his arms over his big chest. “Truth of the matter is we were all a little nervous about you, worried about the idea of you picking one of us, or none of us. The idea of being without you was almost too much to take.”

“Guess the bet was our way of coping with it,” Sean said.

“But we can only say our peace,” Seth added. “It’s up to you to decide if you want to accept our apologies. Because I’m truly sorry.”

“I’m sorry, too,” Sean said.

“Same here,” Sam added. “I’m sorry.”

Part of me was still a little mad about what they’d done. But as my eyes jumped from face to face to face, the love I knew I felt for them came rushing back.

“Alright. I forgive you guys.”

“I’m so glad to hear that,” Sean said. “Because I love you.”

“I do too,” Sam spoke next. “I love you, Gen.”

“And I do three,” Seth said with a wry smile.

“I love you guys,” I said. “All three of you.”

We all hugged, gently and lovingly, the guys showering me with kisses. “Oh, and there’s one more thing I have to tell you all. Well, *three* more things...”

EPILOGUE I

Seven months later...

I opened my eyes to the soft light that filtered through the blinds of my luxury Manhattan penthouse. As I lay in my king-sized bed, I felt the weight of exhaustion in my bones, but also a sense of contentment that I had never felt before.

I glanced over at the bassinets positioned beside my bed, each one cradling a tiny bundle. My triplets, my beautiful babies, had arrived just days ago. I still couldn't believe that I had given birth to three healthy, perfect little humans.

I sat up and turned my head to look out the window, taking in the stunning view of the city skyline. It was a gorgeous morning, and the sun was just starting to rise over the skyscrapers. I felt a sense of calm wash over me as I gazed out at the bustling city below.

As I settled back into the pillows, I closed my eyes and took a deep breath, feeling my body start to relax. I knew that the road ahead would be challenging, but in that moment, I was content to just lay in bed, enjoying the quiet of the peace and tranquility with my little ones.

At least, that was how I felt until one of the babies started crying. Then the other two joined in.

"OK! Coming!" Amy's voice came from down the hall, followed by the sound of her running, her feet plodding on the tile. Seconds later, she burst into the room with an expression of total alertness on her face. She clasped her hands together,

like a coach getting ready to call a play. “Alright, what’s the story? Caleb? Connor? Caitlin? What do we need?”

I groaned, rolling over and beginning to put my feet on the ground.

“What are you doing?” Amy asked. “Please don’t tell me you’re thinking about getting up.”

“I’m more than thinking about it.” I placed my feet on the ground and pushed myself up.

Big mistake.

My legs went weak underneath me, Amy rushing over and putting her hand on the small of my back, easing me onto the bed.

“OK, I know the last few days were kind of a blur, but don’t forget that you just popped out *three* kids. Give yourself some time, alright?”

I took a few deep breaths, the babies still wailing. When I was ready, I tried once more to get up, Amy helping me that time. Step by step, I made my way over to them and they stopped crying.

“Look at that,” Amy said with a smile. “You’ve already got the magic touch.”

I said nothing, smiling at the sight of my precious children. My heart swelled with pride and love as I gazed at my three cherished babies, Connor, Caleb, and Caitlin.

Connor, the oldest by a few minutes, had sandy brown hair that looked almost golden in the soft morning light. His hazel eyes locked onto me with an intensity I felt in my heart.

Caleb, on the other hand, had a head full of tousled sandy brown hair that seemed to have a mind of its own. His eyes, just like his brother’s, were a mesmerizing shade of hazel, but he had a slight wrinkle between his eyebrows that gave him a serious expression.

Finally, there was Caitlin, my little princess. She had the same sandy brown hair as her brothers, but her eyes were dark, just like mine. Her long eyelashes rested against her chubby

cheeks as she fell back to sleep, her tiny fists curled up beside her face.

As I looked at each of my newborns, I couldn't help but feel amazed at how different they already seemed, despite being less than a week old. Their unique personalities were already starting to shine through, and I couldn't wait to see how they would develop and grow over time.

"What's up? They OK?" I glanced up to see Sean and Sam and Seth all rushing into the room.

"We came as quickly as we could," Seth said. "Kind of a trek in this apartment."

Sam said nothing, instead stepping over to the bassinets, one after another, checking to make sure the babies were good.

"Here's what I'm thinking," he said. "I know you want to have the little ones close at hand."

"But Mom needs some rest," Sean chimed in.

Seth nodded. "We're all here for you. Three kids are a lot, but there's three of us, remember?"

Amy pointedly cleared her throat.

"Four," Sean said with a smile. "And we're in the middle of finding some more help around the place so we can devote all of our attention to you and the kids."

"Hey, Aim?" Sam asked. "Let's get the triplets in their nursery. Thinking we're going to have that talk with Gen."

Amy nodded and winked. "Got it. Maybe a little help?"

"Talk?" I asked. "What's going on?"

Without another word, Amy, Sean, and Seth began wheeling the bassinets out of the room. I took one more look at the trio, part of me wishing they could stay in the bedroom with me forever, another part of me knowing we all needed our rest.

Once they were gone, Sam nodded toward the balcony, a serious expression on his face.

“Here,” he said, offering his arm to me. “Allow me.”

I took his arm, and he held sturdy as a column as I eased myself off the bed.

“How are you feeling?” he asked, leading me to the balcony doors.

“Sore and tired, but grateful.”

He smiled, opening the door and allowing me to exit first. I stepped out onto the balcony and right away began basking in the warm sun. The city was alive with the sounds of people going about their day, and the energy was infectious.

In spite of the mostly sleepless night and the exhaustion that still lingered in my bones, the bright and sunny morning lifted my spirits. I gazed out at the stunning view before me, feeling grateful for my little family. The Empire State Building loomed in the distance, and I could see the glimmer of the Hudson River beyond.

“Hell of a view, huh?” he asked, placing his hand on the small of my back as we looked out together.

“It’s something else. Nice contrast to the craziness down below.”

He turned toward me a bit. “We’ll be here as long as you need. And when you’re ready to get back to work at the MET, we’ll be more than happy to take over childcare duties.” He placed his hand on my hip. “But work’s the last thing I want you thinking about now.”

Sam was right to put the idea in my mind. While the last nearly-year at the MET had been amazing, my career was going to look a hell of a lot different now that the triplets were here. I’d known right from the moment I’d laid eyes on their precious faces that I’d want to be spending as much time with them as possible. That didn’t mean I was totally ready to give up my career, however.

I set it aside. There’d be time to think it over later.

“But” he went on. “There’s something that I don’t want to wait on.”

“What’s that?”

He glanced through the glass windows of the balcony.
“Finally.”

“Huh?”

I looked inside to see that Seth and Sean were making their way toward us, the pair carrying three huge, gorgeous bouquets of flowers between them. They stepped outside, Sean handing his second bouquet over to Sam, so they each were holding one. I gasped at the sight of them, how beautiful they were.

“You guys got me flowers? That’s so sweet!”

“That’s right,” Sean said. “We wanted to set the stage for what’s next.”

“And... what’s next?”

At that, each of them set down the bouquets on the table nearby before reaching into their pockets and taking out individual black boxes. I gasped once more as they opened the boxes, revealing three different rings, each with a different style of diamond.

“I don’t know what to say.”

“Then let us do the talking,” Sam said with a small, warm smile. “Gen, when you came into our home, we never could’ve expected the direction our lives would take.”

“f But after all we’ve been through together, and now that you’ve blessed us with three wonderful children, we couldn’t imagine our world without you,” Seth added.

“So, we got to talking, and decided that there’s no way any of us could stand to not be married to you.”

“With that being said...,” Sam added.

The guys smiled, all speaking the next words at the same time. “Will you marry us?”

There was no point in trying to hold back the tears, nor my happiness.

“Yes! Yes, I will!”

I rushed over to the men, hugging them all at once. We kissed, one after another, my heart filled with pure joy.

“Well, in the event that you accepted the proposal,” Sam said. “There was someone else who wanted to say something.” I turned around to see Bobby standing in the room holding a smaller bouquet of flowers.

“You want to give her your present, bud?” Sean asked.

“Yes.” Bobby’s speaking had come a long way over the last several months. He stepped over to me, sticking out the flowers. “Love you.” The words made me melt as I took the bouquet from his hand, bending down as best I could to receive the hug he wanted to give me.

“I love you too buddy. Thank you all so much,” I said, not even trying to stop the tears. “I can’t wait for what’s next.”

EPILOGUE II

Two years later...

“Caleb, Connor, Caitlin!” I’d said the three names together in the same way so many times over the last two years that they seemed to blend into one big, super name—Calebconnorcaitlin.

And it was even more the case now that they were all toddlers, all of them eager at every hour of the day to stretch their developing muscles and practice their new running abilities. Truth be told, I loved it. I’d travelled the world, made billions, and, with the help of my brothers, set the tech industry on its ear.

But there was nothing more fun to me than chasing my kids around, listening to their wild peals of laughter as they rushed around our home. I peeked around the corner of the living room, spotting the trio within, their eyes lighting up as they looked for me.

“Alright, I’m coming for you guys!”

Connor still had the sandy brown hair that he’d been born with, and his eyes sparkled mischievously as he explored his surroundings with a sense of adventure.

Caleb’s own sandy brown hair still had a wild tousled quality to it, but now he sported a dimpled smile that lit up his face and crinkled the corners of his eyes. He had a contagious energy that made him the center of attention wherever he went.

Caitlin had a full head of dark brown, almost black hair that was usually in pigtails. Her big, dark eyes were curious and full of wonder, and her chubby cheeks were always ready for a smile or a kiss.

And they all loved to run. The triplets let out happy squeals as I ran into the room, all of them getting up and rushing down the hall.

“You’re first, buddy!” I said, pointing to Connor.

He grinned back at me, ready for the challenge. I ran, quickly cutting the distance between him and me, scooping the boy up as I drew near. We turned a quick corner into the kitchen, Seth there to greet us.

“You’re mine, little lady!” He bent down and caught Caitlin, who just about burst with laughter as the other of her three dads lifted her off the ground.

Sam looked up from his laptop at the kitchen bar, raising an eyebrow. “I suppose it won’t do any good to repeat the ‘no running in the house’ rule?”

“Not even a little,” I said, planting a kiss on top of Connor’s head.

“Fair enough.” Sam shot out of his seat, letting out a triumphant “ah-ha!” as he picked up Caleb.

Together, we carried the little ones outside, over to the patio by the pool. Gen, the love of our lives, was there in nothing but a blue and white striped bikini, a pair of black sunglasses on her face, an art book close at hand. On her ring finger were the engagement rings we’d had made from our three stones, each set in an artful way.

When she heard that we were coming, she sat up and turned around. As always, it was damn impossible to avoid devouring her with my eyes.

“You guys need some help?” she asked.

“Don’t even think about getting up,” I replied, raising a finger. “You just got back in from an LA slash New York slash Paris trip, you’re getting some rest whether you like it or not.”

“Many hands make for a lighter load,” Sam said.

“All the same, I think it’s about time to get these three down for their naps—if that’s even possible.”

Gen opened her mouth, no doubt to offer her help in the task.

“Stay and relax,” Sam said. “We’ve got this.”

She pouted a bit in a playful sort of way. “OK, fine. But I’m going to take a shower and head to Amy’s place downtown. She wanted to grab lunch before we did our shopping for dinner.”

One of the best changes of the last year was Amy deciding to take a remote work job and move to be closer to the family. She’d rented an amazing little flat down in Louveciennes and had wasted no time finding a handsome Frenchman to date. She and Laurent were six-months-strong, and we were all starting to get the feeling wedding bells were on the horizon.

“Sounds good,” Seth said. “But make sure it’s a long, relaxing shower.”

She laughed. “I think I can do that.”

The seven of us made our way into the house, Gen going into her bedroom to wash up, the three of us taking the triplets to their nursery. Together, we gently laid Connor, Caleb, and Caitlin down for their naps, tucking them in with their favorite blankets and toys. As I gazed down at their peaceful faces, a feeling of immense joy filled my heart. Being a dad was the most incredible experience of my life.

I couldn’t believe how lucky I was to have four amazing children who filled my days with laughter, love, and endless possibilities. Watching them grow and learn was a privilege beyond words. As I stood there, their tiny chests rising and falling with each breath, I knew that being a dad was what I was meant to do.

I felt a sense of awe and wonder wash over me as I thought about the future. What kind of people would they grow up to be? What kind of world would they create? The possibilities

seemed endless, and I felt so grateful to be a part of their journey.

We peeked our heads into Bobby's room next. He'd gone down for his nap a little earlier, the handsome guy sleeping peacefully on his race car bed.

Knowing our kids were all settled in, the guys and I turned to one another in the hallway.

"I don't know about you all," Seth said. "But I'm thinking we should take advantage of this rare occasion of all the kids being down for their naps."

Sam and I shared a look and a grin, making it clear we were on the same page.

"Let's do it," Sam said.

We hurried to Gen's bedroom. Since officially moving in, we'd given her one of the big rooms on the third floor, though she often spent the night in one of our bedrooms. Once there, we stripped out of our shirts and pants. We listened for the hiss of the shower to stop. A few moments later our woman stepped out of the bathroom wearing nothing but a towel, her dark hair slicked back.

She smiled sensually at the sight of us.

"Figured we'd surprise you," I said.

"Kids are all down," Sam stated. "We're good to go."

"Assuming you are, that is," Seth added.

Gen responded by hooking her thumbs under her towel and pulling it off, the towel falling to her feet and putting her unbelievably gorgeous body on full display. I drank in the sight of her, thinking of how it was impossible to not be blown away by such beauty.

"Does that answer your question?"

"Sure does." The three of us approached her, covering her body in kisses as we all slowly worked our way over to the bed. Once there, a lovemaking session for the ages commenced, each of us taking our time with her, making Gen

come over and over with our hands, our mouths, and our cocks. When we'd given her all the pleasure she'd craved, Gen returned the favor, bringing each of us to orgasm.

We laid together in bed, all of us catching our breaths as we watched the sea through the tall windows of the room.

It took barely any time after that for the cry of one of the kids to come through the monitor.

“Ready to go back to it?” I asked.

“Of course,” Sam said.

“Let's do it,” Seth replied.

“Ready and more than willing,” Gen finished.

Once we were in the nursery, Bobby sleepily coming into the room to join us, surrounded by our children, each of us doting on them in our own ways, I knew that our life was filled with endless possibilities and adventure—not to mention boundless love.

The End

Dear lovely reader,

Want a recommendation for what to read next? Check out *Her Independence Day* - another bestselling steamy reverse harem ready for your reading pleasure.

Her Independence Day Reviews:

“If you are looking for a fast, fun and flaming hot read you’ve got to grab this book.” -Gladys., Goodreads Reviewer

“FMC is strong willed and fights for what she wants.” - Kimberly, Goodreads Reviewer

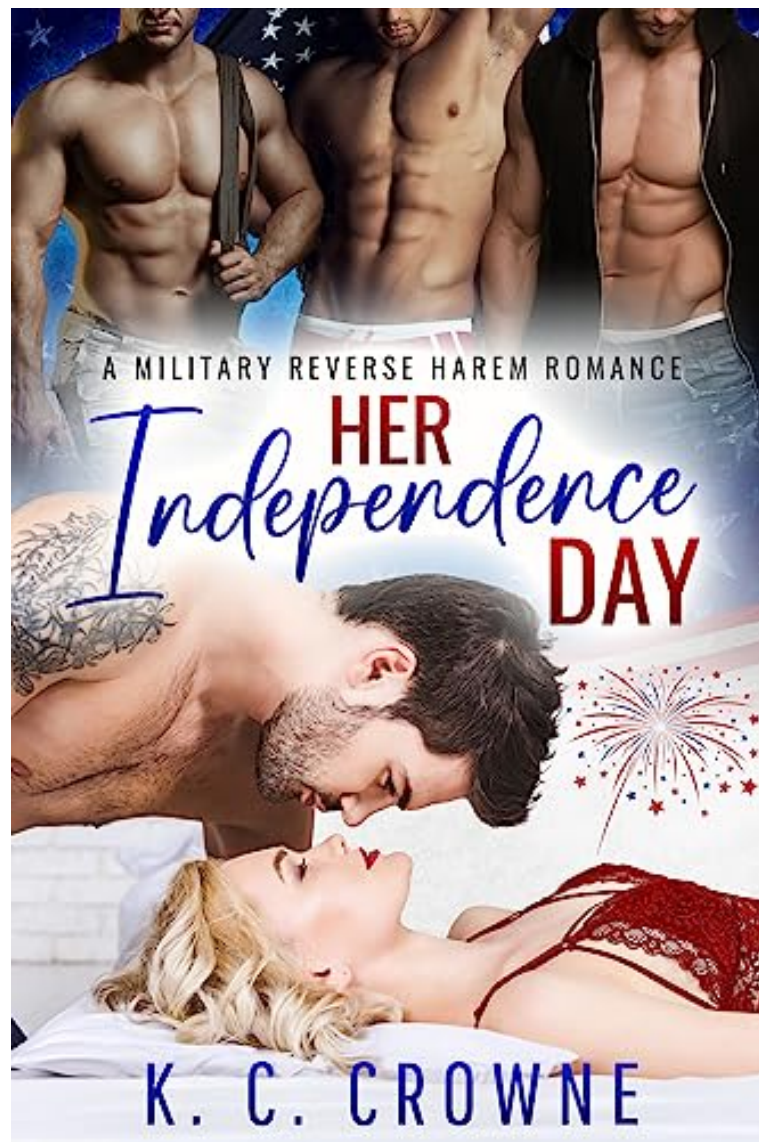
“The fireworks start as she meets her brother’s four best friends. These guys are tough and super into Winona thrilling and entertaining.” - N., Goodreads Reviewer

Grab it [HERE](#)

Already read Her Independence day? I’ve got other bestselling Reverse Harems [HERE](#).

(I’ve included a sneak peek for Her Independence Day on the next page.)

HER INDEPENDENCE DAY (PREVIEW)



Four strapping Marines are home for Independence Day.

And all four brothers in arms have their eyes on one lucky lady.

I moved in with my older brother...

And he left me alone with four of his insanely HOT military best friends.

I remember drooling over them growing up.

Now they can't keep their eyes off me.

I must be imagining it, right?

How can all four want me?

One night, they sneak into my room,

Shirts off, their hands on my skin.

My heart racing a million miles a minute.

Will this be the most unforgettable night ever?

Or, will I regret letting my inhibitions finally get the best of me?

CHAPTER 1

WINONA

“I’m going to fucking *kill* him.”

My brother crouches down in front of me and lays the cold compress he just purchased on my swollen eye. It stings like a bitch, but I’m so exhausted, drained, and cried out that I can’t do much more than wince.

I’m seated on the curb of a gas station, my knees tucked to my chest as the heavy scent of gasoline and windshield wiper fluid fills my nose. The duffle bag beside me is full of all the clothes I managed to cram in while Chet wasn’t looking, though I’m sure I left more than a few things behind in my haste. I thank my lucky stars it’s warm out. I left in such a hurry, I had no time to think about changing, so I’m dressed in nothing but a pair of jean shorts and a thin grey shirt. I don’t even have a jacket with me.

The passing June breeze brings with it the sound of distant traffic and the chirp of evening crickets from the surrounding woods, but it does little to soothe the trembling of my hands.

Don’t you dare walk away from me, Winona!

William sighs, gently grasping my chin to get a better look at my face. His brows are pinched together in a steep frown, his lip curled up in a sneer. I don’t think I’ve ever seen him more murderous.

“I’m so sorry,” he says gently, which surprises me. “You should have told me things were so bad. Has Chet hit you before and you didn’t tell me?”

I shake my head quickly. “No, this is... Things just got a little heated.”

“What were you fighting about?” my brother asks as he takes a seat on the curb beside me.

He’s dressed in a suit, his tie hanging loose, the top button undone. His light brown hair is windswept, and his forehead is a little sweaty. If I had to guess, I’d say he dropped everything to meet me here.

“I told him I was going to New York City in the fall,” I mumble softly. “I got an interview to intern at Sterling Publishing House to work with a junior editor. They said they were really keen on meeting me because I was one of their top candidates.”

William’s eyes widen in delighted surprise. He bumps his knee against mine. “Seriously? Win, that’s *great*. You’ve wanted to work in publishing since you were old enough to know what books were.”

I cast my one good eye down to the pavement beneath my dirty shoes. After our fight, I waited until Chet passed out on the couch after a handful of beers before sneaking out of our apartment. I would have taken the keys to the car, but I was afraid they’d make too much noise and wake him. Besides, the car is technically in his name, and I wouldn’t put it past Chet to call the cops on me for stealing his vehicle. Hell, even the apartment is in his name, so it’s not like I could have kicked him out.

At the time, he insisted it was for my sake. He’d take care of everything. The bills, the car, our home, our finances... I’d felt cherished and cared for. Who doesn’t want a man who knows how to provide? In hindsight, I realize how stupid that was. Naïve. I didn’t realize until it was too late that Chet had trapped me, and I don’t think I’ll ever stop kicking myself for it.

You’re nothing without me, do you understand?

I chew on the inside of my cheek. “Chet didn’t think it was so great. When I told him I would be gone for four months, he

lost it.” My eyes burn with the threat of tears as the memories rush back. My swollen eye hurts twice as much. “We went back and forth. The argument got out of control, and before I knew what was happening, he...” My voice wobbles and my throat tightens. I can’t bring myself to finish my sentence.

It all happened so fast. Chet and I argue from time to time, but fights happen. Just never like *this*. This one escalated from pointed words to harsh shoves, and then a closed fist careening toward my face. He hit me hard enough to knock me to the kitchen floor. I wanted to fight back, to not curl up in a ball and give up, but I was so shocked and blindsided I couldn’t control my body.

Fuck, Winona, I’m so sorry. I didn’t mean it. Are you okay? I love you, I love you.

Needless to say, he’s never going to hurt me again because we’re done. Like my mother always used to say: a man who’d dare raise a hand to you is bound to do it again and again and again. I’ve made a lot of stupid mistakes where Chet is concerned, but staying with him after the shit he just pulled? Out of the question.

William gingerly throws his arm over my shoulder and gives me a side hug. “What do you need, Win? Anything at all. Just name it. I’m assuming you need a place to stay, right?”

I try to swallow the sticky lump lodged in the back of my throat. “Yeah, I’m... I don’t want to go back there. At least, not any time soon.”

“Then it’s settled. You’ll stay with me.”

“I don’t want to put you out.”

“Oh, shut up,” my big brother says with a chuckle. “What’s family for?”

I manage a small smile. There may be a ten-year difference between us, but William’s always been a protective and loving brother. Our schedules were the definition of chaotic when I went to college and he was still serving with the Marines, but we always made the time to call each other when we were

able. In many ways, I think of William as my best friend and guardian angel.

“You’re sure you’re not too busy with work?” I ask, giving his suit a sideways glance. “I know you’ve been trying to get your startup off the ground.”

William shrugs. “I’ll admit I have an important meeting to get to in Seattle. I’ll be away for about a month, but that doesn’t change the fact that you need a place to stay.”

I grimace. “You were on your way to the airport when I called, weren’t you?”

“Maybe.”

“I’m so sor—”

“Stop it, Winona. It’s fine. My personal assistant can book me a flight for tomorrow. Or I can just cancel my whole trip and—”

“No,” I say quickly. “No, please don’t do that on my account. I’ll be fine as long as I have a place to crash. You don’t have to worry about leaving me alone.”

William sits up a little straighter, his mouth dropping open. “Oh, shit.”

“What?”

“Actually, you wouldn’t be alone. A couple of my friends are staying at my place right now. You remember the guys from my old unit, don’t you? Asher, Tank, Eddie, and Richard?”

I search my memories. My brain’s admittedly a little jumbled right now, still buzzing on adrenaline. When my brother was an active service member, I got to meet some of the people he served with, though it was a very long time ago and I honestly haven’t given them much thought.

“Vaguely,” I answer.

William runs a hand through his hair, looking rather guilty. “It totally slipped my mind. They just got back from overseas and needed a place to relax for a while. They said they’ll be

leaving the weekend after the Fourth of July, but if you're uncomfortable with the idea, I can put you up in a hotel instead."

The thought of my brother paying for a room leaves a bitter taste in my mouth. He missed his flight to come and get me, rushing to my aid at the drop of a hat. It wouldn't feel right to ask him to pay for a room when I know for a fact he's got several unused guest rooms at his place.

"It's okay," I insist. "I don't mind at all. You trust these guys, right?"

"With my life."

"Then I trust them, too. Really, William, it's fine. I'm just grateful you came all this way for me."

"Are you kidding? I'd murder that son of a bitch with my own two hands if you asked me to."

I laugh quietly, but the dark look in my brother's eyes tells me he's probably not joking. "I'll have to figure out how to get the rest of my things from him."

"We'll worry about that later," he insists. "For now, let's get you home so you can rest. Are you sure you don't want to file a police report?"

I swallow hard, my throat uncomfortably dry. This is the third time he's asked me, but my answer remains the same. I might be scared and pissed off and unbelievably hurt, but a part of me just wants to move on.

"I just want to get out of here," I confess.

"Fair enough. Come on, my car's over there."



The drive to our parents' old lake house is as scenic and beautiful as I remember. The property is roughly a half-hour drive north of Sandy Creek, New York, surrounded on all sides by tall pines and a west-facing view of the water. Mom and Dad left it to both of us in their will, but I gave my half of the

deed to William because Chet said he'd buy us a place of our own. What a fool I was.

By the time we arrive, the sky is an inky black. The stars are out and twinkling, but it's hard for me to enjoy the view—mostly because I'm not in the mood, but also because my left eye is officially so swollen I can barely see out of it. I haven't used the car visor's mirror at all during the drive because I'm a little worried about what I'll see. Judging by the pitying glances my brother's been giving me, I'd say not so good.

When the crunch of the gravel driveway beneath the car tires reaches my ear, I finally look out the window. Three other vehicles and a cool sporty motorcycle that definitely doesn't strike me as William's style are parked out front. Some of the lights are on inside, a warm and welcoming orange glow.

William tries to carry my heavy duffle bag in, but I won't let him. Instead, he grabs the door for me as we ascend the steps of the lake house's wraparound porch. The porch swing I used to use every day as a little girl is still there near the door, but its hinges are rusted, and the wood needs a fresh coat of paint. Memories of a simpler time bring a smile to my face—which unfortunately isn't very wide because everything hurts right about now.

My brother and I step inside together, the sounds of lighthearted chatter bouncing off the smooth walls and high ceiling. Men's voices, low and rumbling like distant thunder. It sounds like they're in the kitchen.

“Come on,” William says. “I called ahead to let them know you were coming.”

I'm not entirely sure who or what I was expecting to find when I follow William into the kitchen, but four hulking, handsome, irresistible men is definitely not it. Their conversation comes to an abrupt stop when they see me, a sudden awkwardness lingering in the air.

Damn, I must really look frightful.

“Boys, you remember my little sister, don't you?” William asks. He turns to me and gestures to the man furthest to the

left, seated at the table in what used to be Dad's chair. "Winona, this is Asher Grey."

He stands and offers his hand to shake, a charming smile on his lips. His long fingers easily wrap around my own, the warmth of his palm igniting something deep inside me. Asher is breathtaking. Tall and broad, with dark brown hair and equally dark brown eyes that remind me of toiled earth after a heavy thunderstorm.

"Hi," he says, sounding almost... stunned? Caught off guard? I suppose I can't blame him. I'd be at a loss for words if some random woman showed up out of the blue with one hell of a shiner.

I shake his hand and offer a sheepish smile. "Hello."

My brother moves on to the next man, who immediately gets out of his seat. "That's Joseph Quill. We just call him Tank."

"Ma'am," he says as he nods respectfully. The first thing I notice about him is his unmistakable southern twang. His accent, combined with the low, full tone of his voice sends a delightful shiver down my spine.

It's frankly no wonder they call him Tank. He's certainly built like one. Strong arms, a wide chest, and thick neck make him a dominating presence. His dirty blonde hair is cropped short, his blue eyes trained on me like a hawk. It's hard for me to notice the sling around his right arm, propping it up against his chest.

My brother moves on. "The grumpy guy in all black is Edward Luna."

The third man in question glares daggers at William from his spot at the kitchen counter. "Watch it, Wren," he grumbles before tipping his chin up in my direction in greeting. "S'up?"

I can see why William thinks the guy's grumpy. He stands out in his all-black ensemble—black jeans, black sweatshirt, black hair—and I'm not sure if he's ever cracked a smile. His features are hard and cold, from the razor-sharp line of his jaw to his aquiline nose to his black irises like polished obsidian.

“Don’t mind Eddie,” the last man says to me with a low chuckle. “He’s just cranky because his blood sugar is low.” He rises from his chair and approaches, something mesmerizing in the way he moves. Slow, but powerful—a panther on the prowl.

The more I stare at his face, the more I start to recognize him. Streaks of grey pepper his dark brown hair, just like his trimmed beard. His eyes are a hypnotic green, much like the rich pines just outside. His name is on the tip of my tongue, but it takes me a moment to find it.

“Richard Wilder,” I say with a gentle smile.

“You remember me?”

“You were there the day William was supposed to ship out on his first tour. I couldn’t have been older than eight, nine?”

Beside me, my brother laughs. “Oh, right! You started bawling your eyes out and wouldn’t let go of me. Richard had to pry you off.”

Heat pools in my cheeks, mild embarrassment washing over me. “Sorry about that.”

Richard carefully reaches for my hand and brings it up to his lips, placing a kiss on my knuckles. It’s a gentlemanly, chaste sort of kiss, but it nonetheless sends electricity zapping up my spine. “There’s nothing to apologize for.”

Asher, Tank, Eddie, and Richard continue to stare at me, but their initial shock is nowhere to be found. If anything, it’s been replaced with intrigue.

“Would you like something to eat?” Tank offers. I really like the way he talks. “We’ve got a lasagna in the fridge we could pop in the microwave for you.”

“That’s really sweet of you, but I think I want to lie down. It’s, um, been a long day.”

Asher nods. “If there’s anything you need, just let us know.”

I look at each in turn. My nerves are frayed and I’m not in a good headspace, so you’d think having a bunch of strangers

in my childhood home would make me even more flighty. But I'm oddly at peace here. Maybe it's because I know William would never invite questionable characters to stay over, or perhaps it's the comfort of being in a familiar place that sets my mind at ease.

Or maybe it's because of the way the four of them are looking at me...

I can sense their outrage on my behalf. They're too polite to pry, but it goes without saying what's happened. I see a subtle shift in their posture, something leaning toward an innate protectiveness. I can see the questions written all over their faces and in their body language. It's in the tension of Asher's shoulders, the concern in Tank's eyes, the flex and clench of Eddie's hand, and the tick of Richard's jaw. Much like my brother, they look murderous and ready to fight Chet in an instant even though they don't even know who he is—all for my honor.

Of course, it could be my imagination. I *did* get hit pretty hard, after all. There's a good chance my brain is just desperate for a knight in shining armor since my Prince Charming turned out to be an absolute dick.

"Thank you," I mumble.

William pats me on the shoulder. "Get some rest, Winona. We can talk more in the morning."

I nod wearily and start down the hall, eager for this awful day to end.

CHAPTER 2

I have a new assignment for you.

When are you coming back to work?

I stare at my grandfather's text message until the letters are burned into the back of my eye sockets. He sent the message almost a week ago, but I've left him on read. It doesn't feel good, but neither does having him breathing down my neck 24/7.

After how everything went down in Somalia, I think the boys and I are more than a little entitled to a well-deserved break. Tank's still recovering, for fuck's sake. Not to mention Eddie's still dealing with the trauma. He's too much of a tough guy to say it aloud, but these walls are thin. I've heard him screaming in the middle of the night, his nightmares clawing mercilessly through his psyche. And Richard... he and I aren't really talking to each other right now. Until he's done trying to play the blame game, I don't want anything to do with him.

The colonel knows there's next to nothing I wouldn't do for him, but we're not machines. We need rest just as much as anyone else.

I hear someone shuffling around in the kitchen, the soft clink and clatter of pots and pans floating into my ear. The time on my phone's screen reads 5:45 a.m. The boys and I are all early risers, but not *this* early. And certainly not while off-duty. Curious, I throw off my covers and quietly leave my room, padding down the hall.

I'm pleasantly surprised by the smell of sizzling bacon, freshly brewed coffee, and something coated heavily in cinnamon. A woman's soothing voice hums melodiously—the voice of an angel.

I round the corner slowly, silently, thoroughly breathless when I see Winona in front of the stove expertly flipping a pancake with nothing more than momentum and her hand on the pan handle.

From behind, it's hard not to notice the lovely curve of her ass, the dip of her slender waist, and her enticingly long legs. She's in a pair of light blue jogging shorts and a white tank top, exposing the smooth paleness of her skin.

My parents always taught me it was impolite to stare, but no matter what I do, I can't seem to look away, suddenly gripped by something carnal and feverish. Is it the delicate flow of her movements as she cooks? Or maybe it's the way her long, brunette hair flows over her shoulders, curled slightly at the ends from sleep? Or could it be the way she dips forward slightly, her shirt riding up just so to expose the small of her back?

And then she turns, and I'm suddenly reminded of the bastard who raised a hand to her. I don't know shit about the guy, but I hate him with all my being. How he could ever harm such a woman is beyond me. If the only way to get his point across is to use his fists, then he's not a fucking man at all.

William wouldn't tell us exactly what happened, only that he canceled his flight to Seattle last minute because there was some sort of family emergency. His text messages are always brief, sometimes impossible to decipher. Then Winona arrived late last night, shivering not from the cold, but from fear and exhaustion. It was easy to put two and two together.

Winona lets out a breathy yelp when she finally notices me. "Oh! H-how long were you standing there?"

"Only a moment," I lie. I smile at the smorgasbord she's single-handedly prepared, several plates piled high with food hot and ready on the kitchen table. "You must have quite the appetite," I joke lightly.

Miracle of miracles, I earn a little laugh from her. “I couldn’t really sleep,” she confesses, wringing her hands together. “I thought maybe you guys would like breakfast. Hungry?”

“Famished.”

“Please, help yourself. Would you like some coffee?”

“I can get it. Why don’t you sit down and enjoy?”

Winona nods, smiling appreciatively. We move at the same time. She crosses to the table while I attempt to get to the coffee maker. Unfortunately, the kitchen is rather small. More of a nook. Our paths cross, collide, and suddenly we’re doing that awkward shuffle-dance to try and get out of each other’s way.

“Sorry,” she says with a light laugh, attempting to side-step me.

“No, it’s okay—” I step to the side, too, but I’m too big for her to get around.

“I’ll just go—”

“Here,” I say with a chuckle, grasping her by the waist. I lift her up and rotate our positions, setting her down on the tile floor. My eyes didn’t deceive me—she’s as wonderfully soft as she looks.

But I realize my mistake all too late. Her laughter fades, her eyes cast to the floor. Winona clears her throat, shifting her weight uncomfortably as her cheeks redden. I’ve made her uneasy. I couldn’t help myself, but that was no excuse. What the hell was I thinking? Touching her without her permission only hours after someone close to her did the same? As innocent as my intentions were, it was still wrong of me.

“Sorry about that,” I mutter.

When Winona looks at me, I don’t see discomfort or fear. If anything, her eyes are ablaze, so bewitching it makes my heart skip a beat. “It’s alright,” she says calmly, the corners of her lips tugging up into a grin.

I reflect her smile, amused and a little dazed. *Holy shit, William's little sister is gorgeous*—black eye aside, and even then, it's not that bad. The swelling has gone down slightly, but the bruise is more apparent than it was last night. Reddish purples and pinks. All things considered, the injury isn't too bad. It doesn't look like she's hurt anywhere else, and for some reason, I'm immensely grateful for that fact.

"Let me get you an ice pack," I mumble, barely audible in my own ears.

I turn quickly and head straight to the refrigerator, opening the top door to the freezer. William's got a couple of those reusable ice packs shoved way in the back, so I grab one and wrap it up with the nearest clean tea towel I can find. Slowly, I place it on her eye. Her hand follows, her fingers gingerly grazing my wrist before settling on the back of my hand, keeping me there.

I'm suddenly incendiary, my skin feverishly hot beneath her touch. I'm up close; I can pick up the lovely scent of her sweet floral perfume—roses and peaches. My gaze slips down to the plush fullness of her mouth, and I'm lost in the shape of her sharp cupid's bow and soft bottom lip.

My mouth goes dry and my heart hammers against my ribcage. Why do I want to devour her lips? Why do I want to press her against the edge of the counter and see if the rest of her body is as hot and welcoming as it looks? These are *not* thoughts I should be having about one of my closest friend's little sister, and yet...

Why is she looking at me like that? Does she feel this strange pull between us, too? Could she possibly—

"Oh, sweet! Pancakes!"

Winona and I jolt, each taking a massive step apart just as William and Eddie enter. Neither of them seem the wiser, too fixated on breakfast to notice Winona's pink cheeks and my semi-hard cock hidden by my shorts. Fuck, what's gotten into me this morning?

“Are Tank and Richard still asleep?” I ask, making my way over to the counter as casually as possible. I take my time making my coffee, hoping my body will calm down.

“You know them,” William says lightly, helping himself to several strips of bacon. “They could sleep through a hurricane.”

“Did you sleep okay?” Winona asks when she takes her seat next to Eddie. “I, uh... I thought I heard you yelling last night.”

I say nothing, taking a long sip of my coffee. Black with one sugar. I’ve tried to bring the issue up with Eddie countless times since we got back, but he always ends up chewing my ear off. I’m not trying to antagonize him. The four of us went through hell and back, and a weaker soldier would have lost his mind after what we witnessed. All I want is for Eddie to get help—but he has to admit there’s a problem, first.

I half expect him to cuss Winona out. He may be a Marine, but he’s got the mouth of a fucking sailor. Maybe I should step in and change the subject before—

“I slept fine,” he grumbles around a mouthful of cheesy scrambled eggs.

Huh. Color me surprised.

“I’m glad,” she says, and I think she genuinely means it.

“What about you?” he asks gruffly. Everything out of his mouth sounds like a damn machine gun, sharp and to the point and with much too much force. Luckily, Winona doesn’t seem to think much of it.

She shrugs. “Good. Alright.”

William strums his fingers on the table’s surface. “Has he tried contacting you?”

His sister presses her lips into a thin line. “Yes. He blew up my phone all night and all morning. I texted him that I’m fine and not to contact me, but he won’t stop, so I turned off my phone.”

“I don’t have to go on this trip, Win.”

She shoots him an exasperated look. “We’ve been over this. I’ll be okay here, I swear.”

My ears perk up. “Is this the boyfriend?”

“*Ex,*” she corrected pointedly. “But yes.”

“I know it’s probably none of our business, but does he know about this place?”

Winona chews on the inside of her cheek. “I never told him about my parents’ lake house. He shouldn’t be able to find me here.”

“How long is she staying?” Eddie asks William.

“As long as she needs.”

Eddie huffs and looks at her. “Let’s not beat around the bush, okay? Is this asshole going to try and track you down? We need to know these things.” His expression is hard and impassable. “What about your job? Do you need to tell your boss you’ll need time off? Did you leave anything important behind? Does he know how to locate you using your phone?”

I sigh. “Don’t overwhelm her, man.”

Winona sits up a little straighter, unperturbed. She answers without missing a beat. “I’m a freelance editor, so I’m my own boss. I did leave a couple of keepsakes at his place, but I’ll figure out how to get them back at a later date. And no, he doesn’t know how. Even if he did, my phone is off, so there’d be no signal to pinpoint me.”

William cackles. I stifle a laugh. Eddie just shrugs and attacks his piece of buttered toast like it owes him money.

“I think that’s settled, then,” William says. “I think there’s a flight this afternoon I can catch, but if you need anything at all, you’d better call me.”

Winona smiles. “I will.”

CHAPTER 3

TANK

Winona hugs her brother tight, hopping up on the tips of her toes in order to reach. They're by his car, too far away for any of us to overhear their conversation. They speak quietly, a couple of nods here and there followed by reassuring smiles.

With one final wave to the boys, William gets in his car and backs out of the gravel driveway, disappearing around the bend not long after. There's no need for personalized goodbyes because he already pulled the four of us aside to give one final warning before his trip.

Protect my sister at all costs.

And if any of you make a move on her, I'll personally castrate you.

Needless to say, we got his message loud and clear. Except...

I don't know about Asher, Eddie, and Richard, but I have a feeling keeping my word to William is going to be easier said than done. Winona is doggone gorgeous. Ever since I first laid eyes on her, I've been as happy as a clam at high tide. They should bottle up whatever her sweet smiles are made of, because I swear it's more effective than the pain meds the doctors have me on.

We got back from overseas roughly two weeks ago, and I've been swimming in pain like nothing I've ever experienced. I still don't know what went wrong. None of us do. But the fact of the matter is we're lucky to be alive. The

surgeons said they had one hell of a time getting the shrapnel out of my arm, but with some time and patience, I'll be patched up good as new.

I have plenty of time since we're on leave...But I don't have the patience. Not even a lick.

Winona turns and walks up to the porch, her hand gliding up the support rail. "He told me to tell you all to be good."

I chuckle good-naturedly. "Yeah, that's about right."

"Do you have any plans for the day?" she asks, blinking up at us with those pretty hazel eyes. The curl of her long lashes and the shape of her little button nose does something strange to my insides. I can't remember the last time I had a case of butterflies as bad as this one.

"We're on vacation," Asher offers with a charming smile. "We've got nowhere important to be. Why do you ask?"

She tucks a few loose strands of her hair behind her ear. "Well, I guess I didn't pack as well as I thought last night, so I need to head into town to buy a few things. Since I don't have a car, I was wondering if one of you would be willing to—"

"I'll take you," Eddie says, which is frankly a surprise and a half. I love the man like a brother, but he's never been the type to willingly lend a hand—especially when there's nothing to be gained. But the way he looks at her tells me everything I need to know. Maybe I'm not the only one who's going to have a hard time keeping our promise to William.

"Hop on the back of my bike," Eddie continues.

"Why don't we *all* go into town," I suggest. "No harm in a change of scenery, right?"

Asher and Richard exchange a heated glare. The silence between them speaks volumes. Apparently, they're still at it. Things have been particularly stressful since we failed our mission, and neither knows where to pin the blame for the catastrophic shitshow that went down. I'm really hoping it all blows over soon. I can't stand seeing my brothers at odds with one another.

Winona notices the exchange but says nothing about it. “I think that’s wonderful. It’s been a long time since I’ve visited town. I’d love to see what’s changed.”

“We’ll take my car,” Richard says before anyone else can offer.



People stare wherever we go, whispering amongst themselves as Winona passes them by. I’m not sure if she’s aware of all the strange looks or if she’s choosing to ignore them. Either way, she doesn’t appear to be bothered as she flits from storefront to storefront, merrily browsing.

“So, where are you from again?” she asks me as we stroll. “I feel like you might have told me ages ago at a Birthday Ball, but I can’t remember.”

“Alabama, ma’am. Born and raised.”

Winona snaps her fingers. “Oh, that’s right! A little ways outside of Florence.”

I grin proudly, genuinely surprised she bothered to remember the conversation at all. She couldn’t have been older than thirteen or fourteen. Vivid memories of her frilly pink dress dance through my mind. I hadn’t paid much attention to her back then. She was glued to her brother’s hip all night, anyway, and there were plenty of pretty ladies in need of a dance partner. But now?

Now, I can’t *stop* paying attention to her.

The delicious plane of her throat, perfect for kissing. Her ample bosom and her small waist, perfect for holding. Her luscious, long locks—perfect for pulling.

I mentally berate myself. This is wrong. It hasn’t even been two hours since William left, and my mind’s already getting away from me. I can’t be thinking these things—these delicious, dirty things—for three very important reasons: she’s much too young, at least ten years between us; there’s no doubt in my mind William *will* make good on his threat to

castrate me; and she's clearly going through a bad breakup under very traumatic circumstances. I'm sure she doesn't want to exchange one asshole for another.

"Asher tells me you're a freelance editor," I say as she peers into a dress shop. "Books and stuff. Mighty impressive."

"He told you?" she says coyly. "Goodness, word gets around fast at the lake house."

I chuckle. "We tell each other everything. We're worse than my Nana's knitting circle after a pitcher of margaritas."

Winona laughs. *Really* laughs. The sound is bright and bubbly, so beautiful it takes my breath away. It's warmer than sunshine and more refreshing than an April shower. "That's quite an image."

"It's the truth. Once Nana knocks a few back, she'll spout everyone's secrets no problem."

"She sounds like a lot of fun."

"Oh, she's the best."

"Do you get to see her often?"

"Not so much anymore," I confess. "But that's okay. My sisters keep her plenty entertained while I'm abroad."

Her smile widens. "Sisters?"

"Seven, in fact."

"You're kidding. Are you older? Somewhere in the middle?"

"I'm the youngest, actually. They babied me all the time. Still do, matter of fact. I can't go a week without them calling to check up on me."

Winona giggles. "I guess we have that in common, huh? What about—Wait a second."

"What is it?"

"Where are the others?"

I stop in my tracks and turn, realizing Asher, Eddie, and Richard are no longer with us. I have a sneaking suspicion

why they might have ventured off on their own, but I'd rather not worry Winona.

“Something shiny probably caught Eddie’s eye,” I joke lightly. “I’m sure they’ll catch up with us soon. Is there anywhere else you’d like to go while we’re in town?”

She casts a curious glance over my shoulder, but says, “Maybe this dress shop? I accidentally packed all my winter sweaters, so I’m hoping to find something light for the weather.”

I hold the door open for her with a grand sweep of my hand. “After you, ma’am.”

The shop is cramped, but that’s true for most places when you’re my size. Clothing racks are arranged in tight rows, and the width of my body takes up the entire aisle. But as I watch Winona browse through the clothes and pick out a few summer dresses, my discomfort slowly dissipates. I notice little things, like how she prefers simple patterns in bright colors, or when she glances at the price and deems it too expensive, her nose curls adorably before she puts the item back on the rack.

“What’s wrong with that one?” I ask her.

Winona huffs. “It costs a hundred and twenty bucks.”

“Didn’t William say you could put everything on his card?”

“Yes, but I’d feel guilty buying something that expensive on his dime. There’s nothing wrong with a fifteen-dollar dress.”

I decide I don’t want to hear any of it. I pluck the dress off the rack and hand it to her. “Go try it on.”

“It’s too expensive, Tank.”

“No harm in taking it for a test drive, though, right?”

Winona takes the dress, laughing under her breath. “Why do I have a feeling you won’t take no for an answer?”

“Because I won’t. I think you can get changed over there.”

There are a couple of stalls in the back corner of the boutique shop, nothing but a flimsy navy curtain for privacy. I guess this place isn't big enough for a private change room.

“Will you stand watch?” Winona asks, her voice as sweet as honey.

I chuckle. “Don't worry, I'll protect you from any looky-loos.”

She steps into the stall while I remain just on the other side of the curtain, observing the other shoppers and noting the exits. I know I'm not on duty right now, but old habits die hard. The throb of my healing arm serves as a reminder to always be on guard. My injury is proof that things can go wrong at the turn of a dime, and while I don't expect any trouble in this quaint little town, I'd rather play it safe than sorry.

I take a quick glance out the store's street-facing windows and spot the boys on the other side of the street next to the public water feature. I obviously have no idea what they're saying, but their body language speaks volumes. I think Asher and Richard are finally getting at it, and poor Eddie is caught in the middle of it. I really hope those two can work things out—and sooner rather than later.

“Tank?” Winona calls out softly. I hear the curtain pulling aside.

“Yeah, sugar?” I don't even mean to use the endearment, it just sort of slips out. It's fitting, I think, since everything about her is so sweet it's enough to make my teeth hurt. Thankfully, Winona doesn't seem to take issue.

“Would you mind helping me with the zipper?” she asks. “I can't quite reach.”

Before I can answer, Winona turns and exposes the soft, milky surface of her back. I have no sweet clue why my hand is so shaky. I've been trapped under enemy fire. Nearly blown up by an IED. Tasked with leading full-on assault raids in the dead of night, enemies surrounding us on all sides—but *this* makes me nervous?

Slowly, carefully, I drag the zipper of her dress up, intently following the line of her spine. My knuckles graze her bare skin. There's something electric in the air. It makes the hairs on my arms stand on end, the space between us thick and heavy with anticipation. I almost hate that the zipper isn't longer, because before I know it, the job's done and I know I can't stay.

When I look up, I find Winona watching me in the reflection of the changing stall's mirror. Her eyes darken with something intense and hungry, but I'm no better. My own expression is full of obvious want and a burning focus. I guess I don't have as good of a poker face as I thought.

Could it be how irresistible she looks in that dress? Or maybe it's the fact that she's off limits that has me in a tailspin. Or is it because she reminds me so much of an abandoned kitten in need of safe keeping?

I could protect her, if she wanted. I could keep her safe.

"Maybe I'll get the dress, after all," she mumbles.

We're still staring at each other, but it isn't awkward. It's charged and tense, neither of us willing to be the first to break. Except I do because what other choice do I have?

"We should get going," I mumble. "I think the guys are waiting outside."

"Okay. Let me just change and I'll—"

"Wear it out. It looks good on you."

Her cheeks flush pink. "I still have to pay for it."

My fingers graze the nape of her delicate neck and slip just beneath the collar of the dress. I find the price tag and quickly swipe it off her. "I'll take care of it," I said. "Consider it a homecoming present."

Winona gives me an appreciative smile, a protest on her lips, so I turn on my heels and walk straight to the cashier. I'm happy to do it. There's frankly nothing nicer than treating the little lady to something she more than deserves.

And I think a fine belle like Winona deserves it all.



END OF PREVIEW

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

K.C. Crowne is an Amazon Top 10 bestseller.

All books are FREE on Kindle Unlimited and can be read as standalones.

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