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CREA REITAN



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TIME

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FOR YOUR LOVE

BOOK I



# CREA REITAN

dragon fire fantasy

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For Your Time

For Your Love | Book 1

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This story is about friendship and what that means for different people. No two friendships look alike but that doesn't mean that one is wrong and another is right. Friends are those who support you through everything and pick you up when you need it. In this story, you'll find friends to the extreme and while there might be some other feelings involved, the friendship is always there as a priority.

This story is about being comfortable in your own skin and staying true to who you are. As with the friendships featured in this story and what the world/society decides is acceptable, we also meet some characters who go against the grain of what's appropriate. It's not always easy to stay confident and live your best life. Sometimes it's downright heartbreaking.

This story is about learning about yourself, even when it's uncomfortable. Amongst all the unnecessary and useless topics people are required to learn growing up, some rather important things are left out. Like when you find yourself different from your peers but don't understand why. When you think there's something wrong with you but you're not sure where to turn to find answers. When you're taught that there's gay and straight nothing in between, you might begin to question why you don't fit into either side.

Coming to terms with the idea that the world isn't black and white is a big theme in this book. Men aren't always masculine but they can like pretty dresses and pastel colors. Gay men aren't always feminine but can be strong, confident, and enjoy what's considered the 'straight man's' traits. And that sexuality is a spectrum in some people. It's not just gay and straight but there's a whole array of colors in between.

This story is a whole lot of everything with a long list of topics, tropes, themes, and elements. To name some so you're not caught unaware: sugar daddy, professor/student, breath play, pain play, cock warming, breeding kink, subspace, strict top/bottom, age gap, BFF/sibling co-dependency.

If anything you just read bothers you, makes you uneasy, or isn't what you're looking for, please do not read this book.



Otherwise, enjoy this story about self-discovery, friendship, love, and growth.

One

## SIMON



THE NIGHT AIR IS COOL. I welcome it because I know before too long I'll be inside the crowded club with too many sweaty bodies to count. I'm only in jeans and a t-shirt, despite the chilly January air. At least we're not in the north. Going out in the winter would be such a chore.

Declan's fingers lace with mine and I glance his way. Damon's already behind me, his chest pressed to my back, chin on my shoulder.

"You sure you don't mind?" Declan asks. "We can go to Sinners instead."

I look up at the club's sign. Every letter of Stripes is a different color of the rainbow, declaring for all to see what the place is—a gay club. Smirking, I shake my head. "You've been bitching for two days that you need a hookup."

"It's not like I won't be able to find one at Sinners," Declan says.

Damon snorts his agreement. They aren't wrong. Every time we go to Sinners for me to find a hookup, they do as well. Or maybe instead. I don't always go through with a hookup. It's more than a mood thing for me. Sometimes, I'm just not into it. And my body is kind of a bitch about hookups.

"Nah. I'm good."

I feel the twins frown. Damon and Declan are identical at six feet even. Their hair is on the darker brown side, longer on top so that the messy strands reach their cheekbones and short in the back. They have pouty lips, something that I've heard

men comment on so many times that I can't help but notice and agree with. It's their eyes that I appreciate the most, though. A unique green-gray with flecks of brown near their pupils.

They are also shameless about their bodies, loving every contour. And will take every opportunity to show it off. Right now, they are both wearing jock straps—which I know because their pants are low on their narrow hips—and button-down shirts, unbuttoned and open for the world to see their lean figures.

At least they don't dress alike unless their parents make them for some family picture, which still happens despite them being twenty-two. Parents will be parents, and all that. The thought makes my chest tight, and I shove the thought away.

They're still frowning at me, though. "When's the last time you hooked up?" Damon asks.

I sigh. "You're needier than I am," I tell them. "You've been going on about needing a dick in your mouth for days. I'm nearly tempted to give you mine to shut you up."

Declan's hand squeezes mine, and I flash him a grin. Our friendship is what the world deems inappropriate for anyone outside of a romantic and physical relationship. Very touchy. Very close. Including in public.

It's just how we've always been since we were kids, though. Affection was high on our priority list and we never thought about it. That mentality carried on as we grew up. Since we weren't hurting anyone, we didn't give a shit what others said or thought about it.

However, there were lines. Boundaries. Even if they look like we passed them long ago.

The line moves forward a few feet and we follow.

"Seriously, Simon. When was your last girlfriend?"

I sigh, giving Declan a deadpan look. "I'm good. Stop prying into my sex life and worry about your own."

"Your lack of one," Damon says.

“By choice,” I say emphatically. “If I want sex, I’ll get it.”

They huff in unison, and I smirk. I’ve known them for so long and so well that I don’t need to see them to know who speaks. Who’s touching me. Which sound of frustration comes from which man. The world sees them as identical, but to me, they’re very individual.

“So, what’s your goal tonight?” I ask, trying to drive the conversation back to where I’d rather it be.

“Big fat cock,” Declan says, grinning. He looks ahead as the line moves another few people nearer to the door. “I want to choke.”

Damon nods.

I chuckle. It’s always the same with them; they like to be used. Yet, I also know they’re tops. They don’t hold details back.

Damon’s hands move to my hips, one slipping into my front pocket. I know what he’s doing and try to swallow my frown. I hate when they stick money in my pockets. In my jacket. In my backpack. I know they don’t do it for any other reason than to take care of me, but I’m to the point where it’s my only true stressor.

I hate taking their money. I hate living off them and their family. Despite needing to make a change, I just don’t know how.

We finally make it to the front and the bouncer, Micah, smiles recognizing us immediately. “Whitakers,” he says, flashing his startling white teeth. “Everett,” he says to me, winking.

Everyone knows I’m the straight man that comes to the gay club with his gay best friends. We’d call it a wingman thing, but they don’t need wingmen. While I’ve never thought to really take inventory of what men look like, I’m aware of what makes men attractive and desirable. I happen to fall into that category easily enough, fortunately. I’ve never had an issue getting a girlfriend or a hookup.

Neither have Declan and Damon. So, yeah, the twins don't need a wingman. And if they did, they'd be better wingmen for each other than I would be.

Micah does his job and checks our IDs, which is unnecessary at this point, since he knows our names. But he never lets anyone slip by that shouldn't. He stamps our hands as over twenty-one and then allows us to enter.

We could have already guessed that it would be crowded based on how long we'd had to wait in line. Which, while longer than usual, wasn't more than fifteen minutes.

"Look at all the options," Declan says, his hand squeezing mine once more. "So many cocks."

I laugh, shaking my head.

He goes on to describe exactly what he wants tonight. How it will weigh on his tongue and leak for him. How they'll have to force it down his throat because it's going to be too big. I glance back at Damon, his eyes already dark with lust as we listen to his brother.

Shaking my head, I let them lead me to the dance floor. They immediately sandwich me between them. It isn't a group dance. It is a true sandwich. Declan is still in front, one of his hands wrapped around me to cup my ass as he grinds against me, pressing his half hard cock to my thigh. His other hand roams over my stomach and chest.

Damon is no different except he has one hand low on my stomach, the other in my hair as he tilts my head so he can bite at my neck.

Closing my eyes, I let them do what they want, listening to the too loud music pulse through my blood like alcohol. I've always thought that because I have no physical reaction to them and their hands all over me that I was undoubtedly straight. I mean, when I do find someone attractive enough to want to hookup with, it's always been a girl.

We move on the floor for three songs before they turn me around in their arms so that they switch positions. Declan pulls my hand up and I tangle my fingers in his hair. He grunts, his

hands on my hips as he presses his pelvis to my ass, rubbing his hard length against me.

A smirk covers my mouth in amusement.

Three more songs and we're sweaty. I can feel their hearts pounding in their chests where they're pressed hard to me. Sometimes I think they use me to get their engines running so they don't have to work so hard for a hookup. They're basically roaring to go. I am the appetizer, so they can dive right into the main course.

We're halfway through another song when Declan pulls away. He tips my head back, laying a sloppy kiss to my lips before turning away and getting lost in the crowd. I barely meet Damon's eyes before he does the same.

Then I'm left on the dance floor with dozens of bodies gyrating around me. If I stay there long enough, someone will come over. I know. I've been lost in thought on the dance floor before and have found another body pressed against me, trying to coax me into a dance.

I've found that gay guys are nicer than straight men. No one has had any problem backing away when I tell them I'm not interested. I can't say the same for some of the things I've seen at Sinners.

As I turn to leave, I find myself thinking about their hookups. Choking on a dick. Honestly, if they weren't so fond of the actual act of sex, I'm pretty sure that they'd only focus on sucking cock. It's their thing.

Over the years, I've heard enough about sucking dick that I'm pretty sure I know what to do based on more than knowing what I like about having my own sucked. I glance around, curiosity making me think that perhaps I can try. Just to see if maybe that makes me feel anything.

Does that make me less straight than I claim? But isn't college for experimentation?

Before I can truly decide what I want, a body presses to my back. He's not as insistent and at home as one of the twins, so I know right away that it's a stranger. Which is fine. If I

want to play at sucking a dick, it can't be with the twins. I'm sure that isn't just a line but a cement wall that shouldn't be leapt over in our friendship.

Like most times that someone has approached me here, there's a question in their light touch. Asking me if I want to dance without screaming the words over the music.

I nod and lean back into the firm chest, which gives him enough of an invitation to place his hands on me and press against me a little more intently. I can feel that he's getting hard as he moves against me. His breath hovers over my neck.

For a minute, I consider whether all guys who grind like this are supposed to be hard. Is that a rite of passage? Is the stimulation all that's needed to start the engine?

Pushing that thought away, I realize I need to decide whether I actually want to try sucking dick or not. My sex life has always been a little boring. I've just never been into it. I don't get excited, like the twins or the rest of the world. It's not mind-blowing and honestly, I could take it or leave it. Most of the time, I leave it.

Maybe this will be different.

I look around as my dance partner runs a hand up my stomach and chest. The other stays stationary on my hip, using it to guide me how he wants to dance. His mouth doesn't ever touch my skin, but it skims just a breath away. Teasing. Leaving gooseflesh.

I try to figure out how to tell him what I want. Should I also say I've never done it before? That I just want to try it and I might not like it?

"Do you want me to leave you alone?" the man asks, his lips at the shell of my ear.

I shake my head, shifting so I can glance back at him. He's got long blond hair that's heavy with sweat. It sits shaggily around his face. "No," I tell him. "Just looking for an available dark corner." Was that too forward?

He stills and I wonder whether I've read the situation wrong. Do people go to clubs with an intent *other than*



hooking up? Before my anxiety can take hold, he grabs my wrist and pulls me off the dance floor.

When he shoves me gently into a darkened alcove that blessedly is a little quieter, I sigh a breath of relief that I hadn't made the wrong assumptions. I don't want to think about this too hard, though, so I immediately drop to my knees and look up at him.

There's no mistaking the hunger in his eyes. They're light blue, which is impressive in the shadows of the alcove. The only light in this little cubby is what colored strobes reach us from the dance floor and the dim light from the bar itself.

He's tall. Based on how he fit behind me, probably a little taller than my five-foot-eleven frame. Maybe taller than the twins, but I wasn't paying that close attention. There's day-old scruff along his jaw, framing his thin, light lips. He wears a plaid shirt, the first four buttons undone, letting me see a hint of his smooth chest.

His hand runs through my hair, and my eyes flutter when his fingers dig into my scalp. If I have one weakness, it is that. I love more than anything to have hands in my hair. Massaging my head. If I were a cat, this would make me purr.

I reach up, sliding my hands up his thighs awkwardly until I find the buttons to his pants. I undo them without ceremony and pull them down to his thighs. He moves his shirt out of the way, and I'm left staring at the cock framed in his boxer briefs. He's not small. At all.

Glancing up at him, I find he's not proportionate. I am fairly certain this dick belongs on a really big guy. I swallow, reconsidering what I'm doing here. Maybe the twins should have found this man. This is the cock they're looking for.

But it's here in front of me.

Looking up at him again, he's giving me a half smile that I swear I've seen before. I study his face for a second, trying to decide why I know him. Probably because we're at Stripes at least three times a week. He wouldn't be the first face that's become familiar.

Swallowing, I reach for the elastic and pull it away from his body, unwrapping him as if he might be a bomb and explode if I move too quickly. I bring his underwear down, shoving them to his thighs so his cock is left bare for me. There's already a bead of pre-cum at the tip and I stare at it for a heartbeat.

Deciding that I need him to take the lead and do this, I drop my hands to my thighs and look up, opening my mouth for him.

“Jesus,” he says, his voice a growl.

His hand tightens in my hair, but the other grabs the base of his dick and points the monstrosity to my face. It looks even bigger like this. I swallow and lick my lips.

He brushes the tip of his dick across the seam of my mouth, rubbing in his pre-cum like ChapStick. I shiver and look up at him again. The hungry look that met me before is replaced with lust so intense, I can almost feel it radiate off him.

“Open that pretty mouth,” he says.

I do.

Two

## SIMON



“OPEN THAT PRETTY MOUTH.”

I do, and he wastes no time pressing the head of his dick onto my tongue. It’s weird. I shiver again as the thought *there’s a cock in my mouth!* runs through my head. I don’t have long to think about it, though. He presses in further and already my jaw is straining.

Probably should have tried this with a smaller dick. He pulls back and I swallow, flicking my tongue along his length in exploration. I’m not looking at him anymore but staring absently at his hand wrapped around the base of his dick, letting my concentration focus on what he feels like.

When the twins talk about how heavy a dick is on their tongue, I’ve always thought it was a strange expression. It’s not like it’s laying there like a dead fish or something. If anything, it’s straining a bit upwards, right?

But now I understand. There is a weight to it, but maybe not in the traditional sense of the word. He pushes himself back in and hits the back of my throat. I grunt, sucking in a breath. He grunts, too, and I look up at him, my eyes locking with his.

“What do you want me to do?” he asks.

I pull back enough so that I can tell him, “Just get off however you want.”

Honestly, I didn’t think he could look more turned on. I’m wrong. My words make his nostrils flare. His hand in my hair

flexes, sending a jolt of pain through my scalp. I swallow at the way it courses through me.

I settle back and open my mouth again.

“You can deep throat?” he asks.

Shrugging, I give him a single nod. Yeah, that is brave. Considering his cock is the size of my arm.

“Fuck,” he mutters, pushing himself back into my mouth. He’s gentle, even as he drives straight to the back of my mouth until he’s forced to stop unless he’s ready to shove down.

The thought makes me nervous. As he’s working himself in and out of my mouth, I take inventory of whether this is having an effect on me. My heart is racing, sure. That should be expected. I’ve never done this before and he’s about to shove something down my throat that is far too big for that space.

My breaths are a little shallow, rapid. Again, I can’t exactly take full breaths and they’re about to become even more stifled. I’m hot, which could be because the club is hot. Filled to the brink with sweaty bodies moving around and creating more heat. My hands are shaking with nerves.

But my cock? Not hard. Am I aroused at all? It’s hard to say. My body’s reaction could be considered arousal, but my dick isn’t all that interested.

Disappointment floods me before it’s shoved away as the man gently pushes down my throat for the first time. I try to take a breath reflexively and find I can’t. My eyes snap up to him and he pulls out. I swallow a deep breath.

“Okay?” he asks.

I nod. I’m fine. Because I just told him he could do this. I’m not backing down now. Who knows? I might find it arousing further on.

He pushes back in, deeper this time. I wait to gag or choke or something. Besides my immediate need to take a breath, I don’t have any of those reactions. Curious.

My thoughts are lost as he begins to really use my mouth. Three or four deep, quick thrusts before he allows me a breath. A single breath. Then he's fucking my mouth again. He doesn't push in all the way, which is probably really considerate of him. He's fucking big. I'm sure he could reach my lungs or something if he tried.

He's going quicker, and I stare at his face. Wondering why he's so familiar. His eyes, maybe? Saliva begins dripping down my chin.

When his fingers rub in my hair, I groan and my eyes flutter. I can hear him breathing heavily now. He's taking more thrusts than four before letting me breathe; but if he keeps massaging my head, I think he could kill me like this, and I'd be happy to go.

His other hand cups the back of my neck, and he shoves his dick down my throat. Farther. Farthest. So deep that my nose is pressed harshly to his pelvis. Tears sting my eyes. I can feel him twitch in my throat. His grip on my head is tight as he keeps me there.

He pulls back and I gulp in a breath around the head of his dick, but that's all he allows me as he forces himself down my throat again. I still don't choke, which is amazing enough that it penetrates the lightheadedness that's starting to set in.

My hands grip his thighs to steady myself.

"Swallow," he says and I do.

That's when he releases down my throat with a harsh groan. *That* makes me choke, but I don't have a choice but to swallow it down. It's not like I can do anything else. His hands on my head are like vices, holding me in place. His hips rock, his dick pulses with each spurt.

He pulls out and I cough, sucking in a breath. I get half a breath before he buries himself again. I'm a mess of tears, spit, and cum as he empties himself, forcing me to swallow it or drown.

Finally, he lets me go, and I cough as I swallow big gulps of air. My hands are shaking. I can taste him on my tongue, in

my throat. It's bitter and a little salty. Strange, but I suppose there are worse tastes. He gives me a minute before pulling me to my feet and gently wiping my face with his shirt.

"Are you okay?" he asks. "Did I hurt you?"

I snort, my throat feels raw. Shaking my head, I meet his eyes. There's concern there as he studies me, gently cleaning my face. Fuck. Why do I know him?! He drops his shirt and I follow his eyes as he looks at my neck. His fingers trail down the length and I shiver again.

"I didn't realize you're gay," he says, confirming that we do know each other somehow.

Shaking my head, I laugh a little. It sounds raspy. "I'm not." I wince at the sound of my voice, though I laugh again. "My best friends are, which is why I'm here so often. We switch clubs."

He doesn't stop staring. Is he waiting for me to recognize him? It's going to drive me insane if I don't.

"You're not, huh?"

I laugh again. "They're always talking about sucking dick. I thought I'd see what the big deal was."

He smirks and finally, I place him. My eyes go wide. "Professor?"

He winces and bows his head, taking a step back. "Yes."

Now I really laugh. "You always hookup with students?"

He scowls at me, and I only grin further. I don't miss the smile that's tugging at the corners of his lips. "Never," he says. "I... don't know why I'm even here tonight. I never come here."

It's the closest gay bar to school, so of course, it's filled with students. But there's also a Navy base close by as well as a textile factory that employs hundreds. So while the club is filled with college twinkles, there's usually a healthy mix of others too.

"Not judging," I say, shrugging.

Professor Stommer takes a step closer to me again, his gaze still locked on mine. I had him last semester. He teaches shop, which is like an extension of the little glimpse of using your hands to build shit in high school. I needed an elective, and it seemed to fit the bill. I learned all about tools and even built a rocking chair that's now housed on the twins' parents' back porch with pride. You'd think they were my parents with how they went on about it and how proud they were.

I suppose they are my parents in the basic sense of the word. They filled in the gap, anyway.

Professor Stommer sighs. "Seriously, I rarely come here. I was just..."

"Horny?" I ask.

He gives me a smile. "Yeah."

"And you recognized me?" I ask, raising a brow.

I don't miss the flush on his cheeks. "I did," he says carefully. "You're not my student anymore."

I raise my hands, leaning against the wall behind me. "Again, not judging."

He sighs again and runs a hand through his messy blond hair. Then he looks at me, his eyes moving down my body. "So you're not gay and just wanted to see what it's about?"

"Yep." I shrug. "Years, Professor. They've been talking about dick for years. This is more than a couple of boys just obsessed with their own junk and what to do with it. I know details you can't even imagine."

He laughs. "Quinlan," he says. "Stop calling me Professor. I feel like I'm going to get fired."

"Will you?" I ask.

"You're not my student and your major is not in my department. I might get slapped on the wrist, but ultimately, no. Probably not. I'd still not like to push that, though."

Nodding, I glance into the club.



“So?” he asks. When I look at him, he’s moved closer. “How was your first blowjob?”

I shrug. It didn’t do to me what I hoped it might. I didn’t realize that’s what I was hoping for—any physical arousal at all—but there you have it. “Fine,” I say. “You’re... big.”

He grins. “You have a perfect mouth.” His eyes drop to my mouth and then further to my throat. He touches my neck again, his thumb running the length of my throat before meeting my eyes. “I didn’t hurt you?”

“No.” I shrug. “I mean, my throat feels like sandpaper right now, but I’m fine.”

“You didn’t gag,” he muses.

“Yeah, I noticed that too.” I grin at him.

His hand drops to my hip, and he looks down between our bodies. “You want me to—”

I shake my head, cutting him off. It’s a really big chore to try to let someone get me hard if I’m just not there. And I’m not. Though, maybe not as far from being there as other sex acts typically leave me. I *might* be able to get there.

That’s an awkward conversation that I don’t really want to have with my professor, though.

“I’m good,” I assure him.

He raises a brow. “Yeah?”

One might interpret that as I enjoyed it enough to get off hands free. But the way he’s looking at me says otherwise. I smile again and shake my head. “Really, Professor. I’m good. It was an experiment.”

“Hm,” he answers. “One you’d like to repeat?”

“Have you met the twins?” I ask.

His startlement at the question makes him blink at me. “No? I know who they are. It’s hard not to when they were there all the time hanging around you, but I didn’t have them in class.”

“I ask because what you have is their holy grail. They’d be happy to choke on you.”

The expression he gives me makes me laugh. Like I was trying to set him up with my kid sister. There wasn’t another look that said ‘I’m not interested’ more clearly than that.

“Alright,” I say, still chuckling. “Not interested. Got it.”

He snorts, bowing his head. He’s really close now. Nearly against me. I’m not sure when he pulled up his pants and put his mile long schlong away, but he’s dressed again. Probably while I was sucking in air so I wouldn’t pass out.

“I don’t hook up with students,” he says. “I generally look for someone older to assure that they’re not a student.”

“I’m just a pretty exception, huh?” I ask, teasing.

“Something like that,” he says, smirking.

There’s something flirty in the way he looks at me. I recognize it for what it is, but I say nothing. He knew who I was when he approached me on the dance floor. Part of me thinks maybe I should be bothered by that. But then, why? We’re both adults. I consented to being mouth fucked by a monster dick.

He satisfied my curiosity and now I can move on. End of discussion.

Except that I don’t go back to the dance floor. I don’t go to the bar. I remain in the alcove with him as he progressively gets closer to me until he’s pressed against me. His mouth skimming over my neck like he can’t help it.

His cock is hardening again. I can feel it pressed against my thigh. Does he think I’ll give him a second? Will I?

We continue to talk about nothing. There’s a flirty undertone, but I told him I wasn’t really into guys. I told him that this was just something I was curious about since Declan and Damon were always going on and on about it.

So, if he wants to touch me, then fine. I’m used to touch. I love being touched. Crave it. To be stroked. Pet. I’m a damned

cat. Especially when he threads his fingers into my hair again, which he notices.

Professor Stommer chuckles, his lips at the shell of my ear. “You purr when I do this.”

I laugh, breathlessly. “Yeah, I’ve been told. It’s my Achilles heel. I’m pretty mindless when there are fingers in my hair.”

“Good to know,” he says, voice heated again.

Maybe I should discourage him. Push him away. Encourage distance between us so he doesn’t get the wrong idea. But I am all the things. I crave affection and attention.

The Professor has just found my weakness.

Three

## QUINLAN



THERE WAS no one thing that drew me to Simon Everett. The moment he walked into my shop class last semester, I was borderline obsessed. Completely inappropriate, yes, but from my experience as a member of faculty in two different universities, it wasn't that uncommon.

Simon looked like a surfer with his sun-bronzed skin and sleek, hard body. His hair was dark with sun-kissed highlights, much longer on top and shaved on the sides. His eyes were also dark. Though there was a bit of eternal youth in his face, it was lean with a defined jawline.

I was hooked.

The end of the semester couldn't come soon enough. I'd needed him out of my classroom, so I'd stop drooling over him.

Why did I come to Stripes tonight? Because I was horny and too tired to drive to the second nearest gay club, almost forty minutes away.

I knew Simon wasn't gay. Though the twins that were always with him were—something they made entirely clear to everyone around—and they were possessively all over Simon, it didn't take me long to see that they weren't together. Simon was... well, I couldn't say straight, but I didn't think he was gay.

In the months I had him in class, I tried to figure out his sexuality. Not because I had any intention of pursuing him, but because it would at least lead my fantasies in the right

direction. Was I fantasizing about a gay man in which it would be love (or lust, anyway) at first sight? Was this a bi-awakening fantasy? Or, my favorite, a gay for you fantasy?

He didn't appear to be overly interested in either gender, but when he watched someone, it was usually female. I'd never seen him flirt or make any effort in hooking up or dating, so I couldn't be sure.

When I saw him on the dance floor tonight with the twins, I didn't look away. I couldn't help myself. I stared, hard as fuck, as they danced. Their hands were all over him, grinding their obvious hard-ons against him.

And Simon? I studied his face more than I didn't. He wasn't aroused, but he was comfortable. His trust in them was complete, thorough, so deep that he didn't even question what they were doing to him. Hell, his eyes were rarely opened and the serene expression on his face only solidified that his trust in the twins was absolute.

He'd smiled when they went off to find their releases. Apparently, there was a line they didn't cross with Simon. He started to make his way back to the bar and then paused, his gaze flittering around the dance floor.

I was out of my stool before I'd even contemplated doing so. My body against his was not a hard contrast to the twins. There was no fucking way he couldn't have felt how hard I was for him. When he basically said he wanted to hook up, I didn't think. At all. Just dragged him to the nearest empty alcove.

The entire thing was far too fast and better than any fantasy. Seeing him on his knees before me, taking my dick in his perfect mouth, was the best thing I'd ever felt. Simon was fucking perfect.

Even the pseudo flirting that's now following our hookup is great. I hope I can get him on his knees again. Hell, maybe I can get him to turn around and let me lick his ass before stuffing him with my dick.

It will never be enough, but if I'm only getting this one encounter with him, I'm going to see what he'll let me do.

So far, I'm pressed against him again, my lips on his neck.

Simon stands relaxed, hands in his pockets as he leans against the wall. There's a smile on his face; his voice is raw from how I used his throat. That I made him sound like that has my cock already stiffening for a second time, much quicker than is probably healthy.

The sexy little sound that comes out of his throat, rumbling in his chest when I gently tangle my fingers in his hair and massage his head, is addicting. I'm almost licking his neck as I press my dick to his thigh. No reason to hold back now. He had my cock in his mouth not ten minutes ago. Obviously, I want him.

However, I don't let my hands roam his body like the twins' were. He may seem to not care that I'm practically humping his leg, but I won't push my luck. Hell, I'm not even going to suggest we go again. If he's willing, I sure as fuck won't say no. But like the first time, it has to be his idea. His initiative. Not mine.

We don't talk about school. That seems like it's going to be a storm cloud constantly over our heads, reminding us that this thing is really bad. I downplayed that I shouldn't be hooking up with students, but I really don't think I'd get in too much trouble if something came of it.

Now I am letting my imagination take a turn it shouldn't. Nothing is coming of it. This is a one-time thing. No repeats. I know that.

Just because my dick isn't getting the memo doesn't mean I'm one of the horny college students and will allow myself to beg for a repeat.

I so want to, though.

When a shadow falls into the alcove, darkening the space so I can't see anything, I step back. And then step further back when I see the angry faces of the twins standing there glaring at me. The anger in their faces is... evident. The

possessiveness. Protectiveness. The one on the right is clenching his fists.

Simon smiles. “You guys done?”

The one about to hit me nods. His angry eyes never leave me, tracking me like a predator.

“Let’s go,” the one on the left says, grabbing Simon’s hand and pulling him from the alcove. There’s a moment where the other stares at me, a clear threat in his expression, before he turns away and follows.

As I watch, Simon laughs, bumping his shoulder into the one dragging him away. He doesn’t look back, something that makes my chest tight with disappointment. Speaking of disappointment, my cock is extraordinarily upset that it’s left hard and wanting. Never mind that I just had the man of my semester-long obsession on his knees with my cock down his perfect, virgin throat.

Not gay. Not even curious in the exploratory sense of the word. I didn’t feel any real reaction from him. Which leads me to believe what he claimed. The twins talk about sucking dick enough that Simon wanted to see what the big deal was.

It did nothing for him, though.

Frowning, I head for the door ten minutes later, giving them enough time to leave so we wouldn’t have an awkward moment where the sight of me would make them want to murder me again.

I’m fortunate enough to live close to campus in a subdivision filled with maze-like winding and intersecting streets and nearly identical houses. From what I’d seen, there are three different floor plans; three different style houses. Sometimes they’re mirrored so the floor plan is flipped, but there’s no imagination here.

The houses themselves are one of five bland colors, three shades of beige, white, or light gray. Nothing even remotely interesting.

Mine is gray. I scoured through the HOA book to see if I could give my house some personality. Like painting the trim



bright green or something. No. The answer is no. Instead, I focus on the yard, planting a wide array of rainbow-colored flowers all around. I also have little Pride flags and statuary within my gardens.

I imagined it would cause some loud ninnies to complain, but I've been here for four years and have yet to receive a single comment. In fact, I get a lot of compliments on my flowers. It's weird and I'm wary of it, refusing to let myself get too comfortable.

I've lived in many places over the years. Being the child of an Army General meant I've lived all over the world. Being the openly gay son meant I've seen an endless stream of hate in my life. There's nothing that can really surprise me at this point.

Except the absence of hate. Seriously, no one even gives me the side eye when they think I'm not looking.

I'd chosen Longwood University over the position I held at an ivy league university because it boasted that the campus and town were queer friendly. It was right there in bright rainbow colors on the front page of their website.

I visited the school and immediately fell in love with the campus. They weren't wrong. It wasn't just a front. After spending a long weekend in town, I decided that this was exactly where I wanted to be.

So I moved mid semester, which was rather shitty of me, but I haven't been happier anywhere else. In my entire life. The one thing I'd say was that the town and college aren't just queer friendly, they're accepting. It's not something that people say they are to keep up a show. They simply don't care. You are you and I'm me. We're not hurting each other.

After the first week, I called my parents and sobbed over the phone. Cried like that time when I was thirteen and had been bullied so badly that I was hiding under my bed as if they'd followed me home. But these tears were very different. I couldn't believe where I was. How this little sliver of the world lived. I had to share it.

That was four years ago.

I pull into my driveway and park my car in the garage. My dick's deflated, but I swear, it's like a sad puppy right now. I had a taste of Simon. It doesn't satisfy my newly awoken hunger for him, but makes me starve for more.

When the semester ended last month, I came to terms with the fact that Simon was out of my sight. I would move on. And I had.

I went home for the holidays. Hooked up with a couple different men. Came back to new classes with new faces. It was all fine. It *is* all fine.

Then I had to get fucking horny and take a chance at Stripes. Now I'm still free-falling down the rabbit hole that is my obsession with Simon Everett.

"Stupid," I mumble as I walk in the door. The motor of the garage door rumbles behind me while I flip the light switch off and close the door, locking myself inside.

I don't regret the hookup. But what was I thinking? Now I know what his mouth looks like around my dick. How tight and pure his throat is; that there's only been my dick inside it. His face as he looked up at me. Telling me to take him however I want.

The thought of it alone makes my dick fill again. I'll never get this vision out of my head. There's no way. Obsession has moved on to something else. Something more. Beyond a fixation.

I want Simon, but fuck if I can go after him.

Then there's the two rabid pit bulls that I'd need to get through to even get near him again. The fucking twins. They know who I am. There was no mistaking the way they looked at me.

Stripping, I head into the shower. I'm loath to wash Simon's spit off me, but I was just in a club. Clubs are dirty. Even the clean ones are dirty. Do I take that opportunity to jerk off to the memory of Simon at my feet? Yes. It's harsh and quick, an orgasm that almost hurts as I spray the wall.

Clean, dry, and naked, I climb into bed. For just a brief few minutes, I imagine him next to me. Where I can roll over and stroke him under the blankets. To feel what he has between his legs. Bury myself in his ass as he arches under me, jaw tense, dick throbbing and dripping.

Groaning, I roll over, facing the window where I can see the lone streetlight across the street. No more. It was one time. It won't happen again.

I won't even see Simon again. He's not my student, and he's not in my department. It happened once, which is more than I ever thought I'd get.

Once is simply not enough.

Four

## SIMON



THE APARTMENT we live in is close to campus. It's technically part of the school though we pay board separately. Not through scholarships or other school programs. It's like paying rent.

The twins' parents pay for it. None of us work, though the twins always have money. Not just because their family is decently well off, but because their parents made investments in their names while they were growing up. So that affords them some passive income. They've been making money since before they were legally old enough to work.

They're silent as we walk the few blocks home. Silent and brooding. Declan doesn't let go of my hand, his grip tight and angry. Damon is a storm behind us.

I don't try to talk to them. Not yet. I'll let them get over their irritation first. Considering I'm not entirely sure what they're angry about, I decide not to poke the bears.

We step inside and still Declan doesn't let me go. He pulls me along to the bathroom and turns the shower on. I move to the sink and brush my teeth. I can still faintly taste Professor Stommer on my tongue. It's a very strange sensation.

When I'm done, two sets of hands are on me, stripping my clothes and pushing me under the water. They join me and for a minute, there's silence while only Damon is under the stream of hot water. We shuffle a couple times so that we're all wet, and then there's more silence as they lather me.

I don't say anything as they meticulously wash every inch of my body and then my hair. My eyes close as I sway under

the delicious sensation. I'm left alone while they wash and then we're out, drying ourselves.

They head to our room, and I watch them go with a brow raised. Still not a word. Nothing.

Turning, I grab the mail with my name on it from the kitchen counter and head into the room. I slip into a pair of boxer briefs and flip through my mail. I frown when I see one from the admission department. A pit grows in my stomach.

Opening it, I almost choke. After my scholarships and grants, there is a balance of \$1,032.16 due for this semester. My body breaks out in a sweat, my fingers shake. My eyesight grows dark, as the only thing I can see is the number.

Where the fuck am I going to get \$1,000?

I jump when I hear them coming and stuff the piece of paper under a textbook. Their anger disappears when they see whatever expression I have on my face. They're there in a second, sandwiching me between them.

Damon's hands on either side of my face have me looking straight into his eyes. "Did he hurt you?"

For a minute, I have no idea what he's talking about. My brows knit together in confusion as I try to determine what a 'he' has to do with the money I owe the school. "What?"

He frowns. "What has you looking so sick?"

"Oh. I'm... tired."

Declan's teeth sink into my neck, and I flinch before a laugh escapes. Damn boys chastise me like I'm their pup.

"Really, I don't want to talk about it. Can we just sleep?"

Damon is still frowning at me; Declan's fingers dig into my hips. Neither wants me to let it go. They don't like when I keep something from them. I get that. I rarely keep anything from them.

Unless it concerns money. I hate being a freeloader, and they know that. Despite that, they argue that I'm not.

I understand where they're coming from. I do. If the situation were reversed, I'd give them everything I had. The shirt off my back, which they've done. My food, which they do. Endless love and affection. Again, they do.

Damon's mouth presses against mine, and I sigh, closing my eyes. See? Always affectionate.

"Come on," he says and steps away. I follow as he climbs into our bed. Declan turns the light off and then joins us.

Our bed is full size, though you might not know that if you saw how close they sleep. It's not shoulder to shoulder. They literally sandwich me between them. For the next few minutes, their hands run over my body as if they're performing an inspection. To see if there are marks on me. Bruises. Any injuries.

It's only as they do this that I realize what they were asking. "He didn't hurt me," I say into the dark.

Their hands stop, completely in sync. Hell, their breaths on my skin are synchronized too. It's weird. Some people see how they often move as one person, not mirrored, but like duplicates, and find it disturbing. I find it unsettling when they're not synced together.

"Why was he touching you?" Declan asks, his face in mine. I can smell his minty toothpaste.

"We danced and then it was too loud to talk," I tell them, recognizing the lie on my tongue. By the way Declan frowns at me, he does too.

I can't bring myself to say the words, though. It's not embarrassment. Not shame. It takes me several minutes to realize it's because they're going to get angry again and I don't want that.

We've been best friends since second grade. We spent so much time together, it was like we were brothers. They were always affectionate with each other and when they accepted me as their best friend, that affection turned to me.

I came from a very huggy home. My mother was always hugging me. Telling me how much she loved me. How proud

she was of me. How happy she was that I was her son. My father was the same. I loved my home.

Then my mother died, and everything changed. My father drank and drank and drank. At ten, the entire world I knew slipped away into a dark forest.

It was the love of my best friends that showed me there was still light to be seen. Their already generous affection doubled. Tripled. Their hands were always on me. They constantly held my hand and had their arms around me. They told me every day how much they loved me. How much I meant to them.

They commented on my schoolwork and showered me with silly things like flowers and homemade cards. They quite literally replaced my parents' affection with their own without really trying to.

My father's drunkenness meant he wasn't there. Physically, he was. But that wasn't saying much. I never had clean clothes. No food. There were so many times that I was forgotten somewhere.

That's when the twins' parents stepped in. I wasn't sure what went down between the adults. I was only ten, and they did well to keep me out of it. To keep me as carefree and oblivious to the workings of adults as they could. But I moved into their home and became their third son.

I stayed there throughout high school. They took care of me and loved me like their own.

The twins, as we grew older, became not just extra loving, but extraordinarily possessive and protective. That continued, growing more all the time.

What the world saw was a very inappropriate relationship. They didn't know the truth because they didn't care to hear it. That was fine with us. I wasn't going to give them up for anything.

But it's this protective side of them I avoided angering. I've seen how nasty they can get. Not to me. Never to me. But to someone who's ever attempted to hurt me. They may not be



super big and filled with muscles, but there were two of them and they moved like they were one. They can definitely cause some damage.

They know who Professor Stommer is. More times than not, they were waiting outside my class when it ended. There's no doubt in my mind that they recognized him.

My gut tells me not to mention what went down. Not right now, anyway.

So I don't say anything at all. I close my eyes and let their hands brushing my bare skin and their lips feathering on me, lull me into sleep. A sleep so sound and secure between them that not even my financial crisis can penetrate the peacefulness.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Simon', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

UNTIL MORNING when it hits me so hard that I can barely catch my breath. I need \$1,000!

They can see my distress as soon as I open my eyes. It might be because I'm gasping. But fuck, my chest hurts as my panic rises. *I'm going to be kicked out of school.*

“Simon, what did he do to you?” Damon asks.

Once more, I blink at him. He who?

He sighs again, sitting up and pulling me with him. His gaze roams over me as if my body will tell him what he wants to know. Declan's hands mirror where his eyes trace but on my back.

“No,” I say, pushing them both away and climbing out of bed. “Will you please forget him? He didn't do anything to me. He didn't hurt me. We were talking. That's all.”

“His hand was in your hair, his cock pressed against your hip, his mouth on your neck,” Damon says, voice tight. “I'm not sure if you're aware, but I've been in that position many times.”

“With you,” Declan adds. I can hear the bemusement in his voice, though he’s just as irritated.

I sigh, washing a hand over my face and then through my hair. “Fine. Yes. All that. Not a big deal. And it has nothing to do with—”

My words cut off. Not only did I just admit that something is clearly bothering me, but now they really won’t let it go. I sigh in frustration. “Look. I’m going to be late this afternoon. I need to check out the work-study program again.”

Giving them my back before they can say anything, I head for the drawers to find some clothing. I can feel their frowns. I know what’s coming and mentally count down until they speak. It’s a toss up which will. I’m betting on Damon. A grin flashes across my face when I’m right.

“You don’t need to work,” he says, and I mouth the words with him. “We’ll give you whatever money you need.”

A pit forms in my stomach. No, it doesn’t form. It’s been there for years. Growing bigger and bigger as time moved on. I’ve tried to explain it to them, but they don’t get it. They grew up unconcerned about money. It was always there. Whenever they asked for something, they had it. Not just from their parents, but from their income streams.

They’d always been aware of it, and they learned how to manage it early on. They were whizzes at finance because of this and smart when it came to money growth and investments.

But they don’t understand why I don’t like to take their money. I try to tell them that it’s not mine. I didn’t earn it. Neither did they, is their argument.

The whole thing runs through my mind for the hundred thousandth time as I slip into pants and pull them up. I turn to face them as I button, and they’re giving me identical frowns.

“You know what I’m going to say, just as I know your stance on it. Bottom line, whether you understand, agree with, or like it, is that I don’t like taking your money. Not yours. Not your parents’. I need to make my own. It’s important to me,” I tell them.

“Alright, we’ve never stood in your way about that,” Declan says. “But why did you all the sudden become panicked about it again last night and this morning?”

“Also, you’ve looked at work-study positions and hated them. They pay shit too. Minimum wage. *Federal* minimum wage,” Damon adds.

“I just had a reminder that my bank account isn’t very happy,” I say and lean back to wiggle my feet into socks.

Both sets of eyes turn to my desk where I’d been standing last night. They don’t say anything. They know the answer is there. I could get the notice and stuff it in my pocket, but that’s not exactly a deterrent for either of them. I could also tell them to leave it be and they’ll humor me until I’m not home and then investigate.

So I leave it.

The pit grows heavier because I know by doing so that they’ll take care of it. The sour feeling is enough that I turn away to pull a shirt out as tears sting my eyes. I hate feeling like this. Dead weight. Helpless. Useless.

I slip a shirt over my head without a word, still feeling their eyes on me. By the time I pull a Longwood U hoodie over my head, I’ve warred with the sick feeling in my chest for long enough. I walk to my desk and pull the slip out, handing it to them on my way out of my room.

In the kitchen, my stomach growls, reminding me I need to eat. Instead, I skip getting food that they bought and mentally try to calculate how much money is in my account.

When I turned eighteen, I received some money from my mother’s life insurance. But this year, I ran out. There might be \$300 left. While the twins and their parents tried to pay for anything, I’d let them so I could save the money for when I needed it; I attempted to refuse as much as I could. The twins always found my invoices and made sure that something was paid before I managed to. It didn’t matter where I hid it.

Part of me thought I did it on purpose. I *know* that my money will run out. I *know* that I’m on borrowed time before I

actually need to become a working member of society. It's not that I'm against it. But I wanted to get through college by pouring my focus into grades alone.

Slipping into my shoes, I glance at the kitchen before slinging my backpack over my shoulders. I barely have the door open when there are hands on me, pulling me back to them. Declan's hand in my hair turns my head so he can kiss me.

Most of the time, their kisses are just pecks. Not quite something you share with family. But nothing that's too incredibly intimate. More than friends but not quite lovers.

This is a little different. Longer. His mouth is hot against mine as he presses harder against me. When he pulls away, he looks into my eyes until Damon takes his kiss. It's the same. Always the same.

"You better fucking eat," Damon says.

It's stupid of me. I shouldn't spend what's left in my account on food. There's plenty of food in the apartment.

"We told you. If it makes you feel better, you can pay us back later," Declan says.

I roll my eyes. "How much do I owe you?"

He doesn't answer. They never keep tabs. I do.

Extricating myself, I grab a granola bar from the counter and hold it up. "We both know you're not going to let me repay you. I'll find a way to take care of the bill. I'm going to look into work study, whether I think it's worth the money and time or not. Because I'm a fucking adult. It's not all about doing whatever the fuck I want. I have responsibilities and I can't just keep letting you take care of them."

Their argument is written all over their faces. But they let me go. I shut the door and hurry away from the apartment, pulling out my phone and logging into the student portal. As I head for campus, I scroll through the available work-study positions.

By the time I set foot in the building where my first class is, I'm irritated and frustrated, though not surprised. Not only am I looking halfway through the year when all the good shit is gone, but I really *don't* want to do this. At all.

I'm still staring at the open positions when something inside me remembers last night. Professor Stommer. I tap the side of my phone absently before I search for a position within his department. Nothing comes up. Without really knowing what I'm doing or why, I find his picture on the department faculty page and hit the link that leads to an open email.

Tapping out a quick message, I hit send before I can talk myself out of it. Then I close my phone and stare straight ahead, my heart racing.

# Five

## QUINLAN



I'M A WOODWORKER BY TRADE. That doesn't always translate to a college career, but because I love teaching, I've always found a way to appeal to the directors of universities to hire me and create a department around me. Sometimes, I find one that already has a department, and I can pitch my class idea to them.

That's how I ended up at Longwood University. They had a department, but it was failing. Half-assed. So when I pitched my idea to them, they jumped quickly. It shocked me at the time, but I've made the department successful in my four years here.

I teach woodworking. Every semester, each class decides what they want their project to be. I have entire books of designs ready for them. Sometimes they'll propose something, and we'll work together to make a blueprint for them to follow.

Those are the students I tend to really love. I have a young woman in class this semester who showed me a design for a library chair. The three outer sides of the chair are all shelves and under the seat are more shelves designed for books. Because it's very basic and wouldn't take more than a few pallets to build, we've been working together to make it a more intricate design to meet the criteria of the class.

Once everyone commits to their projects, we spend the semester learning the skills they'll need to accomplish them. Anything from a lathe to rudimentary wood carving. Jigsaw, staining, poly, how to preserve living edge slabs of wood...

All manner of woodwork. I also teach them about tools they won't necessarily use like a CNC machine that can cut out shapes or make intricate carvings all from computer files.

Throughout the semester, we use the skills they acquire to build furniture that the school sells. Mostly a play on Adirondack chairs and tables. But we also make other things like bed frames, countertops, doors, etc. Anything that I'm feeling an urge to create.

The profits from the sales go back into the department to buy materials for our students. There's usually a healthy account balance in case I want a new machine or something. The school gets to boast locally made, made by students, and all proceeds go back to benefit the students when they make the sales.

We do pretty well. I never have a stock of items I need to sell. Almost as soon as it's listed on social media, the thing has a new home. I could probably turn a tree trunk into a hiking stick and sell it for \$300.

While sitting at my desk scrolling through a social group that's dedicated to woodworking for inspiration for a new project this semester, a notification pops up on my screen that I received an email. Usually, I don't look at it twice until I'm ready to attend to emails. But the name has my breath catching.

Simon Everett.

Images of last night flash before my eyes. Simon on the dance floor, his back pressed to my chest. On his knees looking up at me with tears streaming down his face, his pretty mouth stretched around my dick.

My cock throbs suddenly and I shift uncomfortably.

*Not fucking appropriate, Q!*

I click on the email and read it.

*Hi, Professor.*



*I see that you still don't keep set office hours. Do you have some time this week to meet?*

*Simon*

I read the two sentences no less than a dozen times. What is he asking to meet about? Again, last night flashes before my eyes and my heart races. I really fucked up, didn't I? Is he going to threaten me with blackmail?

That doesn't seem like his style. I can't imagine that's something he'd ever do. But what do I know? It's not like we're friends. We never spoke outside of the classroom or about anything other than woodworking before last night.

Chewing the inside of my cheek, I quickly type out a response. This afternoon at three or tomorrow at ten in the morning. Then I spend the next hour until class obsessively fretting about what this meeting could be about. What does he want? Why is he coming to my fucking office when he's not a student?

Class drags. While I usually love my classes, I'm very clearly distracted today. We spend all of class just talking about the designs that the students can choose from. I encourage them to commit to something they're excited about, even if it looks ridiculously challenging. I'm here to help and teach them along the way.

There are images of some of my favorite projects hung all around the class. Among them, one that always gets a lot of attention, is an honest-to-goodness outhouse with a working toilet. It always gets a lot of laughter and attention. Each semester, there are no less than half a dozen students who all ravingly declare they're going to build an outhouse, though they never do.

Simon's is on the wall too. The rocking chair he made was beautiful. While it wasn't anything incredibly unique, I left it on the wall because it's Simon's.

My pathetic obsession knows no bounds.

Even as much as I love the topic I teach, I'm far too antsy to get back to my office. I let the class leave ten minutes early with the understanding that they'd be choosing their project next class. There could be no changing their minds after that point. I create each class's curriculum specifically to cover the skills needed to build each project. No two semesters, no two classes are the same.

With that in mind, I'm practically running through the building to my office. Am I really that desperate for this kid? He *is* a kid at twenty-two. Especially to my thirty-eight. Does it help when I mentally call him a kid?

Not in the least. Because I know better. I know he's a consenting adult (or last night wouldn't have happened). But that doesn't mean he isn't off limits. Or he should be, anyway.

*Student. Student.*

I'm disappointed when I don't see an email from him yet. It's been two hours. Did he change his mind? Seriously, what could he possibly want?

At quarter past one, he finally responds.

*I'll see you at three.*

That's it. At three. My cock gets the memo and immediately is pressed painfully against the zipper of my pants. It's like I haven't gotten laid in...

Okay, that might be half my problem right there. When was the last time I'd hooked up before Simon? The desperation inside me was what drove me to Stripes last night to begin with. I haven't had a relationship in...

"Jesus," I mutter. It's been over a year. I think after the few rebound fucks I got under me right after, I've been leading a very monk-ish life. No wonder my judgement was shit last night. No wonder when I saw the object of my lust on the dance floor, I was pressed against him before I could think better of it.

And now I'm sitting behind my desk with a throbbing cock. Which I refuse to do anything about at school. I can't exactly run through the halls with a hard-on, though. Not that I plan to be leaving my office for a while.

It takes an hour of nothing but going back and forth with what to do about the problem in my pants that refuses to deflate before I finally give in and slip into the staff bathroom to rub one out into the toilet. And yes, I'm inappropriately thinking about Simon's tight throat wrapped around my dick as I do.

By the time I'm back in my chair, I feel sick to my stomach. Objectifying anyone like this is disgusting. But that he's my former student? A current student at the university in which I teach. That makes it so much worse. I'm horrible. Awful.

The knock at my door startles me and I glance up. The time on the computer says it's twenty to three. Frowning, I call, "Enter."

I'm surprised when Simon opens the door with a slight smile. It makes my stomach flip and my cock twitch. You'd think that I was a teen the way my cock finds the ability to rally so quickly when it comes to Simon.

"I know you said three, but I've been wandering campus for half an hour to waste time. Though I can come back if you're busy," he says.

I shake my head and gesture to the chair. "No, it's fine. Come on in."

Simon gives me a nod and steps inside, shutting the door behind him. He drops his backpack by the chair and sits, his gaze taking in my office for the first time. Though he commented on my lack of set office hours like he'd scheduled a meeting with me in the past, he'd never actually been here. He hadn't needed to.

There are wood carvings all over my wall. Just pieces I've done when I've been bored. The ones I'm fondest of, I hang in my office or around the shop. Since I've run out of room,

when I create a new one that I love, I'll choose one I like least and replace it, selling the old and hanging the new one.

While it could be considered arrogance; really I'm showing students what they can accomplish with a piece of wood, imagination, and some learned skills.

Simon seems to be particularly fond of the eagle and flag. It was an old design that I'd copied by hand with no guide. Something that I'd seen in museums of colonial houses and such. That's one I've taken with me from my previous job. One of two.

"You made all these?" Simon asked, his voice sounding like he's impressed.

I nod. "Yes."

"They're awesome."

"Thank you."

He looks at me, as if considering me again. Maybe for the first time. Because I have no shame, my cock pulses under his gaze and I force myself to sit completely still. I *will not* adjust my highly inappropriate and unprofessional erection in front of a student. Who's in my office. With the door shut.

"So, what can I do for you, Simon?"

His smile is almost teasing, but he leans back in the chair and gets to business. "You don't have any work study positions in your department, Professor."

I shake my head. "I apply every year and get denied just as quickly."

Simon frowns. "Why?"

Shrugging, I say, "No idea. I always get some excuse that's obviously just that. If they'd tell me it was an insurance liability or shortage or something, I'd accept that. But that's not the spew of bs they give me."

He nods, frowning.

"Are you looking for a work study?"

He frowns again and sighs. “Yeah. But everything available is stupid. I don’t want to file papers or help students set up their classes. I don’t want to work in the school store or food hall. I hate all of that. Your class was fun, so I thought I’d see why you didn’t have a work study.”

“Why are you applying for work study in the middle of the year?” I ask, not that it’s my business.

Simon gives me a bemused expression and doesn’t answer my question. Instead, he counters with a different question. “What if you propose a new position and specifically cite that a student is asking to work in your department?”

I nod. It wouldn’t be the first time I’ve tried that approach. We receive no less than half a dozen inquiries from students about whether we’ll be opening a work study position at the start of every new school year. But the administration refuses, even to those who major within the department.

It’s infuriating, but since that’s been the only thing I’ve ever been denied since beginning at Longwood, I haven’t made such a big deal about it. It’s never mattered that much.

But to have Simon here every day?

Actually, I don’t think my dick can take that. Not now that I’ve had his mouth around it.

“I’ll resubmit a request this afternoon,” I tell him. “Don’t get your hopes up, though, Simon. It’ll likely be denied, as per usual.”

He sighs and nods. His phone pings and he stands. “Thanks, Professor. I appreciate it.”

I don’t stand because then he’ll see my problem. It was one thing in a club where it was definitely expected. Not in my office.

Simon flashes me a smile as he shrugs his backpack over his shoulder and pauses at the door. “See you later, Professor.”

My breath catches for no reason at all. Except that I love his smile. It’s so damn sexy. He’s my fucking wet dream.

As soon as my door is shut again and I can breathe without him in my space, I pull up the work-study application that I submit every year. I go into greater detail as far as need and responsibilities. Chores that don't get done as often as they should be due to lack of resources. Organizational needs. Etc. etc. etc.

Then I hit submit.

As I sit back in my chair and take a breath, I actually feel decent about the application. Maybe if I put that much effort and energy into it before, I might have had a work-study position all along.

Shifting in my seat, I look out the window and my gaze immediately lands on Simon. He's outside, sitting on the bench with the twins. One is leaning over him like a lover might, whispering in his ear or licking his neck or something.

Longing, jealousy, hunger race through me as I stare. I want nothing more than to go down there and tear them apart. To pull Simon along with me to somewhere private where I can ravish him until he's nothing but a writhing mess beneath me.

Simon's head falls back as he laughs. I've never heard that kind of laughter from him. The kind that originates in your gut. My longing changes and I really want to hear it. I want to cause it.

The other twin is grinning at him from his other side, running his hand through Simon's hair affectionately. My stomach twists. I know what that does to him. He purrs like a fucking cat. I don't want him purring for anyone else.

My thoughts stall as the three of them get to their feet. One twin takes Simon's hand in his, threading their fingers together like a couple might. The other has his hand around Simon's waist, his hand sinking into Simon's back pocket.

I frown as they walk away like that. Simon called them his best friends last night. But are they something more? They really appear more. It feels as if they're confirming they are when the one holding his hand kisses him. On his mouth.

There are others walking around, staring at them. Watching with a vast variety of expressions. But there's no doubt in their minds that what they're seeing is a threesome couple or whatever it's called.

A sour feeling forms in my stomach and I think it's disappointment. However, as I turn back to my desk, I take note that my cock does not get the memo. It's still rock-hard.

Awesome.

Six



## QUINLAN



MY APPLICATION IS DENIED before I even leave my office at the end of the day. I doubt anyone actually read through it and gave it true consideration. There's a part of me that wants to storm into administration and demand an audience with the deans so I can get some damn answers.

The thing that holds me back is, well, they're probably not there. It's after four. But also, the thought that I'm doing this for a specific student because of my fucking lust obsession is a little disquieting. Even to myself.

Instead, I go home and consider what to do. Let it go? Wish Simon good luck and cut ties as I should? Make one more plea? It's not like asking for a legitimate explanation of why they keep denying me when there are other departments with less need that get approved, is unreasonable. Especially since I have students in here asking me every year.

While this particular instance has to do with Simon, in the bigger picture, it doesn't. Why can't my department have a work-study? Is it because one of the deans has a stick up their ass and just doesn't want to grant me one? There has to be an actual reason.

I waffle back and forth with what I intend to do about this throughout the night. By the time I'm in my office the next day, I've settled on asking. So I type up a well thought out and thorough reply with a good argument (if I do say so myself) and send it off.

Not ten minutes later, I receive another generic denial.

By this time, I'm fuming. It no longer has anything to do with Simon. They're not discussing this. They're not even considering it. They see what I'm asking for and simply deny.

I spend the entire rest of the day arguing with them, demanding that I have an actual fucking reason why I can't have a work study position, or I'll be requesting an audience with the deans of the fucking school.

At least they don't outright deny my request three minutes later at that threat. It's the end of the day before I get one. This time, it's a long-winded defense explaining why they're denying me. All of it is absolute bullshit that I think about calling them out on since it directly contradicts other departments having one.

I'm seething by the time I get home and sit on my couch with a glass of wine and stare at the blank screen of my television. While I fume over the crap concerning my lack of work study, my mind flashes back to Simon.

I wanted to be able to do this for him. Yes, it would certainly afford us time for a sneaky repeat of the club incident, but I am going to pretend that had no bearing on why I want to find a way to help him.

The idea of seeing him every day in a different capacity than as my student is intoxicating. It's all I can think about since I began fantasizing about it. Sneaking looks. The texts. Secret smiles. The flirting. I've quickly become obsessed with the idea of closely working together.

Sure, it was a fantasy for a reason. Unlikely to happen and all that. But it definitely couldn't happen if I didn't have a position for him.

Taking a sip of my wine, I lean my head back and sigh. Then I pull out my phone and begin scrolling through my social media feed. It's filled with family and friends' updates, sexy gay men whose content I sure as hell *do not* follow or subscribe to, and the occasional gay book rec.

While I'm not an avid reader, sometimes I get in the mood for a story. I was a teenager when I discovered that there were

stories about queer people and not just your typical straight shit. I didn't actually have an issue with straight romance or anything concerning straight couples. It was the lack of queer folk in stories that bothered me.

So when I discovered my first gay romance (a bi-awakening story where unlikely college roommates fall in love), I was enamored with the idea. I branched out into science fiction, fantasy, mystery, paranormal—anything I could find where there were people like me in the leading role. A gay man having adventures, kinky sex, and falling in love.

Throughout high school and college, I was an avid reader for that reason alone. I couldn't get enough now that there was finally some representation of queer people in books. For a while, it made me want to become a writer and hear other readers experience the same feelings I did through something that I wrote.

Then I realized everything that went into writing and definitely nixed that idea. That's a lot of fucking work. And time. Money. Energy. Tears and screaming and blood.

No, thank you. I'd rather risk cutting my fingers off with a table saw.

Anyway, it's while I'm scrolling absently, not settling on anything longer than to take in whatever's in the images, that I find something that stops me. I was hoping the mindless scrolling would dampen my irritation, but finding an idea was not something I thought was going to happen.

Of course, it comes to me in the form of a book. *My Sugar Boy* written by Saxon Finley. The blurb describes it as a sugar baby who falls in love with his sugar daddy.

I stare at the cover for a long time. Not the cover, but the name of the book. *My Sugar Boy*.

Biting my lip, I wonder. Is that something people actually do? Like, in real life? Do those types of situations actually take place? Do they work?

Clicking out of the app and opening the browser, I do a quick search for sugar daddies and am not surprised when I get

thousands of results. I spend an hour reading everything I can and stumble upon a contract template that I read through and find myself marking up. Changing with the idea of... Simon.

I have passive income. Quite a bit of it. When I was in high school, I won a competition for, ironically, a creative writing piece. The award was \$10,000. My parents asked me what I wanted to do with it, and I told them I wanted to invest.

With their help, I purchased my very first rental property, a small one-bedroom cottage on the beach in the Florida Keys. It took me a year, renting the property out at top dollar, to make enough to purchase a second. This one in Miami. A three-bedroom house with its own private beach.

To date, I have six properties, ranging from my first small one-bedroom to a sprawling eight-bedroom estate on a tropical island. I make enough through rentals to keep their mortgages paid and pad some bank accounts. In fact, one of my accounts has gotten beyond what I'm comfortable having in cash. It's time to purchase another house.

But that's neither here nor there at this point. Instead, my entire focus is on the idea of proposing to Simon that he become my sugar baby.

By the time I crawl into bed at one in the morning, I'm salivating at the possibility. My dick is too fucking excited to be ignored and the orgasm I give myself while imagining this leaves me breathless and panting as I drift off into sleep. I'll be sorry for not forcing myself to clean up before passing out in the morning when I have cum dried in the hair on my stomach.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Simon', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

I'M in a much better mood when I get into work the following day. However, I'm also not willing to let this work-study matter go. So while I have no need for it now because I'm stupidly banking on convincing a former student to let me use his body for my pleasure in exchange for money, I know I

won't get anywhere with this right now. I need to focus my energy where it's needed for now.

That being said, I type off a quick email that while I'm accepting this defeat, I will be addressing this over the summer when I speak to the deans of the college about my concerns. I also list why their wordy response to me was complete and utter fucking bullshit. I cite no less than a dozen instances where a specific point of their reasoning would also deny other departments work-study positions.

I leave out the expletives, of course.

I'm pleased when I get a fumbling answer back. It states that they'll take my concerns into serious consideration, and we can certainly discuss opening work-study in my department next year.

All this does is confirm that someone has a stick up their ass. Either concerning me or my department in general. While that's slightly validating my irritation and pisses me off all the more, it's a reason I can work with. An answer that I actually understand outside of a generic denial for no actual reason.

Now I spend my time trying to decide how to approach Simon. On campus is really not an option. Sure as fuck not through school email. I don't have his number.

That really leaves one option. The club.

I don't hate Stripes. It's close to home and school, has good music, is clean, and almost always packed. I like the variety of people. Because of the textile factory and Navy base, there're usually a lot of bodies to choose from. However, being this close to a queer friendly college campus meant there was no shortage of college students, either.

I spend four hours Thursday night at the bar in a strategic position to watch the door and see the floor. Simon and his twins don't come in. The same happens Friday and Saturday nights, too. By Sunday night, I'm feeling stupidly frustrated and horny. I dance for a while and then stare into the crowd, keeping my eye on the steady stream of people coming in the door.

The memory of him and the twins outside my window nags at me. Maybe I misread the situation. Maybe they're together but... have an open relationship? Because the twins like to hook up?

Frowning, I mentally shake my head. That doesn't really make sense, does it? It certainly doesn't line up with the conversation we had in the alcove. The part where he told me that the twins are always going on and on about sucking dick, so he thought he'd give it a try and see what the big deal was.

But they very much appear *together*. I've always thought that. Countering that, I've also never seen Simon show interest in many people, but certainly not men. This supports what he told me.

There's a possibility he was just telling me shit to excuse why he was there, but he didn't have any of the telltale ticks of lying.

By ten, I'm more than frustrated. I've been at Stripes for four nights now. I'm sexually frustrated and will likely get off with the simplest touch because I'm starving for it. There's no sign of Simon anywhere.

Since I have work tomorrow, I decide to call it a night and head home. Maybe I'll try again tomorrow. Or maybe I'll wait until he approaches me again. Or... maybe we'll run into each other somewhere. Like we did at the club.

Or I can be a fucking responsible adult and move the hell on. This is unhealthy and unethical. *Student!*

As I head for the door, I freeze in my tracks. There they are. Simon in the middle of the twins as they drag him to the dance floor. I quickly back into the shadows so they don't see me. I don't want the twins tipped off that I'm there. They already don't like me.

Biting my lip, wavering whether I should be sensible about this and leave, I find myself on a stool. Staring at the three of them when the crowd allows me. It's much like the night last week. The twins are all over Simon, rubbing and grinding

against him as they grope all over his body. They kiss him, have their hands under his shirt. In his pants pockets.

It's erotic. Hot. I'm nearly panting as if I'm in their little sex pile.

But as before, Simon is completely relaxed. He lets them move him, position him how they want. His head is tipped back, a soft, relaxed smile on his pretty lips. Eyes closed. He's a doll.

As I watch, I realize Simon might be a bit oblivious to the twins and their interest in him. I know absolutely nothing about their relationship, but from an outsider's perspective, as I'm watching, Simon doesn't look particularly turned on. Where it's obvious to anyone with eyes that the twins are.

Curious.

I'm ready to jump out of my skin when the twins finally kiss him and disappear into the crowd. My heart races, my body ready to lunge from my stool and pull him against me on the dance floor before someone else can. But Simon doesn't hesitate out there this time.

He turns and heads for the bar. I watch him like he's prey. I know I'm staring. Everyone else who looks at me will know it too. Simon doesn't see me at first as he makes his way off the dance floor. He's stopped a few times, men trying to coax him into dancing.

His smile is sweet and genuine when he makes some excuse to refuse their offer. Finally, he's free of the bodies and he scans the bar. When his gaze lands on me, I swear I can feel it in my blood.

I can feel him through my entire body and I pray to whatever deity is out there that Simon will be receptive to my proposition. It isn't until he's approaching me that I consider that if he's offended or disgusted by it, there could be serious ramifications on my career.

As he takes a stool next to me, still smiling, I already know that I'm going to risk it.

This is unhealthy. I should not risk everything for this. For a man—a *straight man*—that has no real interest in me.

“Hi, Professor,” he says, leaning closer so he’s not screaming over the music. Instead, it’s a yell that probably doesn’t carry very far.

I swallow and smile, reining in my tremor of doubt and brace myself for this conversation. “Hello, Simon,” I answer, smiling at him in return.

His grin is somewhat teasing. Maybe a little flirty but I might totally be placing that there because I want to see it.

“Funny seeing you back here,” he says.

“There are more than students at Stripes.” I pointedly look at the ripped guy on his other side. There’s a Navy tattoo on his arm so it’s clear where he’s from.

“But you’re here. At the bar. Talking to me.”

I take a deep breath. He’s not wrong. Here it goes. “Can I buy you a drink?”



# Seven

## SIMON



I'M NOT ENTIRELY surprised to see Professor Stommer at Stripes. It's the closest gay club to school, so it's certainly convenient. Although, since it's Sunday, I'm not sure that's what brought him here. Unless he works weekends?

It's entirely possible he lives close too. There are a ton of subdivisions close to the school. It makes for an ideal work location.

The way he's watching me as I approach the bar tells me that maybe his motivation for being here might have to do with me. There's something about his eyes locked on mine that says 'come here.' I find myself answering that unspoken request without much thought.

I take a seat next to him. "Hi, Professor," I yell over the music but lean a little closer so I'm not screaming.

He visibly swallows before offering me a smile in return. "Hello, Simon."

I grin as I look at him. He looks like he just swallowed something and it's stuck in his throat. It makes me want to laugh. But he's still staring intently. Since I haven't heard from him since my request for a work-study job, I assume that means he didn't get approved as he said he wouldn't. I expected an email to tell me, but he's here now.

"Funny seeing you back here," I say.

"There are more than students at Stripes." He pointedly looks beyond me. I glance that way and spot the bulk of an

enormous man who could probably break my arm with his bare hands.

Turning back to the Professor, I say, “But you’re here. At the bar. Talking to me.”

He takes a deep breath. “Can I buy you a drink?”

I’m surprised by the question. I glance at his drink, the one that he has his hand over like any smart man does at a bar. But I shake my head, even as my mouth suddenly feels parched. Maybe he sees this because he flags down the bartender and orders a seltzer.

I accept it with a bemused smile and a raised brow. He just grins and brings his drink to his mouth, his eyes still never leaving mine.

We talk about nothing for a few minutes while we drink. Eventually, he leans in and says, “Want to step outside so we don’t have to yell anymore?”

Shrugging, I finish the seltzer and slip from the stool. Following him through the crowd toward the exit, I study the bodies on the floor, looking for Declan or Damon. I don’t see them. Probably still choking on dick.

The idea makes me smirk.

It’s not cold out, but the chill is welcome against my sweaty skin. It’s so hot in there. So many bodies packed together. I follow Professor Stommer several feet from the exit, where he leans against the wall to look at me. I slip my hands in my pockets.

“So, as I suspected, my request for a work-study was denied,” he says.

Sighing, I nod. Not surprised, but disappointed. I received a notice on Friday that my bill was paid. The weight of \$1,000 more added to my debt to the twins sat heavy on my shoulders. We didn’t speak of it. There wasn’t anything to say. If I’d hidden it, I knew they would find out eventually, one way or another. Short of burning the notice and getting a PO Box, they were going to find it, eventually.

*At least I don't have a late charge on top of it now.*

The thought is bitter as I look down the sidewalk. There are guys everywhere. Some tipsy and laughing, while others are just being rowdy.

“I have a different proposition for you.”

His words make me look at him again. “You do?” I can't even imagine how he's going to propose a job to me. The school already said no. Even if there is a position in his department, I'm not qualified for that. Building a single rocking chair does not make me a carpenter.

He nods as he stares. I wait and realize he's nervous. Hesitant. Now my curiosity is stupidly piqued.

Licking his lips, Professor Stommer reaches out and pulls me closer with his hand on my hip. I'm probably far too trusting, but I let him. He brings me close so that there's barely a foot between us. His hand doesn't fall from my hip, but his grip tightens.

I give him a smile, amused.

“Are you familiar with what a sugar baby is?” he asks.

I raise a brow. “Umm... yes?”

He takes an audible breath. “I'm offering you \$4,000 a month,” he says slowly. He pauses. Then says, “In exchange for complete access to your body.”

The breath that rushes out of me has my jaw dropping and my eyes wide. What did he say? That isn't right. I can't have possibly heard him right.

For a long while, my mouth opens and closes, but nothing comes out. When I don't speak, Professor Stommer does.

“For complete and total access,” he says, keeping his voice low, but he speaks slowly. As if he knows I need him to, so I can process his words. “Penetrative sex included, though not at first. We'll start slow.” He smiles, something lopsided and nervous. “Just your pretty mouth around my dick for now.”

I still can't find my words. He offers me a card. A plain white business card with a number on it. "Think about it, Simon. Here's my number if you want to talk about it. We'll discuss details, expectations and we can negotiate the fee."

He slips the card into my pocket. I'm still speechless.

"We'll have a contract," he says, and I can feel the way his thumb is rubbing the skin above the waistband of my pants where his hand is still holding me there. "Of course, I do require discretion. Even if you choose not to take this offer."

Still, words don't come. I'm too stunned.

Then the shadows of Damon and Declan surround me. I know it's them before they make a sound. I'm pulled back and Professor Stommer's hand falls away. His expression remains open as he looks at me, but he's no longer smiling.

"Don't fucking touch him," Damon growls, and they pull me away.

I say nothing. Still. Because I don't have words. I glance back over my shoulder to find the Professor still standing there, watching. He gives me a small smile and I turn back.

That didn't just happen.

They don't speak as we head home. Again, they're fuming, but my only thought is to hide the card with the Professor's number on it, so they don't find it. I don't know where I'll hide it, but I need to. I've never been successful at hiding something from them. Even when they don't know what they're looking for, they'll find it.

As soon as we get home, I head to our room and strip. They disappear into the bathroom, and I use that single moment of solitude to stuff the card deep into my backpack. I'll find something to do with it tomorrow.

Then I drop to my bed and close my eyes. Professor Stommer's words race through my head. \$4,000 for access to my body. Sex. Complete access to my body. For \$4,000 a month.

Does that make me a sex worker? How do I feel about that?

The bed dips and I open my eyes as Declan climbs over me. His hair is still dripping when he pulls me around so I'm facing him, his bare chest to mine. His green-gray eyes stare as if he can dredge up the conversation between me and the Professor just from looking at me.

I'm not about to repeat it. Not only because it would absolutely put Professor Stommer's job at risk, but because I still can't fathom it. And not least of all, the twins would freak.

The light turns off and Damon joins us a minute later, his body pressed tightly to mine. I take a deep breath and sigh, waiting for their questions.

It's much like the other night they found me with Professor Stommer. Their hands roam my body, looking for any evidence that he hurt me. Touched me. Anything at all.

"What happened?" Declan asks.

"You paid my bill when I told you not to," I say, knowing damn well they weren't talking about that.

They give me identical huffs of frustration.

"You don't have a late fee, now," Damon says. "We've already said. If it means that much to you, you can pay us back. But money isn't—"

"Yeah, I get it. When you have money, it's not a big deal. Try to understand it from the other side. When you don't have money, it's a big fucking deal, Damon."

Their hands stop moving. Always in sync. I used to laugh about it. To this day, I still find it funny. They're programmed to be a single person. So much of their personality and actions show that. They're carbon copies of each other.

"I'm sorry," Declan says, as if he'd been the one speaking. His mouth covers mine, and he feathers kisses on me, over and over, until I can't stop my smile.

I bring my arm up and wrap it around him, hugging him. "I know you want to help. That you want to take care of me. But

I hate feeling like a burden.”

“You’re not a burden,” they say in unison. Their tones aghast.

I laugh, shaking my head. “But *I feel* like a burden. Like it or not, you can’t change that.”

They don’t speak. I wait for them to, but nothing comes. Instead, they press against me tighter, as if squeezing me between them will make it all go away. They shove one leg apiece between mine until we’re tangled and flush.

Then we lay there in the dark.

The twins can communicate silently as twins do. We’ve played games when we were younger to prove as much. They claim it’s not so much hearing the other’s voice but that they share a stream of consciousness.

A freaky twin thing is what the world calls it. It borders on supernatural, but it’s just unexplained. Something happened when they were in utero. One group of cells that was meant to grow into a single baby suddenly duplicated. I’ve seen their ultrasounds. They were always wrapped around each other. Best friends, even within the womb.

I’ve heard all sorts of stories from their parents growing up. How it would just take a jerky hand reaching out from the twin that wasn’t upset to calm the upset twin. How they moved in complete synchronicity, even as newborns. Their first words were uttered at the exact same moment.

So many of their firsts happened together. At the same time. Their parents always mused that there was actual conversation in their baby babble. The twins say there was, but not in the way their parents meant.

They explain that they have their own thoughts that aren’t ever private from the other. But they can’t communicate in that space. It’s their own, even if the other has complete access. There’s a separate conscience, as if they’d had a third body and that third body’s thoughts was the place where they can communicate.

It's not in words, though. There's no actual verbal conversation. It just happens. They know.

So, while I lose myself in the proposition that Professor Stommer left me stunned with, I know the twins are having their own conversation. At least when I fall asleep, it's peaceful. It's always peaceful between my best friends because I know that they'd chase away any bad dream, any nightmare.

They'll protect me like rabid wolves. I love them for it.

But it's time I grow up and learn to take care of myself.



Eight

## QUINLAN



I DIDN'T THINK Simon would jump at the offer, but when three days go by and I don't hear from him, I can't help but feel disappointed. The prospect of being able to touch him whenever I wanted has given me a whole new set of materials to fantasize about.

So when the days continued on with no text from him, I was stupidly saddened. I shouldn't be. I know that. It was a long shot. The fact he didn't say a thing after I suggested it might have screamed my answer already.

It was probably his willingness to suck my dick in the club that first night, and his easy demeanor after that gave me the confidence to suggest it. That he sought me out to ask me to apply for a work-study position for him encouraged me to do *anything* to be around him.

He'd sought me out!

In my mind, that felt like maybe he was hinting that it was okay. He was comfortable enough with me to ask me for something.

He probably realized I was fucking hard up for him. I mean, after he'd blown me, I basically pressed myself against him like a horny dog directly following. I was all over him. If the situation was reversed, I sure as hell would have realized that maybe I have something to gain from this man.

Except that's not really how my mind works. I doubt it is how Simon's does either. I don't take him as an opportunist.

He doesn't seem manipulative. After his appearance made me notice him, it was his authenticity that kept me staring.

Being something other than what you are takes a lot of effort and commitment. Simon always comes across as someone who embodies that outlook. What you see is what you get.

I liked what I saw, and I wanted it. Still do. Clearly.

But by Wednesday afternoon when I still haven't heard from him, I'm slightly hard and frustrated. I've worked myself up over this, continuously daydreaming about how I can take him. How I'll make an appointment with him and then bend him over my desk, hand over his mouth because, of course, he won't be able to stop the sounds I'm eliciting from him.

I forcefully shake my head and concentrate on driving. Stupid. I was stupid to think this was a thing that was going to happen.

As I pull into my driveway, my mood only dampens more when I see there's a massive truck parked there. I know the vehicle. My gaze flickers to the house and I wonder which window he broke into this time. Fucker.

Pulling into the garage, I park and kill the engine. Waiting for Vulcan to pop out of the door. Yes, his parents named him after a Roman god. It's like they wanted him to be picked on. He probably would have been even more if he wasn't exactly what you'd picture when you imagined what a god of fire and volcanoes might look like.

He's a fucking beast at six-foot-nine and built like a gladiator. I'm not even talking about the hot guys who play gladiators in movies. We're talking mythical creatures. He's enormous.

Somehow, he manages to climb through my windows without breaking anything when I haven't left a door unlocked. If he'd have texted me he was here, I'd have messaged him the door code.

It's not that I don't adore Vulcan. He's a guy I met while in college; one of the few openly gay men I'd ever met at that

point. It's because of him and how he blatantly made sure the world knew he was gay and proud that changed my outlook on my own sexuality.

Sighing, I climb out of my car and head to the door, hitting the button to close the garage as I do. As soon as I open the door, I hear the music and his deep voice as he sings along to a Taylor Swift song. Rolling my eyes, I can't help the smile that climbs my face. As much as I want to be irritated that he's here without being invited and broke into my house, I love it when he stops by.

I drop my bag by my office door and then stand in the hall to watch him. Honestly, if my ceilings weren't so high, he'd look like more of a giant than he does. But I have really tall cabinets to match the soaring ceilings. He almost looks like the appropriate size to fit in my kitchen.

If the counters weren't about a foot too short for him.

He's shaking his skirt-clad ass as he shimmies in front of the stove, stirring whatever is sizzling in the pan in front of him. It smells divine.

If the three paper bags on the counter, contents half strewn about, hadn't given it away, I'd say whatever he's cooking isn't from my stock of microwave food. It's not that I can't or don't like to cook. I just have very little motivation because it's just me. Why go through the effort and mess to cook for a single person?

"I can feel you watching me, Quinny," he sings into the tune of the song. My grin spreads as he doubles his efforts of shaking his ass.

I laugh and move into the kitchen. "Which window did you break this time?"

He turns his face to me and pouts. "I didn't, Q. You gave me the door code last time I was here."

Ah. Clearly, I forgot that. I wrapped an arm around him from the side in a half embrace. It's never enough for him, though. My giant of a friend is as cuddly as a teddy bear. He

sets his wooden spoon across the pan and turns, wrapping me in his embrace.

I'm not really a small guy, but he swallows me whole in his arms. My feet leave the ground as he squeezes the air from my lungs. If I didn't know him as well as I do, I'd say he boasts his strength with these hugs because I can't breathe for a solid thirty seconds. Because I know him as well as I do, I know he just pours his affection into his hugs. He'll always make sure he shows you how much you mean to him.

When he lets me go, I feel like my ribs are bruised. I used to tease him that I'll feel his love for me for days until they heal after. Now's no different. I chuckle as I rub my side. "I'm glad that you never change, V."

He grins and turns back to the stove. He's wearing a skirt, soft pastel pink. It's pleated and falls just above his knees. I'd wager a guess that this should probably hit the ankles on someone who's two feet shorter than him. He's also wearing a white mesh shirt that shows off the equally pastel tattoos that paint his torso.

On his feet, he wears socks with unicorns all over them.

It's all in direct contrast to his short, night black hair, full beard, and hazel eyes. Not to mention the bulk of muscles.

I remember the first time I saw him. He wasn't nearly as covered in ink, but the few he had on his arms were pretty pastels—pinks, purples, mint green. And a heart striped with pride colors on his wrist where the entire world could see it.

He was wearing short shorts that cupped his massive dick as if it were on display. It was around the crease of his thigh and waist, otherwise it would have stuck out the bottom of his shorts or above the waistband.

He was shirtless and running around on the beach playing volleyball near campus. I stared. Really fucking openly. I'd never seen anyone like him. Not afraid to be who he was and show the world his true colors.

Vulcan has since covered his entire torso in ink—all pretty pastels to match what he'd started on his sleeves—with a vast

variety of designs. There was little black in it. If there were lines in the designs, they were drawn with whatever color suited the design. Sometimes there were white lines, which had a breathtaking effect on him.

To this day, his favorite thing to wear is skirts. Just skirts. He'll put a shirt on from time to time, but more often than not, it's completely useless as a shirt, just as the one he's wearing now is. But always socks. He's strangely self-conscious about his feet.

"What brings you here?" I ask, leaning against the counter to watch him cook.

He shrugs. "Nothing, really. Been a while since I've heard from you." He levels a stare at me, telling me I'm in trouble for that. "What kind of mischief have you gotten into?"

I swear, he's a psychic. He always just *knows* when I need someone around. Even when I'm pretty sure I would rather be alone. While I'd had every intention of drowning my disappointment in Simon's disinterest in my proposition with wine, alone, and had initially been irritated that Vulcan had shown up unannounced, I'm relieved and glad he's here.

As it turns out, I really do need his company.

I shake my head. "Nothing."

He frowns. "Blatant lie."

Laughing, I turn to the wine rack and pull one off before reaching for two glasses. I pour us each a generous amount and hand one to him. "Tell me what's new with you."

Vulcan pouts and turns to the stove. "He dumped me," he whispered. "I'm getting really tired of the guys who pretend they like me as I am but a few months in, decide I'm not at all what they want. They try to change me."

My heart aches for him. I set my glass down and link my arm through his, hugging him. Vulcan sighs. "Don't you ever change for anyone, V. You're an amazing unicorn."

He snorts but nods. "I know. I've never hidden anything about me. Why does someone meet me and think, oh, this is

just a phase. He'll grow out of it."

The man is forty-one. It's stupid to think it's a phase at this point.

I kiss his shoulder and take a step back. The only thing that man has ever wanted was to be loved. To find his soulmate, give them everything under the sun and beyond, build a house from the ground up for them, and have a very large family.

Instead, he keeps finding assholes who think it's 'adorable' that he dresses how he does. But eventually they tell him to 'be normal for fucking once' because they're embarrassed by how he looks. My heart breaks for him every single time.

I'd like nothing more than to run these insects over. I mean, he's fucking tattooed his body in pastels. Not skulls or fire or spiders or some shit. He's literally got a cartoon bear on one biceps with a rainbow on its belly. Permanently there. It never goes away.

How much of a phase could this really be?

Because I know he needs to let it off his chest, I stay quiet as he talks about the last guy that broke his heart. Not for the first time do I think that I'd like to just wrap him in bubble wrap and lock him away from the world. His heart is too big. He's too forgiving. He's got so much love that he never gives up hope and never stops trying to find the person who will love him back.

By the time he's done talking, he's prepared a gourmet meal, complete with dessert. We sit at my dining room table that's never used and eat.

Vulcan is a catch. He's a professional cook, though he refuses to work in the field anymore. His meals are to die for. He's got no debt, he's genuinely kind and thoughtful, and he takes care of everyone. He works, owning his own forge and making pieces that sell for several thousand dollars a pop.

I'm thankful that while he's a bit of a lovesick puppy and always willing to give a guy the benefit of the doubt, he's never been naïve enough to give anyone access to his accounts. He'd be robbed blind because he refuses to see the

bad in people, even when it's clear to everyone else that they're blatantly using him.

He only believes it when they break his heart. Usually in the same way this last guy did. *Just dress like a fucking adult for a change. I can't let my colleagues see you like this.*

The fact that Vulcan doesn't own anything he doesn't wear should have tipped these idiots off to the fact that will never happen. He may be a softy, but he won't bend or break for anyone. And he always ends the relationship when it comes to this point. Though he feels like they've ended it with their nasty demand, which is why he always says he was dumped.

"Your turn," Vulcan says, tipping his glass of wine to me. "What have you been doing?"

I know that look. As if he already knows.

This is a new low for me. I'm usually much prouder than this. Biting my lip, I let my mind drift back to Simon. Vulcan has been an amazing distraction. It felt good to get my mind off Simon for a bit. Maybe give me a bit of perspective.

Not that I won't go back to obsessing tomorrow when I still don't receive a text from him.

"Well," I say and pause to chew on my lip again. "I may have hooked up with a former student at the club last week."

Vulcan raises a brow, then he puts down his drink. "Go on."

I wince. "And I may have propositioned him."

He presses his lips together and waits.

"To be my sugar baby," I finish.

Now his eyes bug out as he stares at me with his jaw hanging open. For a long time, while I fidget under his shock, he just stares at me.

"Are you out of your mind? You could lose your job, Quin. What's wrong with you?"

I sigh, shaking my head. "I've been mildly fixated on him since he was my student last semester. Honestly, it was all



fine. I'd written it off when the semester ended. But then I saw him in the club. And... I had his mouth around my dick." The mere mention of it makes the image of Simon on his knees in front of me flash before my eyes and my cock twitches to life. "V, I don't know how to get over this obsession. I just... *want him* in the worst fucking way. I can't remember the last time I've wanted someone so badly."

He's still staring. Completely flabbergasted. I sigh, dropping my gaze to my plate as I absently roll the wine in my glass.

"What did he say?" Vulcan asks.

"About what?"

He rolls his eyes. "Your proposition."

"Oh. He hasn't responded." I swallow and risk meeting his eyes.

He sighs. "It's a good thing I have a big house. You're going to need somewhere to hide when shit hits the fan."

I flinch at his words and shake my head. He's not going to tell the deans about it. He won't. He wouldn't.

...right?

# Nine

## SIMON



I HAVEN'T STOPPED THINKING about it. Not for a fucking second. I even dreamed about this whole sugar baby thing. I'd stuck his number in my phone under the contact name 'P' and then tore up the card and threw it away at school. No way for the twins to find it. My finger has hovered over that number no less than a dozen times.

Am I seriously considering this? I'm that desperate that I'm willing to trade my body for money?

But it's \$4,000 a month! It would mean I could pay the twins back. I could buy us food instead of it always being them. Maybe take them to dinner and movies and mini golf instead of them always paying my way. I could buy them birthday presents with my own money instead of them basically buying their own gifts because I used their money.

I can be an equal in our friendship.

The prospect of that alone has me almost messaging Professor Stommer so many times, I cannot even count. The idea that I would no longer be a financial burden makes my eyes sting. It makes the lump in my throat that's been there since I was a teenager shrink. The constant sour feeling in my stomach gives way so I actually feel proper hunger for a change.

But nothing compares to the tightness in my chest and the weight on my shoulders falling slightly. This could be the answer to everything.

\$4,000 a month!

In exchange for... sex.

While that doesn't necessarily bring me excitement, I'm not as horrified by the idea as maybe I should be. That it's with a man is probably the most intimidating part. But not because of the aspects that one might find horrifying.

I've known for years that I'm not normal when it comes to sex. The idea just isn't all that appealing to me. I'd rather give myself release than engage in a sexual act with someone else. I rarely find myself attracted to someone enough to become aroused.

So many times, it's more like a chore than anything. I have to be in the right frame of mind. I have to be mentally aroused before I can physically get there. It's a fucking chore. So much so that I rarely put myself through the effort.

Sex has just never been good enough for me to want to try.

I've never told anyone this, though. Not even the twins. I don't think they'd judge me for it. Or that they'd think I was broken. Hell, I'm pretty sure I'm broken. But... I guess I'm just not ready to face the discussion yet.

If I take Professor Stommer up on this, I'm going to have to. Right? He's going to have to know why I'm not as into it as he is.

Then again, I'm not gay. So.... I could just use that as the reason my body is not becoming aroused.

The more I think about that, the more I like that idea instead. Anything to avoid the elephant in my head that is the strangeness of my sexuality.

"Simon."

I blink several times to find Declan in front of me. He's frowning as he stares, letting me know he's been talking to me for at least the last few minutes. "Sorry, what?"

His frown deepens. "You keep telling me you're fine and then keep proving to me you're not."

"I'm just stressed about money," I tell him. "Nothing new."

I try to pull away, but he brings me flush to him instead. Sighing, I lean my forehead against his. “Seriously, Dec. I’m fine.” There’s a second where I almost tell him that maybe I have an idea about how I will make some money. But I’m not ready for that conversation yet either.

They know when I’m lying. They know even before I know I’m going to lie. So I don’t say anything. Instead, I wrap my arms around him, encouraging him to hug me.

Declan does, kissing my cheek. Then my jaw. Just below my ear. “You worry me,” he says quietly, hugging me tightly to him. I love his hugs. When I had just lost my mother, his hugs made me cry because they were always tight, just like hers. “Tell me what you need so we can make you stress less, Simon. Anything. Just say it.”

I shake my head because I don’t know what it will take to make me stress less. “I need to earn my own money,” I say, not for the first time. “You don’t get it; put yourself in my situation. Think about how I feel living off you and your family for the past thirteen years, Dec. Do you know how inadequate I feel?”

I’m surprised when the last few words break. My voice shakes and I close my eyes to hold my breath, hoping that it’ll make the tears stop before they come.

“Fuck, Simon,” he murmurs, bringing a hand up into my hair. “I hate when you feel like this. I’d do anything to take it away.”

My laugh is breathy as I hug him and bury my face in his neck. “I know that you just want to take care of me. That’s all you’ve ever done since my mom died. But eventually I need to take care of myself. We’re not kids anymore. We graduate in less than five months. I can’t just be your—”

“I’m going to kick your fucking ass if you call yourself a burden again,” he growls at me.

I laugh again. This time it sounds closer to normal. That’s exactly the word I was going to use.

The soft touch of his hand in my hair turns harsh as he grabs a fistful and pulls my head up so he can frown at me. “There’s no reason we can’t keep taking care of you. None at all. Simon, you’re not taking advantage of us when all we want to do is give you everything. Why can’t you understand that?”

“For the same reason you can’t understand why I can’t do that,” I say. The words ‘it’s not appropriate’ almost leave my mouth but probably because we’ve been hearing how ‘inappropriate’ our friendship is since we were kids. There was a time when I was vulnerable after my family fell apart that I might have believed it. If not for the twins who refused to change how much they showed me their love.

That doesn’t mean I don’t see the way we’re looked at. It doesn’t mean I don’t hear the whispers and know what people think. *He’s the boy the Whitaker twins share.*

I’ve heard it enough that I almost think there’s something wrong with how we show affection too. Every time I hear a whisper, I wonder if maybe the world is right. Friends aren’t supposed to be this intimate. They’re not supposed to show this much affection in public. Society would really freak out if they saw how we were at home. I’m not sure I’ve spent a night alone in my bed since my mother was alive and my family was whole.

I take a breath and sigh. Declan is still frowning. While I know the twins have that freaky twin thing going on between them, sometimes I think they can read my mind, too. There’s no doubt in my mind that he knew the ‘inappropriate’ words nearly escaped my mouth.

He kisses me. Softly. His hand loosens in my hair as he keeps his mouth pressed to mine. He doesn’t let me go until I finally relax in his hold. “I hate when you listen to everyone else,” he mutters against my lips. “There’s nothing wrong with this.”

I give him a half smile and don’t argue. Most of the time, I agree. But when so many people disagree, it’s hard to keep so sure.

“Ready?”

Damon steps up behind me as he asks the question. I shrug, having no idea what we’re supposed to be ready for. He kisses the back of my neck and, for a minute, I let myself enjoy their affection. Being pressed between them as they hug me. They chase away all the doubt and self-loathing. My guilt. Maybe even some depression that I ignore.

“Come on,” Damon says, pulling my hand to his and linking our fingers. “I need to check on my window.”

The textile building is where Professor Stommer’s office is. The twins are taking stained glass construction this semester. They’ve been super excited about it. I’m pretty sure there’s going to be a penis involved in their final product.

I follow them into the building, glancing down the hallway to the Professor’s office. I can see that his door is open, so when the twins let me go so they can attend to their glass, I meander down the hall.

The door is cracked, so I peek inside. He’s at his desk. Biting my tongue, I knock on the door.

“Enter,” he says without looking up.

I push the door open and step inside. He still hasn’t looked up as his pencil moves across the paper in front of him. His voice sounds irritated when he asks, “How can I help you?”

Finally, he looks at me. The irritation falls away as his eyes widen slightly. Then he flashes me a smile. “Come in.”

I’m tempted to shut the door but then the twins might not find me and they’re already wary of Professor Stommer. So, I shut it to where I found it before crossing the room and taking a seat across from him.

His gaze is intently on me, but he looks like he’s holding his breath.

I glance back at the door, staying silent to make sure I don’t hear anything before I look at him again. “I realize this isn’t exactly the right place for this, but... why are you offering that?”

Professor Stommer's eyes flicker to the door. He takes a breath and sits back. "Because I want you," he says quietly. "You want money and I have money." He shrugs.

"How many—"

He snorts, cutting me off while he shakes his head. "Never, Simon," he whispers. "I've never had a sugar baby, nor have I ever propositioned a student for anything before." His gaze flickers to the door again. "I don't know what it is about you..."

My heart stutters and I have to open my mouth to take a deep enough breath. "How would this work?"

Professor Stommer nods and sits forwards again so he can keep his voice low. "We start slow," he says. "To let you get used to me. To what I want. My... appetite. We'll make a contract that outlines everything. Details you won't even have thought of. It's all about protecting us both during this exchange."

"I'm really not gay," I say.

He smirks, chuckling. "It's just sex, Simon. Your sexual orientation doesn't really matter. But I promise to make it good for you as well. I won't hurt you."

Somehow, I'm not sure how he's going to keep that end of the deal intact. I have a feeling that it's going to hurt. My ass has only been used for one thing and it's not been an entrance.

"All discreetly, of course. For both of our sakes."

I nod, chewing on the inside of my lip. "\$4,000? A month?" I clarify.

He nods. "We can negotiate it further if you want. I'm still looking into a suitable fee for what I'm asking."

"Just sex. For \$4,000."

"Definitely sex," he agrees. "But maybe some other things too. As I said, we can negotiate. Preferably, not here."

"So... maybe more?" I ask, surprised. Where does he get the money?



Professor Stommer tilts his head as he studies me. “Simon, why do you need money?”

His door suddenly opens, his eyes snap up and I twist in my seat, unsurprised to find the twins. This is becoming routine.

They’re frowning. I get to my feet and wave at the Professor without saying anything else. Hopefully, they didn’t hear anything. I sure as fuck don’t want to explain. If anything, maybe they heard my name and his last question. They already know I’m looking for work-study. Not that I’ve looked any further since I asked Professor Stommer for a position with his department.

Once we step outside, I decide to head off their questions. “He’s not a bad guy. I asked him for a position in his department for work-study. They denied his request, and we were talking about that.”

Neither answer as we move down the path. They move in unison as they take my hands and I try not to smile. I don’t know why I always smile when they move in sync with each other. Maybe it’s endearing to me.

“Let’s go home,” Damon says. “We’ll order pizza.”

I nod, not answering. My mind is already back to the idea of becoming a sugar baby. Maybe I ought to look it up online. To see what kind of information I can find.

Frowning, I decide that’s a bad idea. The twins are on my phone all the time. I’m going to have to change the passcode if I go through with this. I can’t risk them seeing any kind of text thread.

“Simon.”

I startle out of my thoughts and look between their identical faces. Again, they’re frowning at me. “Pizza is good. I’ll even let you buy,” I say.

It was supposed to make them laugh. They don’t let me pay for food. Ever. Not even once have I gotten away with it.

But I suppose joking about the thing that I've been so stressed over is probably more suspicious than putting them at ease. "Take me home," I say. "I need to cuddle and watch mindless television."

It's enough of an admission that I'm still stressed and it's bothering me that they accept it. We cuddle all the time. It's normal. It's just how we migrate toward each other because we've always cuddled.

When I'm asking for it... well, it may as well be me screaming that I'm upset about something.

They're going to assume it's the money thing. They'd be right. I am upset and stressed about it. But really, I need an excuse to get lost in my mind without them interrupting me so I can think about Professor Stommer's proposition.

It's tempting. So fucking tempting I want to just... agree. It would solve so many problems.

But is the cost too high? Will I feel sick to my stomach after... after he uses me? Will I be even more disgusted with myself that I've sold my body just so I can pad my bank account?

More importantly, how the fuck am I going to hide this from Declan and Damon?

Ten

## SIMON



I DON'T KNOW how I feel or why I return to the textile building the next day. For a long time, I stand outside and stare up at the windows. I know which office belongs to Professor Stommer. With the reflection of the sky in the windows, I can't tell if he's looking out. Maybe he is.

The guilt inside me has shifted and now lies in the fact that I will have to lie to hide this from Declan and Damon. I don't know how to do that. I don't even know if I'll be able to do so convincingly.

I'm pretty sure I'm going to do this. It's not more weight on my shoulders, as I thought the decision might be. Instead, I feel a little lighter. I can't quite breathe freely yet. There's still too much hanging over my head. Too much that I hate and struggle under to truly feel like this will take it all away.

There's also the possibility I might not be able to go through with this. Blowjobs seem to be inconsequential to me. I didn't feel any horror or disgust after. Of course, there's the argument that I'd done that out of my own curiosity. Not as part of a contractual relationship. This might feel entirely different.

This is different. But so far, all the pros far outweigh the cons. At least, that's how I see it. I might be wearing rose-colored glasses, though.

The benefit of my financial stressors being lifted, while still being able to maintain my concentration fully on my coursework, far offsets any discomfort I might feel about it.

Considering that I don't anticipate discomfort at all says a lot. Is it because I trust the Professor, or that I care that little about sex?

I'm going to have to tell him about my weird inability to really get aroused though. Right? Is that something I should disclose right away?

When a group of girls walk into the building, I follow. A couple grin at me, batting their lashes, and I wonder why my reaction to them, as to most people, is so little. They are beautiful. I can see that. *I think that*. I definitely find women more appealing than men.

Then why is there no physical response in me?

I give them a smile that I hope looks sincere but uninterested as I head down a different hall. Professor Stommer's door is open again and I stand there looking at him while he's concentrating on something on his desk.

I've never thought to look at a man before. To determine whether I thought they were attractive or not. As I study him—his shaggy blond hair and blue eyes, lean build under a flannel shirt—I conclude that he's at least conventionally attractive. Right? Is he someone the twins would like under different circumstances?

If they knew what he has packing in his pants, they'd consider it regardless of how they physically felt toward him. The idea makes me smirk.

It's at that moment that Professor Stommer looks up. He grins at me and sits back in his chair.

When I walk in, I don't close the door. I didn't really come in to discuss the *thing* that's hanging between us. It shouldn't be done here. Not at school, where he could get in serious trouble.

"You're becoming a pretty frequent visitor in my department," he says.

I shrug. "Declan and Damon are taking the stained-glass class. Apparently, they feel their projects are babies and need to keep checking on them in case they're crying."

He chuckles.

“I almost feel like I should warn their instructor that there’s a chance that one or both of them will have male genitalia in their final projects,” I say.

Professor Stommer shakes his head. “I only ever see them with scowls. It’s hard to imagine them with a sense of humor.”

“They’re protective,” I say, shrugging. “They forget that I can take care of myself.”

“Was there a time when you couldn’t?” He looks at me, his gaze tracking over my body. When he meets my eyes again, I’m grinning.

“Not in the way you think, but yeah. There was a time I needed it.”

He nods, and I know he’s curious. Maybe he’s going to ask. Before either of us can say something, my stomach gives an embarrassingly loud growl. It’s so clear and distinct that my cheeks flush. I should have taken a fucking granola bar!

“Simon, why do you need money?” Professor Stommer asks.

I shake my head and say an obvious answer. “I’m a broke college student.”

The world is full of them. The campus is full of them. If I knew how to control my physical reaction, I might have been convincing.

Professor Stommer slides his chair back and opens a large cooler. I’m already shaking my head when he places a sub on the desk and slides it to me. Then he lifts the cooler to show me how packed it is.

“I have more than enough to share. I’m a very indecisive eater, so I always have far too many options.”

I’m still shaking my head when he stands. I watch as he crosses the room and quietly shuts the door. Then he’s in front of me. Not behind his desk but in front of it, leaning his ass on the edge. He bends down so his face is right in mine.

I swallow around the lump in my throat.

“Regardless of what happens, I will always feed you.” He leans closer still so his mouth is hovering over mine. My lips part as I try to take a breath. He smells good, like coconut oil and freshly chopped wood. “We can discuss the contract and terms until they’re something we’re both happy with. That we agree on. I will make this good for you, Simon. Gay or not.”

He stands and moves back around his desk, leaving me to try to catch my breath. It’s as much of a physical reaction I’ve had to anyone in longer than I can remember. Not necessarily sexual, but it’s something, anyway.

“Take the sandwich,” he says, pushing it closer to me. “Don’t argue.”

I do and get to my feet. I’m not sure what to say, so I don’t say anything else. Leaving his office, I’m in a slight daze as I walk out of the building, sandwich in hand. When I step outside, I pause and just stare straight ahead. Not focusing on anything at all. Because I’m not sure what just happened.

My stomach gives another obnoxious growl and I move down the sidewalk until I’m on the main path, where I drop onto a bench with a frustrated sigh.

If I wasn’t so foolishly stubborn, I’d just eat the food at home. Even I know how stupid I’m being over it. It’s petty and unhealthy.

Unwrapping the sandwich, I take a bite and almost groan. It’s so fucking good. I examine what’s in it, but I’m so fucking hungry that I don’t concentrate on it long. I eat much quicker than I should, barely chewing before I swallow and take another bite.

I’m nearly finished with it when the twins join me, sitting on either side of me on the bench. They don’t speak as they watch me inhale the remnants.

“I knew you were hungry,” Damon says.

“We buy roast beef because it’s your favorite,” Declan says. “You know it’s a little too bloody for us.”

I snort and lick the mayonnaise off my fingers. Declan moves his lips to my ear. “Eat the fucking roast beef, Simon. I’m going to be really fucking mad if we have to throw it out.”

Leaning my head against his, I close my eyes. *I’m going to take Professor Stommer’s offer.* The words are on the tip of my tongue. But knowing I’d have to explain myself, I don’t say anything.

“I hate living off you,” I say, giving them the same worn-out argument we’ve been having far too frequently lately.

“We don’t mind,” Damon says. “We can argue about anything else except your basic fucking necessities. Eat the fucking food, Simon. Drink. Don’t make us tie you the fuck down three times a day to assure that it happens.”

I nod. “I won’t. I’m sorry.”

“Are you done? I need to go to the library,” Declan says.

I nod again and they pull me up. Their fingers are linked with mine as they pull me along. We turn back toward the textile building to take the path to the library. As we pass the front door, I see Professor Stommer step outside.

His gaze locks on me and I stare. For just a moment. With my heart racing, I give him a slight nod and smile, my cheeks heating slightly.

Laughter nearly bubbles out of me when his eyes widen. Then he’s grinning hugely. I lose sight of him when we round the building.

“I don’t like how he looks at you,” Damon says, his voice low and possessive.

“What are we talking about?” I ask, already feeling so much fucking better than I have in days. Weeks. Fuck, probably years. I’m about to have money!

While money might not buy happiness, it’s going to lighten my financial burdens. And fuck those people who don’t think that will bring me happiness. Short of my mother being alive and my father no longer being a fucking deadbeat drunk, there’s not a goddam thing I want more than a means to



support myself financially without relying on the generosity of others.

“Stommer,” Damon says. “He looks at you like you’re a fucking popsicle.”

I snort. “He does not.”

“He does,” they say together.

“We should know. We look at plenty of men that way,” Declan says.

“Objectifying them?” I ask, raising a brow.

“Yes,” they agree together, giving me identical smiles.

“But they like it,” Declan says.

“Right. Measure someone’s worth by the size of their cocks,” I say. “I can see how someone might like that.”

They snicker. “Don’t be ridiculous. Their worth is measured by their...” Declan trails off. “Well, nothing sexual. Their usefulness *to me* has everything to do with the size of their cocks.”

The one place where the twins aren’t carbon copies of each other is the type of guy they like. Damon enjoys jocks. Someone with muscle. However, he likes to dominate them. So finding a submissive guy bigger than him has always been a fun hunt.

Declan enjoys—well, he’d like Professor Stommer under different circumstances. He’s attracted to intelligence. Confidence. He wants someone softer. Pretty.

However, neither of them has ever been in a relationship. They want hookups. The occasional friends with benefits situation is fine, but not since high school. In college, it’s always been whoever scratches their itch that they find at the club.

Me? I rarely do hookups but it’s for the reason I don’t say more than I’m just not interested right now. I don’t feel that desire. Definitely not with a stranger. It’s far too much pressure and energy to get there with a stranger.

My sexual encounters have been with girlfriends. Of which, I haven't had one since sophomore year of college. I know this will be surprising, but our relationship ended because she couldn't handle my friendship with the twins. She was jealous. Nothing I said would make her understand it is simply platonic. This is just how we are. How we've always been.

I haven't tried dating since. I haven't had the desire to do so.

While we head over to Sinners sometimes because the twins really think I need to let off some sexual tension, I don't hookup. Even if I disappear for a while. It's much more gratifying to find release by myself without the pressure of someone else being involved.

"What happens when you fall in love one day and your guy asks how many dicks you've had in your mouth?" I ask.

"Two," Declan says.

I look at him with a frown.

"You don't mean at the same time," he says, smirking.

Rolling my eyes, I shove my shoulder into him.

"Do you care how many dicks we've had in our mouths?" Damon asks.

I shake my head. "No, but why would I?"

Neither of them answers me until I glance at them on either side.

"I'm not going to fall in love with someone who cares about my past sex life," Damon says. "That's a facet of my life that will be disclosed right away and if they can't handle it, we won't progress enough for me to fall in love with them."

"I'm just teasing, you know. I really don't think there's anything wrong with your behavior," I tell him.

"I know," they say together.

As soon as we step into the library, the twins head into the racks, and I pull out my phone and scroll to Professor

Stommer's number. For just a second, I give myself pause.

Am I going to regret this? Will he let me back out if it turns out I can't do this? What happens when he's ready for fucking sex?

Taking a deep breath and letting it out slowly, I send a text. There's no harm in talking about it. All these questions can be answered. We can discuss it all.

**Me**

Where can we talk details? When?

I don't even get a chance to close the app when I see he's already typing a response. It's only a few seconds later when I receive it.

**P**

48 Longley Place. Tomorrow. What time works for you?

Tomorrow is Saturday. A specific time doesn't matter a whole lot. It's finding a reason to leave the house without the twins. Biting my lip, I wrack my brain for a reason.

**Me**

I'll try for close to 11 if that's okay. I'm not sure how to get away from D&D, yet. Might take me a while.

**P**

Tell them you have an interview.

I smile. How fucking easy is that?!

**Me**

Brilliant. Thanks. See you then.

Pocketing my phone, I stare around the library. Everyone looks normal. It's just a normal day. Nothing exciting. Like I

didn't just sell my body to solve all my money issues. Not me. Not Simon Everett, who is always wrapped between the possessive clawed holds of the Whitaker twins.

By the time they return to where I'm standing, I'm breathless and my heart is racing. Damon takes my face in his hands and studies me. "Simon—"

I lean in and kiss him. A brief peck. Then offer him a smile. "It's okay. I just got an interview for tomorrow morning. That's all. I'm happy."

He nods slowly, as if he's considering my words. It's not exactly an interview, but it's also not *not* an interview. We're talking about the details of a contract. And technically, there's money exchanged for a service provided. That means it's work, right? Is that not the definition of a job?

He's not exactly satisfied with my answer, but neither addresses it again. I'm sure there will be more questions tomorrow as the time nears. After all, I'll need to find a convincing name for this job. And where it's at.

But for right now, I'm smiling. Because soon, I'll have money in my account. I won't be a goddamn leech anymore.

All in exchange for some orgasms. Easy peasy.

# Eleven

## QUINLAN



THE THRILL that goes through me when I see Simon outside *and he nods* with a smile is second only to being in his mouth again. I can't stop the smile that spreads across my face.

Of course, this only means we have a lot to talk about. I head home. I need to do further research on the contract, filling it out and deleting the things that aren't pertinent to us so I can have the contract ready when Simon arrives. My fingers are shaking by the time I sit in my car, and I already have a text message from him.

**SE**

Where can we talk details? When?

I'm already responding before I can think this through or second guess myself. Not that I have yet. Apparently, my shameless obsession knows no bounds.

**Me**

48 Longley Place. Tomorrow. What time works for you?

I watch the screen as I start the engine. He's typing and pausing. My stomach flips when I receive another one back. I swear, I feel like a teenager again. Was this what it had felt like when I secured my first date?

**SE**

I'll try for close to 11 if that's okay. I'm not sure how to get away from D&D, yet. Might take me a while.

**Me**

Tell them you have an interview.

**SE**

Brilliant. Thanks. See you then.

Yep, my stomach is rolling with nerves, excitement, and anticipation. I'll be lucky if I can keep anything down until he's signed this contract.

Honestly, I wouldn't have thought about a contract at all except that when I was researching sugar babies, everything said that we should have one. It would protect both parties. Then I fell into the rabbit hole of whether it was legal in our jurisdiction. You've got those prude-y states that are afraid of people making money in ways that they deem immoral.

The way I see it, it's my money and as long as this is with a consenting adult, there's no fucking issue and it's no one else's business. Like I'm going to let a little thing like legalese get in my way of securing Simon Everett.



I'M PRACTICALLY JUMPING out of my skin the next morning until he arrives. There's a clear path that I've paced bare, tracking down my hall. If there'd been carpet, it would have been stupidly obvious. Fortunately, I tore all the carpet out of this place before I even moved in. Who wants germs and bacteria from the previous owners under your feet?

It's just before eleven when he knocks on the door. I still, my heart racing in excitement. *He's here. He's here.* The words

chant in my head like I'm a five-year-old on a playdate. Now I'm a thirty-eight-year-old on a very different kind of playdate. Well, the precursor to many playdates, hopefully.

He's smiling when I open the door, but I can see his nervousness in the way his shoulders are slightly tense. There's something in his eyes too. In the way he's looking at me. But the smile is real enough, and that makes me feel a little more at ease.

"Hi," I say, stepping back to let him in.

Simon bows his head slightly, cheeks flushing, as he steps inside. He kicks off his shoes as he returns my greeting. I lead him into the living room and gesture for him to have a seat. "Want a drink? Water? Juice? Wine? I might have a beer. No soda though. Or I can make you some tea?"

His smile widens a little and I realize I might be rambling. "Water will be great. Thanks."

I nod and move into the kitchen. I'll show him around later. If he agrees. I can't bring myself to even think *when he agrees* because my hopes are already through the fucking roof. That's going to be a long fall if this doesn't work out.

With a bottle of water, I return to the living room. He's right where I left him, his dark eyes moving over my space and taking it in. I try to see it through his eyes. The entire house is covered seamlessly in gray hardwood floors. The living room is painted a muted blue/gray. Depending on the natural light coming in the large windows that face the front of my house, they can look bluer or grayer. Today they're bluer.

There are a few pieces of art scattered here and there. A three-seater couch with a table in front of it and a chair perpendicular. There's a banquet that I've turned into a television stand with a modest forty-two-inch flatscreen.

A table at the corner of the couch and chair holds a lamp and the remote for the television. There are also a couple low three-shelf bookcases with old books and knickknacks and a table that reaches the windowsill with an array of succulents.



Honestly, this room doesn't get used much. It's the closest area to the front, so it's made to be homey and welcoming, but I spend almost no time in it.

I offer him the water and take a seat next to him. Not as close as I hope to be soon, but not necessarily on the cushion I should be on.

“So, any questions before we talk details?”

Simon huffs a quiet laugh as he takes a sip of water. “I think if I have questions, it's going to be after I leave here today.”

That makes my stomach sink. No signature today. Fuck, I want his mouth again.

Nodding, I sit back. “I'm going to text you a link to the doc so you can look at it as I go over the details. I think explaining it verbally will be easier to talk things through than if you just read it. Maybe a little less overwhelming.”

Simon nods absently, but he's frowning. When he pulls his phone out, his finger hovers over the link. “The twins and I share the drive,” I say. “They're going to see this if I open it.”

“Make a new login. Don't save the password, but make it something completely random that they won't think of.”

“Like today's date?” He smirks, and I watch as his fingers move quickly over his phone screen. He's got the bottle of water between his legs and I'm a dirty, dirty man as I stare for far too long.

Minutes later, he says, “Alright. It's open.”

Taking a breath, I nod again and look at the screen. “The first line is just a disclosure that, while this is a legal document, it might not be enforceable in some jurisdictions. However, I've checked our local laws and I can get it notarized, so it's a legally binding document.”

“Are you going to do that?”

I study his face for a minute. “I don't know. In reality, we don't know each other very well. It's not a bad idea. It'll protect us both.”

Simon shrugs. “I’m just asking. I don’t care either way.”

“Okay, good.” I nod and look back at the screen. “Obviously, the first few lines are just laying the whole thing out. Outlining that I’m referred to as Sugar Daddy and you’re referred to as Sugar Baby. The period for the contract is six months, which will bring us to right after your graduation.”

When I glance at him, he’s biting his lip, but nodding along with me as he scrolls slowly. He’s not moving ahead, but keeping right at my pace. It makes me smile as I continue.

“Ground rules. The key points I want to point out here are items 1.1 and 1.4. The first states that this is a short-term relationship for us to satisfy intimate needs and for me to provide financial support to you. As such, no other emotions are required—i.e. jealousy, love, or whatever.” My gaze flickers up to him and he’s smirking at the screen. “The second is exclusivity. No sex with other people while in this contract.”

He looks up at me and there’s a hint of amusement. “You want me to yourself, Professor?”

The teasing in his tone makes me shiver. I hope I don’t look too crazed when I smile. “Yes.”

He’s still smiling as he returns his gaze to the document.

“Communication. Let’s keep it strictly to cell phones. Texts, calls. Whatever. No emails. You’re not required to delete texts, though maybe not save my number in your phone under my name.”

“It’s under ‘P,’” he tells me.

Professor. Despite me telling him to call me by my name, he still calls me Professor. Not gonna lie—I don’t hate it.

“Communication is important, as in all relationships. We don’t necessarily need to have a set schedule and I won’t ever ask you to drop everything for me, but... For simplicity purposes, like any other relationship. Sometimes we’ll get together on a whim, other times we’ll schedule and plan on something.”

“We may need to consider some kind of schedule. It’ll be easier avoiding the truth with Damon and Declan.” I look at him, studying his face, until he looks up and meets my eyes. He sighs. “Please don’t be one of those people who are going to ask.”

“For the purposes of this, it’s not a bad idea,” I say, holding my phone up slightly to indicate the contract open on each of our screens.

He sighs again and the playful smile he’s had since he got here fades. “Would you be asking about anyone else’s friends in this situation or is it because our friendship isn’t what the world deems ‘appropriate’?”

This is apparently a touchy subject. I wrap my hand around his wrist where it rests on his leg. His eyes dart down to it before looking at me again. “You tell me they’re only your friends and that’ll be enough for me. While this contract is to protect us both, we’re going to need to have some trust in each other since we won’t be together every single minute.”

“I don’t think I’d ever use ‘only’ to describe anything with them, but we’re not in any way lovers. They’re my best friends; always have been,” he says, his words slightly stiff.

I nod. “Fine. Ready to move on?”

He lets out a breath and gives me a jerky nod. Good to know that the twins are a touchy subject. Although, it only makes me want to ask more.

“Social interactions. It’s a longer section and I’ll only skim except for the first line. I expect meetings 3-4 times a week unless otherwise agreed upon.”

His smirk is back as he looks at me with mirth. “Horny, huh?”

“Yes,” I tell him, though I’m looking back at my phone so he doesn’t see just how hard up I am for him. “When we go out, I pay. No PDA of any kind. Celebratory gifts are not necessary. You’re not required to be my stand-in partner for social events, but, as we’ll come upon later, I reserve the right to request your presence at some things. None of which will be

local; there will be very little possibility of running into someone from Longwood. If we run into each other, such as on campus, we are typical acquaintances—former student/teacher. And, of course, we'll both keep this completely confidential.”

Simon frowns, letting out a heavy sigh. “I agree, but we’re going to have to make a contingency plan for the twins. I’m shit at lying. They can call it out before words even leave my mouth. It’s infuriating sometimes, but I can’t change that.”

“Sounds to me like they’re going to be a big obstacle.”

He sighs again and leans his head back, staring at the ceiling. I’m left looking at his smooth, perfect throat. A shiver races down my spine.

“We can talk about them later. What’s next?” he says, picking up his head and looking down at his phone again. I watch as he scrolls.

“Financial compensation. We’ll start at \$4,000, but we can negotiate it.”

Simon shakes his head. “That’s fine.”

“You can ask for more.”

“I won’t argue if you want to pay me more,” he counters, meeting my stare.

“You’re worth whatever amount you ask for, Simon.”

His breath catches as he looks at me. I watch as pink tinges his cheeks and he swallows. “This is fine,” he says quietly.

I want to push a little. Everything I’ve been reading says that this is a good amount for what I’m asking. But I’m also aware that I’m asking a straight man to be my lover. He absolutely has grounds for demanding more.

Since he won’t, I’ll just have to keep that in mind. Stipends for food, clothes, whatever. More money without it looking like more money. Right?

“Intimate acts,” I continue. “I want it all, as I already told you.”

He nods as he scrolls, reading each line. When I see the header for ‘Other Activities’ come onto his screen, I move on. “Social gatherings, as discussed above, with a minimum of 72 hours notice. I also want dinners, dates, and conversation. I want a complete companion.”

“A secret companion,” he says, amused.

*No, I want you as my companion.* If that means secret for both our sakes, then fine.

Obviously, I don’t say this. But before I can speak, he says, “Sex toys?”

The tone he speaks in makes me laugh. “I can take them or leave them. I added that in for you because I don’t know what you like.”

His eyes are wary as he looks at me. “Yeah, thanks.”

I laugh and skip down to protection. “Condoms. But I’d like us to get tested and then we can discuss not using them at some point. If you’re comfortable. Also, this might be the time to say that I’m usually a strict top. I’ll consider bottoming if you’re not comfortable, though.”

Simon surprises me when he waves me off. “I don’t care. Bottoming is fine.”

“Really? You have no concerns?” I ask, skeptically.

He smirks at me. “No. It’s fine.”

“All right,” I say slowly and look back at the phone. “I’ve added a section about the use of safewords because I want to give you the opportunity to stop something if you don’t like it—given that this is entirely new for you. We’ll use the stop light method. Green means you’re good to go, completely comfortable and maybe enjoying it; yellow means you need me to slow down, you’re getting overwhelmed; and red means you need me to stop and I’ll back away immediately. There’s no punishment if you use a safeword, ever, but I may ask questions for yellow and red, so I’m clear about what you don’t like. All right?”

Simon nods. “Yep, works for me.”

“If we find we need to add things to the contract, we can do so at a later time by initialing the addition. The rest is just legalese to protect us both. Terms and termination, stating that we can absolutely terminate the contract at any time for any reason. More confidentiality. Health and safety—this is primarily regarding disease and such. And then the legality of it.”

I give him a few minutes as he reads through the rest. When he’s done, he looks up at me and nods. “Okay, sounds good.”

“You agree to the contract as is? No changes? You don’t want to think about it?”

Simon shrugs. “No. You’ve been pretty thorough. I don’t have any questions about it right now. And you know what my concern is.”

“Your inability to lie.”

“Lie to Damon and Declan. Though I don’t make a habit of lying, I might not be bad at it outside of them.” I raise my brow and he laughs. “We’ve been friends for fifteen years. In case you haven’t noticed, we’re fucking close. So, no, I can’t lie to them. Nor can they to me. Because of this, the three of us have ended up becoming pretty honest people.”

“That’s fair. Think you can keep the idea that you’ve acquired a job as the cover?” I ask.

He shrugs. “Outside of asking the typical, expected questions of where, what’s your position, what’s your schedule?”

“What if you say something about working... not remotely but, it’s travel work?” I suggest.

“Honestly, I think the less I give them, the better it’s going to be. But I anticipate only being able to wrangle them into letting it go for so long. What happens when they follow me and figure this out, Professor? What then?”

“Can you trust them to keep their mouths shut?”

He gives me a bemused smile. “Depends. If they think they’re protecting me, there’s nothing they won’t do.”

I sigh. Complication of the worst kind.

“Maybe you need a different sugar baby,” he says, voice quiet.

“Not a chance,” I tell him. “It’s not about finding a sugar baby. It’s about having you,” I admit.

He bites his lip as he looks at me. Well, that shouldn’t have come out of my mouth. “How do you want me to sign this?” he asks, barely above a whisper.

He really wants to do this after what I just fucking said? Is it too much to want his mouth around my cock before he leaves here today?

“Use the drawing tool and sign with your finger in the document,” tell him. “I’ll do the same.”

Simon does. I watch, transfixed. My fingers are tingling when I do the same. I stare at the little icon that says ‘saving’ turned to ‘saved.’ Then I close the app and open another, using his phone number to transfer him \$4,000 and put down my phone. Simon’s phone pings with the notification. I wait as Simon stares at it, then signs out of the new shared drive account he made earlier before doing the same.

When he looks at me, I find all this new freedom is a little overwhelming. I’ve wanted this man since I set eyes on him five months ago. Now he’s mine.

First things first. Moving my hand into his hair, I pull him closer and cover his mouth with mine. I can feel his smirk. Feel his amusement as I trace his lips with my tongue. He lets me in without hesitation and I take a thorough examination of his mouth.

I’m pleasantly surprised when he participates in the kiss. His tongue moves against mine as I taste him, learning every little hint of flavor that is Simon Everett.

But I’m keenly aware of my zipper digging into my throbbing dick. No amount of adjusting is going to assuage the

pressure. I reluctantly release his mouth and move to straddle him. My knees are on either side of his thighs as I hover over him, my crotch in his face.

“I’m going to need to use your mouth, Simon.”

He chuckles and reaches for my pants.



# Twelve

## SIMON



THE TWINS and I have vehicles. Their parents bought us each a Jetta in three different colors as high school graduation presents. Because we live so close to campus and the clubs, we rarely drive. Usually, we use them once a week so that they don't sit for long periods of time and breakdown from disuse.

I know nothing about cars, but their father made us promise to keep them running regularly. There's nothing more irritating than accumulating bills from something you're not using.

Don't get me started on how guilty I felt when they handed me the keys to a car they bought me. A gift that, if coming from anyone, should have been my father. Not that he even showed up to my graduation. I doubt he's been sober long enough to realize he has a son since my mother died.

The Whitakers are my family. They stepped into that role when my world fell apart. They became my parents, treating me no differently than they do the twins. I've even been grounded a time or two. Something that made me stupidly happy because an adult cared enough about my behavior to punish me.

How fucked is that?

Today I drove my car to Professor Stommers. As I drive home, my bank account fatter than it's been in two years, I wait for a new weight to settle on my shoulders, replacing some of the burden from being broke. But it had lifted when I saw the notification that I received a transfer of \$4,000.

Of course, I wanted to accept it while sitting right there on his couch. I didn't. I had some self-control. But when I drive down the road and stop at the stop sign, I pick up my phone and hit accept. Then I log into my account and see that it's now sitting at \$4,234.63.

My smile is stupid big when I continue down the road.

I don't go home right away. Professor Stommer likes fucking my throat hard. It's a fucking experience, but I don't hate it as maybe I should. I don't necessarily like it. It's not at the top of the list of my favorite things to do, like it is the twins. But at least I won't be dreading it.

Will I dread other things? Him touching me? When he wants me to touch him? Then there's the whole question about bottoming.

Obviously, when that came up would have been the opportune time to tell him about my sexual inadequacy. But if I'm bottoming, then it doesn't matter. Right? I don't have to be hard for that. I'm pretty sure I can fake the sounds needed to convince someone I enjoyed myself.

As long as he doesn't require me to be hard at any time.

Taking a breath, my throat still burns with the raw feeling of having his fat cock shoved down it. Over and over and over. The way he falls apart over me when he does it is almost invigorating. There's a strange sense of accomplishment.

*I did that.*

My body didn't respond exactly. But I wasn't empty. I felt warm. That might have been because it felt good to know that I had the ability to make someone come undone. Even with just my throat and him doing all the work.

His taste is still on my tongue as I drive through the winding streets that seem endless in his subdivision. I'm going to need to bring up my map to get out of here, but for right now, I keep randomly talking in my car, waiting for my voice to sound normal.

Maybe I'm also avoiding going home. A glance at the clock tells me it's past two. How long can I claim an interview

takes before they get even more suspicious? I was pleasantly surprised when they didn't ask questions this morning.

I woke up alone in bed, which never happens. When I joined them in the kitchen, they were in their underwear—okay, Declan was in a jock because he often walks around like that—as they cooked myriad breakfast foods. When I asked what it was for, they told me they were celebrating me getting an interview.

It was a weird way for them to tell me they're supporting me, but they've always been a little extra with me. Just to make sure I knew they loved me.

Although I'm still keenly aware that in six months, this'll be over and I will need to have an actual stream of income, I'm not afraid of going broke right now. So I stop at the pizza shop and pick up two large pizzas and some apple crisp. It's their favorite.

I drive slowly home, taking back roads so I can go under the speed limit. When will I feel guilty? Should I feel used or cheap? Disgusted with myself? Why is the only thing I feel fucking giddy that there's money in my account and I can fucking pay some goddamn bills on my own?

Shaking it all off, I park my gray Jetta between Declan's white one and Damon's black one. Yes, we park like that on purpose. Identical cars in monotone colors, light to dark. Carrying my gains (offerings) upstairs, I find the twins on the couch with game controllers in their hands. Still in their underwear. This is what we're doing today, apparently.

Both flash me a smile as I set the boxes of food on the table in front of them.

“What's this for?”

“I'm starving and we're celebrating my first job,” I say as I kick my shoes at the pile where they fall on top of the heap.

“You were hired on the spot?” Declan asks.

Yep, and now I realize that maybe that's not normal. But I'm already committed to this story so I nod, grinning. “Yep.”

“Where—”

I shake my head and point at the pizza. “Eat before it gets colder. Traffic and shit.”

The way they stare at me tells me they heard the lie. Traffic. On a Saturday afternoon between the pizza place and our apartment. Yeah, no.

“Just eat,” I say as I sit on the chair instead of the couch.

They continue to stare at me, their frowns deepening. When they still don’t open the pizza box, I lean forward and do so on my own, taking a piece and shoving it in my mouth as I look at them pointedly.

Though I can see their irritation at the situation which I’m not talking about, they do as I do. I eat slowly, my throat still feeling a little sore as I swallow each bite. At least it’ll wash down the cum taste in my mouth. Because I know it won’t be long before they’re all up in my face and there’s no way I want to answer questions about that.

I’m not wrong. As soon as I’m done with my first piece, Declan pulls me to my feet and pushes me into Damon’s lap. I laugh, shaking my head as we get situated on the couch with Damon’s back against the arm and me between his legs. Then Declan spreads mine apart and settles facing me, all up in my business.

Yep, certainly glad for the first piece of pizza; though I’m still self-conscious about the smell of cum in my mouth. “Another piece,” I say.

Declan leans over and picks up another slice. He rips off a little piece, bite-sized, and feeds it to me. I shake my head as I eat it from his fingers. Like the weirdo he is, he lets his finger linger in my mouth so I can lick off the cheese and sauce before pulling it out and licking off the rest.

We get through the whole piece that way before they eat a second apiece.

“So,” Damon says.

I figure I better start talking first. With the flimsy story I came up with in the car. “I need to do this on my own,” I tell them. “Go there on my own. Work on my own. No following me. This is my thing. My job. I need you to trust me and let me do this without you.”

You’d think by the way Declan looks like I just gut punched him, that I’d told him I was moving to China without them. Taking his face in my hands, I tangle my fingers in his hair and bring his mouth to mine, kissing him hard. “I love you. I love how you take care of me. But please understand that I’m not ten anymore. I need to do this without you.”

“You’re not going to tell us where you’re working?” Damon asks.

“No,” I tell him. “Because I don’t want you showing up. Not to check on me. Not to support me. Not for any other reason. And before you get offended, you both know that’s exactly what you’d do. Don’t even try to deny it.”

Declan’s eyes narrow.

“I really wish you’d let us—”

I sigh, cutting Damon off. “I know you do. But I *can’t* live like that anymore. No matter how much I try to tell you, you just don’t understand how it makes me feel.”

“We know. We understand. We just don’t want you to feel that way,” Declan says as he somehow shifts his body in a strange way that he manages to lie flat against me, his face still in mine. Sandwiching me between them. “You have no idea how much we love taking care of you. Giving you everything we can. Making sure you know that you’re everything.”

“You’re loved,” Damon says.

They’ve told me the same thing since I was ten. Since the day I didn’t go to school because my father was passed out drunk on the living room floor and I had nothing to eat. Nothing to bring to school. No clean clothes. I was starving by the time the twins demanded that their mom drive them to my house to check on me.

Starving and wearing a stained shirt with dirty underwear and no socks in a house that had never looked worse.

Their mother was fucking fuming. Livid and horrified. I don't think I ever stepped foot back in my childhood home again. Not for clothing. Not for any possessions. All I grabbed on my way out was my backpack where I'd been carrying my school things and an album of my family before my mom got sick. I never saw my father again.

The twins never let me forget I was loved. Despite what became of my father at the loss of my mother, they loved me more than anything. They were my family now.

They repeated their words constantly. And when their words weren't enough to cut through my heartbreak, they physically did whatever they could to make me understand they were serious. Hugging me. Kissing me. Wrapping me in blankets and petting me, cooing to me.

It's entirely their fault I didn't turn into a bitter asshole. It's their doing that I smiled again.

"I know," I say. "I love you too. More than anything. That doesn't mean I can just stay home all the time and let you baby me."

"We don't baby you," Declan says, frowning.

"Not what I meant. The 'taking care of me' thing gets repetitive. I was finding a different word for it."

"You'd make a pretty house husband," Damon says, and I'm thankful he's trying to lighten the mood. "Just stay home in your underwear and look pretty for us."

"Yeah, I like that. I vote for that," Declan says.

Laughing, I pull Declan's face to mine again and press another quick kiss to his lips. Something that makes him smile, despite his efforts not to. Then I pull him further down so his face is on my chest and we're laying together. The pause music on the game they'd been playing is the only sound as it cycles through the same episodic notes. Otherwise, I can just hear their breathing. Feel their hearts beating in synchronization on either side of my chest.

“I really need you to trust me and let me do this. Please,” I say into the quiet.

The only answer I get is a kiss from each, placed on my skin at the exact same moment, though in different spots. Damon on my neck and Declan over my heart.

“Fine,” Damon says. “But there’s no shame in admitting defeat and coming home to let us *baby* you. Just so you know.”

“Not even defeat. You can just decide that you don’t want to work anymore. We’ll be totally cool with that.”

I snort and shake my head. “You’re stubbornly ridiculous.”

“No,” Declan says quietly, wrapping his arms around me to hug me tight. “We know our days are numbered and the time we get to spend together is going to get less and less. We’ll be moving on from college. Getting real jobs in the real world. And we’ll only get to see each other in the evenings.”

“Then there’s the dooming idea that you’re going to find someone you love more than us and leave,” Damon says. “Move out so you can have a wife and family.”

Part of me wants to tell them that’s never going to happen. But I bite my lip to keep those words in. Someday, I imagine it might.

“Why do you always make me the person who falls in love? It could very easily be one of you who breaks up our trio.”

I hear and feel their disgust at my statement. A grin spreads across my face.

“Not going to happen, Simon,” Damon says with a frown.

“Your heart is made of stone,” I tease.

“There’s a really thick fucking wall around it. The only ones I love enough to spend my life with are you and my brother,” he answers. “If I have my way, that’s exactly how things will stay.”

“Forever,” Declan agrees.



I reach one of my hands behind me and touch Damon's hair so I can hug them both. Usually, right now, as with all of the other times we've had this exact conversation, I'd agree with them. I'm not sure what stops me this time.

What I say is, "I'm not going anywhere for a long time. As long as we can find jobs a reasonable distance apart, there's no reason we can't live together after college."

"You still want that?" Declan asks. "Even though we smother you?"

"You're feeling very needy today," I say. His arms tighten around me. "You don't smother me. I told you; I love our friendship and I love how much you love me. I even love your desire to take care of me. You have no idea how many times your love for me has saved me over the years. But I meant what I said. I'm not a little kid anymore. That doesn't mean that I will ever *not* want your love. And when a time comes that I might need a little space, I will never be far. As much as you love me, I love you too."

"I hope you don't forget that," Declan whispers.

We don't speak after that. I'm not sure what has them so doomy and gloomy today, but I spend the rest of the evening and the next day curled up with them, constantly reminding them that they're mine and I love them more than anyone else. They're my best friends. They're always going to be my best friends.

That doesn't make them smile in the same way it used to. Now they kind of look sad. And I don't know what to do with that or how to take it away.

# Thirteen

## QUINLAN



WHEN I WAKE up Sunday morning, I feel really fucking good. I can't get the smile off my face. I try, and fail. A lot.

He agreed. Simon agreed! I could now touch him and kiss him and fuck him whenever I want.

As long as it's within the three to four days a week.

I don't even care about that restriction. Although, when I wrote the contract, I'd desperately wanted to put in five days a week. If I'd known 'a job' was going to be his cover story, I might have. You know, to keep it believable. But then, as a full-time college student, that probably wasn't acceptable.

It doesn't matter. I'm already planning when to see him again. Monday for sure. I don't want to push too much right away, so I think I'll keep the first few visits as light conversation and my cock in his mouth. Then, on the day that I take over the weekend, I'll keep him to myself all day. Or at least, a lot of the day. That would certainly make it believable that it's a job.

The fact I'm using that as an excuse to get so many hours with him isn't at all something I'm ashamed of. I'm helping him out.

Yeah....

What I can't stop myself from doing, that I really wish I could, is getting completely fucking hard as I imagine him face down on my bed as I push into his tight, virgin body. No one has touched that hole. I'm sure of it.

*I'm really not gay.*

To me, I'm interpreting that as he's never done butt things. I was too damn excited yesterday to introduce him to the world of butt things. My excitement was far too much when I imagined hitting his prostate for the first time and seeing the way he falls apart under my touch. Maybe as I'm sucking his dick. Maybe he'll just come right then and there.

A shiver races through my body as I palm my hard dick. Good thing I chose sweats today. I have a feeling I'm going to be hard most of the day. Since I plan to save my release for Simon's perfect throat tomorrow after school, it's going to be a long, frustrating, and painful day.

My first distraction comes when my parents call. When I see it's an incoming video, I grab my tablet and head into the living room, sitting in the place where I'd had Simon pressed against the couch as he swallowed my dick.

It's because of this memory that I'm smiling far too wide when my parents' faces come onto the screen. My mother immediately smiles in greeting, noticing how giddy I must appear. Yet, I can't wipe the smile, no matter how hard I try.

"Hey, baby. You look so happy," she says.

"Just got some good news yesterday, is all." As soon as the words leave my mouth, I realize my mistake. That opens up for follow-up questions and my mother doesn't disappoint.

"Tell us. What's your good news?"

Great. Talk about walking myself into a corner. Still, my smile doesn't fade. "I'd rather not jinx it, but I'll tell you as soon as I can."

"Ooh," my mom says, looking at my father. "Can we speculate?"

I shrug. "Sure, but I'm keeping a stony poker face."

"Not sure how you're going to do that, son, when you can't stop smiling," my father says.

"Some statues have smiles carved into them," I point out.

He chuckles and I spend the next several minutes listening to my mother rattle off all sorts of theories about what has me smiling. My father gets in on it too. The game falls into what ridiculous thing can my mother come up with that will outshine her previous ludicrous idea. I spend far too long laughing that my cheeks hurt before we finally change topics.

“It’s really good to see you laugh, honey,” my mom says.

“I always laugh,” I say.

“Yes, but there’s something almost glowing about you, today. Like the world can’t touch your happiness. Whatever’s responsible, I hope you have it for a very long time.”

It’s probably those words that finally dislodge my silly smile. There’s a deadline on this happiness. An ending.

“Oh, look what you’ve done, dear,” my dad says.

I laugh and shake my head. “No, no. It’s all good. Anyway, what’s going on?”

My father retired from the Army right before Christmas last year. He’d served ten tours over his forty years. He’s such a highly decorated General that I swear, his dress jacket weighs more than he does with his medals and ribbons.

There was a huge party when I went home for the holidays. You always hear about how proud a parent is of their children, but I can’t say how incredibly proud of my father I was at that moment. He served our country for four decades. He served six tours in war zones. Not only that, but he worked tirelessly since the day I came out to make the military a safe place for LGBTQ+ people.

It’s not perfect. No place is. But it’s far more inclusive. It goes beyond ‘don’t ask, don’t tell’ anymore. There are queer people throughout the military and he had no tolerance for bullying, hazing, or any other hate. I’ve seen people discharged for it. Including an enlisted soldier who beat me up for being gay on one base when I was sixteen.

The world needs more people like my father. I keep telling him he should run for a government position or something. Not because he’s really political, but because he’s an amazing

example of what a good man looks like. He served his country. He risked his life so that the idiots in politics today can take away our rights and deem what qualities make a person a person. What gender and sexuality allows them the same rights they want to control and take away.

Anyway, my dad is fucking awesome.

“That’s why we’re calling,” my mother said, and it was her turn to smile like a schoolgirl. She was so excited and by the way she was looking at my father—still sickeningly in love by the way—it had something to do with him and she was so proud she could barely stand herself. “Dad has been working on starting a new organization. He’s got a lot of support from his Army buddies, both active and retired, and he’s looking to get some funds together.”

“I’m happy to donate,” I say.

My dad rolls his eyes, despite his smile. “You don’t even know what the organization is for,” he says. “And I’m not asking for money.”

“No, no,” my mom says. “Well, donate, yes. But not money. We’d love it if you had some carvings or furniture that are pride themed.”

“Pride themed? Wait, not the right question. What do you want furniture for?” I ask.

“Not just furniture. Anything you’ve made. Carvings or figures. Anything,” my mom says. “And yes, pride themed somehow would be awesome.”

“It’s a little difficult to create pride themes in a table,” I tell her. “They’re sealed; not painted. You still haven’t told me what the organization is.”

“It’s a LGBTQ+ military support program that we’re hoping to establish on every US military base. So that families like ours and kids like you, as well as enlisted, have some resources and support. We didn’t have that with you and we’d really like to prevent the experiences you went through from happening to anyone again,” my father says.

“Being gay doesn’t mean they can’t serve their country,” my mom says. “But knowing how cis straight men who are afraid ‘the gay can be caught’ react prevents many people in the queer community from pursuing a military career. Your father hopes that his new organization can help open up conversations and provide support for those who want to join. And give families and kids who are already a part of the military a place to find support without having to worry about how their commanding officer will react.”

For a minute I just look at them. Tears sting my eyes. I did mention that my parents are incredible, right? If I missed that, I’m saying it now. No matter how old I am, they’re still actively trying to make the world a better place. Because of me.

“Yes,” I say, my voice a little breathless. “I’ll find some pieces and figure out how to make them pride-y.”

“Pride-y,” my mom repeats, giggling. She still giggles like a kid. I love that about her.

We talk for a while longer about my dad’s organization and then about family and friends. They never moved home after my father retired from the military. Instead, they bought a house right off base in California so my father could still be involved while being a civilian. I have to wonder now how long ago they’d been talking about this.

By the time we hung up, it’s past noon. I grab some leftovers from last night’s delivery and munched as I absently stared off at nothing. My mind flicks between the new organization, what I can make that screams *pride* without making it colored, and Simon.

It’s not that I am against painting my furniture, but the natural grain of wood is so beautiful that it’s almost a travesty to cover it up. How do I make something that’s true to what I create and make it prideful? Pride-y? Pride-ish?

Anyway. When I finish eating, I open my laptop intending to look up furniture ideas. But the only thing I really find are benches painted in a rainbow of colors. Nothing creative about it.

When I can't find inspiration, I find my attention has shifted to other things, such as checking my bank accounts. My primary checking has the income from the university and the very first cottage I purchased to rent coming into it. These are what I consider my personal income.

The income from two of my other rentals go directly into savings. A fourth goes to paying all my taxes. This is one of the larger properties.

The rest are all listed under my LLC as investment properties and are taxed as such. As I suspected, that account has gotten too large for my comfort. I don't like having the higher end of six figures just sitting in the bank.

Frowning, I open another browser and start searching for properties that would be a good investment with the potential to have year-round income. There's nothing worse than having a property not earning money but costing you instead. I did that once because I loved the house. I sold it again within half a year because it cost more than it brought in.

I find as I'm scrolling and looking through the virtual tour videos, that I'm thinking about Simon and what he'd think of a house. A flash of us sitting together, curled in a blanket, him in my arms as we search for houses together. I can almost hear his laughter.

One day. I've had him for one day in my contract and I'm already thinking domestic thoughts about him. This is going to end badly.

Speaking of ending badly, my phone rings and I answer it.

"Hey, Quinny."

I smile at Vulcan's deep voice. Despite there being no mistaking that he's a big fucking man, there's also a youthful, innocent quality in him that I adore. Every time he ends up with a broken heart, I wonder how long it's going to be before he loses that.

"Hey, V. How's it going?"

He sighs and I already know the next words. I brace myself for them.



“I met someone.”

This time I sigh. “Tell me about him.”

“Well, I met him online. He’s... nice.” There’s hesitation in his voice. “I thought maybe if I didn’t fall for someone right when I meet them, then I might find someone who really connects to me. But... you know, they’re not seeing me through an app. This might have backfired because I really like him but, besides the one picture on my profile, he doesn’t see me.”

“What do you like about him?”

He sighs, and this time it’s dreamy and wistful. “He’s so nice to me. Says sweet things. He remembers what I say and asks me about it later. He tells me I’m beautiful, Quin.” The last words he whispers.

I press my lips together because I desperately want to caution him, but he sounds so happy. “Vulcan, he sounds great.”

“But?”

Smiling, I lean back into the couch. “I worry that you’re getting in too deep already.”

“I know.” And now he sounds defeated. Great. “I just... I want my person, Quin. If I don’t look, how will I find him? If I think every person I meet is going to eventually be embarrassed by me, I’m going to miss the one man who’s not. What then? What do I do, Quinlan?!”

It’s almost a wail and I close my eyes. He needs a hug. “Where’s Goldie?” I ask.

His golden retriever is just Vulcan’s energy. “She’s right here. licking my face because she thinks I’m upset. Ew, she just got my mouth. Gross, Goldie. Stop.”

“You lick asses,” I point out. “Surely a little dog tongue isn’t that bad.”

He laughs loudly and I smile. Much, much better.

“Listen, V. Are you listening?” I hear the clanking of Goldie’s collar and her panting. When she’s finally settled, he says he is. “I don’t want you to hide in a hole. You’re much too beautiful a soul for that. But I want you to be extra slow. Super cautious. There’s no need for you to rush into anything. Can you do that?”

He sighs again. “It’s really hard. I want my happily ever after right now.”

“I know,” I tell him. “And you deserve it. Think of it this way—when you keep spending months with the wrong one, you’re further away from the right one *and* left with a broken heart. Right?”

“Yes,” he says, pouting.

“Then go slowly. You’re going to know soon enough if this online guy is for you or not. Also, I think you ought to add some more pictures of yourself to your profile. Show them your pretty self. Show your closet and that it’s filled with pretty things. Make sure those dogs know that this is you and you’re not changing for fucking anyone. Understand me, Vulcan?”

“Yes, Daddy,” he teases.

I grin because that word has a very different meaning to me right now. Simon’s pretty mouth wrapped around my cock flashes before my eyes, making my forgotten half-hard cock throb in response. Daddy, indeed.

“Good. I want you to be happy, and I want you to have fun. But it breaks my heart when yours is broken.”

“Me too,” he says quietly. “Thanks for not telling me I’m being stupid.”

I frown. If he thanked me for that, it means someone has told him he’s stupid. I don’t ask because I know who it is. “You’re not being stupid. Not at all.”

When we’re off the phone, I text his brother before stuffing my phone away.

**Me**

Tell him he's being stupid again and I'm going to put you through my table saw, fucker. One finger at a fucking time.

Simon's twins have one thing right—you protect your best friends against everyone. Including and especially their own family.

Fourteen

## SIMON



I WAKE up as I usually do; with Damon and Declan. My face is tucked into Damon's neck, his hand low on my back, trapped between me and Declan. I'm practically sprawled across Damon's chest. Declan is pressed flush against me, his legs tangled with Damon's and mine.

They're both awake. Damon's fingers run smoothly over my arm, back and forth, as if he's deep in thought and doesn't realize he's doing it. I smirk because that's probably exactly what's happening. Declan, on the other hand, is gripping my hip with punishing fingers as he gently rocks his hard cock against me.

After a minute, Declan huffs in annoyance and rolls out of bed. I don't have to ask to know where he's going—the shower to take care of his problem.

I'm grinning, though I close my eyes again. Damon's hand moves from my back to my hair, his fingers pressing into my scalp, and I practically melt into him. This has been my weakness since I was a child. There's no way to make me stop talking or fighting faster than massaging my head.

"Morning," Damon says. The absence of sleep in his voice tells me he's been awake for a while.

"Mm," I answer.

We lay in silence for a while before he says, "There's a lot of money in your account."

I don't move. I'm not sure there's a change in me at all. It's just a comment. An observation. Not even a question.

“Why were you in my account?” I ask.

Full disclosure, they have the passwords to unlock my life as I have theirs. There’s simply nothing we ever hid from each other growing up. So yeah, I’m not upset that he was in there. I’m just curious about why. And fuck, when?!

“You’re always stressed over money. More so lately. But you came home with no less than \$50 in take out last night, happier than you’ve been in a while. I wanted to make sure your account wasn’t at zero. Instead, I find you recently received a several thousand-dollar deposit. Right before you got home from your interview.”

“Yes,” I say. “You were going to put money in my account.”

He huffs quietly but doesn’t argue or deny my accusation.

“You said you’d trust me,” I say.

“I do, but—”

I climb up onto my elbow so that I’m hovering over him. “It’s not illegal. I’m not desperate enough to do something I’m going to regret. I will admit that I’m a little nervous but I’m also...” Excited isn’t quite the right word, but it is in the direction. Honestly, the sex part I couldn’t care less about. It didn’t matter to me. But in all the quiet moments since leaving Professor Stommer’s house yesterday, I’ve gone over the points in the contract that we talked about.

Dinners. Dates. Movies. Cuddling. Conversation.

I... don’t hate it. I *am* a little excited. And yeah, nervous for the sex parts, but only because I’m afraid that he’s going to be upset about how I react. Or more accurately, don’t react. Will he take it personally? Will he want to call it off? I should have told him.

“You got quiet,” Damon says as the bed dips and Declan joins us again. His hair is dripping all over me, and I glare at him over my shoulder.

“Sorry, I was trying to find the right word. I’m looking forward to it. Nervous and maybe a little excited. It’s new. I’ve

never... had a job before.” I wince at the hesitation in my sentence and press my lips together.

I know immediately that they’ve heard it. I’m still hovering over Damon and his gaze narrows.

“Please, trust me. Please. Six months. It’s only until right after graduation. Then it’s over.”

“Over,” Damon repeats.

“Yes. Then the job is over,” I say. “Just let me do this without constantly giving me a hard time. No poking and prodding. If you’re going to continue to monitor my bank account, I don’t want any questions.”

The longer I talk, the more irritated they get with it. Especially when I mention my bank account. I’ve basically just said there’s going to be some shady shit that they’re going to want to know about.

“I hate this more with every word that comes out of your mouth,” Declan says.

“Because you want me to wear a house skirt and stay home as your baby mama,” I say, teasing him. Hoping that he’ll play along and let the tension drop.

He grunts, then lays his weight on me, pushing me back into his brother. I laugh and bury my face in Damon’s neck again. I take a deep breath and close my eyes. Honestly, I can’t imagine falling in love with someone enough that I’d want to leave them. Who doesn’t want to wake up to their best friends every single day? Laughing and playing games.

Really, I can’t imagine that I could love someone enough to want that. It’s been thirteen years that I’ve lived with them every single day. Sure, there’s been a few times that we’ve spent the night apart. Once, I even went on a long weekend where I visited my mom’s parents.

It was horrible. I never knew sleeping alone could be so awful. The entire night, I was constantly cold. I kept feeling like I was going to fall. Or maybe fall apart. There wasn’t twin pressure on either side of me. The bed was so fucking empty

that it felt like I was lost in a sea of torment. Hell, even my dreams were awful.

Who could mean enough to me that I'd leave this?

"What are we doing today?" I ask to force myself away from the prospect of sleeping without them.

"Leftover pizza for breakfast," Declan says. "Cold, because we're college kids and that's a rite of passage or some shit. Then I really need to finish a paper and homework."

I nod. Definitely need to do homework.

"Then I think we'll have cake for lunch. You know, really push the fact that we're adults." I snort. "Play video games for the rest of the day. Order dinner in. Watch movies. Go to sleep early because we're getting old and need our beauty sleep."

A grin splits my face as I shake my head.

"You know what?" Damon says. "We'll let you do this thing that we'd really rather you didn't as long as you know that just because you're making money somehow, we're not letting you pay for shit. We're doing groceries. When we go out, we're paying." He grips my head to force me to look at him. "Like it or not, Simon, we're going to fucking take care of you. But if getting a job makes you less miserable about it, then fine."

I shake my head, though I'm smiling. "I'll agree to your terms on one condition: when I bring something home or buy something for you, you best be happy about it. Don't give me a hard time. You fucking smile and be excited. And no more slipping money into my pockets."

He sighs in exasperation. "We don't need anything."

I laugh again because he sounds like a grumping three-year-old. "And you let it be. Let me work and *don't* get involved. No following me. Understand?"

"If we agree to that, you're going to let us take care of you without complaint?" Declan asks.

"I don't really complain about it. It's always been money that I've complained about." I reach behind me to grab his



thigh and dig my fingers in. “For a couple of guys, you need a lot of affirmation.”

“Oh, hush. You were raised by our parents too,” he says, biting my shoulder.

Laughing, I push away from them and climb out of bed. “I’m hungry. Feed your housewife,” I demand with a grin as I head out to the kitchen.

“I’ll make you a fucking housewife,” Declan mutters as I leave our room. I fall onto a stool and wait for them to join me. It doesn’t take long before they do, and I watch as they move around the kitchen.

Their parents taught us how to cook. For the last two years of high school, we were each assigned a night every week that we were responsible for the evening meal. However, I learned pretty quickly that I hated cooking. I didn’t complain then, but as soon as we moved out, the twins made sure I never had to prepare my own meals. Not even cereal. When I go into the kitchen for anything besides a drink, I receive very loud glares.

Declan slides a plate with two slices of cold pizza toward me and Damon adds a cup of chocolate milk—my one addiction.

We eat quietly and then gather around the living room to focus on our homework. I think we’re all annoyed when hours go by and we find that we have more than we thought. However, Sunday is not all lost. We finish just after one and Damon orders a cake for delivery as he heads to the shower. Declan and I put all the textbooks and shit away.

By the time Damon comes out, our delivery is here. He answers the door (oblivious that we’re all still just in our underwear) and the delivery guy blushes furiously. Damon flirts shamelessly, making the guy turn beet red.

When he shuts the door and turns to us with a cake in hand, he’s grinning. “I love seeing men squirm.”

He’s only taken half a dozen steps towards us when there’s another knock at the door. The three of us look at each other as

if taking inventory. One, two, three. Yep, we're all here.

Damon turns back and sets the cake on the counter as he pulls open the door again. I can only barely see her, but I break out into a grin as I get to my feet, Declan on my heels. Their mom steps into the apartment as we converge on her, wrapping her in our arms.

"There's my three favorite boys," she says, hugging us as best she can.

"Dad's going to be upset he didn't make the cut," Damon says.

She laughs and pulls back to look at us. Her eyes find mine first, as they usually do. A mom unable to help herself as she hones in on the child who's struggled in their own family home. She cups my face and pulls me down to her for an extra hug.

"Mom's playing favorites again," the twins say together.

"He's a good boy and doesn't give me grief," their mom says.

I hug her tightly. I may never be lacking in physical affection with the twins, but they're not moms. There's nothing quite like a mom hug.

When I step back, she looks at all of us before rolling her eyes and turning back to the door to grab the bag she'd dropped when we swept her into our arms. "I see you still don't believe in clothes."

"Body positivity, Mom," Damon says. "We're completely comfortable with our nakedness."

"Just be glad we're wearing underwear," Declan says.

"And that you're not wearing a jock," I mutter.

"Yes, that too."

"Not everyone who comes to your door should be greeted by you in your underwear," she chides as she moves through the kitchen and begins emptying her bag. I slide onto the stool to watch her.

“Well, if they’d call first, we’d at least pretend to discuss whether we should put clothing on,” Declan says. “Not everyone just drops by unannounced.”

She levels him with a stare. “Did you put clothes on for the delivery man who practically ran to his car blushing and sweating for a different reason?”

“Who says he was a delivery man?” Damon asks, wagging his brows.

“My boys, everyone...” she says, sighing.

They beam at her. She carries on chopping vegetables at the counter. Based on the spread she’s got, we’re having subs.

“We have food, you know,” Declan says. “Our cabinets are not bare.”

“We also eat three meals a day,” Damon says.

Mom pauses and looks at the cake. “I can see that,” she says, frowning.

“Ugh, I swear, this is just a treat,” Damon says.

“And I’d like to remind you that we’re adults now.” Declan sniffs. “We’re allowed to have cake for lunch.”

She sighs in exasperation, but we move the conversation over to other things. School. Dad. Other family news. When she looks up at me with a fond smile, I beam back at her.

“This is a good look on you, Simon,” she says.

I raise my brows and look down at my bare chest. “Thanks?”

She laughs. “You’re smiling. You’re happy. I love to see that, sweetheart.”

My shoulders relax as I continue to smile at her. It really is amazing how different I feel. That little bit of money in my account makes a world of difference. “Thanks, Mom.”

“Do we owe someone special for this change?”

My brows knit together as I consider her question. Does she suspect that I now have a Sugar Daddy? Do I consider him

special? What does my contract say about that?

Her quiet laughter breaks into my thoughts. “Have you met a sweet girl, honey? Someone who’s put that smile on your face?”

“Oh.” Well, fuck, I didn’t see that coming.

Declan is at my back suddenly, his chest pressed tightly to me, his hands land on my thighs. I can just imagine the glare he’s giving his mother.

“No,” I say. “There’s no one. Just in a good mood, is all.”

Mom looks between the two of us, her eyes narrowed. She’s always told the twins that they smother me. That their overbearing presence will prevent me from meeting someone. Of course, the twins’ response is always ‘good.’ I have no doubt that this is the nonverbal equivalent of that conversation.

“I have plenty of opportunities to meet someone,” I say, hopefully preventing the conversation. “But that’s kind of silly when there’s only a few months of school left and then we’ll be moving on. What’s the point in starting a relationship now that’s going to end?”

“Graduation does not have to mean your relationship ends,” she says.

“Stop pushing, Mom,” Damon says, sitting beside me. “He doesn’t want to date.”

“He doesn’t want to, or you don’t want him to?” she asks, her tone sharp.

“Both,” the twins say.

Mom slides a sandwich toward me, then grabs my hand. I meet her eyes, which are exactly like the twins’ eyes. “Don’t you dare let them keep you from finding your happiness, Simon. Understand?”

Declan’s arm moves around my stomach possessively. But I nod. “Yeah, Mom. I’m not ready to date.”

“Because the last girl didn’t like your friendship with the boys?” she asks knowingly as she backed away.

Had I told her that? I try to remember if I brought that girl home. Finally, I shrug and take a bite of my stuffed full sub.

Mom shakes her head and continues assembling sandwiches. She stares at Declan until he finds a stool next to me instead of remaining wrapped around me. Only when he's sitting at least a foot away ("You don't need to be in his lap, Declan!") does she give him his sandwich.

Damon on my other side remains silent; though what she can't see is that his ankle is hooked around mine. I smile and eat. While Mom has always supported our friendship however it manifests, the older we get the more concerned she becomes. Not because she thinks it's unhealthy but because she thinks eventually, we're going to break.

Fifteen

## QUINLAN



THE FIRST FULL week of having my Sugar Baby has been... amazing. He came over Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday this week and I've fucked his mouth every time. He stayed for an hour or so before leaving.

My plan is to break him in. I don't want to overwhelm him with too much right away. Since he'd gone down on me in the club, I figured that was a safe enough position to take initially. I also didn't want to force conversation, so I only required an hour for the first few meetings just so he can get comfortable with me and being in my house.

Tonight will be the first time he'll be over here for something more than just a hookup. I'm making dinner, then we're going to cuddle and watch a movie. I'm not naive enough to think I'm going to keep it in my pants tonight, but I'm going to attempt just cuddle touching. You know, over clothing. I want to feel him pressed against me.

Honestly, the thing that has me most nervous about the night is what to make for dinner. I didn't want to go all out so that it feels like an actual date, but I didn't want something simple either. There needed to be effort, but not something ridiculously complicated.

Then I toyed with the idea that maybe I should just make comfort food. Something that immediately sets you at ease. That would help, right?

Simon never appeared to be overly nervous. There were the initial nerves when he got here, but as soon as I had my

mouth on him, he relaxed. Like he needed to know what was expected of him and as soon as I gave him that input, he fell into the role with ease.

I fucking love kissing him. When I say we're going to cuddle and watch a movie on the couch, I really mean cuddle and kiss. Hopefully, we'll talk. Maybe some above clothing exploration. And yeah, I'm not going to be able to let him leave here without my cock down his throat.

It's not just that I love his mouth, or that I'm creepily obsessed with this man. There's something intoxicating about knowing that there's only been my dick down his throat. I know it's not necessarily true, but I love to think that the things I'm going to do with him will only be things he'll do with me.

I'll own his body in a way no other man will.

My cock is far too on board with this idea. I'm wearing cotton slacks and a t-shirt, but the pants do nothing to hide how excited I am. Nothing at all.

We haven't really had a conversation about food likes and dislikes. I did text him and ask him about allergies, to which he responded that he had none. To play it safe, I'm making burnt steak tips, roasted potatoes and vegetables, with a salad. I'll start the grill right before he gets here.

Because I needed something to do to occupy myself and not go crazy as I anxiously await his arrival, I've also been making soups. Prep for our meal is finished. The soups are for the rest of the week. Why not, right? I'm already cooking.

Since that still doesn't seem to be enough to keep my mind from obsessing, I decide to call Vulcan. I received a few texts here and there throughout the week, but nothing yesterday or today and I want to make sure he's not jumped head-first into something.

He answers on the third ring, sounding breathless. "Quinny?"

I roll my eyes. "That's what your caller ID says, no? Why do you sound surprised to hear from me? Better yet, what are



you out of breath or do I not want to know?”

Vulcan laughs. “Sorry. Was running.” Now that he’s saying more than just my name, I can hear his panting too.

“Not from something or someone, right? For fun?”

His bark of laughter makes me smile as I lean back on the counter. “No, not from anyone. Yes, just for fun. Cardio and all that.”

“There are studies now that say the benefits of cardio workouts aren’t as big as once believed,” I tell him.

He snorts. “I like running, Q.”

“Hm. So... what’s happened with online dude? You stopped texting me about him.”

Vulcan sighs. “Same thing as usual. *Do you own anything that’s not pink and girly?* I blocked him. Then I took your advice and uploaded a lot more pictures, including a video of my wardrobe and saying ‘if you don’t like my lifestyle, then don’t message me. I promise, you’re not worth changing for.’”

“Fuck yeah, V. I’m so proud of you.”

He hums. “It hasn’t stopped the messages, but now I get the added, ‘were you serious in your video?’ I don’t bother answering. I just block their sorry asses.”

Despite his affirmative actions, he sounds sad. If I were better about dating, I’d totally try to play matchmaker. But clearly my only relationship since I moved to the Longwood U area is a contractual one. I might not be the best at choosing my poisons.

“No other prospects?” I ask.

“Nope.” He pops the P. “I’m going to go clubbing tonight so I can get some attention. I’m lonely. But yeah, I’m still waiting for my man to find me.”

“You’re a catch, V. Don’t ever think otherwise.”

“Yeah. Yeah. I sparkle and shit. That’s just the glitter, Quin. It washes off.”

I laugh and turn to stir my soups.

“What about you? Your inappropriate crush still just out of reach?”

My stomach flips at him bringing up Simon. I bite my lip and determine what to tell him. The contract says complete confidentiality. But that was specifically designed for school reasons.

“Quin?” he prompts when I don’t answer right away.

Taking a deep breath, I blurt, “I contracted him to be my Sugar Baby, and he’s on his way over now.” Then I hold my breath and wait for what’s to come.

And I wait. And wait some more.

Finally, Vulcan says, “A Sugar Baby? Like, you’re paying him for... sex?”

I flinch. “Yes?” I hedge. “But more than that. I get his body, but I also spend time with him. We talk and...” Okay, maybe this sounds lamer than it is. I sigh. “Yeah, V. I am.”

There’s another pause before he says, “Okay. Well. Good for you. I’m glad he agreed.”

“You don’t think I’m stupid?”

“For risking your career on a student that graduates this year and you have no future with? ...no.”

I wince and scowl. “When you put it like that...”

He huffs. “You and I are very different. I want a happily ever after. I want my forever. You want what you want; which happens to be a who, and you go after it. That’s how you’ve always been. More times than not, you succeed because you don’t take that leap unless it’s something you *really* want. But you can see a very distinct difference in how we’re running our love lives, right?”

“How’s that?” I ask warily.

“You got what you wanted. I’m *still* looking. And I’m fucking forty!”

It's the first time I've heard the frustration and defeat in his voice. "Vulcan, you're amazing. You are. Please don't—"

"I know. I know. I'll find my guy, blah, blah, blah. As bitter as I am, I'm not stopping looking. I'm fucking lonely and I want my man. I have to believe he's out there. But we've already talked about me. Let's get back to your student."

"Former student," I say, because that's a very important distinction. "And I'm aware that it's going to end after graduation. The contract is for six months. Technically speaking, that's through most of July. We both have summers off, and I plan to have him into the fucking stage of this by then so I figure we can stay at one of my rentals and fuck for days. It'll be well worth it."

Vulcan laughs. "You're funny. I hope it works out. He's been okay so far? You haven't scared him away?"

"Nah," I say, smiling. "It's good." The knock on the door makes my heart jump. "Speaking of him, he's here. Talk later, yeah?"

"Yep. Have fun."

I hang up and head for the door. He smiles at me when I open it. "Hey," I say and take a step back.

There's always something in his smile. Something flirty or confident. I'm not sure exactly what it is, but it makes my stomach twist.

"Hello, Professor."

As soon as he's inside, I have him pressed against the door and my mouth hard to his. He relaxes as I devour him, pushing into his mouth and taking everything I can. It takes all I have not to groan, especially when I can't stop myself from pressing my body to his.

"So good," I murmur.

He chuckles. His hands rest lightly on my waist as if he's not sure where he's supposed to put them. His touch isn't exactly careful, but it's clear that he's not confident in his skin yet.

“Miss me, Professor?”

*Yes. So fucking much.*

I smile and pull him into the house. He stumbles as he kicks off his shoes, laughing to catch up when I don't let him go. “We're grilling,” I say. “Steak tips, potatoes, veggies, salad. All fairly safe. That okay?”

He nods. “Yep. There's not much I don't like.”

“Good to know, but that almost means it'll be a short list I'll need to know at some point. Want some wine?” I reluctantly let him go in the kitchen as I turn off the burners with the soup.

Simon looks around and shrugs. “Not sure I've ever had wine.”

I choose one and pour us each a glass, then watch as he sniffs it before taking a tentative sip. His expression morphs between surprise, disgust, and then something that's clearly *yeah, that's okay*. He takes another sip as I laugh quietly and sip mine.

“You don't have to drink it,” I tell him.

“I might need to in order to determine if I like it or not.” He takes another sip and then shrugs. “Each sip is a little of both.”

“Wine is an acquired taste. There are just as many people who hate it as love it. I'm in between, but it's definitely my alcohol of choice.”

I take the trays from the fridge and nod for him to follow. Simon does, picking up my glass of wine on the way by, and we head onto the back patio. My phone call with Vulcan distracted me enough that I forgot to start the grill. So now we'll have to wait for it to warm up. When we've both set down the items we've brought and I have the grill warming, I pull him to me and press my mouth to his.

His initial reaction to kissing is to smile. But as I deepen the kiss, his smile fades and he responds. I love that he responds. There's no hesitation or disgust or discomfort. But

I've also noticed that he doesn't have the same reaction as I do. He does not get turned on.

To be fair, I don't kiss him with that in mind. I kiss him because I can't stop tasting him. He tastes so good. Sometimes I can coax him into playing with me and there's a battle of tongues that makes him eventually back away laughing.

This time, there are no games. I keep him against me, dropping my hands to his ass for the first time and pulling him in tight. His breath hitches and I kiss him deeper.

His hands don't move from where they are on my waist, but he grips my shirt tightly. "Color?" I say into his mouth.

For a second, there's confusion. Then he answers, "Oh, right. Green. I'm fine."

"You don't need to tell me you're fine if you're not," I assure him. "I'm really not going to get mad or anything."

He smiles against me, surprising me when he leans in and licks into my mouth. "Really, I'm fine."

Fuck, I need more. I seal our mouths together and don't let him go for far too long. When I do, it's because I'm panting and need to breathe, but I drop my face against his skin and latch onto his neck. Again, he sucks in a breath. His delicious shiver makes me smile.

"I can't excuse away a hickey from work," he says, voice breathless.

I chuckle and let him go completely, or I'm going to end up biting him. Yeah, there's nothing he can say that would explain that away.

Turning to the grill, I get our dinner started. I manage to keep my hands off him until we've finished eating. I tell him he doesn't need to help me clean up, but he does so without answering. I put the leftovers away and then put the soups into containers too, stacking it all on the counter to cool before putting it into the fridge. With the dishwasher loaded and a couple of bottles of water in hand, I take Simon deeper into my house.

I keep meaning to give him a tour, but I'm far too keyed up with wanting to touch him that I never manage. He doesn't ask as he looks around. Peeking into rooms whose open doors we pass. We stop in the den, which was at one time a library. There's a large couch in the middle, the kind with cushions that attach, extending it so it's like a bed.

Simon grins and I gesture for him to climb up. He does and I try desperately not to stare while I'm putting the water on the tables and grabbing the remote. I spent a lot of unnecessary time researching what movie to put on. Nothing that's going to actually draw us in, but something that's interesting enough to watch if we choose to. Nothing sexy or overly romantic to force the mood but not action or horror to send this into a friend zone night, either.

Once I get it playing and have the volume set so we can hear it, but it won't interfere with conversation, I climb onto the couch. His dark gaze remained on me as soon as he sat.

I'm nervous. Even as I pull him down toward me so I can curl our bodies together, chest to chest, my heart is racing. I pull a blanket over us before bringing my hand into his hair and pressing my body to his.

There's still a soft smile on his lips, but his breathing is stilted. I can feel his heart racing. He's not hard. I'd know because I have my leg wedged between his. There's no way he can miss that I am, though. Once again, his hand is on my waist. I've decided this must be neutral territory for him.

"Color," I say quietly.

"Green."

I lick my lips. "You can touch me," I tell him.

"Is that a request, or are you just telling me I can?"

Laughing, I shake my head. "Right now, I'm just telling you."

Simon nods. I can tell he's chewing the inside of his lip as he thinks about it. I'm stupidly excited when he decides that he's okay touching me a little more. He slides his hand over

my side and around my waist. It takes effort not to grin stupidly.

“You feel good,” I tell him, “pressed against me like this.”

He smirks. “You feel hard, but I think you’re always hard.”

“When you’re around, yes I am.”

His chuckle makes me pull his mouth to mine where I kiss him a little more aggressively than I mean to. It’s harder than I’ve kissed him to date, but he doesn’t pull away. His hand tightens around me, but I can’t decide if it’s because he likes what we’re doing or if he’s steadying himself.

I press my body hard to his, rolling my hips so that my dick is pressed to his thigh. Gripping his hair tightly, I pull his face away and move to his neck. I bite and suck and lick him, reaching for every bit of exposed skin I can.

“I swear I meant for this to really just be cuddling but... Simon—”

He laughs and pushes me away, his hands on my chest. I let him, thinking maybe he needs some space. I watch as he moves angles and pushes the blanket aside. When his hands go to my pants, I realize he already knows.

Without saying anything, he pulls at my pants, and I lift my hips for him. I kick them off completely as he leans over me, stretching his long body out perpendicular. He doesn’t play. He doesn’t explore. He goes right to sucking me into his mouth and making my eyes roll.

“Jesus,” I say, my hands going straight to his head. I grip him tightly. A thrill races through me when he completely hands over control. My mouth. My throat.

I shove up into him, making him grunt. Shifting my legs, he moves to accommodate me until he’s leaning over one of my legs with his arms between them, his weight braced on his elbows. His hands on my opposite thighs.

“Take my balls,” I tell him.

He shifts to do as I say, and his hot hand cups me tightly. I groan as I pull his face down at the same time I push my hips

up. So fucking good. So good.

His throat automatically contracts around me, and I shudder. When I begin fucking his throat in earnest, I find he's squeezing my balls in time with his ability to breathe. The more desperately he needs a breath, the harder he squeezes.

"Fuck, keep doing that," I say as I lose my mind. I'm definitely harder than I normally am. I can't seem to stop myself as I destroy his throat.

Over and over and over, I slam home and hold him in place as he squirms. He's covered in spit and tears as he lets me use him. My head is spinning. I see nothing but his mouth around my cock. My spine tingles as my legs shake violently. His hand is like a vice around my balls, and I lose it when he makes a desperate sound around my dick.

Giving him half a second to breathe, I shove him down hard as I arch up. Making sure he takes every long, thick inch as I release hard enough that my eyes roll. Finally he chokes, and it's a heady sound pulsing in my ears. The way his throat strangles me as he tries to swallow. Tries to take a breath. His squirming picks up, his fingers digging into my sensitive sac. It only spurs on my intense orgasm.

It's not until I really feel him trying to pull away that I come back from the mindless pit of pleasure and pull him up. He gasps, coughs. He's shaking and I realize that maybe I've hurt him. But for a second, all I can do is stare at his face. He's a wreck. So fucking beautiful like that. My cock is already trying to get hard again just seeing him such a mess from me.

He looks up at me, still trying to take a breath.

"Are you okay?"

"Green," he gasps, giving me a weak smile before letting himself fall. I pull him up and then reach for the blanket to gently wipe his face. He closes his eyes and lets me. When I have him clean, I wipe myself, then shove the blanket onto the floor.

I help him to sit up and hand him one of the waters. He drinks it all.



“I’m sorry,” I say. “I didn’t mean to... do that.”

He chuckles, and it’s raw. Raspy. “It’s fine. I don’t mind.”

When the water’s gone, I toss the bottle away and pull another blanket from the back of the couch over us, pulling him back to me. “You don’t mind,” I repeat.

“No,” he says.

“You don’t hate it?”

He laughs again. It’s quiet and I feel it through my body. Not just because I have him pressed tightly to me again, but because it’s sexy. “No,” he says quieter this time. “I don’t hate it. I’m kind of amazed every time that I’m not gagging and choking.” He glances at my softening dick. “You’re definitely not small, so it’s a serious revelation to me.”

“It’s an amazing talent. Though hearing you choke on my cum is seriously hot,” I admit.

“Yeah, I can tell you like that. You kind of shut off and just go when I start choking.”

I wince. “I really don’t mean to hurt you. You have to tell me if I do, Simon.”

“When you hurt me in a way I don’t like, I’ll tell you.”

I let his words hang between us. *In a way I don’t like*. Does that mean he likes what I’m doing to him? Yep, my dick is really loving that. Even if I’m misinterpreting it.

It’s only when I’ve completely caught my breath that I realize his arms are around me and his face tucked against my chest. His fingers move absently over my back.

He’s completely relaxed and I grin for a long time because of it.

Sixteen

## SIMON



I FROWN at my phone but quickly clear the notification and stuff it in my pocket until later. The twins and I share two of our four classes. Today is one of them. A two-hour-long lecture in stadium seating for which the instructor doesn't really give a fuck if you're listening or even in attendance. If you don't pass your shit, you fail. End of discussion.

We take our seats and I'm already lost in my thoughts before the class begins. Though I'd barely glanced at the text, I saw what it was. Another electronic transfer from Professor Stommer. But it's only been just over a week. Definitely hasn't been a month.

It's not like I've earned another \$4,000, either. I've given him head whenever he texts for me to come over. Which is fine. I don't care. But I don't know if that qualifies as being good enough to warrant another payment.

There's commotion in the seats below us and I'm momentarily drawn from my thoughts. It's not a disruption, though. They're laughing at something the instructor said. Something I obviously missed.

Damon's on my left, his hand on my thigh with his fingers absently flexing and relaxing as he stares straight ahead. Declan on my right is playing with my hand, tracing my fingers, my veins, the lines on my palm. They're both absently looking forward, but their gazes are glossy.

Without having to ask, I know they're bothered by the last few weeks, which has been largely my fault. Receiving a new

invoice, especially as much as \$1,000, always sends me spiraling over the deep end, my inadequacies once more weighing heavier on me than normal. It's a cycle. Always that the beginning of the semester when bills come due again, I'm reminded that I live off my friends.

It's a stress they don't understand. The weeks following those bills become something like these last couple. I internally freak about money and how I'm freeloading and, in turn, they smother me in their love a little more. Eventually, I let it pass as the semester wears on me and I have to pour my attention into schoolwork.

This semester turned out differently, even though it started the same. I'm not sure they appreciate the difference on my end though. I've known that they've always loved to take care of me. When we were in third grade and would play on the playground, it was always some strange combination of characters, but always, they were my protectors. My guardians. My caretakers.

While we grew out of that play, those roles transferred to real life. It's never been a hardship for them. Just as when we were kids, they fucking thrive in it. They *love* being the ones who bring me food and put a smile on my face when they hand me something I want, even if it's nothing but a comic book or a box of fucking crayons.

It's what they love to do. As the years wear on, they do it as second nature and get really offended if someone gives me something before they can.

Getting a job directly compromises that role in my life and I think that's what they're struggling with more than anything. How can they take care of me when I can take care of myself? How can they protect me when I won't let them know where I'm going or what I'm doing for work?

The lie that hangs between us makes my chest hurt, but I know that they're going to flip shit if I tell them. They don't care about sex work. I'm pretty sure they've discussed sharing a hooker before just for the experience. But I *know* that it'll be a very different conversation when they learn that I've

basically become one just for some money when I can clearly still carry on the way I've always been and let them do what they do.

They'll be even more pissed when they learn that it's not with a woman, but a man. It's clearly not my orientation that will matter to them. It's that we've all known I'm just as straight as they are gay, so why the fuck am I doing this with a man?

*And then* there's the fact that it's a professor that they somehow have a beef with. Since they've never taken Professor Stommer's class, I can only assume that they think he's preying on me. I don't dare bring him up long enough to ask, especially since they've dropped the conversation concerning him, but I am curious.

However, anything that keeps him far from their thoughts, the better. I don't want them looking at him and beginning to question.

So, yeah, I know what they're thinking about. I just worry about the conclusion they'll come to.

Wednesdays are light days. We have this single class and then we're done by eleven. Usually that means we hit the café on campus for an early lunch. Then to the library to crank out any homework from the class we just left or catch up on something that's due later in the week, and then the gym before going home.

I'm not sure when I'll be able to message the Professor about the errant transfer. Not with any kind of leisure. I've never hidden my phone from them, so it will look ridiculously suspicious if I start doing so now.

Declan leans in and whispers, "We're taking you someplace after this."

I glance at him. "You mean to get food because I'm starving."

He grins. "Yeah, we'll feed you. But somewhere else after that."

"Library and gym? It's Wednesday."

Declan shakes his head. “Not today, housewife.”

I snort and roll my eyes. That’s fine. Homework related to whatever we’re doing in class today can wait.

As the last hour passes, both twins seem to have relaxed. It’s as if whatever they’d been thinking about was settled with the declaration that we’re going somewhere not school related after this. Well, probably. I guess they didn’t say it *wasn’t* school related. It doesn’t seem announcement worthy if it is.

Finally, we head out and to the café. They leave me at the table, and I pull out my phone to send a quick text while they wait in line to order. This will have to be a quick conversation.

**Me**

You transferred more money. Why?

I appreciate that at least his response is immediate.

**P**

It’s the first. That’s the agreed upon date within the contract.

**Me**

Yea, but it’s only been ten days. At the very least, it should be prorated for last month.

**P**

Just accept the transfer, Simon. You’re worth every penny.

My stomach flips as I close out of the text. When I glance up and see the twins watching me, I give them a smile and look back at my phone. I decide to be safe and delete the text thread. There’s never anything in them that might tell who he is, even when he texts my name, but I’d rather not test that.

Then I stare at the transfer request and bite my lip. It’s wrong. I can’t take that much more. How can I just take part of it?

The twins are making their way to me now, so I quickly hit accept and then delete that conversation thread too. No proof. No trail.

My gut twists at the web I'm creating. The secrets I'm keeping. I pull up social media and start scrolling through like I wasn't doing anything else this entire time.

They sit on either side of me and Declan hands me my food while Damon hands me my drink. I set my phone on the table, screen up and still open, and thank them. Their eyes train on my phone though neither of them move to take it. They want to. I can tell by the way they watch it.

"Where are we going after this?" I ask to distract them. There's nothing incriminating on my phone. Jesus fuck, I'm going to give myself an ulcer if I have to keep worrying about this. When neither of them answers me, I slide my phone to Damon and raise a brow.

He looks at me and then takes it. Just like a jealous boyfriend, he taps through my apps as he eats and then sets it on the table.

"Satisfied?" I ask.

The look he levels me with says he hates that I'm lying to him. Or maybe I'm reading shit into it. Maybe I'm projecting my own feelings.

Damon sighs. "Yeah."

That's a fucking lie too. As much as they know when I lie, I know when they are. My gut twists and I look at my food, suddenly not very hungry at all.

I can't do this. I just... can't.

"What's wrong?" Declan asks.

Shaking my head, I take another small bite and pretend it doesn't taste like sandpaper. It shouldn't. I love the sandwiches here, so it really shouldn't be awful. But I taste nothing.

"Nothing," I say.

His fingers take my chin and turn my face to him, making me look him in the eyes. It stings. “I hate this thing that’s building between us. I think you do too.” Unconsciously, I nod and my face contorts before I can stop it. “Tell us. Please.”

Pressing my lips together, I shake my head. Doing so admits that there’s something I need to hide from them. “I know how you’re going to respond, and I can’t allow that to happen.” Before he can argue, and he certainly starts, I shake my head. “I know you. I know exactly what you’re going to do. And *I can’t* let you do that. The only way you won’t is if I don’t tell you.”

“When did you start keeping things from us?” Damon asks. “When did we lose your trust?”

His words sting like I’ve just been punched in the kidney. I flinch, like it’s a physical attack. Forcing a breath in, I close my eyes. “I trust you. I don’t trust that you will listen to me and *trust me* to handle this all on my own. Like the adult I am.”

“Simon,” he says sharply, and I wince again.

“I know you don’t want me to be, but I am,” I say defensively.

Then I’m sandwiched between them, and people are staring. I sigh and let my head fall back on Damon’s shoulder. “What I really want is to drop this,” I say. “I need... I need some boundaries.”

This time it’s the twins that flinch and I can feel that I just hurt them. I’ve never asked for boundaries before. We simply don’t have any.

Damon’s hand wraps around my neck, his lips hover at my ear. I open my eyes and stare at the lights on the ceiling until I see nothing but them. “I’m not going to give you any,” he hisses. It causes me to shiver and fuck if I don’t smile. I may need some, but losing even a bit of their invasive presence in my life would sting so fucking bad. “Just fucking tell me.”

“No.”



I swear, this man growls and I grin further. His hand flexes around my throat. “Simon,” he warns.

“You already promised, and I know you’re not going to break our trust by negating that,” I say.

Declan’s teeth suddenly sink into my jaw, and I yelp, swatting him away. It was far too loud. The café turns quiet, and I know people are staring now. Taking a breath, I try to pull free. They don’t let me. “You’re suffocating me,” I try.

“No, we’re not,” they answer in unison.

And yep, just like every other time they do something like that, I smile. I can’t help myself. “Look.” I push Declan harder than I usually do until he puts a couple of inches between us. Then I pry Damon’s hand from around my neck and pick my head up. “I’ve already agreed to let you take care of me any way you want except in this one area. You agreed. What more do you want from me?”

“What you’re not saying,” Damon says. “How do you expect our minds not to conjure the worst possible thing?”

“Okay, tell me what you’re imagining?”

“You’ve turned into a hitman,” Declan says.

I snort and shake my head. “You can’t really think that’s something I could do, do you? And wear a smile every day?”

“You’ve witnessed a crime and are being paid off.”

“You’ve sold your sperm.”

“You’re selling nude pictures.”

“You’ve started an adult content page.”

“Money laundering.”

“Gambling.”

They begin rapidly firing different things for the next five minutes and my attention volleys between them with wide, startled eyes. Growing wider the longer they go on. When they finally stop and look at me expectantly, I realize how much

thought they've put into this. However, they haven't hit it on the head at all.

"No," I say. "None of those things."

"None of them?" Declan asks, eyes narrowed.

I laugh and shake my head. "No, Dec. I don't even know what half that shit is. Or how I'd even do it. I'd also like to point out that you two would be more likely to begin an adult content site than I would. You'd dedicate the whole thing to swallowing big dicks."

Declan snorts in amusement, but I can tell he doesn't want to find it amusing at all. He wants the answer.

"I'm not doing any of that," I say again. "But I'll tell you what. You keep thinking of one horror after another, and I'll keep telling you that's not what's going on. When you get to the point you run out of crazy theories, you can drop it and trust me like you said you would."

They don't answer as they turn back to their forgotten lunch. I somehow finish my sandwich and realize I really need to talk to Professor Stommer about them. Otherwise this is going to end far before it really begins because, eventually, they're going to say 'Sugar Mommy' and while I'll say no, they're going to know that there's something to that.

We leave the café not long after. They haven't said a thing since their interrogation. Not another absurd accusation or anything else. We head for Damon's car and climb in. The ride is quiet and I spend my time looking out the windows. Pointedly *not* on my phone.

I'm not nearly as obsessed with being online as many people my age, so it's probably not overly suspicious that I'm not on it. What's more unsettling is the quiet between us.

Just when I thought I could enjoy the weight of my financial burden being lifted, I'm left with this. A new weight. A new worry. It's surprisingly not worrying that they're going to find out. It's somehow knowing that this is going to really fuck up our friendship.

It's stupid to think that. They'll be mad at me for the whole thing and for not telling them, but I don't know why I think it'll ruin our friendship. But I just can't shake the feeling that it will. It's not just a new and unfamiliar weight on my shoulders; it's the anvil that's formed in my stomach.

And I can't seem to shake the feeling.

# Seventeen

## QUINLAN



I SHOULDN'T SAVE the picture to my phone. Somehow, I think it goes against our contract. But when Simon sent me a selfie of him in the planetarium with the biggest fucking smile on his face, I couldn't stop myself.

Couldn't stop myself from grinning like a lunatic. Or from staring at it for entirely too long. And not from downloading it to my phone. I stuck it into the secure folder, but still. It's on my phone.

The image came with a text where I could almost feel his excitement. *D&D took me to see the stars and walk on Venus!*

That was on the first and I fucking loved it. I wasn't sure how he'd accept the fact that I transferred him the full fee again so soon, but I didn't hear anything else concerning it. Not when he came over Thursday and not when I texted him this morning to ask him to spend the evening here tomorrow, Saturday.

He agreed. Without complaint. Without question. He frowned at me on Thursday when he showed up on my doorstep, but I quickly covered it with my mouth when I pulled him inside and then pressed him to the door. I stopped any conversation that would bring it up. Honestly, I can still just play up the fact that it's the first and I'm contractually required to send him \$4,000 as per the contract we both signed. It says nothing about prorating from last month.

Fuck that. I'd pay him \$10,000 if he asked for it. Does that make me desperate? Considering he's the only one I'd ever

consider doing this for, I think it's not exactly desperation. It's unhealthy obsession.

But we already knew that.

My phone ringing makes me jump. Stupid since I'm in the car, but apparently whatever I listened to last was obnoxiously loud, so the blaring is deafening. Glancing at my phone in its holder, I see Vulcan's face in the little circle on my screen and hit answer.

"Hey," I say.

"Quinny!"

I laugh. "What's up, V?"

"So... I wanted to ask you something."

The nervousness has me looking at my phone as if his face will appear there in a video call. It doesn't, obviously. "What's that?"

He doesn't answer. I prompt him again.

"Well... I have this... thing. I-I'd like you to come to it."

"Sure," I tell him. "You know I'll come to whatever you want." It's true. He has a lot of shows he does with his metalwork, and I try to attend them all. It can be a little more challenging when they're not local.

Again, he falls silent.

"Vulcan, you want to come over?"

He sighs. "Yeah. I'll be there in twenty."

After stopping at the store for taco fixings for tomorrow, I'm pulling into my garage just as Vulcan parks in my driveway. I step out and wait for him. He's in short baby blue shorts that leave nothing to the imagination—I'm pretty sure it's a tree trunk—and a cute white crop top with little stars all over it. I can see the whole array of his pretty pastel ink-covered body as he makes his way up the drive with a wide grin, a large paper bag in his hand.

"Hey."

“Thanks for having me,” he says.

I roll my eyes and turn, hitting the button to close the garage. “Like you’ve ever waited for an invitation.”

He follows me inside and toes off his sandals next to my shoes. “It’s nice to be invited sometimes.”

“It’s an open invite. You’re welcome anytime.”

“Unless your friend is over.”

I glance back at him, unable to keep the smile contained. “Yes, that would be unfortunate for you to witness.”

“Nah. I don’t mind watching.”

“Good to know—I think—but I’m not inviting that in.”

He grins and watches as I put away the groceries. When I’m finished, he moves through my kitchen to pull out plates before emptying the paper bag of its takeout contents. Thai food tonight. We load up and head to the table.

After a few bites, I look at him. “So, what’s up?”

His cheeks turn pink and I find I’m staring now. Oh, there’s definitely something.

“Well, I’ve... joined a... uh, community. And, umm, our opening performance is coming up.”

“A community?” I ask when his voice peters off. “What kind of community? What are you inviting me to, V?”

His eyes widen. “A local theater community?” he asks, as if he’s not sure. “I have a role in the upcoming performance. It’s nothing huge, but I get on stage and... I even sing a little.” He bites his lip, his eyes darting down to his plate.

“Why are you so nervous?” I ask.

“I just...” Vulcan sighs. “I join a lot of things and you support me in them all. Then I lose interest. I’m just... I don’t want you to think I don’t have any commitment. I keep placing weird things at your feet and asking for your support and—”

“Vulcan.” He stops rambling and looks at me, his face guarded. “You’ve been talking to your brother again, haven’t you?”

He sighs and bows his head.

“Stop talking to him. I’m going to run his ass over.”

Vulcan gives me a smile that doesn’t reach his eyes. Eyes that are still downcast. “Look at me, you pretty fucking flower.” This time when the corners of his lips curl, it’s real, even if small. “I don’t care if you want to go to the moon to date a fucking Martian. You have my support. I’m ecstatic to see you on the stage. I tell you that you have a fantastic singing voice all the time. You’re going to nail it.”

He sighs like I just answered all his problems. The way the lines in his face relax makes me smile. I reach over and pat his hand. “Seriously, stop talking to that bitch.”

“I can’t help it. He calls and... he’s my brother. You know?”

“Toxic behavior comes from everywhere, including family. You don’t need that, V.” He deals with enough of that in everyday life the way it is. Like it’s a goddamn crime for big men to be wearing pink and enjoy what’s considered feminine things. He doesn’t need that from his family, too.

I squeeze his hand. “I mean it. No more. Let him bail himself out. He’s a nasty deadbeat and you need to stop enabling him, Vulcan.”

He sighs but nods.

“Now that that’s settled.” I pat his hand and go back to my food. “Tell me about your performance.”

Vulcan is positively beaming now as he talks animatedly about the play. I don’t know a thing about acting, but I can tell he’s excited. That’s all that matters to me.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'D. Smith', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.



SIMON ARRIVES AT five on Saturday afternoon. I feed him tacos, which he seems to love. We talk about school and how it's going with the twins, a conversation that he skips past as much as I allow him. I get the impression that it's not good. He knew they were going to be an obstacle. But he says he's dealing with it, so I have to trust that he is.

When we're done, I take him back to the den again and onto the big couch. This time I wasn't naïve enough to think I could just cuddle without it leading to sex. There are a couple cloths in the table drawer, a few waters, and extra blankets, so I don't mess them all up.

Once again, I put on something that's not exactly dull but definitely nothing that holds one's attention for any length of time.

During the week, it's easier to have a quick blowie and then just hang out for a while. I don't want to push him too much when he can't stay long. We have school the next day, so I don't want anything we're doing to get in the way of either of our schedules.

He doesn't talk about the twins, but I can tell when there's something bothering him. Especially when I bring them up, even casually.

I pull him to me, but don't bring down a blanket right away this time. I don't even pretend to want to just cuddle right now or chat. Instead, I cover his mouth with mine and kiss him hungrily, letting myself take from him what I hold back from doing during the week.

He lets me. His hands rest where they usually do on my waist, and he kisses me back. I nearly die when I go to remove my mouth and he chases mine. It only makes me dive in deeper.

I pull his shirt up and splay my hands over his stomach. He hums into my mouth and I decide that's permission enough to pull his shirt over his head. So he's not uncomfortable with being slightly naked while I'm fully clothed, I pull mine off too.

He looks at me, his eyes travel down my chest and stomach, before looking back into my face. There's no real interest. No look of attraction or lust. But the little smile on his lips says he's not uncomfortable.

"Color," I prompt.

His smile climbs. "Grassy green."

"Good." I smash his mouth to mine again with my hand at the back of his neck before letting us fall down again, now so he's slightly under me. I bring my knee up between his legs, pressing my thigh to his crotch and rubbing my hard-on against his thigh.

His hands are still stationary. Still resting just over my ribs. His fingers shift sometimes but there's nothing in what he's doing. Except kissing me. Simon seems to like that well enough to kiss me so enthusiastically that I think he might even like it.

When my pants become too much, I lean off him and pull them off too. Exposing myself entirely. Then I lay back and beckon him over.

He tries to go right to putting his mouth around my dick so I can fuck his throat. The anticipation of it makes my cock jump and leak. But I stop him. "Touch me, Simon. Everywhere. Get comfortable."

Simon bites his lip and looks down at my body. I can practically feel the way his eyes touch every inch of me. Eventually, he gives me a stilted nod and then his hands are tentatively on me. Beginning at my ribs.

He moves over my stomach, letting his fingers skim over the shape of my abdominals. I'm not the fittest but I'm not fluffy either. Woodworking keeps me active. Then he moves up my body, touching over my chest. Skimming my nipples under the pads of his thumbs.

By the time he examines my biceps, his touch is a little more confident. His gaze is open, as if he's studying me for real. The way his fingers glide and trace, I feel like he's

committing it all to memory. Like I'm a specimen under a microscope.

His hands move to my hips and he touches my thick thighs and down my legs. When he's come back up and is hovering over my dick, I nod. "Look at it," I tell him. "Handle it."

Simon bites his lip again and turns his attention back to my dick. I watch his Adam's apple bob as he swallows. His touch is still confident when he traces a finger down the length of my cock. He gets to my balls and cups them in his hand. When they move within his hold, it seems to trigger Simon to take his job seriously again.

I watch as he shifts lower, taking in everything between my legs. My heart races as I feel his breath ghost my skin. My cock leaks at the way he touches me, tracing his fingers between my balls down to my crack.

When his tongue darts out to lick the pre-cum now pooling on my stomach, I lose my self-control. I'm up and flipping him over. He barks out a startled laugh, his head hanging off the end of the couch.

"Color," I say.

"Green, Professor."

I straddle his body, my dick in his face. "Open, Simon. I need to fuck your throat."

He chuckles but opens his mouth. My knees are almost on the floor, and I move his body so his head is completely off the couch, hanging nearly upside down. His hands grab my ass as he takes the tip of my dick in his mouth.

His hands all over me have made me so fucking desperate that I'm not nearly as slow as I usually try to be at first. There's no easing him in this time. I snap my hips and lodge myself down his throat. He grunts, his body squirming under me.

Simon's knees bend up as if he's trying to accommodate the cock down his throat with his entire body. I grab his thighs and spread his legs. Pulling my ass into the air, I hear him take a quick, gasping breath before I slam back home.

He chokes around me, his fingers digging into my skin. That's all I can take when he makes noise and it vibrates through me. I bury my face in his crotch and begin fucking his mouth in earnest. Keeping my face buried between his legs, nuzzling into his soft dick, I pound into him hard and deep.

With each thrust, I'm nearly undone. Dizzy. Growling like an animal. The pressure of his nails in my skin, the way he's making struggling noises around my cock. How he swallows and gasps and then takes me like he was made for my dick.

It's all too much and I shove myself home so hard I'm sure that his neck is bending in a way that must hurt. He makes an alarming sound as I hold there and release down his throat. He tries to cough around me. His nails dig into me, though he's not pushing me away so much as maybe anchoring himself.

Then he fights a little as I hold myself in place. Deep. Completely and utterly sheathed down his perfect throat. The struggle of his throat around my cock has me continuing and continuing to come.

Finally, I remember that I haven't let him breathe in fucking days, so I pull myself free. He coughs weakly, his breathing sounds hoarse and ragged. I give him a minute on his own, my face still pressed between his legs, before I crawl off him and pull him more fully onto the couch.

There's a look that Simon gets when he's sucking me. His eyes get glassy, and his attention turns inward. Once I've thoroughly used his mouth, he kind of falls into this place and doesn't come out for a while. There's usually a slight smile on his parted lips and his eyes are mostly closed, but he's peeking out through slits. He answers mostly in hums. Unless I ask him what color he is. Most of the time, he'll answer me readily enough.

I equate it to subspace, but I'm not sure if that's what's going on. I'm not a Dom, though I do like to wash him and hold him when we're done. After the first few times I saw the look on him, I did a little research and from what I can tell about Simon, he probably would be a sub if he was into the lifestyle.

The way he lets me take complete control. The way he lets me clean him and soothe over him. The way he disappears inside his head, relaxed and happy.

There's no missing that Simon is deep within this place now. While he's still struggling to catch his breath, his body is completely limp and relaxed. There's no tension anywhere—not in his muscles and not on his face.

“Simon,” I say, brushing his sweat-soaked hair from his forehead. “Color, baby. Tell me what color you are.”

Hell of a time to ask.

“Green,” he murmurs.

“Are you okay?”

“Mm,” is his only answer.

He doesn't respond to anything else. For another couple minutes, I leave him laying there as I run my fingers through his hair. “You're so fucking gorgeous,” I say. “Look at you, covered in my cum, your spit, and tear stains.” So many tear stains. “I love this look on you. I will remember this for the rest of my life, Simon.”

I gently start cleaning his face, trying not to jostle him. When I'm done, I pull him to my chest, run my fingers through his hair and wait for him to come out of it while I still tell him how fucking perfect he is. So perfect.

When his hands land on my stomach and he sighs, I know he's back. “Color?” I whisper.

He snorts. “Green,” he rasps. “Thirsty.”

I let him go long enough to bring him water. He drinks it all so fast that some is dribbling down his chin. Then I pull him back to me. “I'm sorry. I didn't mean to go that hard.”

Simon chuckles. The sound is raw and while I shouldn't love it, it turns me the fuck on. “I don't hate it,” he says. “It's kind of... fun?”

Groaning, I bury my face in his hair. Fuck, I'm so going to fall for this guy.

Eighteen

## SIMON



I'LL NEVER ADMIT this out loud and never to the twins, but... I kind of like having something that's all my own. I'm on the fence about calling this Sugar Daddy thing a job because it really doesn't feel like one, but what I enjoy about it is that it's all mine.

Something I do and do all by myself.

I wasn't lying when I told them that I love how they take care of me. I really do. Maybe that's because of how I suddenly lost my parents, who had spoiled me with their love and attention. Now it's like I crave everything about it. I love affection of any kind. I love to be petted and kissed and hugged and loved on. I love being washed by someone else's hands. I love fingers in my hair.

And honestly, I love when the twins do something nice for me. When they buy food because they know it's my favorite. When they get pizza toppings that are my favorite. When they come home with a new game to surprise me.

Even more than all the physical shows of someone caring for me, more than that I love the verbal and emotional affirmation of it. I need to hear that I'm loved. That I'm a priority. I love when one of the twins sends me a text, just to let me know they're thinking of me. I love the thoughtful things that go unnoticed by most people; like how we always sit to the left of stadium seating in class instead of on the right or directly in the front. It's a stupid preference, but it's one they always remember and make sure that we get there.

It's not that I need these things to be whole and happy. It's simply that in the absence of my parents, it's easy to forget that I'm never alone. There was no worse feeling than waking up that morning when I was ten and finding my father passed out on the living room floor.

There was no one there to make food, and even if there had been, they couldn't have because our cabinets and fridge were bare. The silence of the house was deafening in my ears. I cried, and no one heard. No one cared. I asked for help; I screamed for someone to help me because I thought my dad was dead too, and no one heard. No one came.

He wasn't dead. Despite me screaming and shaking him to wake up, he was just so fucking drunk that he was unconscious. The asshole probably had alcohol poisoning.

Don't get me wrong. I completely understand the loss he felt. I don't blame him for being upset and wanting it all to go away. Not at all. There were so many times I begged and pleaded and prayed for me to suddenly wake up and my life would be put back together. My mom would be there, healthy and smiling and waiting to give me a hug. My dad would be there to drive me to school and tell me he loves me when I get out of the car.

That didn't happen. My mom was still dead. And my father didn't care enough about me to remember he still had a ten-year-old son who needed him to fucking live!

I'd never felt so alone. I'd never felt so forgotten. Unwanted. Unloved.

When the twins showed up with their mother, their mom looking absolutely horrified, I didn't even move when the door opened. I was convinced that I wasn't really there. No one saw me or heard me or remembered me.

They took me from there and never let me go back. Sometimes, I'd fall into a darkness no child should have to know about. But I'd get lost there, thinking that I just didn't matter. My mom died. She left me. And my dad forgot about me. No matter how many times I screamed his name, begging him to wake up, he didn't.



I think that was the beginning of the twins telling me they love me. Reminding me every single day. Because I needed to hear it. Sure, maybe I shouldn't forget, but I was a kid. There's no rationalizing adult emotions that a child shouldn't have to deal with.

So, yeah, I like being doted on. Spoiled and taken care of. I like the thoughtful things and the validation that I matter. That there's always someone there that loves me and will miss me if I don't show up one day.

I need to not feel like I've been forgotten.

But in becoming this person, I have come to realize that I'm incredibly co-dependent on the twins. Sometimes it's been out of necessity. Because I just don't have the resources they do. And while I like, *love*, being taken care of, I have gotten to a place where I understand that it's not healthy to live this way.

I have to have my own identity. I need to be able to take care of myself. For my own mental wellbeing, I need to be able to contribute. Even if they won't let me, I need to be able to acknowledge that *I'm letting them* do it instead of them doing it because I simply don't have the means or the funds.

There's a difference between agreed upon care and the inability to do so something and having to have someone else do it for you. Like paying my own college tuition. Buying a textbook. Putting fucking gas in my car!

Maybe signing on to be a Sugar Baby isn't something that I should be proud of, but it signifies the first thing I've ever done on my own. Ever. I did it all by myself. I have money coming into my bank account for something that I'm doing without the twins.

For the first time in my life, I'm self-sufficient.

Well, kind of. The twins' parents pay for our apartment.

I look down when I receive a text. A smile flashes across my face when I see it's from Professor Stommer.

**P**

I have our first social engagement if you can get away on February 24th.

**Me**

That's far enough in advance that I definitely think I can manage. What time? For how long?

**P**

Begins at 6. My best friend is in a play. I figured, after, we can go out to dinner or something. It might be late by the time I get you home.

**Me**

How late do you think?

**P**

It's an hour away, so maybe midnight? Think you can manage that?

I glance at the twins and bite the inside of my cheek. How the hell will I pull that off? But... I don't want to say no. I want to go.

**Me**

I'll figure something out.

When it's clear the conversation is done, I make a mental note and delete the thread.

My time with Professor Stommer has been pretty routine. While it didn't start out being a set schedule, we kind of naturally fell into a pattern where I stop over after school on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays. And then I spend half the day with him on Saturdays. Usually in the evenings.

I honestly don't hate that he fucks my mouth. I'm not sure I *like it*, exactly. What I undoubtedly like, and there's obviously no denying it, is that I get lost in the high of

knowing that I can make someone feel that good when I get very little from it. Physically, anyway. Mentally, I seem to be all on board.

There's no describing the peace that follows. Hell, sometimes it's not even a follow up thing, but I escape to that place right in the middle of him fucking my throat so hard that I can barely swallow after. It's a high like I can't explain. I feel so stupidly good after.

Especially when I finally come out of that spot and he's saying all the things I need to hear while he's holding me tightly to him and petting me like a damned dog. It shouldn't feel that good, right?

Following these moments, especially when I'm on my way home, I wonder why all parts of sex can't be like that for me. What do I have to do to make it good like that in every way? Seriously, his face was at my dick last Saturday as he brutally tore into my throat; and while I was already headily flying somewhere blissful, my dick didn't get the memo.

I'd chalk it up to the fact that very few people have ever garnered any kind of sexual reaction from me that I didn't have to somehow force into existence. Despite that, I apparently really like what I do to him enough that I somehow get something out of it, even if it's not sexual.

I glance at the twins. We're on the couch, each with a textbook in hand. They're busily scribbling away as they do their schoolwork while I pretend to read my textbook. At least the book isn't upside down.

What I'd love to do is have this conversation with them. I want to ask them what they think. But then, I'd have to admit a whole lot of shit that I've always kept to myself. Like the fact that I'm broken. My sex drive is dryer than the Sahara most of the time.

If I somehow managed to get through that conversation, I'd have to not only mention that I've had a dick down my throat—many times now—but that I mentally really like it. *It does something to me.* I just need to know what that something is.

Then there's the idea that I somehow really like having my throat abused and torn apart. That's not something I'm ready to think about on my own. What the fuck does it say about me? I've never looked at a man and obviously a girl can't do that to me. How is it that I don't feel *anything* sexually, but I enjoy being used like a fucking whore?!

"You're thinking really loudly," Damon says.

I jump at his voice and blink several times, as if I've forgotten where I am. My breathing is a little stuttered, which brings their attention to me. Great.

The rest of the week has been easier between us. They still pop off sometimes with some outlandish occupations (if you can call them that) which usually ends with me laughing hysterically at them—not to mention I'm a little flattered that they think I could pull even 1/3 of them off. But the tension between us has dissipated. It's not gone. But it's not as suffocating either.

I shake my head. "Sorry."

"I suppose you don't want to talk about it," Damon says, frowning.

Sighing, I toss my textbook on the table and get up. Damon watches me as I cross to him and pull his shit from his hands, letting it fall on the cushion next to us as I crawl into his lap. He's not smiling. He's waiting for me to tell him no.

"I do, actually, but I'm not ready."

This time, his brow raises.

Normally, Declan would climb behind me, so I'm between them. Always between them. But he sits next to his brother so he can see my face.

I decide that I'm going to start. I need to give them something. And I really need to talk about it. "I really, really don't want to talk details because it's... bothered me for a long time and I just don't want to think. It has nothing to do with not trusting you with it but... I don't feel like I have answers for my own body and it's frustrating."

Their concern has only grown with every word I say. Declan leans forward and brushes my cheek. “Tell us whatever you’re comfortable with.”

I nod. “I don’t like hooking up,” I say, shrugging to try to take the attention away from the way my cheeks heat. They’re so red, I feel like I’m being burnt. Branded with a hot iron. “Even when we go to Sinners and you two go off, and I say I’m going to, too. I don’t.”

“What do you do?”

Shaking my head, I shrug. “I usually just sit at the bar and pretend to be interested in whatever girl comes around. Then you two come back and I can pretend I’ve already gotten off, and we can go home.”

The horror on their faces makes my heart stutter. I hold my breath, waiting. *I’m broken. You think I’m broken.*

“Jesus, Simon,” Damon says, pulling me to his chest hard enough that I let out an oomph. “We would not have put you in that position if we knew. Why the fuck didn’t you say something?”

“I didn’t want you to think... that I’m...” They wait for me to finish but I can’t catch my breath. We might be used to talking about feelings a lot more than the stereotypical man, but it’s not always easy.

“That you’re what?” Declan asks gently, pressing his lips to my shoulder over and over.

“Broken,” I whisper.

They still and my heart pounds hard. I swear, it’s going to beat out of my chest.

“Fuck,” Damon says, and I’m suddenly pushed back. The tears sting my eyes as I wait for it. I’m certainly not expecting both their mouths on me, kissing me all over my face.

“I’m sorry we failed you,” Declan whispers and my breath catches again.

“What?”

“How could you think we’d think that, Simon?” he asks, voice cracking. His eyes are watery as if he’s about to cry. “You’re not broken. You don’t have to like casual sex.”

The words ‘I don’t really like sex at all’ are on the tip of my tongue, but I can’t seem to say them. I’ve already admitted so much more than I ever thought I would.

“How do you know I’m not broken?” I ask. “What twenty-year-old guy doesn’t want to hook up every chance they get?” I wave at them.

Damon catches my hand and pulls me to him again, my mouth landing on his when I’m thrown off balance. “We’re hard all the time,” he says. I snort because I know that. More often than not, I have their dicks pressed against me somewhere. “Just because you’re not, doesn’t mean that you’re broken. It means that you have standards, and we don’t.”

“Damon’s right. As long as it’s at least six inches, it goes in our mouths.”

I laugh and wipe my face.

“He’s making us sound far too good. More than six is our preference, but we really don’t care as long as we get a dick in our mouths regularly,” Damon says.

I appreciate their laughter, even if it is picking at themselves right now. Their fingers rub at my face, clearing away the tears I tried desperately to keep contained.

“You should have said something,” Damon says softly. “We would never have put you in that situation.”

“I just thought... you know, I hadn’t found anyone lately that interested me. So I went, waiting for it to happen. It’s not like I *never* hooked up. I just... it’s not my favorite way to get sex.” When my stomach churns, I know this is the limit of my spill session today. I can’t talk about it anymore.

Now Declan moves behind me, sitting on his brother’s lap with me and his chest pressed to my back. “Don’t you ever think you’re fucking broken, Simon,” he whispers in my ear. “You’re perfect.”

I close my eyes and let them cradle me between them, murmuring that I'm not broken over and over and over until I believe it. I'm not sure I'm convinced of that yet. Clearly, there's something wrong with me if I don't like sex. But for now, I let it go.

I was right. It feels good to tell someone part of the shitstorm that's taken up room in my mind for years. The twins will always be my first choice to talk to about something difficult. Even if it takes me far too long to gather the courage to do so.

# Nineteen



## QUINLAN



BY THE MIDDLE OF FEBRUARY, I've spent a lot of time with my tongue in Simon's mouth. We remain clothed since I harshly fucked his face in my den two weekends ago. Despite that, he seems fine with it, it's hard for me to bring myself to do that again.

Don't get me wrong; it turns out I really like breathplay with him. Cutting off his airway with my cock and feeling him struggle. I love when I do it for so long, he chokes as he tries to inhale.

But I'm also really conscious of the fact that I think I had hurt him. The way he kept swallowing after and wincing. How he chugged water and asked for some ice. I also brought him ibuprofen, which he accepted with a smile.

I've taken our activities to just kissing for the few visits after that. I'm far too conscious of how much I brutalized his throat, despite him saying he didn't mind.

*"When you hurt me in a way I don't like, I'll tell you."*

*In a way I don't like.*

That implies he likes what I'm doing, right? Does it also imply he likes the pain? He likes being hurt? I'm not much of a sadist, but I can't deny that I like the way I brutalize his throat. I fucking love when he looks torn up. The way he's covered in tears, spit, and my cum. There's nothing hotter than that.

This is what's rapidly playing in my head as I have him pinned between me and the back of the couch while we make

out like teenagers. His hands don't remain as stationary as they once did. Since I had him touch me everywhere, he seems to have found the confidence to do so on his own.

While I keep our clothes on—or I'll be far too tempted to skip straight to really, really fast—I let my hands roam over his chest, stomach, back, and ass. I go down the side of his thigh and hike his leg between mine so I can rub my hard-on over his thigh. Then I grip his ass tight and haul him to me.

He makes an appreciative hum in his throat that has me nearly growling blindly. Why is it so intoxicating? Why do I feel that all the way in my damn balls?

I roll us over so that he's sprawled over my chest and his legs immediately drape over my hips. Gripping his ass again, I thrust my hips up and press my erection into him. He's not hard, which only seems to prove that he doesn't get off to men. He's not nearly as into this as I am.

Although he seems eager enough to be kissed. There's nothing I love more than when I release his mouth and he chases my lips. He has no problem running his hands over me, feeling my chest and stomach.

But there's nothing in him that's overly aroused by the contact, either. He participates, sometimes rather enthusiastically, but there's no arousal.

I slip my hand beneath his pants and cup his ass cheek. He grunts but there's still no movement of his hips. Nothing that has him pushing back against me, either into my hands or against my crotch.

Rubbing his ass—a wonderful round globe that I can't wait to sink my teeth into—I dip my fingers between his crack and run them along the length until I get to his hole. His breath catches and his mouth stops moving against mine.

He's not clenched. He's still completely relaxed against me. The muscles of his hole quiver under my touch and he gasps a little when I press my finger against him. I move my hand down further, trying to contort myself without losing

complete access to his mouth, and skim my hand over his balls.

“Wait,” he says breathlessly and I freeze.

“Color,” I say.

He shakes his head, laughing nervously. “No. It’s not that. But... I need to tell you something. I should have told you while we talked about the contract, but... I just... it’s nothing I’ve said out loud and I didn’t know how.”

There’s so much in his stammering declaration that I have no idea what he’s getting at. I pull my hand out of his pants and shift him so I can look at him. His cheeks are pink, which doesn’t happen all that often. There’s fear in his eyes. I brush his cheek and kiss him gently. “Tell me what’s wrong. What just happened?”

Simon shakes his head. “No, no. It’s not that, Professor. I don’t care that you’re touching me. I just...” He bites his lip. Then he takes a breath, and it’s one long sentence that rushes out of him. “My body doesn’t respond to sexual stimuli, and I don’t care what you do to me, but you said you’d make it good for me too, but I just don’t work like that. It’s a very frustrating and long *process* to make myself respond so I-I-I just don’t—”

He trails off, running out of steam. His cheeks are bright red now as he dips his face so I can’t see him. It takes me several seconds to decipher the long, run-on confession before I can make sense of his words.

“You don’t respond to sexual stimuli,” I say gently.

The frustration in his sigh reverberates through his entire body. “It’s more than that. I don’t feel sexual attraction to anyone. I don’t care about sex at all. It’s not good for me. I don’t.” He bites his lip for a minute. “I don’t know what’s wrong with me, but when I want to get off, I’d much rather do it myself than have someone else involved. There’s too much pressure and another person’s hands on me just causes me to be so self-aware that I’m not into it when they are.”

“You’re asexual,” I say in realization.

He picks his head up to look at me. “What?”

I chuckle. “LGBTQIA... the A is asexual, and it’s exactly what you just described.”

Simon stares at me blankly for a minute. “I... What?”

“Your gay twins never told you that’s what that means, Simon?”

He huffs. “I haven’t ever said it out loud. I said that, didn’t I?”

They don’t know. I hug him close and kiss his lips twice. Quick, short pecks until I feel his muscles relax. “Asexuality is a broad spectrum. It runs from having a sexual appetite *sometimes* and under particular circumstances, to never wanting sex at all. Anything in between is considered gray asexual; meaning that sometimes you feel aroused. Sometimes you feel attraction. Sometimes you want release, whether with someone or not. There’s also demisexual; meaning that you only feel sexual attraction when you’re emotionally involved with someone.”

Simon lets out a long breath. “It’s... I’m not...”

“It’s perfectly fine.”

The sound that comes out of his throat is reminiscent of a sob. He squeezes his eyes closed and whispers, “I thought I was broken.”

My chest clenches. “Growing up gay, I completely understand that feeling. While everyone around me was into women, I had to be different. I had to be *broken* to want men. It took me a long, long time, and a bit of therapy, to understand that there’s nothing wrong with me. That the world decides we need to label sexual orientation like that defines who we are is what’s broken.”

“Yeah, I get that. The twins used to be picked on. But you know, there’s two of them and I’ve seen them get really fucking scary. I’ve seen them beat the shit out of five kids three years older than us and a whole lot bigger than us because they thought they could pick on the younger gay boys.” He opened his eyes to look at me. “But they never

thought they were broken. I guess maybe I always feel like there's something wrong with me because all the people I've met in the LGBT community—we attend Pride events all the time—no one ever appeared *disinterested* in sex. Orientation and shit varied all over the place, but they always had one thing in common—they liked sex and craved it. I was always the outlier.”

“I'm sure you weren't,” I assure him. “If you knew what you were looking for, you'd have seen that you're far from alone.”

He laughs in disbelief. “I didn't know there's a term for... this.”

“You never told your twins?”

Simon shakes his head. “I just told them a couple weeks ago that I don't like hookups. I told them that even when they go with me to Sinners, I pretend that I'm going for one when they do. But I don't. Though I didn't tell them why. I just left it as that's not how I like to get off. I didn't say that I didn't like sex.”

“You're telling me now because of our contract.”

He winces and looks anywhere but in my eyes. “It's a contract based on sex,” he murmurs. “And... I don't really care that I don't like it.”

“We don't have to—”

“No,” he says quickly, looking at me again. “I don't want to break the contract. You can do whatever you want, including sex. I'm good with it.”

“Simon—”

“I really don't think I can handle topping, which seems to align pretty well with what you like,” he says quickly before I can argue. “I can't get myself hard on a regular basis as it is and then the pressure of something I haven't done before, nerves, and the general challenge that sex presents me would be a damn nightmare. But you can still touch me. You can do whatever you want to me. I like being touched.”

As I study his face, I'm not sure what to say. I sure as fuck don't want to push him, and I don't want to make him uncomfortable.

"I don't want to break the contract," he says again. "Please believe me, Professor. I knew what was involved when we went over it, and agreed knowing how I felt about sex. It's not like I hate anything we do. I didn't hate touching you. Or when you touch me. I don't hate when you fuck my throat. Or when we kiss. I like kissing, actually. I just wanted you to know why I... probably, most likely won't respond when *you* touch *me*."

"That explains a lot," I say, because it does. "I had my face between your legs, pressed right against you. I just thought men really didn't do it for you."

He laughs a little and shakes his head. "No. I wouldn't have responded any differently if you were a woman."

"Are you pan?"

Simon shrugs and shakes his head at the same time. "I'd say no because I've only ever found women attractive, but maybe I don't know as much about myself as I think I do. Maybe I just filled the role of the straight best friend because my twins are gay and I... I don't know, needed to be the straight one? That sounds stupid out loud."

I kiss his lips with a smile. "No. It's not stupid. The world places expectations on us and if we don't know any different, there's a ton of confusion concerning ourselves and what we think we know. There's a lot of *I should be* instead of *I am*."

He sighs. "Thank you. For telling me this stuff. I didn't know to ask someone."

"Look it up. Read about asexuality. I'm sure you'll feel a lot better about yourself. If you're worried about your twins, do it under privacy mode on your phone browser. No search history that way."

I'm surprised when his arms wrap around me. He hugs me tightly. "Thank you." I smile into his hair and kiss the side of his head. "You have permission to touch me. Just so you know."

I get that the contract says as much, but you feel hesitant now. Truly, I meant what I said. I don't mind touch. I'm not going to mind sex, either. It's just not something that I'm into."

"We'll talk more about it when we get there, okay? And if we keep going, I need you to be even more honest with me at all times, Simon. If I do anything to make you uncomfortable, you have to tell me. Anything at all."

"It's already different, Professor," he says quietly. "Because *you know* and it's like I can breathe with you knowing."

"I'm so sorry you felt like it's something you have to keep to yourself," I say.

"I might not feel that way anymore. I do need to know more about it and I'll read about it. But if I'm not alone in this... Jesus, it feels like I can see myself in a very different way. I'm not—"

"You're not broken," I whisper. "You're fucking perfect, Simon."

He laughs quietly, burying his face in my neck. "You sound just like them," he whispers.

I don't have to ask to know who 'them' is. Not for the first time, I wonder if Simon might be a bit oblivious to the twins' feelings.

"So... You're okay if I touch you," I prompt.

"Mm-hmm," he says, wiggling to get closer again. "I told you; I like being touched."

There's a fine line between different kinds of touches. But I start slowly, bringing my hand back around to touch his ass. "Here?"

He nods.

I slide my hand under his pants again and my fingers through his crack to his hole. "Here?"

He shivers, but nods again. "I'm a little curious."

My dick swells at his words. "Curious?"

“Maybe I’ll like it,” he says, shrugging.

“Want to see?” I ask.

He bites his lip. I can feel it where his face is pressed into my skin. Finally, when I think I might pass out from holding my breath for his answer, he nods. “I just... if I don’t get turned on... I think...”

“You tell me when you want me to stop, Simon,” I assure him, using my other hand to brush his hair back. He looks up at me. “I need you to tell me how you feel about everything we do. It’s always important that I know whether you’re comfortable, but this is a little different now.”

“Do you still want to do this with me?” he asks, vulnerability clear in his voice.

I kiss him and the man fucking clings to me. While his tongue is moving almost desperately in my mouth, I press my finger to his hole again. Not hard. I don’t try to breach him. Just enough that he feels me there, still.

Again, he gasps, but he brings one leg up so I have better access to him. “We can take my pants off,” he whispers against my mouth.

I nod, and he sits up. Grabbing the hem of his shirt, I pull it over his head before dropping my hands to his pants. He watches as I undo them and then he shifts to wiggle out of them, bringing his underwear with him.

Then he straddles my lap again and looks down at me nervously. “You can touch me,” he says quietly. “It’s a blanket permission. So I don’t have to keep saying it.”

Licking my lips, I study his face as he watches me shyly. Resting my hands on his thighs, I run them up and down his skin. “There’s lube in the drawer.” I nod above me on the side of the couch.

Simon nods and crawls along my body until his stomach is pressed to my face. I hear the drawer open, but I kiss his skin, breathing him in. So perfect. He comes back with the tube and sets it next to us. Then he watches my face as I slowly move my hands around his naked body.



I realize in this moment that he trusts me. Trusts me with his truth and with his body. I'm almost shaking with that responsibility.

His dick, even soft, isn't really small. I'm sure he's at least six or seven inches hard. I trail my finger along the top of it where it now rests against my stomach. It twitches under my touch and I glance at his face.

He's watching my hand, studying it like he's learning something new and fascinating. "Are you okay?" I ask.

Simon nods, his eyes flickering to mine. He offers me a smile. "Yes. Green."

"Come here." I reach for him and he drops on top of me, his mouth coming to mine readily. His kiss is immediate.

Pulling my hand out from between us, I reach for the lube and coat my fingers over his back, careful not to drip any on him. Then I shift him on top of me so I can reach around. With my slick finger, I trace his hole again.

Gently. I apply pressure every other pass until he's squirming over me. Breaking our kiss, I ask, "You okay?"

He grins. "You don't have to ask me every two minutes, Professor. I'll tell you if I'm not. Put your finger in my ass already."

Laughing, I nod. He locks his mouth with mine as I slowly press against him, this time for the goal. Harder. Harder. I can feel his body resist and then give in. My finger slips inside to the first knuckle and I wait for his reaction. Besides the shudder that runs through him, there's none.

I press in to my second knuckle and he stops kissing me, his body squirming on top of mine.

"It's weird," he says, laughing. "I don't know whether I'm intrigued or horrified that there's something going into my ass right now."

Chuckling, I kiss his neck. Simon takes a shuddering breath, leaning his face against mine as I slowly work my

finger in and out of him. I curl it and he jumps; the sound that comes from him is hoarse with surprise.

“What the fuck?” he says, pressing his ass into my finger. I reach between us to wrap my hand around his still soft dick. “What... I—” He laughs breathlessly. “It feels good and yet... I got nothing.”

I smile into his neck as I continue to spread slow, sensual kisses along his skin. “Just relax, Simon. Relax and let me explore your body. All you have to do is feel. Alright?”

He sighs, and his body physically slackens on top of me. I can feel the moment he starts to slip into what I’m pretty sure is subspace in his head. Before he does, I ask if I can give him a second finger.

Simon nods before saying, “Green” though I’m not sure he’s really attending. I decide not to try the second finger. Instead, I keep my hand around his slack cock, using my thumb to run over his head and slit, as I work my finger into his ass.

I don’t even care that he’s not responding with arousal. The warmth that’s taken over me because he’s letting me do this to him, that he wants me to, is consuming me. I want to make sure he likes it. Since he’s checked into subspace, I’m pretty sure he does. Even if it’s not in the traditional, sexually aroused way.

Maybe this is better. My heart thinks so.

Twenty

## SIMON



I SPEND a week reading about asexuality any spare moment I can. Like Professor Stommer suggested, I do so in privacy mode on my phone because I'm not ready to talk about it to Declan and Damon. I'm excited to do so because it's like... I've just won the fucking lottery.

There are answers about what I've always thought meant I was so fucked up that there was something vitally missing inside of me. Over the years, I've run the gambit of what could have caused it. Maybe my mother dying and my father checking out stunted me and I lost the ability to truly mature into a sex-crazed teenager.

Maybe I was so hard up for love and affection that there was no room in my mind for sex.

Maybe.

Maybe.

Maybe.

None of that's true. This is just how I'm made.

The freedom in knowing that is a high I can't explain. I thought having a bit of financial security was a weight lifted from me. Now that I know I'm not so fucked up and broken as I always thought, I almost feel weightless. Like I might just float away if I'm not hanging securely onto something.

Not that it's all easy to take in and understand. There are still a ton of questions that I don't have answers to. As

Professor Stommer said, asexuality is a spectrum, and I don't know exactly where I fall.

I'm at least partially convinced that I'm gray asexual. I have felt arousal without forcing myself there. Once. Just once. But I thought that might have been more having to do with my mental state than it was with the girl. I'd been listening to something, though I don't remember what it was. I was slightly hard from just listening to it and the girl, Melody, was there and willing.

It was probably the only sexual interaction that I've actually enjoyed.

But the fact that I did enjoy it, that I was aroused and felt that need with another person, put me into the gray. I'm not completely horrified at the prospect of sex. Okay, sometimes I am. But on a whole, I'm not. I'm just not interested 99 out of 100 times.

That one time, though. That's why I consider myself gray.

It's not a complete answer. I'm not convinced I know all the ins and outs of my sexuality enough to declare to anyone that this is my truth yet. I'm not even ready to tell the twins. That might be a stressful and emotional conversation for me.

Because I know what they'll say... Why didn't I just tell them? Why didn't I share what my concerns with myself were? My insecurities and what I thought were busted pieces inside me? Was I just ashamed? Scared? I know that they'd never judge me. They won't think that I'm fucked.

So why didn't I just tell them years ago? Fuck, they'd have probably said I was asexual then if I had. I'm convinced that they'd have known right away. Just as Professor Stommer had. So why didn't I just fucking tell them?

My frustration was not knowing why I kept a secret that I continued to keep the secret. They were going to ask me why, and I needed to have an answer.

Even with this newest irritation on my plate, I was still feeling so much better than normal. Even more so than having

almost \$8,000 in my bank account. There was no feeling more liberating than having two enormous stressors being lifted.

Declan stares at me as we stand outside the textile department building. We are making our daily trip to check on their stained-glass masterpieces. I swear, they're nursing them or something. It's almost comical.

They pause at the break in the halls and look at me expectantly. I look between the two of them with a brow raised. "What?"

"You going to visit Stommer?" Declan asks.

I sigh but nod. "Yeah. Why do you hate him again?"

Declan's lips press together, but Damon's eyes scan the area before he steps closer. "Because he was touching you," he says, his voice a growl.

"Are you jealous?" I ask, teasing.

"No one touches baby but us," Declan says, eyelids lowered as he glares at me. "And thus why you need to just stay home in your underwear and let us take care of you."

I laugh, shoving at them to head for their pets. "Go. Stop being so dramatic."

They do, but I don't miss their identical scowls as they go. I'm actually surprised that they don't try to drag me with them. Their obsessive overprotection usually does. Maybe they've taken into account all the times I've told them I'm an adult.

I head down the hall of offices. Professor Stommer's door is wide open, so I pause and find him leaning over his desk, chin resting in his palm as he marks off items on a sheet of paper.

After knocking, I wait until he looks up.

His eyes kind of light up when he sees me, and a smile spreads across his face. My stomach flips, and I bite my lip as I step into his office.

"Professor," I say as I approach.

He glances at the door before meeting my eyes. “Hello, Simon.” There’s something sensual about his voice and I’m reminded of the quiet words he murmured in my ear as he fucked my hole with his finger. A shiver races down my spine. “What brings you here?”

“Twins are checking in on their glass babies,” I say, shrugging.

I glance down at the papers strewn all over his desk and note that a lot of them are graded. Low grades at that. “Your class isn’t cutting it, huh?”

He snorts. “Apparently, they’re a bunch of slackers who don’t think they need to actually prepare and study for exams. The first is usually like this.”

“My grades were never that low,” I say, touching one paper and shifting it aside. My gaze moves to his. “I don’t remember you being this hard.”

Heat flares in his eyes and I’m startled when something inside me stirs. Not my cock, but it’s still something answering that heat. A zap down my spine and dropping into my balls.

Maybe my dick is the broken part of me since my balls seem to like the way he’s looking at me.

“Some students need it hard or they don’t learn their lessons,” he answers.

I shiver and, fuck, I like the tone of his voice. Husky. Deep.

“Simon.”

Startled, I spin to look at the twins in the door with wide eyes. As if I’m not expecting them. Jesus, just when I think my cock might finally like something, I’m interrupted!

I run a hand through my hair and look back at Professor Stommer with a tight, frustrated smile. “I’ll see you later, Professor.”

He nods, lips pressed together tightly.

It's fucking Wednesday. Not even my day to go to his house.

However, when we finally leave campus two hours later, I hop in my car as soon as we get home and tell them I was called into work. My short conversation with Professor Stommer is still swimming in my mind, making my skin uncomfortable.

I need him to touch me. To put my skin on right. I need him to push all the wild, unsettled flailing inside me. To hold it down until it calms. To make me feel so good, I fall into the euphoric place in my mind where all I am is sensation and good feelings.

My knock on his door is hard. I don't stop knocking until he swings the door open. His eyes widen when he sees me.

Without thinking, I leap into his arms, slamming my mouth painfully against his.

I've never thought to consider that maybe he doesn't want to see me. Or that I might be interrupting something. As soon as my mouth is on his, all those doubts come screaming in.

Thankfully, they're also drowned out immediately because his hands are on me as the door slams shut. I have his face in my hands as I kiss him with my teeth and tongue. It's rough and messy. But fuck, my dick has finally found something it likes.

Stupid, lame, and weak dirty innuendos are apparently its love language.

"I need you to touch me," I pant.

He nods and starts stripping me out of my clothes as we move further into the house. I think he's going to take me to the back where the den is, where we spend most of our time. We don't make it that far.

Standing in the middle of his living room, we tear at the remnants of our clothes until we're bare. "What do you want?" he asks, his hand sliding down my stomach to wrap around my chubbing dick. Fuck, it's been so long since it's been hard.



Part of me thinks, even hard, I'm not going to like being touched. But I groan, pushing myself into his hand and shake my head. My voice is almost a whimper when I shake my head in frustration. "I don't know," I whine, desperate. I just need him to take away the parts that aren't fitting right and make it feel good.

"Okay, baby," he says, pulling my face to his with his other hand at the back of my neck. "I'll take care of you. Come with me. Back up. That's it."

The back of my legs hit the couch and I go down. He kisses me and moves away, his hands leaving me entirely. There's a moment of panic inside me and my limbs kind of spasm. Like a startled infant. Like that sensation that you're suddenly falling. I can't find anything to ground me and the panic spins like a cyclone.

Fuck, I feel out of control. Panicky. Alone.

Then he's back, climbing on top of me. "Shh," he murmurs, probably seeing the instability in my face. "I'm right here, baby." He kisses me, slow and sweet. "Right here, Simon. I didn't go anywhere."

I whimper, unsure why I even feel this way. Is this an asexual thing, too? Hell, why the fuck am I hard when I just determined that I'm asexual?! Seriously, what the actual fuck is wrong with me?!

"Shh," he whispers and lies on top of me. I spread my legs so he can settle between them. This is the first time we've both stripped bare at the same time. It's always been one or the other. "We don't have to do anything."

Oh. "No," I say, gripping his face again. "I want you to touch me, Professor."

He studies my face. "Are you sure?"

"I assure you, I'm going to lose my mind if you don't. Make me... make me come." My words are shaky, but when they leave my mouth, I know I want them.

Professor Stommer licks his lips as he studies my face. He gives an experimental roll of his hips, his hard dick against

mine. I'm not completely hard yet. I'm half there. But when he rubs against me, I take a sharp breath.

Because it feels good...

I nod, trying to encourage him.

"Tell me if you need to stop, okay? Promise?"

"Promise," I say. "I'm very, *very* green right now."

He chuckles but I cover it with my mouth on his. We kiss sloppily as he works our bodies together. With every stroke, every rub, my cock responds as if I've never been disinterested in sex. I get harder and harder. My body is more desperate for release by the passing seconds.

But there's something more than that. Like when he touches my hole. It's not the sexual aspect of it that makes me feel good. There's something else that I can't figure out. Something that I crave more. Something I've been lacking.

When he reaches between us with a wet hand and circles both of our dicks with it, I whine pathetically, shoving my dick into his hand.

His mouth drops to my ear as I writhe against him. "Let me please you, Simon," he whispers. "Just relax and feel."

His words have a strange effect on me. Like the other day when he fingered my ass, I go completely slack against him. I close my eyes, clinging to him, and let my body go. I just feel his hand working over my dick, driving me into a place that I've felt before. It's not like the one time that I actually wanted sex.

There's something different and unfamiliar about it. Maybe it's the combination of losing myself inside the pretty corners of my mind where all I do is feel. Feel the way his mouth brushes along my skin. How his tongue teases and his lips press soft, sensual kisses.

I can hear his words saying to let him take care of me. Let him please me. Let him do all the work and all I have to do is feel it. Take pleasure from it. Lose myself in it.

It's like the other times. When he fucks my throat or when he was fingering me. I drop into the place where all I can do is get lost in my senses. The smell of our arousal. The feel of his hand over my cock. Squeezing. Rubbing my head. Teasing my slit.

This time, I'm not just relaxed and floating in the cozy place, though. This time, I'm so fucking turned on I feel like I'm vibrating on top of all the cozy, good, comfortable feelings. It's foreign but I'm so ready for it.

I can't grasp it because Professor Stommer told me to let him do the work. I'm supposed to relax and just feel. So I do. It's hard and it kind of hurts to stay perfectly still for him, but I love his words and the way he's touching me. I love how turned on he is. How turned on I am. I love what his arousal does to me. How it makes me feel knowing that I'm the reason for it.

When I orgasm, the entire cozy place I'm in turns blinding white as pleasure sears every nerve ending and makes me cry out. My ears ring and my fingers tingle with the unfamiliar pleasure. It lasts forever. For so long, I try to document exactly what happened in those moments. I want to remember them forever because it might never happen again. I might not ever feel sexual again.

For so long, I just float there in the cozy place. Where I'm completely aware of Professor Stommer and yet I don't feel like I need to be present right now. I can feel his hands on me, gently cleaning me. I can feel his lips on me, touching me softly and kissing me.

More than that, I can hear his words. Telling me how amazing I am. How good I feel. How much he loved that I came for him. He loves that I covered us both. He loves how I look covered in our mixed cum.

I'm pretty sure he spreads it across my lips before sticking a cum-coated finger into my mouth. I suck on it in reflex, tasting our release. It only heightens the cozy place. Makes it crisp colors, vibrant and warm.

I don't want to leave this feeling where I'm the only person who has his attention. I can pretend that I'm the only one who matters. That I'm the only one he touches and uses like this.

When I finally come out of floating in my comfortable zone, I'm curled into Professor Stommer's chest as he hums quietly, his hand running soothingly through my hair. I blink a couple times and then take a deep breath.

His fingers don't pause when he speaks. "Color."

Grinning, I press my heated face into his chest. "Green," I murmur.

"You're okay? Not upset?"

"I came here," I say.

"I know. You have no idea how much I love that you came here when you wanted something, baby."

It's not the first time he's called me baby, but this time I'm completely conscious of the fact. The smile that takes over my face feels utterly ridiculous.

"You made me hard," I whisper. "Where else was I supposed to go?"

He chuckles. "Rest a while. I'll feed you dinner before you leave."

I nod and snuggle further into him. It's then that I realize we're wrapped in a blanket. His fingers continue to run through my hair, but his other arm tightens at my back.

This doesn't feel like we're going through the motions of a contract right now. This feels... real.

And I don't hate it.

Twenty-One

## QUINLAN



OVER THE NEXT WEEK, Simon's here almost every day. They aren't just hour-long visits, either. He shows up almost right after school and stays until ten or eleven.

Always, he wants me to touch him. He wants me to bring him to his subspace.

The acts are always sexual, whether I'm fucking his throat or fingering his ass. Licking him. Touching him. I've never been so turned on in my life.

There are times he's more into it physically than others, but never to the extent he was when he came here hard and we frothed on my couch. I've determined that what he's getting out of this isn't sex related at all. It's something entirely different, though I haven't figured it out yet.

Every night I go over what took place between us and try to decide what it is he's getting from this. Is it just the reprieve into subspace? Is it an escape from sexual acts so he doesn't feel obligated to participate? Somehow, I really don't think that's it. He definitely wants to be in that place, but I'm sure there's something more.

Though Simon doesn't say the word anymore, there's no doubt in my mind that he truly feels he's broken. Especially now that he's doubly confused. He'd just accepted that he's asexual and then he falls off the deep end with a hard-on because of a single interaction.

My fear is the more we do, the more he's going to think there's something wrong with him. But I can't stop. I can't.

Not when I know our time is limited. The countdown is ticking as the days go by.

Besides, how am I supposed to tell him no when he demands I touch him?

I've only been home for three minutes when his familiar knock on my front door fills the foyer. I haven't even left it yet because I knew he'd be following. Just as he had every other evening this week. After I've counted to ten, slowly, I open the door.

He smiles and steps inside. Right into my chest. And wraps his arms around me. There's something really needy in his hold. In the way he wants to always be held. I definitely don't mind. My hands on him are a high that I'll never forget. I'll never get tired of this.

I close the door and flip the lock. As soon as it's shut, he says, "I'm fine. Green. Just want to be here."

*With you.*

I imagine the words but don't say them. Instead, I nod and kiss the side of his head. "What do you want today?"

He huffs quiet laughter. "Touch me. I like when you touch me."

"How?"

Him dictating what he wants assures me I'm not pushing him to something he's uncomfortable with. But he picks his head up from my shoulder and looks at me. Shyly. Fuck, I love when he looks at me like that. "What do you want to do to me, Professor?"

When I lick my lips, his eyes drop to the movement. "I want to eat your ass," I tell him.

His eyes snap up, wide. "What?" The alarm in his voice makes me grin. I kiss his lips, across his cheek, to his ear.

"I want to stick my tongue in your ass. Then I want to try three fingers in your tight hole."

Simon's breaths are short and shallow as he clings to me. He shivers, his fingers flex on my back. "Yes," he breathes. "But... Can I take a shower first? I'm clean, but... your mouth is very different from your fingers."

Chuckling, I nod. "Yes. Come on."

He slides his shoes off and follows me through the halls. As soon as we step into my room, his gaze travels through it with curiosity and I realize that I *still* haven't shown him around yet. I kiss his temple and then take him to the bathroom, showing him where he can find anything he wants.

"Thanks," he says, turning the shower on and pulling his shirt off at the same time.

I leave him and move to my bed, pulling out the lube from my drawer and setting it on the comforter. Then I find myself standing in the middle of my room, chewing my lip.

Once I told Simon to read about asexuality, I did some reading, too. I've done more since, as I try to determine what he needs from me. Why does he want sexual touch when he doesn't feel the sexual desire and attraction? He doesn't get hard or get off. He's not even really there.

Even when he's deep within subspace, there are times when I stop touching him and he gets frustrated with me until I continue. I *know* he takes something from it, but fuck if I can figure it out. When I ask him why, he gets concerned and self-doubt clouds his mind. It's probably a good idea that he examines it, but I don't want to push him when he already feels lost and confused.

I should encourage him to talk, though. Right?

He steps out of the bathroom, still dripping, a towel wrapped around his waist. Simon smiles as he approaches, and I pull him to me right away. Wet dream. That's what this man is.

"You really want to put your tongue in my hole?" he asks, amused.

I grin. "Very much. If that's okay."



Simon shrugs. “Sure. It’s fine. It’s kinda...”

Chuckling, I kiss his lips lightly and then move down to his collarbone. “If you don’t like it, all you have to do is say so. Okay?”

He nods.

I continue to kiss down his chest, flicking my tongue over his nipple. His hand moves into my hair and he pets it back. My lips trail over his wet body, chasing the water droplets and tickling where his muscles flex under my touch.

My hands sink into the knots of the towel as I concentrate on his navel. His hand tightens in my hair for a second and I look up. He’s watching me, eyes half closed. “Simon?”

“Hmm?”

“I need you to stay with me for a bit, okay? No escaping into subspace right away. Not until I get my fingers in you. I need to know if it’s too much. Can you do that?”

His head tilts. His chest rises on a stuttering breath and then he blinks a few times. When he looks at me again, he’s definitely more aware of me. His amused smile, that fucking smile that’s always a little flirty, spreads across his lips.

I pull at his towel until it comes loose and then drop it to the floor. Even soft, he’s beautiful. Perfect. I run my nose along his shaft, just to breathe him in. Then I kiss his thigh.

Simon is completely smooth. When I asked about it, he told me that hair is itchy so he keeps himself as smooth as he can. He’s apparently done it for a long time because he’s damn good at it. So fucking smooth. Beautiful. I kiss the spot just above the base of his cock.

“You can touch me,” he says. “I’m giving you blanket permission, so you don’t always have to ask.”

Grinning, I look up at him. “I’m still going to ask often. I need to check in with you, and I never want you to feel pressured into doing something sexual with me when you’re not feeling it.”

Simon licks his lips and I can see that he wants to say something. I'm not sure how to encourage it so I just watch him. Eventually he says, "It's not sexual to me, which sounds stupid. I mean, I guess it is; but it's also... not?" His brows knit together, then he sighs in frustration.

I kiss the inside of his thigh again and stand to cover his lips in a deep kiss. He sinks into me, his arms wrapping around me, pushing under my shirt. I pull back to take it off and I love the way his eyes slide over my torso. It's appreciative even if it's not aroused.

There's something even more personal and pleasing about that.

"Get on the bed," I tell him. "Face down."

Simon nods and does what I tell him. I follow once he's there, staring at the globes of his perfect ass. Biting my lip and ignoring the way my cock struggles in my pants, I kneel on the bed behind him. He shifts so he can see me over his shoulder.

I maneuver his legs so he's still somewhat flat, but his knees are bent, and his legs splayed. "You okay like this?"

He nods.

I nod and kiss his ass cheek. His cheeks flush as he watches. "Stay with me. Okay?"

Simon nods again. I move to his delicious backside and just look. Running my fingers along his soft ass, I spread him open. He takes a breath and I smile as I bury my face in his crease.

His breath catches, and he laughs nervously.

Flicking my tongue out, I give him an experimental lick. He rocks forward a little, but not far because the position I have him in doesn't allow for much freedom of movement. I lick him again, more intentional this time, and then press the tip of my tongue to the pucker of his hole.

The sound he makes is somewhat strangled and his arms shift on the bed like he's looking for something to hold on to. Pressing my face in closer, I seal my mouth over his perfect

hole, press the flat of my tongue to him, and give him a subtle suck.

He groans, shifting again. “Jesus, Quin. I can feel that in my balls.”

I smile stupidly wide. He said my name. Not Professor but Quin. I’m far too excited now. After I soak him with a bunch of spit, I bring my finger up and gently prod him open. Just to my first knuckle. He’s used to one finger now, so there isn’t much of a response. We’ve been working on two fingers for the past few days.

When I pull my finger out, I replace it with my tongue, spearing him as deep as I can shove it. He yells, turning his face into the comforter to drown it out. I reach under him to find his hand wrapped around the base of his cock.

He’s not hard. Maybe a hint of chubbing, but nothing to be considered truly aroused. I pull his hand away and lock our fingers together as I continue to eat him. He tastes like soap. Almost exclusively like soap. He definitely concentrated on his ass in the shower.

I pull back and push a finger inside him and he moans, his body gently rocking against me. When he’s ready for two, I replace my finger with my tongue and reach for the lube. It’s not easy to coat my fingers with one hand and not make a mess, but the way he’s gripping my other, I’m not about to let him go.

Once more, I take my tongue away and then start the slow process of inserting two fingers. He whines a little, the muscles in his ass flexing around me. I move smoothly in and out of him, curling my fingers every so often to rub his prostate and scissor to stretch him.

“Three,” he says, and I look up at him.

I pull my fingers out and he protests. “Turn over.” As he does, I put more lube on my fingers and add a bit extra to his hole. He pulls me to him so that I’m draped over his leg and he’s slightly on his side.

Simon gives me his hands, so I pull them above us until I can make us comfortable. His soft dick lays against my thigh and I wish I had a third hand so I could touch him. He looks at me with a vulnerable, soft need in his dark eyes.

I reach between us, curling myself a bit so I have a good angle, and then toy with his hole again using two fingers and then I start on the third. I watch as his face contorts and his body trembles against me. His muscles stiffen.

Before I can ask, he says, “Green. Make them deeper.”

“I don’t want to hurt you.”

There are tears clinging to his lashes that finally unleash when he says, “I want to hurt.”

My heart jumps and my breaths stall.

“Please,” he whispers.

I take his mouth in mine and kiss him gently, but I give him what he asks for. Though I still try to be gentle, I’m not so slow about it. His tears don’t stop falling. While I’m sure he’s uncomfortable to some degree, I don’t think I’m hurting him that much.

There’s definitely something else. Something I’m not sure he understands about himself. His noises don’t stop. They’re a mix of hurt and pleasure. Not sexual pleasure, but a pleasure that he feels somewhere inside him. I’m answering something. Giving him some feeling he likes.

“More,” he murmurs, and I increase the pace at which I fuck his ass. He grunts into my mouth, but I know the moment he starts to fade into subspace, which tells me he’s definitely comfortable with what’s happening. I continue to kiss him, murmuring to him any wayward thought that comes into my head.

“Beautiful,” I whisper. “You’re so tight, but you take my fingers so well. Feeling you tremble against me is everything, Simon. You’re amazing. I can’t wait to breed you.”

My words stop me short. Where the fuck did that come from?

Shaking it out of my head, I continue to tell him how much I'm looking forward to his ass. How I can't wait to lick every inch of him. How I want to give him every good feeling.

He whines when I remove my fingers, but I shush him as I kiss away his tears. My fingers trail close to where his dick is and he murmurs, "Please, Quin."

I'm at his damn mercy when he says my name. But I don't want to overstep. When does this become inappropriate? When is it no longer welcome?

I trail my thumb along the underside of his dick and he fucking purrs. His eyes are mostly closed; but I doubt he sees anything right now. His pretty lips are parted with a small, satisfied smile on them. There are still tears trickling now and then.

When I pull my hand away, his face contorts into something that breaks my heart, so I settle and continue to rub his soft dick with the pad of my thumb. Softly. Gently. From root to tip, back and forth.

He needs to be cleaned. He's covered in spit and lube. But I don't want to let him go. I don't want to stop kissing away his tears or miss his occasional contented sigh.

As I pet his dick, I watch how evenly his chest rises and falls. I continue to murmur to him all the things I want to do. How I want to take care of him. Give him everything. I've basically just declared my fucking love.

But the problem wouldn't be the slip of my tongue. It would be that I've fallen for this man.

Twenty-Two

## QUINLAN



*“I LIKE WHEN YOU PET ME.”*

*“Pet you?”*

*His face turns a pretty shade of red. “My dick. But is it weird because it’s soft?”*

I still can’t get the conversation out of my head. When he woke up two days ago, he confessed two things. That he likes when I touch him soft, and that he likes the pain of my fingers in him. He *doesn’t* like when the pain wears away. It’s frustrating. However, three fingers seem to keep just enough there that he can feel a twinge of it sometimes.

Simon likes pain play?

It’s not like I can just ask him. He doesn’t fucking know what he wants until he finds something he likes. And then he’s all about it. He wants more. He wants it all the time.

I’m really confused by the entire thing. He wants sexual acts but not sex in the basic sense. He doesn’t feel the arousal or attraction. Though he feels something else from it, there’s no release. While some of his responses can be considered sexual, there’s no actual sexual response. His dick doesn’t get hard. He doesn’t want release.

He wants the feelings that come with it. The feelings that he gets out of it.

And then he won’t leave until I’ve emptied my load down his throat. Which only has him staying an hour later than we

plan because not only does he get lost in his happy place for a while, but his voice is raspy.

I made sure last night wasn't without clothes at all. We didn't have to talk, but I needed him to just relax with me. There was a moment of panic in his eyes that took me some time to reassure him. I wasn't sure where his fear originated. Hell, he didn't know. I could feel his embarrassment after the near panic.

But he relaxed, we cuddled, and he went home early.

Which would make up for tonight, since he won't be home until midnight. At the earliest. Tonight is Vulcan's performance. When it's over, the three of us are going out to dinner.

I've never introduced anyone to Vulcan. I've never had an interest in keeping someone around. There's the argument I keep telling myself that our contract says I can take him to social events if it's not near campus. This is more than an hour away. It's very unlikely that we'll run into anyone we know.

He pulls in twenty minutes later than I expect him. That doesn't make him late, just unusual. I'm waiting by my car when he steps out and walks right into my embrace. I can tell something's bothering him. His muscles are tight. Even as he lets his entire body relax into me, I can feel his tension.

"What's wrong, baby?" I say before I can swallow the 'baby' back down.

His lips curl at my neck; his arms tighten around me. "Nothing. Declan and Damon are upset that I'm spending so much time out of the house."

I kiss the side of his head. "Want to go home instead?"

He leans back to look at me, his brows knit together. "I want both." He laughs in annoyance and looks out of the garage. "I want to be with them, but I want to be with you, too."

I kiss his jaw, and he sighs. His hands move between us and then run up my body. My stomach, my chest, my shoulders, and finally, around my neck as he presses his mouth



to mine. I lick into him, enjoying the soft hum he gives me in response.

“Let’s go,” I murmur. “Or we’re not leaving here and V will be hurt that I’ve missed his performance.”

Simon smiles and pulls away from me. I open the door and let him climb in before shutting it. When I back us out of the garage and turn onto the street, Simon leans on the console and takes my hand.

“I hate that this is in the way,” he mutters. I glance over to see him pouting as he glares at it.

“What’s wrong?”

“I—” He bites his lip and then sighs. “I want to be held.”

“We have a two-hour play to go to. I’ll hold you the entire time.”

His smile has my stomach flipping. “Yeah? Isn’t PDA against our contract?”

“Do you want me to hold you or not?”

Simon laughs. “Oh, I definitely want you to hold me.” He turns his attention out the window, and I barely hear his next words. “Hold the cracks together.”

I don’t ask him to explain because I’m positive I wasn’t supposed to hear him. So I try to engage him in easy conversation. School. My class’s projects. Vulcan. I don’t bring up the twins since he’s been tense today when I do.

By the time we pull into the parking lot of the theater, I’m dying to get him in my arms again. I yank open his door and pull him against me as soon as he’s standing. “Miss me?” he teases, but what I don’t miss is the way he clings tightly to me.

So I hug him, shoving down all the things that are trying to overflow their way out of my mouth. I’ve had this man for just barely over a month. I *should not* feel this way.

After a soft kiss, I pull him forward. “Let’s find some seats.”

I'm pleased to find that there's already a bit of a crowd. For a giant of a man, Vulcan is really sensitive, and it would have hurt his feelings a lot if there hadn't been a crowd tonight. Even though it wouldn't have been a reflection of him at all.

We find our seats and I push up the armrest between us. We shift for a while until we are somewhat sideways between the two seats with him between my legs. My ass and foot are going to be numb by the time this show is over, but I simply can't bring myself to care. I doubt that Simon's entirely comfortable either with the awkward way he's twisted in my lap.

I keep one arm around his chest, the other I run through his hair. A contented smile settles on his lips as he rests his head on my chest. For a while, we stay like that, watching people come in and find their seats. When the lights dim with a five-minute warning, Simon pulls up the program and starts flipping through it.

He finds Vulcan's headshot and bio. "He looks like a giant Viking biker guy," he says.

I laugh. "Just wait till you see him."

While I don't watch most of the play, I only really pay attention every time Vulcan is on stage. He's not there a lot. He told me he had a supporting role but was super excited to sing in the second act. When he wasn't on stage, I watched Simon.

Thoughts about what's going on inside him have consumed me for weeks. So right now, I just relax with him and stare unabashedly. For now, this man is mine. I can hold him and touch him and kiss him. And I can do so with everyone around. He's so fucking perfect.

Honestly, I should have given this contract more thought. Already my obsession with him was so unhealthy that I even considered it. Of course, I was going to get in over my head if he agreed.

But this is far more than I ever thought might come of it. His trust in me with parts of him he doesn't even understand is fucking everything. I would burn the damn world down to keep that trust. The way he hands me his vulnerability and asks me to give him what he needs pierces my heart every time.

I don't know what this is, and I'm absolutely terrified of what will happen when it ends. But right now, I will gladly accept the responsibility of helping Simon figure himself out.

After Vulcan sings, Simon cheers loudly, clapping loudly. My smile is so fucking wide, I think my face might split in half. By the time we climb to our feet, I realize how very right I was. My entire lower half is numb. Simon laughs as he leans on the back of the chair in front of us. "I think we should petition for theaters to have two-person lounge chairs."

Laughing, I lean down and kiss the back of his neck. He smiles over his shoulder but doesn't stand straight again yet. Vulcan said he'd be out as soon as he could, but there was changing to do, cleaning off the makeup and whatever else comes after a show. We have a few minutes at least.

"This was really fun," Simon says, finally shifting his weight back and forth then reaches behind him to rub his butt. "My ass is so asleep. Not the kind of pain I prefer."

My laughter bursts out of me before I can keep it in. His teasing grin is so wide that I think he planned that little remark. I pull him to me and kiss him long enough that we're almost the last people in the theater.

"Let's go meet the star, baby," I murmur.

Jesus, I can't keep that word in!

We make our way into the lobby and wait just where I told Vulcan we would be. I watch Simon as he watches everyone else move around us. His hands are in his pockets, his usual small and somewhat flirty smile resting on his perfect lips.

When I look up, I see Vulcan coming toward us. He's beaming as he makes his way through the crowd. People stare, mostly in awe and wonder.

He's wearing a short, pink pleated skirt, a white shirt covered in pearly sequins, and white converse sneakers. The two pieces of clothing, his pastel tats and the bulk of him, are nearly all you see. You can't help but look at him. He's magnificent with his giant bulldozer frame and full beard.

But his smile! He's so fucking happy.

"You were awesome, V," I say, reaching for him when he's close so I can hug him.

My feet leave the ground as he hugs me back. "Thanks for being here, Quinny. I was less nervous knowing you were watching."

"I wouldn't miss it. You really were spectacular."

His face is flush when he sets me down. "You think so? My singing?"

"Honestly, you were the star of the show, V. It was all good, but you were perfection."

He sighs. "Even if you're just saying that so you don't hurt my feelings, thank you. I needed to hear that."

Then his gaze cuts to Simon.

It only now occurs to me that I might not have prepared Simon for Vulcan. What if he has a problem with his appearance? Fuck, what if he's uncomfortable? What if he doesn't like Vulcan?

Simon's studying Vulcan with a passively curious expression. Nothing's changed about his demeanor or his smile than when he was simply people watching. Until he feels me watching him. Then his smile climbs a little. Widening. His eyes flicker to me and he's amused at however I'm looking at him.

"This is Vulcan," I tell Simon. "Simon."

"Hi," Simon says, offering Vulcan his hand. Hesitantly, Vulcan takes it. "You were really great."

Vulcan offers him a nervous smile. "Thanks. It's nice to meet you."

Simon points to one of Vulcan's tattoos. "My best friends have that, too. It means calm, right?"

Vulcan's face lights up when he shifts his arm so Simon can see it. He nods excitedly. "Yes! The one next to it means peace."

"They look a lot nicer in the light colors. Like they're actually preaching what they mean."

The way Vulcan's eyes light up when he looks at me puts everything inside me at ease. "Ready to eat?"

"I'm starving," Vulcan says. "I was too nervous to eat before."

"We'll meet you there. Yeah?"

He nods, flashing a smile at Simon, and then turns for the doors. I go to take Simon's hand, then pause. Should I do that? Am I even allowed to now that we're not strictly anonymous?

Simon's hand slides into mine as he steps close. "I like when you hold my hand, Professor." His voice is quiet, and I sigh. Shit, the things he does to me.

The restaurant is close by. Vulcan is waiting outside, bouncing on the balls of his feet when we get there. We head inside, Simon's hand in mine again, and are led to a round booth. I have Simon slide in and then I follow, sitting probably far too close.

The first few minutes while we look at the menu, I find that I engage in a series of behaviors that startle me. Once Simon says what he's interested in, I order for him. I brush his hair off his forehead. I hand him a breadstick and then butter a roll for him. When I go to reach for him again, I suddenly freeze, realizing what I'm doing.

Well, fuck.

I glance at Vulcan, who's staring with a super wide, knowing smile. Then I look at Simon. His smile is softer. "Sorry," I say. "I didn't mean to—" To what, exactly?

Simon shakes his head, still smiling. "I don't mind. I like your attention," he says quietly. His gaze is all for me, not

caring that we have an audience. “I really like touch.” His voice is low and his eyes drop. “I guess that’s a byproduct of being unwanted as a child.”

My stomach drops and I think I have an inkling where some of his need for affection comes from now. All I want to do is take it away. Make sure he knows that he’s fucking wanted. I want him more than I should. It’s going to hurt when he’s gone.

His hand slipping into mine while I’m still frozen snaps me out of my thoughts. He smiles. His entire posture is relaxed. Comfortable. “I like your attention on me,” he says. “You never have to stop. I’m not uncomfortable.”

I sigh and give into my need to get closer. I slide to his side and kiss his temple. Maybe he’s not the only one who’s learning a lot about themselves.

Then I turn my attention to Vulcan. He’s munching on a breadstick with a glowing smile. I try to give him a look of ‘don’t start,’ To my relief, the entire dinner is light and just... fun. Simon and Vulcan get along remarkably well.

When we’re back in my car heading home, Simon takes my hand but doesn’t speak. I can feel that his quiet isn’t just happy quiet. But I wait until he decides he wants to talk. He does after a few minutes.

“I really like him.”

I nod. The relief that rushes through me makes me sigh. “I’m really glad you do.”

“I think Declan and Damon would adore him,” he says. I glance his way to find him smiling.

“Can I ask you something?”

He looks at me and nods.

“You said you were unwanted as a child.”

Simon sighs. “Yeah, sorry.” He pauses and I don’t think he’s going to continue. Finally, he says, “My mom died when I was ten. My dad... checked out right after. And checked into

being permanently drunk to cope. I went from having a really idyllic childhood to being utterly forgotten.”

Unwanted.

I squeezed his hand, but before I could speak, he continued, “The twins’ mom took me from there and I’ve never seen my father again. He’s never called or come looking for me. It’s like I never existed.”

Unwanted.

“Anyway, that’s why the twins are so affectionate. They probably saw that I needed it and just responded. We were always close. When kids are young, they don’t really know that touch is only supposed to be between certain people and for certain reasons. We just never grew out of it, I guess.”

“Your mother didn’t forget you,” I say. “You know that, right?”

Simon nods.

“And I’m confident that your father didn’t forget you, either. But his grief over the loss of his wife consumed him. That’s not your fault, Simon.”

He takes a shaky breath. Then he laughs, but it’s watery. “I think I’ve hid behind the twins my entire life,” he whispers. “I’ve let their love for me soothe away all the darkness inside. All the loneliness. My misery and fear and insecurities. Being thrown away by my dad. I’ve locked it all away so thoroughly that I don’t know anything about myself.”

When I look at him, I find a tear running down his cheek. He’s looking straight out the window. My heart clenches in my chest.

“Every day I spend with you, it’s like you unlock something new inside me and I can take a breath. I don’t understand a fucking thing and I have no idea who I see in the mirror, but for the first time in thirteen years, I don’t feel like an extension of Declan and Damon.”

If we weren’t on the highway, I’d have pulled him into my chest. I don’t know what to say to that, though. I just hold his

hand, letting him know I'm here.

Finally, he takes a deep breath and sighs. "I wish I could introduce you to them in the same way you did for me and Vulcan."

"You don't think they can keep a secret?"

He snorts. "They can keep a secret just fine. Their parents are still blissfully unaware of the tattoos they have on their ass cheeks." I laugh and shake my head. "But they've already decided they don't like you, though I'm not sure why."

"Because they saw me touching you in the club."

Simon nods. "Yeah, that. But not just that. They'd lose their minds if I told them I'm getting money like this. They're nothing if not insanely protective of me."

I press my lips together and realize that Simon might be a bit more innocent and naïve than he thinks. Yes, those boys are protective of him. No argument there.

But mark my words, they're also in love with him.



Twenty-Three

## SIMON



IT FEELS as though every answer I find to a question I didn't know to ask about myself, I'm left with a dozen more questions. I didn't know asexuality was a thing. I didn't know that's what I am. It's almost shocking how much I relate to what I've read. *I am asexual* in the broadest of terms; I don't want sex, I don't feel sexual attraction almost ever.

But then tell me why the fuck do I want the acts without the expectation on me? Where does that fit in? Why do I want Professor Stommer's hand on my soft dick as he lets me fall into my subspace—whatever the fuck that is. No, I haven't asked, nor have I looked it up. There's like a dozen pieces of confusion on my plate right now that at least that one doesn't require an immediate answer.

I like the subspace. I like escaping inside it and feeling... free and good.

When I can figure out the sex stuff, then I'll look into that. But what the fuck do I do with this sex stuff? There's absolutely no desire in me when he touches me. Like, none. What I appreciate more than anything is that he doesn't require me to respond in such a way. There's no expectation on me. He's letting me explore all the weirdness inside me with no question.

Except what color I am, but I like that question. I like him checking in all the time.

But I need to understand why I like his fingers inside me without any desire to get sexy. Why I like his mouth on me

and his touch everywhere.

Oh, and now let's add to this fucked up conundrum that I also *need* the pain of too much. Yes, I want to fucking cry for him. I want him to break me so badly that I'm sobbing. To top it off, I'm pretty sure I need it all as harshly as he can give me.

I want to cry.

I want to cry?

Feeling like I'm broken because I don't want to have sex at all seems like such a minor thing now. What are all these little pieces about me that I don't understand? I've never craved pain in any way. I don't even like to get a cramp when I run. I don't want to stub my toe. I don't want my hair pulled. I definitely don't want to be punched.

But I want it to hurt in the most intimate way possible. Yep, the chill that just went through my body confirms that.

I'm so lost in my thoughts that I see nothing else for a long time. When I climb out of bed in the morning and dress, when I leave, how I get to school. I see nothing. It's when I finally come up for air from the suffocation of not recognizing anything about myself that I look around.

There are people getting up and heading for the door. Frowning, I realize I'd at least made it to class. I hadn't fallen off a cliff or anything. That's something. Though it's a little frightening that I don't even remember getting out of bed. I can only assume I did those things.

I have nothing to pack up so I just sling my backpack over my shoulder and head for the door. Looking across the hall, there are people moving by in both directions. But the wall is empty. No one is there.

My stomach drops as I wait for the twins to magically step out of the cement block walls. They don't and I look down the hall in the direction I think they come from. They're not there. Not within the faces coming this way.

Tears sting my eyes and I feel fucking foolish. Why am I going to cry now? Is *this* the kind of cry I want?

No. It's really fucking not. But fuck's sake, why am I such a sap all the sudden? I've been without them after class. Why do I feel like my life is falling apart right now just because they're not here?

I spin in a blind panic and my gaze falls on them. They're a couple dozen feet down the hall watching me. Waiting. I don't try to decipher their expressions as I move toward them. Nor can I stop the way I fall into Damon's arms.

He wraps me up and then presses my back to Declan's chest. "Why are you over here?" I ask.

"Didn't know if you wanted us here," he answers.

For a minute, I try to translate his words into something that makes sense. When they don't, I pull my face from his shoulder and stare at him. "Why would you think that?"

"You didn't acknowledge us at all this morning."

I flinch and drop my head back. "I'm so sorry. It had nothing to do with you at all, I promise. Fuck, I don't even remember getting to school."

They don't answer for a long time. When they do, it isn't having to do with this conversation at all.

"You work today?"

I shake my head.

"Want to go home?"

"No library? No gym?" I ask.

"Nah. Let's just go home."

Sighing, I nod. "Yeah. Sounds good."

They release me, and we head down the hall. They're not touching me, which makes me feel a little chaotic. Like I might float away and not in the same feeling I had when I received that first \$4,000 in my account. This isn't a good feeling.

I look between them, trying to decide why this is different. Why is this happening? Simultaneously, they each take one of

my hands and my shoulders relax. Now I'm grounded.

I climb into the back of Damon's car behind Declan in the passenger seat and look out the window as we leave campus. There's no talk. No music. No phones. Just silence. It's not quite uncomfortable, but it feels heavy.

"I took the weekend off," I say.

Damon's eyes lift to the mirror and look at me while Declan turns in his seat, swinging his arm around the back.

"Yeah? Why's that?" Declan asks.

I shrug. Because as frustrated with me for not being home much as they are, I'm feeling a little lost with how little time I've seen them.

"Just needed a break," I say, and reach for his hand. He tangles our fingers together like it's natural. Like we've always done. Because we have. It is natural. This is us.

The lie in my words isn't that I need a break. I don't. In fact, I can already feel the itch under my skin that only Professor Stommer seems to satisfy. His touch is different, even when it's the same as theirs. His hugs are different. The way his hands run through my hair. How he touches all over my body.

Nothing in that is physically any different from how Declan and Damon behave with me. But *it feels* vastly different. My entire body recognizes it as different. It feeds something inside me that Declan and Damon don't reach.

Honestly, by the time Monday evening rolls around, I'm going to be coming out of my skin for Professor Stommer's touch. For his lips on my skin. For his fat dick down my throat as he tears me apart. And his fingers spreading my ass until it hurts so good that I'm a weepy mess.

My head is going to be so hectic that I'm going to need to disappear into my cozy place while he protects me from the world. I know being with him allows me the safety and comfort I need to be in that place.

Why haven't I ever felt that with Declan and Damon? I get the same trust and comfort and safety from them. I have no doubt that they'd set the building on fire to keep me safe—yes, that's counterintuitive, but I stand by that.

When the car stops, I blink my way out of my head again. Declan goes into the grocery store while Damon and I wait for him in silence. I don't pull out my phone. I just keep my eyes locked with Damon's in the mirror.

There's a part of me that wishes he'd see through everything and just tell me what I'm feeling. Explain to me all this weird and scary shit that is happening to me. I don't know my own head or needs right now.

If he does, he doesn't say.

I know Declan's back when Damon unlocks the doors and mine opens. Declan hands me half a dozen big paper bags and I push them to the opposite seat. "Are you hungry?" I ask, amused.

He chuckles and leans in to press his lips to mine. My eyes close. It's been too long since I've felt the reminder of him like this. "Don't want to leave again this weekend." He looks into my eyes. "I've missed you."

My heart clenches. I nod and barely choke out, "I miss you, too."

"Move in," he says and pushes me along the seat so he can climb in the back with me. I do and as soon as he shuts the door, he pulls me onto his lap, which is a little awkward since we're not tiny guys. Although, we're not Vulcan huge, either.

But I'm content to lay in his arms in a very unsafe way for a moving vehicle and close my eyes. "I'm sorry I've been distant," I tell him. "I really don't mean to be."

He kisses the top of my head without answering.

We get home and head upstairs. I drop my bag in our room and pull off my hoodie. Damon comes in and pulls the rest of my clothes off, too, before steering me to the living room where we pile on the couch in our underwear.

I used to laugh about this. When we were younger, we were always running around in our underwear. About the time we became teenagers, his parents said that was no longer acceptable behavior for our age. We swore that once we moved out and got our own place, we were only ever going to be in just our underwear.

Of all the weird and silly things we declared we do when we moved out (like cake for dinner and pizza for breakfast every day), this was the one thing we actually kept. Oh, and sharing a bed. That's never changed, but his parents never tried to prevent that.

The twins get cranky if they try, so they haven't since we were fourteen.

I sit sideways in Damon's lap, my back against the armrest of the couch as I lean into his chest. Declan is between my legs but facing the television. It's a very inconvenient and messy way to eat, but we've been doing it so long, we make more of a mess when we're at the table eating like proper civilized people.

When we've made it through an entire family size bag of boneless crispy chicken that we air fried, I stare at Declan until he shifts between my legs so he's laying with his face in my stomach. I hug his head like I once would have a stuffed animal.

There we stay in silence. We're all facing the television but don't speak. Damon's hand comes down to rest along Declan's back, his other buried in my hair.

I sigh. Content. But the quiet comfort of this familiar position allows my head to start populating with all the newest strands of concerns. All the questions. All the discomfort under my skin because I don't know what I want or need.

"You're keeping a lot of secrets," Damon says quietly.

"You said you'd trust me," I answer.

"We do. We haven't followed you. We haven't even asked questions."

“I’d say you’re babysitting, but that seems unlikely since you get really awkward around kids,” Declan says.

I snort. “They have shit coming out of both ends. All orifices! I’m not cut out for that.”

They laugh quietly.

“Model?” he counters.

“Pfft. I’m not model quality.”

“The fuck you aren’t,” Damon mutters before tipping my head back to look at me. “You got another deposit two days ago. There’s almost \$12,000 in your account.”

“And there’s obviously something bothering you.”

“One doesn’t have anything to do with the other,” I say. It’s true. I’m not at all upset about the Sugar Daddy aspect of my life. Like, at all. I’m enjoying this.

It’s everything I’ve discovered about myself that’s a little terrifying.

“Then let’s not talk about your job that we promised not to talk about. What’s bothering you?”

I close my eyes. “I’m not ready to talk about it. You already know some.”

“You don’t like to hookup,” Declan says.

I nod. “Can you please just accept that I promise to talk to you as soon as I figure my shit out?”

“Why not now?”

There’s hurt in his voice. I can feel it in my chest.

“Because I don’t have answers. And I’m a little afraid to talk about it. I want to. But... not yet.”

“I didn’t think you’d ever keep something from us,” Damon says, his voice low.

I grip his hand tightly. “It’s not a reflection of you. It’s really not. Like with the hookup thing, it’s just something that I can’t... I don’t understand and it’s hard for me.”



Declan turns his face into my stomach and places soft kisses all over my skin. It's reminiscent of the way Professor Stommer kisses me, and my heart races a little. Not because I feel the same, but because I'm suddenly missing the Professor right now.

"Have you started looking for jobs?" Damon says.

I sigh in relief at the change in subject. "No. There's still three months left. It feels too soon. What if someone interviews and wants me to start next week? Are they going to hold the position until I graduate? Then there's the other side. It might take me that long to find anything at all in my field of study."

"Yeah, tell me about it," Declan mutters. "It's frustrating as fuck. We don't even know where we want to live."

"We can talk about that now," I suggest. "Maybe narrow some places down this weekend. Somewhere with a big job pool so we can find something close by."

Declan picks his face up to look at me. "You still want to room together?"

I roll my eyes. "No. I want to live together. We can buy a house or a condo or whatever." He smiles and I brush his hair from his face. "That hasn't changed, Dec. Nothing's changed."

Declan sighs and presses his face into my stomach.

Nothing changed except that maybe everything has.

Twenty-Four

## QUINLAN



LONGWOOD UNIVERSITY HAS A VERY eclectic trade department. We cover all areas, and while there aren't any specific degrees that we offer in a particular trade, we assure licensure and certificates where appropriate.

There's your typical trade training in heavy machinery and construction, electrical, etc. But we also offer some less common trades like stained-glass, wood-working, weaving, seamstress, etc. We've become widely known across the country for these programs so enrollment isn't ever an issue.

Even those who aren't pursuing careers in these areas often take classes for elective credit. Such as Simon did and his twins are doing with stained-glass.

Two times a semester, the department puts on showcases. The first is for items we've made as a department or a class. They're for sale to the highest bidder. We also set up custom orders when it comes up.

The second, at the end of each semester, is for our students to show off their final pieces. About 2/3 of them are for sale and the students get to keep their proceeds. The other third chooses to keep their hard-earned items.

Tonight is the first showcase. Because I've spent the last two nights setting up, I haven't seen much of Simon, though I haven't stopped thinking about him. Like, at all. It's maddening. Because of this, I'm practically drooling when he walks in the gym where the entire department is set up. Our displays take up every available space inside and then spill

outside through the double doors to show some of our larger pieces.

He doesn't come in with his twins. Because they have pieces displayed, they're likely already here. The stained-glass items are at the other end of the gym than I am. Only because I've been staring at the door, knowing that he'd be here, did I see him come in.

There's no way he wasn't going to show up to show his best friends support.

My fingers tingle with the need to touch him. It's been three days since he's been in my house. In my room, my bed. Since I've kissed his entire body.

Inwardly scowling, I shift to hide my chubbing cock. I *cannot* be thinking about that right now. My bosses are here. I'm going to get myself fired!

For a while, I convince myself to pay attention to the people wandering around. Part of the purpose of the showcase is to teach our students how to sell their goods. Even knowing that not all our students plan to go into a profession where they're looking to physically make sales, almost everything you do in life is selling.

Selling a product. Selling your company. Selling yourself as a broker or provider. You're convincing clients and customers that you are the best option, regardless of what career you find yourself in.

It's easy enough to let the time go by while I coach my kids how to answer questions and talk up their items. Most of these items are class-made but there are a few individually made. And many more that are department made, which means the instructors putter around and produce something in their boredom.

I look up during a lull and my heart stops when I see Simon standing at the end of the table looking sexy as fuck with his lazy, flirty smile and his hands shoved in his pockets.

"Hey, Professor," he says when I meet his eyes. He moves closer to me, and it takes a concentrated effort not to lick my

lips.

“Simon,” I greet, trying to casually see who’s nearby. Simon joins me behind the table I’m at and we step back a little way. “How’s your twins’ glass?”

He chuckles. “I’m surprised to report that there aren’t any dicks in it. I’m also a little disappointed, but they say that their instructor nearly had a coronary when he saw their design, so they had to modify it. All bets are off for their final piece, though.”

I laugh. “I bet those two are a riot.”

He nods absently, a fond smile on his pretty lips. “Yeah,” he says, but there’s a note of sadness in his tone. I know he’s been going through something with the twins, and he hurts because of it. While I know it’s because of me, even though they don’t know it’s because of me, I feel a little guilty for getting between them.

I’d be crushed if someone came between me and Vulcan. Friendships, real friendships, are sacred. Someone who gets in the way of that is not a good person.

Right now, intentional or not, I’m the one getting between them.

“Everything okay?” I ask, keeping my voice quiet.

His dark eyes flicker to mine and his smile climbs a little. “I’m good. Just a little starved.”

I glance at my cooler, mentally going through the contents. “I have food. What do you want?”

He chuckles and I look up. “Touch starved,” he says quietly. For a second, he bites his lips and his eyes dart around us. “I need you to fucking touch me, Professor.”

It’s torture to hold in my groan. I’m not at all sure the world doesn’t see the hunger that suddenly flares to life inside me. More than anything, I want to bend him over this pretty chair for sale and fuck his ass with my tongue.

“Tonight?” I ask him, breathless. “It’ll be a little late but —”

“Yes,” he answers and takes a subtle step closer. His eyes are trained intently on me. My eyes trail down to where his Adam’s apple bobs when he swallows. “What will you do to me tonight?”

“Whatever you want,” I whisper, turning my attention to everything around us. Looking. Waiting for someone to *know* what we’re saying. “Fuck, Simon,” I mutter as my dick throbs.

When I glance his way, his eyes are not on my face but on my pants. On my dick that’s certainly trying to wave a flag for attention. Although I shouldn’t, I end up staring at his face.

His lips slightly parted, eyes wide and pupils... blown. Jesus fuck, not here. Not like this.

He looks up at me a little startled. “How do you do that?” he whispers, shifting to adjust himself. Simon blinks. “I’ve been turned on twice because of you. That’s more than any other person in my entire fucking life that isn’t directly related to my own doing.”

I swallow and shake my head. “I’ll text you the code to my front door. Go there when you leave. I’ll get there as soon as I can.”

Simon nods, almost absently. “I need—”

His voice cuts off when we’re interrupted by a customer. She grins at us both, completely unaware of the heat burning hotly between us. It seems impossible to miss, but this woman is focused on other things. Not two men planning to hook up really fucking soon.

Not soon enough.

The fucking woman who talked rampantly about nothing served as a lightbulb to everyone else in the building and they formed a long line and thick crowd around my department. I could see the strained way that Simon looked at me as he gave me a somewhat desperate smile, brows furrowed, and moved away.

The rest of the showcase drags. And I do mean drags. I check the clock no less than three times in a single minute which really puts into perspective how long the fucking thing

went. Then we have to clean up, bring everything back to our respective departments, load shit on trucks, etc. etc. etc. I'm ready to rip my hair out by the time I'm able to make an excuse and slip away.

To make the day longer, my dick never deflates. I've been painfully hard, fucking *aware*, the entire time. I keep catching glimpses of Simon as he tries to get closer and is discouraged by the crowd each time. The whole thing is made all the worse when I see him standing in the door ready to leave, looking at me with so much need in his eyes that I'm ready to quit my job and follow.

I text him my front door code without thought. Half an hour later, I receive a text back telling me he's there and waiting.

He's fucking waiting for me and there's a goddamn crowd that wants to talk about a stupid table!

By the time I shove through my front door, I'm panting and ready to combust. I have half a mind to rub one out before I even find Simon; but instead, I slam the door a little too hard, shove the locks into place while I struggle out of my shoes, and practically run/stumble to my room.

Where I find Simon naked on my bed. He sits with his legs folded under him, his cock very obviously half hard and waiting. His lower lip is between his teeth and the tube of lube is in his hands.

"How much would you object if I told you that I already prepped, and I just want you to slam home?" he asks as if he's requesting a glass of water.

My mind short circuits for a minute as I process his words. "Already prepped?" I parrot.

Simon nods, dark eyes still on me. My chest is rising and falling so fucking hard that I can hear almost nothing else but my own breathing. "I assure you, there's plenty of lube in my ass." He gives me a deadpan look. "That was awkward as hell, but I... need you to get undressed now, Professor."

Again, I stare and it takes me a few beats to understand him. Then I'm stripping in such a way that has him grinning at me with amusement. I'm on the bed in the next heartbeat, shoving him onto his back and mauling his face.

The kiss is hard and sloppy. I bite him more than I kiss him. It's been far too many days since I've touched or tasted him. I lick along his neck and jaw, bite his ear hard enough that he makes a sound in his throat.

Simon is on a mission though. He takes one of my hands and brings it to his dick. I wrap around him and moan into his neck. "I honestly don't understand my body," he gripes.

He's not completely hard, and he doesn't exactly get harder when I rub him. Not quite. But I can feel his desire and energy buzzing in the air between us. "Tell me what you need," I say, still licking and sucking at any inch of skin I can get at.

"Hold me down and fuck me hard," he says. "Make me cry."

I freeze. Did he just—What?

Pulling up, I look at him. His cheeks are rosy as he stares at me. Though he's a little shy about it, there was no mistaking his words or the look on his face.

"I've thought about it," he says, tapping his fingers against my cheek. "A lot. I don't know why I want it, but I want you to make it hurt. I want you to make me cry. And then I want you to keep using me while I go to my cozy place until you're wrung out."

"You—" Words just don't form.

"I did two fingers," he says, eyes closing slightly as he gives me a wan expression that makes me laugh. "Please? And then hold me after?"

"Fuck, Simon," I say and kiss him deeply. It's not as hard and sloppy this time. I try to show him through my kiss that I'll give him whatever the fuck he needs, though I'm not convinced I have it in me to hurt him. Not like he wants.



He gently pushes me away and untangles us so he can roll over. Then he looks at me over his shoulder expectantly. “Hold me tight, okay?”

“I... What if you—”

“I remember my safe words. And... it’s not that I want to be helpless. It’s not about force or making it so I can’t move. I just need you to hold me so tight that I feel you everywhere, Professor. So I know I’m safe and that you’re here. That you won’t let me go.”

I roll on top of him, the vulnerability in his voice ringing loudly in my ears. I wrap my arms around his torso, effectively trapping him between me and the bed. He has his arms folded against his chest.

“Like that,” he sighs. “Tighter when you take me, okay?”

I nod, nerves racing through my body. I can feel how dripping he is. I’m sure there’s a puddle of lube on my bed where he was sitting. Did he just squirt the bottle into his ass?

“Make it hurt,” he says quietly. “I want to cry and I don’t want you to stop until you fill me. What did you call it? Breed?”

“Jesus,” I mutter through a laugh. He definitely hears me in his subspace.

“Will you?” he asks, shifting his head to look at me from the corner of his eye. I kiss him.

“I’ll do whatever you want, Simon. But... are you sure this is what you want?”

“I’m very, very green. And feel stupidly turned on the more we talk about it so hurry up before this little window of arousal goes away. My body is very off, you know.”

I laugh, kissing his jaw, and I shift so I can drag my cock through his crack. “Condom?” I ask.

He shakes his head. “I saw your results. You saw mine. And I don’t think you can properly breed with a condom on. Just saying.”

My cheeks heat but there's no doubt I'm fucking excited to let loose in his body. My dick leaks in anticipation. My balls tighten. Just knowing that no one but me has ever been inside him has some caveman ferocity roaring inside me.

I rub my cock through his crack until the head of my dick catches at his hole. Pausing for just a second, I swallow and start to push against him. Simon shivers under me and I remember his words. Hold him tighter when I take him. So I do. I hug him more and ease my way inside him.

He whimpers and I pause on reflex.

“Green,” he says. “Don't stop. I told you, I want—”

“I know. Sorry. Hurting you is really the last thing I want to do,” I say.

“It's not that kind of hurt, Quin. I need to feel it for days. I need you to take me like you own me. Like you're going to make sure I only think of you like this. I *need to feel the pain* of this. I want you to make me cry and beg and tell you it hurts and then I want you to take me harder. Then let me go to my cozy place.”

I nod against his head. Despite that my instincts reject the idea of hurting him, I can't lie that every damn word that comes out of his mouth makes me hungry. I don't answer, but push farther inside him. He whines at first, the sound like a shot down my spine.

Then his noises change to something that's very clearly discomfort. I'm not small. I've never advertised that I'm big and I don't wear clothing to show that when I go out. But I know that I shouldn't be anyone's first. Especially when they don't want me to really get them ready.

When his tears start falling, I grip him tighter. My body reacts on its own, keeping him tied to me with my embrace while I shove my way inside his too tight body. His tears are what keep my release at bay, because his body quivering around mine, strangling my dick with more pressure than I've ever felt, is a drag that demands bliss.

When he cries out, I nip at his jaw and ask his color.

He screams green as he sobs and when he tells me harder, it feels good. I'm a little disgusted with myself that it does. To see him wrecked in my arms while I make him take my dick. The way his tears track down his face. How his face contorts so that I can visually see he's in pain.

Simon doesn't fight me at all. The little spasms and twitches of his body are reflex alone. He's given himself to me completely with his absolute trust.

It's warming. It's intoxicating.

I fuck into him hard and with abandon until my head is spinning, all the while I find that I'm spewing words. Sick words. Words that drive us both on. As I finally release inside him, Simon falls into subspace.

Flipping him over, I push back inside him, dick still stupidly hard, and rub his dick. Taking him in my hand. He's hard. Really hard. "Want to get off, baby?" I ask, gently stroking him, the rocking of my hips slow now. I'm still deep inside him, unable to convince myself that I need to let his body rest.

Simon whimpers and reaches for me as he falls away. I curl into him, still stroking him. He kisses me and nods. "Make me come."

I'm not sure if that's a forceful 'make' or just that he's ready for release. Biting my lip, I watch his serene features as I concentrate my efforts on earning myself an orgasm from this confusingly perfect man in my arms. Wrapped around my body. Demanding pain as an escape. I kiss away his tears.

His breathing quickens. His stomach muscles tighten as a low moan rattles out of him. I tighten my fist and jerk harder, adding a flick of my wrist at his head.

I nearly jump when he orgasms. A thick rope of cum shoots up his body and covers his face. He doesn't flinch, though his quiet sounds of pleasure and release are ringing loudly in my ears. I lick his face as I milk him until he's empty.

For a long time, I don't know what to do except hold him. Apparently, I have some things to learn about myself. Like how much I loved that. How hot it was. How fucking turned on I was to see that he was crying for me.

He let me destroy him and I fucking got off on it.

I don't think Simon's broken at all, but I might be having second guesses about myself right now.

Twenty-Five

## SIMON



I TURN my face up into the spray of hot water and sigh with Damon and Declan in front and behind me, respectively. Damon, behind me, is washing my body, while Declan in front is washing my hair.

The first time we did this was when I was ten and they'd taken me out of my house. I think they did it because I was crying. I was inconsolable, which was to be expected by a kid who lost their mother in the last month and then their father chose alcohol over them. All I wanted to do was cry.

But I was disgusting. No clean clothes, a filthy house. My hair had gotten too long, and it was knotted and thick with grossness. I don't even recall what was in my hair. Hell, even then, I probably didn't know.

When it was clear all I wanted to do was curl up and cry, Declan and Damon forced me to the bathroom, undressed me, and washed me until all I could smell was soap. Then they dried and dressed me.

Only once I was clean did they allow me to curl up and cry... right between them.

In hindsight, I'm sure that those few months—where I lost my mom and dad, and the twins' parents took me in—really shaped our relationship to what it became. I was needy, heartbroken, and exhausted. Declan and Damon somehow broke through all that with their infallible presence. They never left my side. Never stopped holding my hand. Never

stopped curling around me when I slept. And never stopped making sure I was clean.

It became something therapeutic over the years. By the time we truly realized it was inappropriate, we'd decided that we'd done it for so long, it was just stupid to listen to the rest of the world at that point.

Besides, it was all my favorite things—someone's fingers were in my hair as they scrubbed my scalp while someone else massaged my entire body. Who doesn't love that?

"We booked our accommodations," Damon says, and I blink back into the present. Being with them, even like this, when I'm completely relaxed, isn't enough to send me into that cozy place that Professor Stommer does. That doesn't mean I'm not relaxed as fuck, but I hover just outside. Like I'm at the door looking in, but there's some barrier holding me here. "You sure you don't want to come?"

When I expressed wanting to stay home this spring break, they were ready to stay home with me. But I pushed and shoved because I *knew* they didn't want that. This was our last spring break. I knew they wanted to live it up.

Besides, there were places they wanted to go that I had no interest in. So when I told them I'm staying home this year, they booked one such place. An island that throws a gay party for an entire week. I'm a little unclear on the details, but it might be that the island itself is geared towards LGBT. They called it the 'gay party to end all,' so I was just going with gays.

"I'm not sure I'll appreciate my ass cheeks hanging out and my dick groped by random strangers in the same way you do," I say.

Both of them snort. Honestly, at any other time, I might have agreed to go with them. It wasn't like I had to do all the gay partying and hooking up. I could hang out in the cabana and on the beach. I'd be perfectly happy.

But I just need a break. I'm tired. My life has been a constant onslaught of 'I bet you didn't know this about

yourself' for the past two months!

"I don't know. I think you just haven't been groped right," Declan teases, nipping at my chin before he drops to wash my legs.

Rolling my eyes, I shrug. "I can assure you, that's not the case. I don't want to be felt up by strangers."

"We know," Damon says, his hands having moved to the base of my head. I'm nearly groaning. "We won't ever put you in a position where you feel pressured to hookup, Simon. We feel really bad about that."

"Don't," I say. "I didn't tell you and I should have."

"You don't mind coming tonight, though?" Declan asks.

The plan is to go to Stripes so the boys can choke on a dick before they leave in the morning. I kind of laughed at them because, hello, what do they plan to be doing at this gay party? Exchanging business cards?

"Nah," I say. "We can dance and then I'll have a drink at the bar until you get off."

Damon chuckles and I can feel him shaking his head. Declan stands and pulls the shower head from the holder. He sprays me down, beginning with my hair and then over the rest of my body. When I'm soap-free, they wash themselves and we get out.

Once, they used to dry and dress me, too. Apparently, that's where my depressed mind had drawn the line at some point. They could take my clothes off and wash me, but drying? Nope, that's something I was supposed to do. I still find it amusing, when I occasionally try to determine what I was thinking.

Then again, I still let it happen just like that. Okay, I'll admit that *this part* of our friendship might be crossing a line. It's not like they fondle me. Their touch isn't exactly business, it's familiarity. I'm sure they know my body as well as their own. Not once, ever, have they even hinted at trying something.



The way I've always thought of it is that it's just another aspect of them wanting to take care of me. Even my most basic of functions. Considering there were a few months when I was a kid that I couldn't find the motivation or care to do so and therefore they did, I'm not all that surprised.

In a lot of ways, it was my mental state at age ten that put us on this path and shaped our relationship. I wonder what it would look like if my mom hadn't died.

That's like the least of the top reasons I always wish my mom hadn't died. But there you go.

I step into jeans and a Longwood U tee-shirt and then watch the twins choose their clothing. Most of our clothes are all mixed together in one big dresser and closet. But there are a couple drawers that I just don't touch.

Like their jockstraps, which they each choose one of—Damon in red and Declan in purple. Then tiny shorts that are entirely transparent in the light. This time in opposite colors—Damon in purple and Declan in red. Their shirts are matching plain white crops and they slip into sneakers before turning to look at me.

I shake my head. Not that I'd ever thought to look, but now that they're standing in front of me and I've been recently introduced to the use of another man's dick, they might as well be breaking out of their shorts.

"You're really going out of here like that?" I ask.

They look at each other and their twin gazes track down the other's body as if they're looking for a reason I'm asking. I laugh, thinking about how ridiculous it is.

"Are we not hot?" Declan asks.

"Your junk is practically going to poke someone in the eye," I say.

He grins. "Thanks for noticing. Ready?"

Still laughing, I turn away and head for the door.

"We've worn this before," Damon says from behind me. "You've never given it a second look."

There isn't a reason for the sudden realization about what they put on. Or, in this case, what they don't. It's not that I'm *looking*. Hell, if that was the case, it would have been in the shower when they were completely naked. I'm just going to blame it on the fact that I've gotten well acquainted with a cock since we last went to the club in January and now I'm apparently noticing these things.

"You're not leaving anything to the imagination," I say as I head down the stairs with them behind me. "They're going to think they don't have to work for it."

"They don't," they say in unison, and I laugh.

We walk so we can drink what we want and not have to worry about driving. As soon as we're on flat, open ground, their hands take mine and we head down the street.

Since I spent the weekend at home a couple weeks ago and have been making a more conscious effort to split my time between them and Professor Stommer, we've found a more peaceful existence. I won't say it's back to what it's always been (we all know I have far too many secrets for that), but we're doing much better now.

It's easy again. Only when I leave or come back from work and it's on the tips of their tongues that they want to ask and demand some answers does it get a little rocky again. But we cuddle it out and reassure each other that everything is fine. We're fine. I'm fine.

Trust.

"Let's be real, though," Declan says, and I glance at him. "No one actually gets to touch my dick unless I want them to. I just want a fatty down my throat."

Damon nods and oddly enough, I find I am, too. I get that. Because I now understand, but I know for certain we like it for two different reasons. They find sexual pleasure in it. I find a very different kind of pleasure that has nothing to do with sex. For all intents and purposes, my dick is mostly stuck in the 'off' position.

Micah is at the door and though it's a Friday night, there isn't a long line. Probably because we're here pretty early. It's not even nine. Maybe they want multiple dicks tonight, so we need extra time?

With fewer bodies, the music seems overbearingly loud. I have a fleeting thought that I should have premedicated and taken some ibuprofen before we left the apartment. A headache is already blooming at the base of my neck.

They pull me to the dance floor immediately, and I barely catch a glimpse of the bar. A grin pulls at my lips because I recognize the shaggy blond hair of the man sitting at the end. Watching me with his intense light eyes. They almost glow like a storm in this lighting.

I turn away before the twins notice him. But their attention is on me as they tangle our bodies together and move us to the music. I'm more keenly aware of their cocks against me tonight, and I have to assume it's for the reasons I've been musing about all night. Never has another man's dick been of interest to me. Now that one is, it's almost like I've realized that other men have them, too.

Though I'm not at all surprised that I have no physical response to their rubbing and grinding and swaying against me, even as they start to stiffen, I half expect it to. I mean, if I were demisexual, all I need is an emotional attachment in order to feel sexual arousal with someone, right? Not that I think I'm demi, but that almost feels like less pressure. There's no one in the world I have a deeper emotional attachment to than Declan and Damon.

However, being demi isn't what I think of myself. I'm sure I'm just somewhere in the gray asexual range. Somewhere that I can get aroused under a very specific set of circumstances, otherwise I have no interest at all.

One of the things I've read is that sometimes the reason an asexual person engages in sexual behavior is so that they can connect with a partner. To share that intimate moment with them. Or just to satisfy them. The asexual person doesn't get

the same thing out of it as the other, but that doesn't mean they're not getting *something* out of it.

This is where the articles never expand, though. While I might be able to convince myself that I'm indeed *not* broken like I always thought I was, I can't find the kind of information I'm looking for. Why do I like to be touched in sexual ways when it's not about sex for me? Why do I want to be hurt and broken and bawling when I am being bred? Yes, that fucking word is hella exciting in my head.

Not exciting enough to get my dick up, but you know, not much is.

I bring myself back into the moment and find that there's nothing different in the way the twins are dancing with me than would normally be happening. If two months ago didn't happen and I didn't go off the rails in a parallel life. Except that we dance a lot longer than normal before they decide they're going to go find their dicks for the night.

The dance floor is packed now, so I move toward the bar. When I'm stopped by a man who wants to dance, I pause before I turn him away. My eyes are locked with Professor Stommer's and I flash him a smile, holding up a finger that I'll be there in a minute.

I dance with this stranger. While he's not overly handsy, I pay attention to my body more than the dance with him. I just want to see. I've only ever gone out to hookup with women. Maybe it is a gender thing and not an asexual thing.

Sure, I'm stretching. I know that.

When this man does nothing for me, I thank him and move on. I dance with four more men before I get to the bar. Professor Stommer is glaring hotly at me, his shoulders tense. He pushes a seltzer to me without a word.

Trying to fight the somewhat smug grin, I drink nearly the entire glass before shoving him back in the stool and maneuvering between his legs. After taking a quick look around to make sure I don't spot Declan or Damon anywhere, I lean in and kiss him hard.

His hands on me are punishing as he grips me. “Are you jealous?” I ask, my mouth at his ear.

He doesn’t answer.

“I promise, I had a purpose. I just wanted to see if... To see how my body reacted to other guys. I thought maybe it was just that I was convinced I was straight, but maybe I’m gay and didn’t know.”

He laughs. “It doesn’t work that way, Simon.”

I pull his hand from my hip and drop it to my dick. He grips me, his eyes blazing hotly as he looks into mine. “Soft,” I say. “Nothing. You’re officially the only one who really gets me hard. You know, sometimes.”

The sound he makes is like a growl. “How long until they’re done?”

Shrugging, I step out from between his legs and look around. “As long as we’re well hidden where they won’t look for me right away, you can fuck my throat.” I pause to look at him. “Hard.”

This time it is a growl as he grabs my hand and pulls me along. I go without resistance, grinning like a fool the entire way.

Twenty-Six

## SIMON



“WE CAN STAY,” Damon says, his hands in almost the exact spots and with the same harsh grip that Professor Stommer held my hips last night. There’s a strange parallel in it and yet, it feels so ridiculously different.

“No, you can’t. We’re almost twenty-three. I can handle a week alone,” I say. Though I’m not sure I can handle a week *sleeping* alone. I barely managed two days when we were fourteen. It was a kind of hell I just didn’t want to repeat. Yet, here we are.

“You really want to stay?” Declan asks, his mouth on my neck as if he’s going to give me a hickey. He’s not sucking or licking or anything. His mouth is just there, open and on my neck.

“Yes. I plan to do nothing and sleep. But you go, let your asses hang out and get a new dick down your throat every hour. Also, call me every day. Don’t miss a day or I’m going to report you missing. I’m not even slightly joking.”

Our goodbye lasts a lot longer than necessary. I finally watch Declan’s car pull away and then I drop onto the couch and flick on the television.

It takes only an hour to realize that there’s no fucking way I’m going to last a week alone in our apartment. It’s far too quiet. Even with the TV on. My fingers itch when there’s nobody against me. My ears start to ring without hearing their breathing or their voices.

It's taken me this long to realize that I'm very, very codependent. My hands are shaking when I jackknife into a sitting position and pick up my phone. I've never called before but I hit the dial button before I can think better of it.

"Simon," Professor Stommer's voice says. It's warm, sweet. Like he's happy to hear from me.

"They're gone and I'm alone," I say, breathless, looking around like the ghosts from my past are going to jump out and attack me. What the fuck is wrong here? "I don't know what to do."

"Easy, baby," he murmurs. "Want to come over?"

I sigh and am already at the door before I answer. "Yes. I'm leaving now."

Pretty sure I break like every traffic law I can on the way. I pull in and then stare at his door. Really? This is what my life has come to? I can't be alone for more than an hour without losing my shit? What was I even panicking over? What horrors from my past will pop up—my dead mother's ghost?

A chill races down my spine, and I practically run out of the car. *Please don't haunt me*, I beg in my head. Professor Stommer opens his door before I get there, and I barrel into him. His arms circle around me and he grips me tight.

There's a part of me that notes this is in no way different from how the twins were just holding me, so why does it *feel* so different?

"I might be haunted," I say.

He doesn't laugh. There's a slight nod of his head as he pulls me further inside and shuts his door. For a long time, he just holds me. When I finally take a breath and don't feel like I'm going to turn around and see my mother's ghost, I pull away.

Professor Stommer studies my face, and I can only imagine all the shit he's seeing. The words are on my tongue to tell him that I'm fucked up, but they die as he gets to his knee and pulls my sneaker off. It's only while he's doing this that I realize I put on two different ones. Idiot. What the fuck?



When he pulls me into the house, we stop in the kitchen for a couple bottles of water and then head back into the den. When we stop, I just start rambling. As if I need to get them off my chest or combust. And they don't stop.

"I'm dependent on them. They leave and I think there are ghosts watching me from corners. Why is it that I can't be alone? Why does it feel entirely different when you touch me than when they do, even when it's the exact same? How am I going to get through this week without them? I almost lost my sanity when I was forced to sleep alone for two nights when I was fourteen and I went to my grandparents without them!"

"Shh," Professor Stommer says, his hands on either side of my face as he looks at me. I'm shaking. Who knew I was such a fucking mess?!

As the silence stretches, I wonder if he's trying to figure out how to ask me to leave and cancel the contract without sending me off the deep end. This isn't what he signed up for. He wanted sex. And I'm a fucking mountain of weirdness.

He surprises me when he kisses me. It's deep with his tongue sweeping through my mouth and pulling my soul up with it. I can't breathe as I float there, the way he pours everything into me in such an absolute way, completely filling me without suffocating me. It's just... good. Warmth. Want.

"Do they kiss you like this?" he asks, his lips now dusting soft pecks all over my face.

"No," I whisper.

He brings his hands down and then up under my shirt, his calloused hands running smoothly over my skin and nipples before he pulls my shirt over my head. He gets to his knees and kisses down my body. It's soft and sweet, and while with someone normal it might be arousing, I just feel... seen. I'm sure, even as he undoes my pants and shoves them down my legs that he isn't trying to get sexual.

"Do they touch you like this?" he asks.

I shake my head. "No."

His tongue dips into my navel before his hand slides up the leg of my underwear to stroke my soft cock. He pulls the elastic of my underwear down. “Like this?” he asks as he takes the head of my dick between his lips and flicks his tongue over my slit.

“No,” I whisper.

He licks his fingers and brings his hand around the back of me, between my cheeks, and then pushes two into my ass. I hiss, my body clenching with the sting and pain of it.

“Like this, Simon? Do they touch you like this?”

“No,” I say, voice shaking. I suddenly need more. Tears sting my eyes. Every muscle in my body is tight and a desperate animal whine sits in the back of my throat. I need to feel something besides this overwhelming sense that I’m failing. That I’m so fucking broken I can’t even tell the difference between touch.

Professor Stommer stands and kisses me. “Get the lube, baby.”

I nod and stumble to the drawer, tears blurring my vision. Why do I want to be hurting right now? Am I so numb that I need the pain to feel anything?

When I have it in hand, I turn to find he’s stripped down, too. “I want to cry,” I say. “Make me cry, Quin.”

He takes a breath and brings me closer. I watch as he coats two fingers and then instructs me to put my leg on the edge of the couch bed thing. I do. His fingers are hard when he pushes them inside me. There’s no ease. Nothing gentle. But his eyes never leave my face, waiting for me to tell him it’s too much.

It’s never too much. It’s never enough.

When he’s got enough lube inside me, he brings me up the couch while stroking himself until he’s covered in lube. But he sits and then pulls me into his lap, my back against his chest. “We’re going to try something, Simon. Okay?”

“But I want—”

“I know. I’ll give you what you want. Ready?”

I nod frantically, and he shifts my body so his cockhead is at my hole. He breaches the tight ring and I whine a little, my hips wiggling on their own.

“Ready?” he repeats.

“Yes.”

He pulls my body down with his hands on my hips at the same moment he thrusts his hips up and he invades me in one harsh thrust until he’s buried deep. I cry out, my body spasming with the invasive pain, even as my head spins and my world tries to settle around it.

But he doesn’t move after that. He takes my hands that can’t settle and crosses them over my chest, where he hugs me tightly to him. Keeping me absolutely still.

“You feel me?” he asks, voice deep and husky. “Feel me inside you. Stretching you painfully. More than your perfect, small, tight hole can take. You feel that?”

I’m sobbing and it feels good. Like the pressure inside me just released. I nod frantically because I feel all that. I feel the throbbing pain that isn’t quite turning into a dull background reminder as I think it should from sitting still. More than that, I feel the way he’s holding me. Like I’m safe and he won’t let me go. He won’t let me hurt alone.

Quin lets me cry for so long that I run out of tears. Then I’m just a trembling mess.

“You want to know why this feels so different?” he asks, his voice quiet at my ear. “Why when I hug you like they do it’s a very different feeling or when I kiss you lightly, it means something other than what it does with them? Do you want to know why you want sexual touch but not release?”

I nod. “Yes,” I pant. I imagine his answer is going to have something to do with the cozy place inside me. Declan and Damon can’t get me there. Only Quin.

“Because this is a kind of intimacy that you don’t share with your twins, Simon. Your relationship has normalized what intimate means to most people. That’s common for you in your everyday life and has been for years. You share a very

beautiful, unique, and amazing friendship with Damon and Declan. But what you're getting with me, when I touch you." He moves his hand to my cock and gently rubs his hand over it. I would probably purr if that was a function I had. "This isn't something you share with them. And it's not something you want to share with them."

"Why do I like it when you make me cry?" I whisper. "Why do I want you to hurt me?"

"I'm not a psychologist, so my hypotheses are just that—complete and total guesses. But I think because they keep you in a bubble of complete safety and protection, you don't have to feel anything with them at all. You want to cry because you've locked away anything personal about yourself and just live in a way you don't have to feel anything. I make you feel."

"It's not normal to want to cry. Or to want sex things without sex. Why am I like this?"

"You're exactly normal, Simon. There's nothing wrong with you. Just because you're built differently doesn't mean you're not normal. Maybe you want to cry because you're overwhelmed by everything you're finally allowing yourself to feel and explore. I'm guessing the relief of finally releasing some of that stress and pressure feels good. As for sex without sex?" He pauses, his hand still resting on my soft dick. "I think it goes back to intimacy. You've already told me you like being touched. Patted. Hugged and cuddled. This is a more intimate version of that, no? You want to feel the connection and I don't put pressure on you that you need to be involved in a way you're not comfortable with."

"Does it bother you?" I ask. "That I don't enjoy it like you do? Does it feel like you're fucking a corpse?"

He laughs and his arms tighten around me, his hand moving away from my cock so he can squeeze me more effectively. It should hurt. It might, but his stupidly long, fat, and throbbing cock in my ass is still the first and most focused point of pain in my body.

“My concern is always hurting you too much, baby,” he murmurs, brushing a kiss over my skin. “And you do like it; just in a different way. Or did I misunderstand that?”

I shake my head. “I do like it. I like when you use me for your pleasure and fill me and hurt me. I like when you make me cry. I like the things you say to me. Dirty and sometimes forceful, but also... nice. Sweet. And then I like it when you clean me up after. I like when you take care of me when I’m in the cozy place. I like it, but I don’t like it like you do.”

“You like it the same way I do. I love all those things, Simon. Everything. I’m thirty-eight. Did you know that?”

I shake my head.

“I thought I knew everything about myself and what I liked sexually. You came sauntering into my classroom and turned my entire life upside down. I had no idea I liked these things. That I’d live to make you cry. To breed you until you’re so full of my cum that it drips for days. More than anything, I love that you trust me with all your soft, vulnerable parts and allow me to be the one to help you through them.”

My tears have stopped, but I’m not sure I want to be done crying yet. I’m still very aware of his dick inside me. The initial pain is gone, but now it’s settling into a deep ache. It’s so big. So hard. My body doesn’t want to just *get used to it*.

It hurts.

I don’t want it to stop.

Quin shifts us so we’re laying and curls me into a ball. It feels like he somehow wedges his dick in deeper and it forces my body to find a new well of tears that slip down my cheeks at that new jolt of pain.

“Are you going to fuck me now?” I ask, voice shaking.

“No,” he says, kissing the back of my neck. “You’re going to lay perfectly still and let me hold you down while I keep my cock so far in your ass you can feel it pressed against your diaphragm. You’re going to cry if you need to and we’re going to continue to talk if you need to. But you won’t do anything else but feel the pain my big dick gives you. Understand?”

I nod, squeezing my eyes shut. “Quin?” I whisper.

“Mm?”

“I kinda like that I don’t get off when you do. It’s not like the twins when they get off with being used. I don’t get off. But you do. I really like that.”

He sighs and curls himself tighter around me still. It shouldn’t be comfortable. Maybe it’s not. But I’m too aware of what’s painfully in my ass to feel any other aches or pains.

“I do, too,” he admits after a few minutes. Then he laughs quietly. “It’s weird learning things about yourself when you’re this old.”

“You’re not that old.”

“No, but I’m not exactly a blushing virgin, either. I’ve had my fair share of sex.” He pauses. “Nothing like this, though. You’ve ruined me for anyone else, Simon.”

That makes my heart skip.

“When you’re done punishing my ass, will you fuck my mouth?”

He groans, his hips rocking into me a little. I catch my breath and shudder. “You okay?” he asks instead of answering.

“Green,” I assure him. “I need this. It... Well, it doesn’t feel good in the traditional sense of the word, but I feel it. Everywhere.”

*That feels good.*

Twenty-Seven

## QUINLAN



SIMON HAS BEEN HERE for the last three days. I've already come to the conclusion that we've broken so many fucking rules in our contract that I'm not sure it even matters at this rate. I could tell when he mentioned something in the contract yesterday that he knew the same thing I did.

I'm not sure where he is emotionally concerning me, and maybe it's wishful thinking, but I think he feels something, too. Not only are we in breach of the part where we tell each other immediately when one of us feels anything that can be considered normal in a traditional romantic relationship, but that's also the triggering event that would end the contract.

I'm confident we haven't brought it up because neither of us wants it to end. We don't want to stop.

A part of me is concerned that once Simon figures out all the little places in his mind and sexuality that he'll be fine to move on. He might remember me after this in a 'it's because of him I found myself' kind of way. But he'll graduate and move on.

Whereas what I told him Saturday when he got here was the absolute truth. He's ruined me for anyone else. Sex aside, I want Simon in the worst damn way. I want him to be mine, without the contract. For him to want me like I do him. I want to love him and be loved by him.

There are still four months left. Four months until the end of the contract. Two until he graduates. Because I have



summers off, I can go wherever he is and we can continue until the termination date.

But the idea of coming back here without him... that's rough.

We're sitting in the kitchen as he talks to Damon and Declan. They're apparently at a gay resort or island or something. Simon says he made them promise to call every day, but they've taken that demand to a different level. They call no less than five times a day.

I can see how much Simon misses them. His excitement to hear their voices when they call isn't fake. There's no fabrication in his emotions concerning them.

It leaves me wondering. If he's this blind and naïve concerning their feelings about him, is it possible that he doesn't recognize his feelings for them?

Simon isn't stupid. He's actually very intelligent. But when it comes to being self-aware... not so much. I really do think he shut down after his mother died and his father drank himself into a stupor. He locked away anything that hurt, anything that upset him, and threw away the key.

When I propositioned him with a sex contract, it forced him to look at the aspects of himself that he was aware of though didn't understand. For someone with two gay best friends, I would have thought he'd be much more aware of the LGBT world at large. I'm also chalking that up to wanting to remain blissfully unaware.

Until I shoved it in his face and unwittingly forced him to deal with it.

These last few days have been really amazing. Going to sleep with him in my arms every night. Waking up to his quiet snores in the morning with his face pressed into my neck.

Once, I might have thought a Sugar Baby situation would have involved a sleepover filled with nothing but sex. But I've only gotten off with him once. And that's including the showers we've taken together.

I love to just spend time with him. The way he feels pressed against me. How he looks at me. His smiles are for me alone. Besides his phone calls with the twins, he's been completely mine.

Sex with Simon is amazing, but living with him like this is—the comfort and ease and trust—it's... everything. It's like he's always been here. Like the little hole in my life that I didn't know was there, was Simon shaped. He slid right in.

I refuse to think of what it might mean when we're over. More than that, I refuse to imagine that he doesn't feel at least a little of what I do. I reason that he's still young. He's barely in his twenties.

Almost as soon as Simon hangs up his phone, mine rings. He looks at it, amused. It's Vulcan, so I answer.

“Quinny, you're on break this week, right?” he greets before I can even say hello.

Chuckling, I nod. “Yeah. Why?”

“Want to go to Latimor Chasm for a few days?” The excitement in his voice is hard to miss. “We can stay in a yurt and do all the things!”

I look at Simon. He's watching me with a smile. There's no doubt that he can hear Vulcan. “Simon's here,” I say. How do I tell him I was planning to spend the week with Simon?

“Oh,” Vulcan says. I feel bad, but before I can say anything further, he comes back just as enthusiastically. “Bring Simon! It'll be so much fun.”

Meeting Simon's eyes, I raise a brow. “What's a yurt?” he asks. “What's at this place?”

“It's a glammed up tent but, like, luxury,” Vulcan says, and I put him on speaker so he doesn't have to yell in my ear. Not that he had to. Simon could hear him just fine. “And the chasm is this long river that's eaten its way through a mountain. There are hiking trails, adventure trails, white-water rafting and tubing and rappelling. It's a lot of fun. Q and I used to go in college.”

Simon nods with a smile. “Yeah, that sounds great. But it’s okay if just the two of you want to go. I don’t need—”

“Don’t be ridiculous,” Vulcan says before I can argue. I might as well not be here. It only makes me smile. “You have to come. Have you ever been?”

“No,” Simon says. “I’ve never heard of it.”

“Oh, you’re going. I’ve already booked us a yurt with bunks. Be there tonight by five. I have dinner reservations at six. Pack for three nights.” The line goes dead. I blink at my phone for a few seconds before looking at Simon’s wide but amused eyes.

“He doesn’t take no for an answer,” Simon muses.

I reach across the counter and bring his face to mine so I can kiss him. As long as I have him, I will never just peck his lips. I need to taste this man until I can still recall his flavor years later.

“Before you try to back out gracefully, thinking you’re intruding, I want you to come. I don’t want to spend a minute of this break without you. Also, if you try to send me without you, trust that Vulcan will show up on your doorstep and literally throw you over his shoulder, completely unconcerned if he flashes anyone in doing so. He’s quite proud of the tree trunk that hangs between his legs.”

“Bigger than yours?” he teases.

I laugh and kiss him again. “Yes. Fucking. Massive. He’s downright terrifying when he’s hard.”

Simon tilts his head and I know what his question is.

“We were college buddies. He was the first openly gay man I met, and we hung out a lot. We crashed in each other’s dorms a lot. That meant I had ample opportunity to see that man hard. Trust me. Enormous. It has no business being real.”

He chuckles. “Another reason Dec and Damon would love him. Size queens don’t come close to describing them. If it doesn’t choke them, they don’t even bother telling me.”

“I’m suddenly very curious. Do they share their hookups?”  
I ask.

Simon grins. “Half the time, yeah. I think it depends on how hard up they are.”

“They really share all the gory details with you, don’t they?”

He laughs and nods. “Yeah. Probably why I don’t have any hesitation talking about anything. Everything between us has always been so open that it feels unnatural to live any other way.”

“That’s not a bad way to live.” I pull back and finish making the sandwiches. “So I don’t need to convince you that you’re coming with me and V?”

Simon’s smile fades a little, though it doesn’t fall away completely. “No. If only for selfish reasons, I really don’t think I can spend three nights alone.” A haunted look crossed his face.

“Can I ask you something?”

He faces me again, and his typical flirty smile is back. “Yes.”

“You sleep with the twins?”

His grin widens. “Yes.” He puts his elbow on the counter and his chin in his palm. “You want to know what our friendship looks like behind closed doors? I’ll tell you.”

Do I? Curiosity makes me nod.

“For starters, we’re never dressed. Underwear is our only option. There’s never a moment when one of them isn’t touching me. Usually it’s very, very close, too. I’m in one of their laps or we’re twisted together in some dog pile as we watch television. Even when we eat, we’re basically right on top of each other. We shower together—they wash me. We sleep together; it’s a twin sandwich. So, yeah... everything you see in public is compounded in private.”

My hands pause as I look at him.

“Oh, there’s no breach of our contract, though. Exclusivity.” He waves. “Maybe hard to believe given what I just described, but it’s not sexual.”

“At all? Ever?” I find myself asking. Then I wince. Jesus.

Thankfully, Simon’s grinning widely as he shakes his head. “No. It’s not like that. This is just how we’ve always been. Always. Since we were kids.”

“You always showered together? Slept together? The underwear thing?” I ask, brow raised.

He laughs again, while nodding. “Yes. Although their parents demanded clothing once we hit our teens, which was wise of them. Those two are always half hard. Talk about awkward family time.”

I snort and go back to preparing our lunch. A glance at the clock that says we need to leave in a couple hours to make Vulcan’s demanded time.

“Does it bother you?” Simon asks. I look up at him, thinking I missed part of the question as I’m calculating travel time. “Now that you know the truth of what our friendship is, do you still think it’s beautiful?”

I’m not sure why, but my heart stutters at the way he asked. His tone? Or the uneasy look in his eyes?

I screw the cover back on the mayonnaise and round the counter as I wipe my hands on the kitchen towel. Pulling him into my chest, I kiss him languidly until he relaxes in my arms. There are a few ways I’ve found to get Simon to lose his tension, but a thorough kissing usually works quickest. I like to think it’s because he can feel every emotion inside me as I pour it into him through our kiss.

Our kiss is drawn out longer than I intend it to because the words ‘I love you’ are on the tip of my tongue. Yep, I’ve completely annihilated our contract with my feelings. Whatever.

So I keep kissing him until I’m reasonably convinced that the first thing I say when I pull our lips apart isn’t a declaration of love. “No, it doesn’t bother me and yes, I still

think it's beautiful," I tell him. "Simon, do you have any idea how incredible you are? There's not a fucking thing wrong with you or your friendship. Nothing. Yes, it's still beautiful that you three are so close that you can share all those moments together. That's a bond unlike any other and you shouldn't be ashamed of it."

"I'm not," he says. "I just get tired of defending it."

"Then don't. Let people think whatever the fuck they want. It's not hurting you or them."

He stares into my eyes for a long minute before saying, "I wonder if you'd still feel that way if you saw it."

"I've seen you three dance," I say, brushing my thumb over his lip. "That's downright raunchy."

Simon laughs, and I let him go. I finish our sandwiches and push one towards him, before taking a seat next to him. We eat quietly for a while before he leans into my side. I shift my sandwich into the other hand so I can wrap my arm around his waist and pull him closer with my foot curled up under the rung of his stool.

"You'd think I was touch starved," he mutters as he leans into me with a sigh.

"You're not," I say, agreeing. "You just need a constant reminder that you're wanted."

He nods and chews. There's a pause before he takes another bite. When he looks at me, I can't read the expression on his face. "Do you want me, Quin?"

I'm not sure when he switched over to using my name, but Jesus does it fuck with me. Everything in me turns on and melts at the same time.

"More than I should say," I tell him.

"Say anyway," he says in a whisper.

Licking my lips, I set my sandwich down and twist in my chair until he's between my legs. I make sure our eyes are locked. Am I going to tell him? My heart races.

“I’ve never been so in love with someone,” I whisper as quietly as he had. His breath catches. His lips part and I stare for just a second before looking into his wide eyes again.

“You love me?” he asks.

Fuck. Fuck, fuck, fuck.

“Yes.”

Fuck!

“Say it,” he says, voice breathless.

“I love you, Simon Everett.”

He shivers and I’m not sure if it’s a good sign or not when his eyes get glassy. I can’t breathe. Is he going to walk out?

Simon forces out a breath and then takes another deep one. “Is it okay if I don’t say it back?”

I pull him closer because I can’t stop myself. “I definitely don’t want you to lie to me. Not about anything, but definitely not about this.”

His face is in my neck, one of the places I love it the most. He brushes his nose against my skin. I can barely hear anything over how loudly my heart is beating. I don’t know what’s happening right now. What if—

“It’s not that I don’t,” he says quietly, “but I’m so lost in everything inside me that I’m... not ready to say it. Is that okay?”

Does that mean? Does he?

“Yeah,” I answer and hug him tighter. For me, this time. Not for him.

Simon climbs into my lap and wraps himself around me. “Can we forget the contract?” he whispers. “And just be together?”

Fuck.

“Simon, I—” Jesus fucking motherfucking fuck. “Yes. You have no fucking idea how badly I want that, but... we’re still keeping the contract.”

“Why? I thought—”

I push him back so I can look at him and, sure enough, I see his insecurity. So I kiss him until he relaxes again. “I love you. I mean that. The words aren’t fucking strong enough or expressive enough to really tell you how messed up I am for you, Simon. But I need you to think about something.” He swallows and nods. “You graduate in two months. What then?”

His lips part with shallow breaths. “I-I don’t know.”

When his eyes start to close, I say, “Look at me, baby.” He does. His responsiveness to me, the way he obeys my every request without hesitation or question... this man is fucking perfect. *I want him more than I want to breathe.* “If you really want to talk about a relationship beyond the contract, we will. Do not doubt for a fucking second that I don’t want that. I will do anything to keep you.” The smile he gives me is small, but I can see that he believes me in that expression. That’s enough for now. “But there are a lot of things to talk about and we need to be aware it... it might not work.”

He frowns. “Because of my beautiful relationship with Declan and Damon?” The deadpan way he asks makes me laugh. I kiss him until we’re both breathless.

“No, not for the reason you’re asking. But yes, because they’ve made it very clear that they don’t like me. That’s a lot of stress on you. However, even bigger than that is graduation, Simon. What happens after graduation?”

A flurry of emotion skitters across his face before he bows his head. I don’t think it’s in defeat. Not really. But I can almost *feel* the weight of this settling on his shoulders. Gently, I pull his face up to look at me. “My sweet sugar baby,” I murmur, earning myself a smirk. “This isn’t a problem for you to deal with on your own. If you really want to be with me, we will do everything we can to make it work. We will. Together. You don’t carry around this shit on your own anymore. Understand me?”

“I like when you call me that,” he says, cheeks flushed.



“Good. Now answer me.”

“Yes. We will figure it out together.”

I hug him to me once more, pressing his face into my neck. I barely hear him when he says, “I never want this to end, Quin. Keep me forever. Please.”

Fuck.

Twenty-Eight

## QUINLAN



WHILE I'D INTENDED for this arrangement to be all the sex I could manage before the contract ended, things obviously changed. Not just because of his sexuality, but because we grew into something I hadn't even imagined possible.

It's not that I didn't know I'd fall for him. I was naïve to think any other outcome was possible. No, it's that I didn't think that Simon could fall for me. That wasn't a conclusion I'd come to. I hadn't even entertained the idea.

But fuck, I was loving every little fucking moment with this man.

The three days with Vulcan were amazing. While Vulcan kept us busy and always entertained, he also gave us some alone time. Not long enough to fuck, but time where we'd just cuddle together and talk quietly.

I think I love that more than sex. Who knew?!

However, by the time the three days were over and considering we'd not really fucked at all the few days before that, I'm ravenous and Simon's needy by the time we step into his apartment on Thursday afternoon.

He needs more clothes and wants to pick up his books. I argued the clothes part since I have a washer and dryer and they work perfectly fine. But Simon said he really just wanted to get clean ones and save the chores until he went home Sunday when the twins were due to return.

I'm surprised by the space I walk into. It's clean, which is a bit uncommon for college kids. There isn't any clutter on the

surfaces. No crumbs or dirt. The bedding on the bed looks freshly laundered. Hell, even their bedroom, filled to the brim, is neat.

“I know you told me you share a bed, but I didn’t realize you share a room,” I say when I realize the second room is empty except for a bed, a chair that looks stiff and unused, and a single table with a lamp.

Simon stands in the door to the second room and shrugs. I can see that he’s a little uneasy about this conversation. He’s waiting for what he’s always experienced. Jealousy. Anger. An ultimatum.

“Realistically, it just makes more sense. We’re always going to share a bed, so it seemed stupid to set up bedrooms like we were going to pretend. Besides, it’s just the three of us here. Who do we need to pretend for?”

“You don’t ever have company?” I ask, sitting on the bed. It feels comfortable.

“Their mom stops by. Their parents don’t live far. I think the guest room is a little unnecessary since no one ever spends the night. We don’t have people in our lives like that,” he says.

“Come here, Simon,” I say. He does, kicking the door shut behind him. Not what I meant, but that’s fine. I really want to get him home so I can take care of us both.

He climbs into my lap and wraps around me, sighing into my neck. I slip my hands under his shirt and rub his back until he relaxes. “I’m not judging you, baby,” I whisper. “Not at all. I’m just asking.”

He sighs. “They don’t have relationships,” he says, shrugging. “And I gave up on relationships since girls are infinitely jealous, no matter how many times you tell them you’re not screwing your best friends. You know, straight and all that.” Simon huffs laughter. “Now that seems like a weak lie.”

“I don’t think it’s a lie at all. I’m a firm believer of falling for someone as a person, not as a gender first. Besides, you still look at girls and are pretty oblivious to guys.”

He sits back, brows raised adorably. “Really?”

I laugh and kiss his jaw. “Yep. You enjoyed all the women at the chasm in tiny swimwear. You didn’t notice a single man and what they were wearing. And I promise you, there were plenty of hot guys to look at—they kept V and I well entertained.”

Simon laughs and leans into me again. “Yeah, I guess I didn’t notice that. I *did* see what you and V wore, though. You because you’re you. You’re mine. And I like what you have. V? He’s a little hard to miss. I swear, he’s got like an entire tree between his legs and those tiny ass bathing suits he wore barely contained him.”

“He’s going to love that you noticed.” I laugh.

He sighs and scoots further into my lap. “Fuck me?” he whispers.

I shiver, my hands drop to his ass and I dig my fingers in. “Hurry and get your things so we can go.”

Simon shakes his head. “I don’t want to wait. It’s been days! I need you to break me right now.”

A groan slips from my throat before I can stop it. “Lube,” I say.

He shrugs. “Spit, Quin. Just fuck me.”

Sliding my hand around, I know what I’m going to find, but I need to see exactly what mood he’s in. His neediness doesn’t change whether he’s sexually interested (which has only ever happened the two times) or his needs are sex irrelevant.

Simon pushes his soft crotch into my hand while I cup him. As I suspect. My sweet, asexual man. Fuck, I love him.

“Undress,” I tell him.

He scrambles from my lap and starts stripping down as quickly as he can. I’m no different. My dick hurts, it’s so hard. “I need to fill you so fucking full,” I say.

His eyes light up. “Breed me, Quin.”

Jesus fuck, the need in his voice has me nearly coming right then. He falls to the bed, pressing his face into the pillow. I follow him down, burying my face between his cheeks and lick him, spearing his tight hole with my tongue, and sucking every bit of him I can reach.

He's fucking delicious. As are his desperate sounds.

"I want to cry," he whimpers.

I ignore him for a minute, and work on getting him filled with spit. Stuffing my finger into his tight body and working it in while trying to work up enough to coat my dick, too.

"This isn't enough," I tell him and look around the room as if a tube of lube is going to jump out at me or fall from the ceiling.

"It's exactly right," he says. "Hurt me."

I hate the excitement his words fill me with. When I'm as sure as I can be that I'm not *actually* going to hurt him, I roll him until he's on his back and press inside him before my spit dries.

His whine is a slow jolt down my spine that travels right to the tip of my dick.

"Hurry," he says, breathless.

Gripping his hands and pressing his face into my neck, I give a purposeful thrust of my hips. He cries out, his body jerking beneath me. Pulling back, I do it again. Now he's starting to cry. His body trembling. A third time and I'm buried to my balls as he writhes under me.

His sobs in my ear make me tingle with need. "You like my big dick inside you?"

Simon nods. His tears soaking my shoulder. "Harder. I need to fall apart, Quin. Please."

I give him what he wants. Wrapping myself around him and holding him like he's in a straightjacket beneath me with nowhere to go, I fuck him with every pent up desperate need inside me. His cries don't stop. His sobs fill my head as his body wracks beneath me.

He feels so fucking good, my head spins. Between the squeeze of him, the slapping of our bodies filling the empty room, and the broken sounds he makes, I'm lost in a whirl of pleasure. "You're so small," I groan. "How are you always so tight?"

Simon doesn't answer, but I don't expect him to.

"Am I hurting you, baby?"

"Yes," he hiccups. "I need more."

I shift us and give him what he wants. This position finally has him crying out with every hard, deep thrust I make. Slamming into his prostate and making him shake as he sobs. Begs. Tells me how much it hurts and not to stop until I tear him apart.

Only when he finally starts slipping into subspace, do I let myself come. It's hard and I have to bite his shoulder to keep from shouting. I swear, I see heaven for a split second. It feels just like this.

I'm sweating. Shaking. Holding him in my arms as he sighs contentedly, no longer bawling, though I'm sure his face is still red and blotchy and covered in tears. "So beautiful like this," I say between pants. "Just for me. Only for me, Simon."

He hums a little, an adorable little noise that tells me he's completely content now. I answered the need inside him to feel something real. To hurt him.

For a long time, I just hold him. Until there's a noise from the other side of the door and everything in me freezes. I imagined that, right? It's Thursday. No one should be here.

Laying perfectly still, I try to force my breathing and my heart to calm the fuck down so my blood isn't rushing in my years. A thud makes me jump and dread fills my chest. Fuck.

Fuck. Fuck. Fuck. Fuck.

I shift in the bed and look down at my pretty man. His face is always the same in this state. Eyes slitted and lips parted with the barest hint of a smile. Every single muscle in his body

is relaxed. I gently brush the tears from his face. His skin is mostly dry now, but I touch him softly anyway.

A cabinet door slams, and I wince. Fucking motherfucker.

“Simon,” I whisper. I’ve never tried to pull him out of this place before. I hate having to now. “Baby, I need you to come back. I... think the twins are home.”

He murmurs and I continue to whisper to him, encouraging him to come back to me. I didn’t think I was getting anywhere until another thump sounds outside the door and Simon jolts. His heart is suddenly going a thousand miles an hour.

“I think they’re home,” I whisper.

“No.” He sits and winces before rubbing his hands over his head. The television turns on, the volume way too loud before it gets turned down. “No,” he whines.

“Come on,” I urge, pulling him from the bed. I hand him his underwear and he makes a face as he slips them on. “Did I hurt you?”

I’m not sure he hears me as he slowly moves into them. When he’s upright and I’m back in my pants, Simon looks at me and smiles. “In the exact way I wanted, yes.” His arms wrap around his middle for a minute. He’s nervous.

Hell, I am, too.

“What do you need?” I ask.

“To have listened to you and just gone to your house,” he says with a sigh. “Did they say they were coming home early when we spoke last?”

I shake my head. No. They conveniently left that part out.

When I have my clothes back on, but Simon is still just in his underwear, he opens the door. Sure enough, the twins are home. They’re sitting on the couch, but their gazes are locked on the door we were behind.

There’s no question as to their mood. I’ve never seen someone look at me with such vehemence before. Not even as a kid with the homophobes who ribbed me or beat the fuck out



of me. No one has ever looked at me the way the twins are right now.

Then their eyes move to Simon.

Simon takes a step back, his back hitting my chest. I want to touch him. To reassure him. But I have a sickening feeling that if I lay a hand on him right now, Declan and Damon are going to lose their minds.

“It’s alright,” I whisper. “I’m right here.”

There’s no hiding what we were doing. None at all. Simon looks like he was just fucked six ways to Sunday. His hair is sticking up with dried sweat. His body is bruising in various spots. His face is still red-tinged, as are his eyes. And also puffy from crying. To make it worse, I’m pretty sure I see a trail of cum dripping down his leg.

Fuck. Me. Sideways.

“You’re home early,” Simon says.

I’d have laughed at the exact simultaneous expressions that cover the twins’ faces under different circumstances. It’s like they’re one fucking person in two bodies. It’s eerie and entertaining. Also a little terrifying.

“You failed to tell us you had company,” one says.

Simon sighs. He brings both hands up and wipes his face. “I have company,” he says quietly.

“Thanks,” they say together. I wince at their tone.

“Tell them,” I say.

Simon swallows, his shoulders stiff. I *just* worked all that out of him, for fuck’s sake.

“It’s not what you think,” he says.

“I think you were just fucking a man—a fucking professor—in our spare room,” one says. “Is that not what was happening?”

“Before you answer, you should know that the evidence of that is dripping down your leg,” the other says.

Simon looks down and I don't miss the small smile before it vanishes.

"When were you going to tell us you're not as straight as you pretend to be?" one asks.

Simon sighs in exasperation. "I'm not gay," he snaps. "I entered into a contract with Quin."

"This is your fucking job?" one bursts loud enough that I jump. He's on his feet and storming across the room. He pulls Simon to him and away from me. Far away. Until they're across the room. The second twin stands between us, looking at me like he might murder me.

"Yes?" Simon says as if he's unsure.

"You're really that desperate for money that you're fucking a professor in exchange?"

"It's not... yes but no. I'm not... desperate." He's flustered. His words aren't sure. There's far too much hesitation. My hands ache to get him from between them. They're making him stressed.

The one acting as a barrier between us turns to face him.

"What's the deal here? Sex in exchange for money? Is that what this is?"

"We have a contract," Simon says quietly.

"Fucking hell, Simon. What's wrong with you? That's not safe!"

"It's safe. We're safe."

"Really? Because unless he creamed all over your back, I don't think you used a fucking condom," the twin holding him hostage snaps.

Simon winces, his shoulders curling in. He doesn't answer. He doesn't explain about the tests and our exclusivity clause. My hands fist in irritation. This *is not* the relationship that Simon tells me about. This is ugly possession.

"Declan's been in love with you for fucking years and you're selling your goddamn body? To a fucking man? You're

so fucking desperate to be your own person that you... you..."

Apparently, the barrier twin is Damon. I'm glad to have the identifier, anyway.

"I... what?"

"It's a contract, right?" Declan says.

Simon nods, his eyes darting between the two.

"So it's just sex? You can end the contract now. It's just sex for money. Yeah?" Damon asks.

Simon doesn't hide the way his face contorts in misery. He looks beyond Damon to meet my eyes. A pleading in them that rips through my chest almost has me storming over there. When his mouth opens to speak and nothing comes out, I lose my patience with these assholes.

Twenty-Nine

## SIMON



*“IT’S JUST SEX.”*

Nothing is just sex to me. I don’t like sex. This is a lot different. But how do I say that? How do I tell them...?

Tears sting my eyes and not in the way I like. I haven’t cried so much since my mother died. I hate every part of this moment. Being caught and forced to tell them when I’m not ready. I hate that I either explain myself now, all of me, or this is going to end really fucking badly. I hate the way they are looking at me.

Disappointment. Horror. So much freaking anger, I can feel it.

It hurts. It’s the kind of hurt that has the ability to erase all the good ways my body hurts right now.

*They’re mad at me.*

I can’t take a breath. I can’t do anything but watch my world come crashing down around me. They hate me. They’re going to want me to leave.

“What the hell is wrong with you?”

I jump at Quin’s words. Damon spins around, but Quin is there, pulling me from Declan’s hands. It’s only because the twins are so stunned that they let it happen.

Quin pulls me down the island and lifts me onto a stool. His cool hands on my face have me looking up into his eyes. “Take a breath, Simon. Breathe for me.”

It's only his words that remind my lungs how to function. My eyes close and a tear slips out. His calloused thumb brushes it away.

"It's okay," he says quietly. "Keep breathing. I'm going to get you a drink. I'll be right back, alright?"

No. NO!

"Quin," I whimper. My world is on fire.

"Shh," he hums against my forehead, pressing his lips into my hot skin. He doesn't leave to get me a drink, but stands between my legs and pulls me into his chest. "Just breathe, Simon. You're all right. Everything is fine."

It's not. He's so very wrong, though I don't even have the strength to tell him so. Maybe he'll just steal me away, so I don't have to face them right now.

"You know," Quin says, and I hold in my shaky breath to listen to what he's telling me. "You two are a real piece of fucking work. Simon has never said anything other than you're his goddamn world and *this* is how you fucking treat him?"

Oh. He's not talking to me. That's good. If he did in that tone, I'm pretty sure that would be my complete and total undoing right now. Why am I so weak? Where did the person go who didn't care about anything? The one who just wanted to graduate and move away. Far from his childhood and into a life that was simple.

Free from memories that hurt.

"Don't pretend you know us," Damon says.

"I don't need to know you, jackass. I was under the impression that you know Simon better than he knows himself and yet you're sending him right into a fucking anxiety attack with no fucking care for him at all," Quin snaps. "Did you even notice? Or are you too concerned with how he's living his life in a way you don't approve of to pay attention to how you're treating him?"

Silence. They don't speak.

“Breath,” Quin says, and I realize that time he’s talking to me. I suck in a breath.

“Simon doesn’t have anxiety,” Declan says warily.

“No,” Quin agrees. “And yet, here we are.”

More silence settles around us. It lingers long enough that I feel stable again and sit back. Quin moves my face back to his, then he thoroughly looks me over. “Can I get you a drink now?” he asks gently.

I nod.

I don’t look at the twins as he leaves me. The fridge opens behind me, then closes. A few seconds later, he’s back in front of me with a blue sports drink. After opening it, he hands it to me. I’m so thirsty, I drink nearly the whole thing. Quin caps it and sets it on the counter.

Only then do I look at Declan and Damon. They’re watching us like we’re prey. I inhale deeply and let it out after a beat.

“I’m going to go,” Quin says, and I look up at him. “I’ll be back tomorrow to pick you up for breakfast. All right?” I nod. “Unless you need me sooner, then just call. I’ll be right here. Promise.”

Swallowing, I nod again. He kisses me. Just like every other time he does, it’s not quick. His kiss is deep and sweet, filled with all the love he says he has for me. He kisses me until I relax into his arms.

He doesn’t say the words as he stares into my eyes after. But he doesn’t need to. I can see them shining back at me. I nod and try to smile.

“Call me if you need anything,” he says.

“Okay,” I answer.

I watch him walk away, slip into his shoes, and pause at the door to look at me. I know he’ll stay if I ask him to. He’ll take me with him if I ask him to. There’s a really loud part of me that wants one of those things, though I’m not sure which.

But I let him go with a smile. He nods again and steps out the door, shutting it quietly behind him.

Once again, silence settles around the space.

“That doesn’t look like just sex,” Damon says, his voice tense.

Pressing my lips together, I shake my head. “It’s not. It started out that way, but it’s not anymore.”

“He’s still paying you,” Damon says.

I shrug. “He wants to until the contract is through.” I don’t say that the contract is technically terminated due to the development and disclosure of our feelings becoming involved. No need to open that up right now.

“And then what?” Declan asks.

*Declan’s been in love with you for years.*

My chest tightens as I stare at him. I can’t answer because I don’t have an answer. “Why didn’t you... is that true?”

Declan frowns and crosses his arms. He gives me a tight nod.

My chest hurts. Am I having a heart attack? Can I have one because of this? “But... we—” I don’t have any idea where I’m going with that. “Why didn’t you say something?”

His frown deepens. “What, and be the cliché gay man in love with his supposedly straight best friend? Because that’s worked out well for so many gays.”

“I’m not gay,” I say again. “Just... for Quin, I guess.” It sounds lame. I hate the words coming out of my mouth.

“Great,” Damon deadpans.

I sigh. “What do you want me to say, exactly? I’m not... quitting. I won’t stop seeing him. And I don’t want you involved in my relationship with him. I’m not gay, despite what... it looks like. And also, despite what it looks like, we are safe. I have safe words, too, by the way.”



“Why do you need safe words?” Damon growls, taking a step closer to me.

Rolling my eyes, I say, “Because I’m not gay and he doesn’t want to push me into something I’m uncomfortable with.” It’s not the whole truth, but it’s true enough. That’s why he created them.

Declan turns away. “This is unbelievable.”

A pit forms in my stomach. I can count on one hand exactly how many times we’ve fought. One. Just once. Right now. I force myself to ask the words that have me terrified the most.

“Do you still want me?” I whisper.

They both turn to look at me, and I can barely see them through the tears in my eyes. What if they say no? What will I do then?

“Do you still love me?” I choke out.

“Fuck,” Damon says, and he’s in front of me now, pulling me from the chair and wrapping me tightly in his arms. “Jesus, Simon. We can hate everything you’re doing, but that doesn’t mean we don’t love you.” He kisses the side of my head.

I cry, but it’s not the kind of crying I like. This hurts. It makes my head foggy and heavy. I can’t breathe and I shake in a very unsatisfying way.

Declan’s behind me now, hugging me between them, but I still feel unsettled. It feels fragile now.

“I’m sorry,” Declan says at my ear, his hands gentle on my hips. “I’m frustrated and... angry. Hurt.”

“I didn’t mean—”

“I know,” they say together.

Damon pulls my face to his with his hand in my hair. I don’t have a choice but to look at him. “Listen to me, Simon. Are you listening?” I nod, but the sob in my throat is ready to break free. My chest is ready to explode. My muscles are ready to give out when they take the world out from under me.

I'm going to lose everything again. This time, I'll hear the words. They'll be said to my face. And this time I'll be old enough to understand what it means.

"Stop thinking," Damon says softly. "More than anything, I hate when you get trapped in your head like that. It's not true. Any of it."

"You don't know what I'm thinking," I say weakly.

"You think that we don't want you," Declan says. "That we're angry enough to leave you. That you'll be alone."

"You think that there's something you can do that will make us stop loving you. You think we're disgusted. That we're going to hate you."

Their hands are petting me everywhere, except the one holding my head up so I can't look away from Damon's eyes. Soothing me. Trying to calm the way I'm trembling.

"You're waiting for us to tear your world apart because you've never been convinced that you deserve otherwise," Damon says.

I hate that they know exactly what I'm thinking. And yet, because I didn't have to actually say the words, I also love it.

"None of that is true," Declan says. "And it's never, ever going to happen."

"Ever," Damon insists.

"Yes, we still love you." He presses into me harder, squishing me between them and making all those loose places go back where they belong. "That will never change. I don't care what you do, where you go, how many lies you tell us. We will *always* love you, Simon. Always."

I flinch at the mention of lies. Something neither of them miss.

"We're never going to stop wanting you, either. There's no one else alive or dead that we want more than you. We want to spend all our time with you. Every day. Do you have any idea how much it sucked being away from you for six days? That's why we came home. No number of big dicks could distract us

from the fucking hole inside that is only filled with you,” Damon says.

“I’m sorry,” I whisper, and try to blink my tears away. But the traitors just trail down my face, anyway. “I didn’t mean to keep this from you. There’s a confidentiality clause in it because he’s a professor and I’m a student. And you already seemed to hate him, and I didn’t want you to get any ideas about protecting me. I promise, I did this completely sober and aware of what it entailed. I knew what I was getting into and chose to do this.”

“Did he approach you?” Damon asks.

I nod. “At the club. Then I went to him for a work-study but the college keeps denying his department.”

“We noticed that,” Declan says and I can hear his frown. “Our professor says the same thing. She gets pretty irate about it.”

“Yeah, well, he tried again. They denied him. He... proposed this instead.”

“Why?”

I laugh nervously, feeling my cheeks flush. “Because he wanted me,” I say, embarrassed.

“So you agreed,” Damon says flatly.

“No, not just like that. I talked to him a few times and then we went over a very detailed contract. *Then* I agreed. I... it might be a little different now, but like you said, it’s just sex. Sex doesn’t mean much to me, something you already know. Hookups aren’t my thing. But I can still do them.” I shrug.

“What’s different now?” Declan asks.

I drop my hands to cover them and hold them tightly. “I love him,” I whisper.

There’s a moment of silence and I both wish I could see Declan’s face and am stupidly relieved that I can’t. I hear him swallow. I’m surprised when they speak next that it’s calm.

“When does the contract end? What comes next?”

Taking a deep, shaking breath, I slowly let it out. “Ends on July 17 and we don’t know yet. He has summers off, so I think we’ll spend part of it together, anyway.” I bite my lip before continuing. “Then we’ll see where we’re at. I think we’re going to try to work it out so we can stay together.”

Declan’s breath catches, but he doesn’t say anything. He pulls his hands free of mine, even as I try to keep them. But he doesn’t pull away; he wraps his arms around my torso and presses his face into my neck.

Hugging me tightly.

“I’m sorry,” I whisper. “I didn’t mean to hurt you. I didn’t know.”

He huffs but doesn’t let me go. “Not your fault. I had no intention of telling you.”

“But you did. Why did you?”

“I didn’t.”

“That was all my fault,” Damon says and grimaces. “Sorry. For as often as we’re a single mind, apparently, I slipped away just then.”

This time, when the silence surrounds us, it remains for a very long time. Minutes and minutes tick by and we don’t move. I’m glad for it. Because I need their hug. I need to know that I didn’t fuck this up.

“Are we okay?” I ask.

“You still have a lot of secrets, don’t you?” Declan asks.

I sigh. “Not in the same way, but there are things I still don’t want to talk about.”

“Why? You used to tell us everything,” Damon says.

“I will tell you. I promise. Some things aren’t that easy for me. If I don’t tell you right now, we’re not okay?”

They sigh, their mouths coming down on my neck in complete synchronization. I smile and close my eyes.

“We’re fine,” Damon says. “You’re going to need to do a lot better about splitting your time, though. We’re not taking back seats.”

I squeeze him as hard as I can. “Never,” I whisper. In some ways, they’re always going to be the most important relationships in my life. Without them, I wouldn’t have survived my mother’s death and my father’s abandonment. Without them, I wouldn’t have continued living.

Thirty

## SIMON



OVER THE NEXT MONTH, it's very clear that we're in fact *not* okay. I can feel their tension, even when they're not touching me. There's a part of me that keeps whispering in my head that maybe this is a blessing in disguise. Friends aren't *supposed to* be this close. It's not natural. Not healthy.

There's not a single cell in my body that believes that.

But I can't deny that the pain of our friendship crumbling around me is even remotely bearable. It's also gotten a little... invading. Their hands on me feel more personal. Moving places and in ways they hadn't before. Their kisses now usually have tongues. And at night, well... they basically dry fuck me without release.

Do I tell them not to? No. It's not that I hate their touch or their kisses. I don't. As always, I love kissing them. I mean that. But it's this new depth to every physical interaction that now feels a little wrong.

I think it's because of my relationship with Quin. If we weren't involved, would I find it as uncomfortable as I do right now? Or is there an invisible line they crossed over that I really wish they'd get back behind?

Perhaps the more pressing question is why haven't I said anything?

"Because you're afraid that if you do, they'll leave you," Quin says as he holds me still. I'm speared on his cock again, the throbbing of it screaming through my body.

When we talk, when I need to get something off my chest that feels too tight or too much, this is how we do it. Quin is right. It helps me to focus my mind on something I need, something I want, in an effort to take away the discomfort of vocalizing what's weighing me down. *I want to talk*, but I can't ever seem to get the words out unless I'm sobbing with his fat dick in my ass, tearing me open.

It's so much better and worse when he makes me hold still. Yet, I love the way he does it. Like he's trapped me in a vice grip, and I can't move at all. Tears roll down my face as I cry. I give in to the overwhelming need to do so and let myself sob like a baby for a long time. The pain of his dick triggers the need to cry, but the crying continues for so many other reasons.

This is the kind of release I crave in the place of a physical sexual release. I need to let go of the pressure. The guilt and torment inside me. The confusion and the constant feeling that I'm going to find myself alone and unwanted again.

That Quin can give that to me without me having to tell him when I need it the most makes me love him all the more. I'm not sure when I fell in love with him, but the feeling is consuming. But I need him so fucking bad that graduation is terrifying. I no longer want it to come. Right after that, I'll be leaving. And while he's joining me initially, our contract will end, and he'll go home.

Without me.

Though I won't actually be alone, I can already feel that crippling loss.

"Shh," Quin murmurs in my ear. "Whatever you're thinking right now, stop. I can feel your body tensing, and that's not what we're doing right now. We'll come back to that in a bit."

I take a breath and wince. That little movement made me painfully aware of his cock stretching me again. The dull ache that intensifies with the occasional streak of burning pain.

Fuck, I love the way it grounds me.



“What do I do?” I gasp.

“I think you already know. You need to tell them they’re making you uncomfortable.”

I wince and then do so again when my body twinges. “I just... They’re everything, Quin. What if they... What if I hurt them?”

“It’s not okay that they hurt you instead,” he says, biting at my ear. He’s not quite as careful as he used to be about not leaving marks on me. It’s not intentional, but he doesn’t concentrate so hard on leaving my skin bare.

Besides, I love the occasional bruise here and there. Not only do I constantly have the reminder in my ass that he’s been there, but I also have the visual proof. It’s like I can still feel that this is real, even when we’re not together.

Fuck, my abandonment issues run deep.

“How about you try to physically tell them if you’re not comfortable saying so?” he suggests.

“How?”

“When they kiss you in a way you don’t like, pull your mouth away. Redirect their hands. Reposition your body with theirs.”

I nod and take a deep breath again, just so I can make my body move infinitesimally and get the twinge of his dick again. The dull throbbing isn’t enough. I need to feel the pain again.

“Relax, baby,” Quin murmurs, kissing my neck softly. His hold somehow tightens as he shoves me harder into his lap. Like he’s trying to fit me into a too small space by scrunching me. But it does what I need. I cry out again, my eyes squeezing shut as fresh tears fall down my face, accompanying the new burn of pain in my ass. “Just feel for a bit. It doesn’t always have to break you in two.”

No. That’s what fucking is for. When I really need him to break me, he does. There’s nothing better than knowing he enjoys it as much as I do.

But for right now, I relax my body into his and let him keep his dick warm in my ass while I pant and breathe around the constant throbbing ache.

Feels so good. Just what I need as tears continue to leak from my eyes and I concentrate on breathing through me. Meanwhile, my body is completely and totally limp, at his mercy.



I CLOSE MY EYES, my fists tangled in Declan's hair as he thrusts his hips hard against mine. His erection rubs into me. I'm not exactly uncomfortable, even as he's dry humping me with Damon pressed tightly against my back, his grip just as hard and punishing on my skin. His hips aren't moving quite as incessantly as Declan's, but he's still rubbing his erection along the crease of my ass over my underwear.

It's just that they've never used me to get off before.

Declan's trailing open mouth kisses over my neck and collarbone. This isn't the first night since they came home with me and Quinn in the spare room that this has happened. So I know, any minute now, he's going to get up and take a shower to get rid of his problem.

It's like they're trying to find a piece of me that's all their own again. But they do so with touch that isn't quite appropriate anymore.

Yes, I used the word, but I think it fits now. I'd feel guilty if Quinn didn't know it was happening. I asked him the other day, when it first happened, what he wanted me to do about it. He says it's my relationship to set boundaries. One of many, many conversations Quinn and I have had about the twins lately.

But we've never had boundaries before. We didn't need them.

Finally, Declan pulls away from me, and I suck in a relieved breath. But when I open my eyes, the look on his face has me catching it again. He pointedly looks at my crotch and then back into my face. There's hurt there that I don't understand.

"I'm not good enough for you to even get a little hard over? Really?" My eyes widen. I see the hurt turn into anger. "Whatever," he mutters and climbs over me. Damon kisses the back of my head and follows.

I sit up and pull my legs up, covering my face as I try to sort through this. What the hell am I supposed to say? I hate that I keep feeling this way. That *they make me feel this way*. Fuck, I can't catch my breath as tears sting my eyes.

The only person I like to cry in front of is Quin. And only when he makes me cry. I hate this feeling right now. The helpless one. Where I feel like I'm falling. My stomach is threatening to upturn all its contents. My head hurts.

I'm still sitting like this when Damon comes back. He sits behind me and wraps his arms around me. But for the first time in my entire life, I don't want him to touch me. "You okay?" he asks.

"No," I say and try to move away from him. He doesn't let me, but I also don't try very hard.

"Simon—"

"It has nothing to do with you. It's a *me* thing," I say.

"What is?" Declan asks as he comes toward the bed.

When I feel his hand on my arm, I decide I really can't take their touch right now. Reminding myself of my conversation with Quin, I pull away and move across the bed so my back is pressed to the wall. Their hurt really is loud now. But fuck, so is mine.

Can they not see it? Or do they care about their own and not mine anymore? Does how I hurt them make it okay for them to hurt me in return? Is that why this is happening over and over and over again?

My chest hurts. I'm going to throw up.

"You want the truth? Fine. I-I'm asexual." Yep, I'm going to be sick. The contents of my stomach lurches and I have to swallow the gross taste in my mouth.

Identical shock. I let it sit for a minute before I say anything else.

"It has nothing to do with you and whether you're 'good enough' or whatever your problem is, Declan. I don't feel sexual attraction, like, ever. Arousal isn't really a thing in my body. I don't work that way. Feel better now?"

Their mouths open as they stare. Still in complete unison. I don't even have it in me to find it as amusing as I usually do.

"Fuck, Simon," Damon says, closing his eyes. "Your hookup thing makes more sense, now, too."

"So glad we can get that out of the way," I say, my tone dripping with bitterness.

"Why didn't you just say something?" Declan asks. "Fuck, I feel like I keep asking this. Why do you keep this from us? Why couldn't you just tell us the truth?"

I sigh. "For starters, I didn't know. I thought I was so fucking broken that even my body couldn't do what it's supposed to. I only recently learned that there's a name for it and it's... I'm not alone in it."

Declan reaches for me, but I shake my head. The sting of his hurt makes me take a deep breath and push aside my impulse to let him touch me. I want his hug. I do. But right now, I need to be able to look at them both *without* the influence of their touch.

"You're in a sex contract," Damon says, frowning. "I've been trying to give him the benefit of the doubt, but—"

"Just stop," I say warily. "It's because of him I know this about myself."

"Explain, please," Damon says.

“I should have told him when we were discussing the contract because he always emphasized that he’d make it good for me, too. I avoided doing so, obviously, because I wanted the money. But when he started moving in that direction where he wanted to, uh, reciprocate, I just blurted out that I’m really fucked-up and that I just don’t like sex. My body doesn’t do what it should. He told me it sounded like I’m asexual. He explained to me what that meant and encouraged me to look it up. So, I did. I think I’m in the gray part of the spectrum. You know? Gray asexual?”

“Demi?” Declan asks.

I smile a little. They definitely would have been able to walk me through it if I had just told them. A pang in my chest tells me that so much of my strife concerning my lack of a sex drive could have been avoided if I hadn’t kept this to myself.

“No,” I say, shaking my head. “I’m very rarely aroused at all. Like, I can count on one hand how many times it’s happened that I haven’t legitimately had to force it. Emotional connection doesn’t seem to have anything to do with it.” I gesture between us.

Declan winces.

“I don’t understand why you’re continuing with the sex contract. Because you love him? That’s not a reason to be subjected to something you don’t like. Nor is guilt or a lover —” Damon says before I get annoyed and stop him.

“Will you please stop trying to make him into an asshole?” He frowns at me. “I’m not forced or coerced or guilted or any of that. I... Uh, I like it for different reasons.”

“You like it, but not... sexually,” Damon tries.

“Yes,” I say simply. “I don’t get sexual fulfillment out of it. I’m rarely even hard. But I still...” I sigh. “I really don’t want to talk about this.”

“It’s painful that you keep this from us,” Declan says, rubbing his chest.

“I know. Believe it or not, I’m always sick over it. But I’m just not ready to tell you. I don’t have answers for myself.

Quin tries to help me with explanations but... I probably need a therapist or something,” I say, hugging my arms around myself.

I can see that it’s a physical challenge for them not to come near me. Fuck’s sake, it’s really hard not to pull them to me. Their hugs always make me feel better. Instead of trying to torture myself with it further, I climb off the bed, avoiding getting close enough to even brush against them.

They turn to watch me as I pick through the drawers until I find something I want to wear. I slip into clean underwear and then socks, only peeking back at them as I’m pulling my pants up.

My breath holds as I see them sitting pressed against each other, shoulder to shoulder, their hands locked together as they stare at me. It’s not even just hurt. I can see fear, too. Sadness. Regret.

There’s something breaking between us, and I’m not sure how to fix it. I need to fix it, but I can’t keep going down the road we are on. It’s hard and... I don’t want to take a chance that letting them continue to push boundaries might hurt my new relationship with Quin.

I pull a shirt on and head for the door. “I’ll be back tonight,” I say quietly. They follow and I suddenly remember and turn to them with a smile. “I have an interview in Glensdale on Thursday. Virtually, I mean.”

“You still want to go there?” Declan asks.

We’d finally settled on a city where we’d concentrate our job search efforts. Somewhere affordable, large-ish, and with a healthy job market. There are also no less than three gay clubs with a population median of late twenties to mid-thirties.

Sighing, I give in and move back to them, wrapping my arms around their necks. Their arms immediately circle me, overlapping on my back. “Yes. I want the future we’ve always talked about. I want to live with you. One bedroom. One bed. I want to walk around in my underwear and cuddle on the couch while you hand feed me and tell me you love me every single

day.” Their grip on me is tight with relief and desperation. “I love you so much. Nothing will change that. But I also need you to stop... stop pushing. I need you to stop being hostile towards Quin and making him out to be a monster. All right?”

“Yeah,” Damon says, kissing the side of my neck. “I feel like I’m losing you, so I’m hanging on a little tighter.”

“I know that feeling,” I say. “I fight that battle all the time. For different reasons, obviously, but all the same.” I pull back to look at them. “Just like you tell me, I’m not going anywhere. But we need to let our friendship bend a little to accommodate outside relationships.”

“What does that mean?” Declan asks. I can tell he’s trying to keep his irritation from his tone.

I kiss him, making his shoulders relax. “It means that how we were in January is exactly how we can always be. If we can get to that place again.”

“You really think he’s not going to be jealous and demand you stop sleeping in our bed?”

“Depends. Are you going to keep trying to fuck me through my underwear?” I raise a brow.

Declan huffs, but Damon laughs. “Fine. If I have to.”

“No more tongue in my mouth, either.”

“You’re taking the fun out of this.”

I kiss him again and again. Until he’s fighting a smile. “I know we’re not going to magically get back to where we were, but I hope we can. I don’t want to live my life without you.”

“Same,” they say together.

“Good. Now, I’m going to work.” I turn from them, feeling their scowl follow me out the door. Little steps, right? Hopefully, we’re at least on the same path now. The right path.

Thirty-One



## QUINLAN



THEIR RELATIONSHIP IS NOT HEALING. While I don't seek out the Whitaker twins, I see them a few times a week in the halls of the textile building going to or from their stained glass class. At least I can see that they're just as miserable as Simon is.

It doesn't please me, though maybe it should.

Maybe everything about the three of them should bother me. That's how any sane man would feel with their boyfriend being fondled by two other men on a daily basis, right? Why don't I?

I'm not a jealous person to start with, but it's more than that. Simon talks about them all the time and while I believe on some level, he's as in love with them as they are with him, it's still incredibly different to him.

They're his family. Not siblings or parents kind of family. Not even distant cousins. But they're the people he turns to for everything in his life. His hurt and pain and loss. To share his happiness and triumphs with. All of it.

I get a part of Simon that he doesn't share with them. Something that's just for us. Honestly, I'm not sure they could take care of Simon the way I do. It's not arrogance talking. But I don't know that they could bring themselves to hurt him the way I do. To make him cry like I do. Despite that Simon would insist on it, there's no doubt in my mind that they wouldn't be able to bring themselves to do so.

I'm a special kind of twisted man that wants his lover to hurt.

On top of that, the first thing Simon and I spoke of in the club was how his twins never stopped talking about hooking up. Choking on big dicks. Their sexual wants will never align with Simon. I might take sexual gratification out of our intimate moments when I strip him bare and he's a sobbing mess in my arms, but his needs have always come first in those moments.

Fuck, the first time I had my dick down his throat in that club, watching him relax into it was fucking everything I ever imagined.

"How far we've come," I murmur and turn to my computer.

As the school year draws to an end, I'm both ecstatic for the break (so I can spend endless days with Simon uninterrupted) and dreading July. While I'm keeping our contract going to make sure Simon has money under whatever pretense he'll take, I don't know what's going to happen when July 17<sup>th</sup> hits and it's officially over.

We've spoken very little about being together permanently. Mostly because I want him to concentrate on school. And he's already got the stress of his now strangely fragile relationship with Damon and Declan to deal with. I don't want to add another stress to his load.

He carries so much on his shoulders but he's so fucking good about hiding it. I'd never have known if he hadn't figuratively collapsed at my feet and let it spill everywhere. I'm not sure the twins even realize.

I'm not sure they realize how much Simon has never told them, either. They're beginning to now. Simon doesn't tell them about our sex life. He doesn't share with them what he wants and what he takes from it.

It's probably a good idea.

I glance at my phone when it pings, picking it up when I see Simon's name.

**Simon**

I'm done for the day.

I smile. Fuck, I love this man. Everything in me lights up when I see him text me with something like this. Nothing important, but I'm his first thought.

You know, probably.

**Me**

What are your plans now?

**Simon**

Can I go to your house?

My chest tightens, knowing he doesn't want to go to his own place. What that must feel like for him! My heart breaks a little more with every day that passes.

**Me**

You don't ever have to ask. You know the front door code. Lock it behind you, baby. I'll be home as soon as I can.

He's spending the entire weekend with me. Sobbing on my cock two days ago after school, he blurted that he didn't want to go home this weekend. While I'd meant for him to stay in that place and just feel what he needed to, I realized that his emotional pain was far too much. So I shifted what we were doing and fucked him until he fell into his subspace, where I cooed to him for more than an hour.

That he spent so long there told me how wrecked he really was. The most he'd ever stayed like that was half an hour. Almost seventy minutes had me concerned that I wasn't really in a position to offer him the kind of guidance he needed.

But when he came out and curled into my chest, I offered for him to come home with me Friday night and stay with me

all weekend. Just the two of us. We could do whatever he wanted.

He sighed in relief. And then was overcome with guilt that he felt that way.

I don't know how to help him. Short of demanding the twins get their heads out of their fucking asses and stop thinking about themselves right now or they're going to push Simon away permanently. I wasn't sure what else to do but offer Simon a place away from them.

Which was its own kind of torture for all three of them. Simon really didn't sleep well without them. I doubted they did either.

When I offered for him to spend the weekend with me, I really had planned for it to be alone. Just the two of us. But when Vulcan called right after Simon left, I decided maybe Simon needed a distraction of a non-sexy variety. Vulcan was his own kind of sexy, sure. But his presence was a loud kind of fun, even if he wasn't overly loud at all. He had a presence that you couldn't ignore, and there was no way that you could get lost in something depressing when he was around.

So I invited Vulcan over for a slumber party, beginning late Saturday morning through Sunday afternoon. It's a surprise, though, so I hope Simon doesn't mind. I might tell him. I'm not sure how he is with surprises.

Coming home to Simon is really the best feeling in the fucking world. He's sitting at the small desk in the wide hall when I step inside. By the way he's leaning over, I imagine that he's studying. But when he looks up at me and beams a wide fucking smile, I melt like ice cream on a hot day.

He gets up and waits for me to step out of my shoes and drop my bag before coming into my arms. Simon isn't much shorter than me. An inch at most. But there are moments like this that I feel as if I could wrap around him entirely.

"I love you," I whisper.

He turns his face into my neck, pressing into my skin. “I love you, Quin.”

I sigh. Not for the first time, I wonder how I managed to get Simon Everett to fall in love with me. How did I get so fucking lucky?

“I have something for you,” I murmur.

Simon leans back to look at me shyly. “You do?”

Jesus, that look. I kiss him because I can. Licking into his mouth nearly has me moaning. Especially when he presses harder into me. His arms tighten around me. “We can spend the night kissing,” he suggests.

I grin and nod. “We can. After I feed you. But I have something else you might want to do?”

He grins. “Want me to choke on you? We haven’t done that in a while.”

Groaning, I rest my forehead against his. “You have a fucking dirty mouth, Simon,” I growl, ignoring the way my cock responds to him. I drop my hand to cup his ass and bring him to me. “I think you just need to be touched all the time. But you know what?”

“Yes, I do. And what?”

I kiss him again. “You don’t need to constantly give me sexual attention to keep me loving you, baby. I’m so deeply in love that I’ll never claw my way out.”

Simon stills before pulling his face back to look at me. I recognize that expression and smile before he says it. “Is that what I’m doing?”

Chuckling, I kiss him softly. “I don’t know. I’m going to take some psychology classes just so I have a bit of insight.”

He huffed. “Don’t. I think you’ll quickly fall out of love if you dissect the chaos in my head.”

His voice is steady, but there’s a tremor in his touch. “No, Simon,” I say gently. “I’m never going anywhere.”

Until July. Fuck, we need to talk about that. I can't be without him.

Simon sighs. "Do you really think that's what I'm doing, though? Do you think I keep... wanting it so I can make sure you don't lose interest in me?"

"Maybe? I don't know. What I do know is that men are conditioned to believe that they must fuck at all times to be considered normal. You've fought with that peer expectation your entire life. Even listened to it in your own home as soon as Declan and Damon became interested in sex. You expect that if someone isn't getting sexual satisfaction, then they move on. Just as the twins practice."

His face continuously morphs between wide eyes and scowls as I talk. I might have absolutely no grounds in what I'm saying, but I feel like maybe I might be onto something.

"They wouldn't have if they'd known," I say gently, tracing his jaw with my fingertip.

"It's amusing how you defend them and yet they'd throw you under the bus if they could," he says, not at all amused.

"There's a big difference between me and them. They're threatened by my presence in your life while I accept and support your close friendship."

Simon grins. He wraps his arms around my neck and uses his grip to bring his feet off the ground and wrap his legs around my waist. "Take me to bed. I need—"

"No dick tonight," I say and am amused to find him pouting. I laugh. "You don't even like it."

He huffs. "Don't be stingy. I want to—"

"No," I murmur against his mouth as I bring him to my bedroom. "No dick. No crying. No subspace. I want you completely present with me tonight. All night. While I spoil the fuck out of you."

His pout turns into a slow smile. "What do you mean, spoil?" I love the way his cheeks tinge red and he bows his head to hide his shyness.

“I mean just what I said,” I tell him and place his ass on my dresser. I nuzzle my nose into his neck, just below his ear. Simon sighs. “I’m going to draw you a bubble bath and wash you slowly while the bubbles make your skin nice and soft. Then I’m going to give you a very long, soothing massage. I’ll feed you after that. Then we’re going to kiss in bed until you fall asleep in my arms.”

His smile isn’t huge, but the way he looks at me will never be something I ever forget. “But... what will I do for you?”

“Let me spoil my sugar baby,” I say.

His breath shakes. When he presses his lips to mine, they’re soft. Just as our kiss is. There’s very little tongue, but when they connect, it’s filled with such emotion that I can almost taste what he’s feeling.

Wanted.

“Can I always be your sugar baby?” he whispers. “I don’t want your money, but I don’t ever want this to stop. I want to always feel this way.”

“Yes,” I tell him. “Fuck, Simon. You never have to work a day in your life. Just be my sugar baby. Let me give you the world.”

He hesitates, but I can feel the fight in him. There’s a part of him that likes the sound of that. The promise. It’s a big thing to ask of him because I know he hates living off someone else. That’s what drove him to accept this proposition to begin with.

But he’s thinking about it. The thought alone makes me fucking giddy. I pick him up and move us to the bed, where I curl around him, his body trapped underneath mine. “I love you,” I tell him. “With everything in me. Nothing would make me happier than to keep you to myself and spoil the fuck out of you, Simon. I’ll take you to see the world. Indulge every passing whim. I’ll give you everything you’ve ever dreamed of and everything you never thought to want. And I’ll use your body in any way you want me to, as often as you want.

Wherever you want. Whenever you want. Whenever you want something, it's yours."

"You'll never stop touching me?" he whispered. "What if I —"

"I'll *never* stop touching you, Simon." Shifting so I can find his hand, I link our fingers together then move further so I can look into his wide eyes. I'm not surprised they're filled with unshed tears. Simon's spent thirteen years refusing to show any deep emotion. Refusing to cry. To acknowledge his hurt and his fear. Now that he's unlocked that dam, he's found that he's rather emotional.

"I'll *never* stop touching you," I repeat. "However you want me. If you don't want sex, then we don't do that."

"You'll want it somewhere else," he says, his voice caught.

"No, sugar baby. Never. You're the only one for me. Besides, you like sex just fine. You just don't like *sex for sex purposes*."

"Are you sure that makes me asexual?" he asks.

"Mmm." I kiss his lips. "We can talk about your sexuality as often as you want but not right now. Right now, we're talking about me and you."

"Do you want to marry me? Have kids with me? A family and a house?"

I never had a real vision for my future. But with every fucking word that leaves his mouth, I see it. "Yeah, Simon. I want all that. I want you to let me provide for you."

"What about Damon and Declan?"

Chuckling, I kiss his lips again. "I'm not going to provide for them, but I'll never, ever ask you to cease your friendship. They'll be a part of everything. Our wedding. Our vows. Our kids' lives. We'll even make sure there's a bedroom for the three of you to have sleepovers."

The first tear finally sheds, and I kiss it away. "I want a job," he whispers. "But... maybe I won't always? Is that okay?"



“I will support whatever you want. Anything. Except working more than 40 hours per week. That’s not happening.”

He laughs and closes his eyes. “How are we going to do that, Quin?” he whispers. “I’ve had three interviews in Glensdale. That’s more than 600 miles from here.”

“We’ll talk about it after graduation. Alright? Don’t think about anything but schoolwork for now.” He nods, but I can feel his tension come back so I layer kisses all over his face. “That doesn’t mean I’m changing my mind, sugar baby. It means that right now, your priority is finishing your degree. That’s your job; the only thing you need to concentrate on. I’m never going anywhere.”

Thirty-Two

## QUINLAN



THERE ARE ONLY three weekends until graduation now, and Simon has decided that he'll be spending them with me. He stays in the apartment with the twins during the week, but every single time he comes over, his stress and hurt and emotional turmoil is through the roof.

We alternate between subspace, massages, and Vulcan as a distraction and escape when he's not studying. I'm actually really impressed that he's kept his grades up with the distress the twins are causing him.

Not that I think they're faring any better. They've stopped even glaring at me anymore. They look dull and lifeless. Exhausted.

Absolutely miserable.

I realize today that they only have each other without Simon, where Simon has me. But I don't know how to fix this. I want to, though.

That's what possesses me to do what I do this Friday night. I'm going out on a fucking limb here and praying to whatever fucking god there is that it doesn't blow up in my face.

Waiting in the door of my office when the twins usually leave class, I wait. It's not long before they head down the hall and I'm not at all surprised they look right at me. I wave them over and they literally stop dead in the hall, causing a momentary traffic jam.

I'd smile, except I'm sure that would increase their hostility. After a few beats pass, they come my way and I

invite them into my office where I shut the door quietly. They have bags under their eyes, and I know that they're wrecked.

"Things aren't getting better between the three of you," I say.

The one on the right frowns. "Thanks for reminding us." His tone is bitter. I think after a few exchanges I'll be able to guess which one is which.

Sighing, I shake my head. "Look. I'm sorry that you're hurting. I hope you aren't so blinded by your own that you can't see how miserable Simon is, too."

The one who spoke to me frowns and subtly shakes his head. The other closes his eyes as the briefest of despondent expressions passes over his face.

"I'm having my best friend come over for dinner tonight," I tell them. "He comes over every weekend and dotes on Simon with me." The twin on the right smiles faintly. "I'm inviting you over for dinner tonight."

Their looks become sharp.

"Why?" the one on the left asks. I'm willing to bet that one's Declan. Gut feeling.

"I don't have a specific reason except that I need you to accept that I'm not going anywhere. Simon is it for me. But he's absolutely broken without you. You don't like me. You blame me for getting between you. I get it. I'm not convinced I wouldn't feel the same way. But I really need you to learn to live with me for his sake. Like it or not, as it stands right now, you're going to lose him, or I will. Both will break him. Is that really what you want?"

Declan scowls at me. Yes, I'm sure that's Declan. Even if I'm wrong, I'm standing by that decision.

"What's your address?" Damon asks. "What time?"

Sighing, I rattle off my address. "Five is when Vulcan will arrive."

"Vulcan," Declan repeats, tilting his head.

“Yes, and so help me if you make him uncomfortable in any way, I will run over your sorry asses.”

I can tell they don't miss the promise in that. More than the threat of my actual words.

“You don't get that defensive over Simon,” Declan accuses.

“I don't need to and once you see Vulcan, I'm sure you'll figure out why I'm protective of him. While very different, it's the same reason you're so protective of Simon. But I meant what I said. Anything at all to make Vulcan uncomfortable and I'm going to lose my shit.”

I'm not sure what I said that they like, but I receive twin smirks. Small and unassuming, but they both approve of my assertion.

“We'll be there at five,” Declan says and moves toward the door. I let him out, but Damon doesn't move for a minute as he studies me.

“You know that we're not going to be able to *not* touch him, right?” he asks.

I nod, shrugging. “I've seen you touch him.”

Damon raises a brow. “Have you?”

Laughing, I shake my head. “When have you ever kept your hands off him?” He shrugs. “The entire campus has seen you touch him. Besides, I've seen you dance with him at Stripes, too.”

He frowns, eyes narrowing. There's a moment of silence. “Want us to bring anything?”

“V usually brings wine. If there's something you want to drink besides that, water, or juice, you can bring that. I don't keep beer in the house.”

Damon nods. Another beat goes by before he heads to the door. “Thank you,” he murmurs on the way out.

I stand there for another second, wondering what the hell I just did. This is either going to make things worse, or maybe a

little better. I hope it doesn't blow up, at least.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Simon', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

SIMON IS home when I get there. He's sitting at the desk as usual, but stops his studying when I step inside. Per usual, he waits until I'm divested of my bag and shoes before wrapping himself around me.

"You okay?" I ask, kissing his jaw just below his ear.

He sighs. "Yeah. I'm just... tired."

"What do you want to do right now?"

"Choke on your dick," he says without hesitation. "I want my cozy place."

I check the time. Just past three. "On one condition."

"I need rules in order to suck you down?"

Chuckling, I nip at his neck, which makes him squirm and laugh. "Yes, sugar baby. You can't stay in your cozy place for very long. We have company coming."

"Why did you invite V over for two nights?"

I gently push him from me and run my fingers through his hair. "Is that okay?"

"Yeah. Is my sexual appetite too much so you need someone here for a buffer?" he asks, raising a brow. I'm impressed with the way he keeps his expression serious.

Biting his lip until he's laughing, I let our play dissolve into quiet kisses. "Because I invited your friends over, too, and I thought Vulcan would be a nice buffer for all of us."

Simon freezes so thoroughly that he doesn't take another breath until I tell him to. Then he turns his horrified face to mine. "Why did you do that?"

"Because I hate seeing you so upset every day." I cup his cheek. "While I know this might end badly, it very well could

have the opposite effect, too. I'm willing to bet that part of the reason they're hanging on so tight in the way they are is because they're afraid of losing you. Just like you are of losing them. They're feeling neglected by how much time you spend with me."

The pained look on his face has me cooing to him for a minute before I continue.

"I understand why you've kept the separation. I don't even disagree. But maybe we need to work toward finding some middle ground. We need to find a way to co-exist together." Dropping my hands to his ass, I pull him roughly against me until he's smiling through his worry. "I want the future we whisper about in the night," I murmur against his lips. "But to get there, we need to find a way to patch what's broken between you and your twins. And if it can't be patched, we need to find a way to build something new. Alright?"

"I love you," he says in response. Once again, he climbs me until he's wrapped around me. "I love you so much, Quin. You always put me first."

"Always will. Now. Do you want to help me get dinner prepped?"

He shakes his head. "I really need some cozy time before they get here. Give me your dick until I disappear for a while."

Sighing, though my cock is fully on board, I bring him through the house and into my bedroom. As soon as his feet hit the floor, he gets down to his knees and looks up at me expectantly. His hands rest on his thighs and he makes no further move.

If I was more of a dominant, if I was into that kind of thing, Simon would be a perfect submissive. A little bratty, maybe, but fucking perfect. I brush my fingers through his hair. "You're so beautiful."

He smiles sweetly and doesn't say anything.

It's not like I can pretend I'm not ready. My dick is very, very ready. Only because our time is limited, do I not draw

this out. I shove my jeans down and then my underwear beneath my balls.

There's no hunger in his eyes. No lust. No heat. No indication that he's actually into this. That he wants it.

Since I learned Simon is asexual, I've let him initiate almost all of our sexual encounters. The only time I really bring it to him is when he needs to get out of his head after school. Even then, it's cock warming as opposed to sex. I know how to make him shut down and just feel without shutting it all away as he disappears from life into subspace. When he's forced to sit on my dick, he also faces every other emotion storming around inside him. We talk.

Neither of us get off. It's not about that. It's about taking care of him.

There might not be anything sexual in his expression as he waits for me to stuff my dick down his throat, but there is excitement. Expectancy. Knowing that I'm going to give him exactly what he wants.

I tap the head of my dick on his lips and smear my precum over them before he opens. "Gotta be quick, sugar baby," I murmur.

He nods as he takes my head into his mouth. I immediately push to the back of his throat. When he takes a breath, I shove further in. He grunts and his hands splay on the tops of my thighs. "So pretty," I groan, pushing his hair from his forehead.

His lips twitch as he tries to smile. Pulling back, I grip his head gently but firmly, allow a single breath, and then push deep until his nose is pressed to my pelvis. Simon groans and I shiver, my balls tingling with the feeling.

I spend the next several minutes pistoning into his throat. Driving myself deeper and deeper as if I keep growing extra length. Letting myself get lost in it, I watch his pretty face as his eyes start to close. He's so close to dropping.

Shifting my hand to the back of his head, I drive into him hard and lock him in place. He can't breathe. I know he can't.



His throat contracts around me twice as he reflexively tries to clear his throat.

“Swallow,” I demand and he does. Stars sparkle in my vision.

I pull back for a half a breath and shove back down, releasing my load. I keep him there, disallowing him a breath until I’m completely empty and he’s swaying faintly.

Then I drop to catch him before he goes down completely and cradle him in my arms. Simon’s chest rises and falls as he swallows deep breaths. “Perfect baby,” I murmur, brushing the spit from his face. “I love you with every piece of me.”

Simon murmurs, but I know he’s not really paying attention. He’s cozy. The thought makes me smile and I pick him up to bring him to bed. There’s always a clean towel by the bedside now. Just for these instances. So I don’t have to leave him for anything while he’s like this. I clean him up while I repeat to him how much he means to me.



I’M STILL REMINDING myself how much he means to me when the twins arrive. They’re here before Vulcan, which I’m a little disappointed about. Simon lets them in, but I remain in the kitchen. Tending to the meal.

It’s only a few minutes later that Simon leads the twins in. They’re quiet and tense as they look around. The one that I’m pretty sure is Damon (they haven’t changed since I spoke to them earlier today), sets a container on the counter. Simon immediately pulls it to him and opens it, grinning when he pulls out a cookie.

“I love your cookies,” he says and takes a bite.

I watch Damon’s fond smile, but I don’t miss the glint in his eyes that tell just how much he misses Simon. Simon leans into him and Damon takes that as permission to move behind him, wrapping Simon in his arms.

Simon sighs and his eyes flutter shut. For a moment, the only sound in the kitchen is me preparing dinner, though I try to keep it quiet so I don't disturb the moment. I'm actually surprised that I'm not at all jealous to see my boyfriend in another man's arms. But whenever there's a twinge of jealousy, I can remind myself that I have Simon in a way that they never will. Simon chose me to love.

Vulcan arrives ten minutes after the twins, but he lets himself in. I wipe my hands and turn, my gaze locked on the twins. Damon notices and raises a brow, amused.

I'm not amused. I'm waiting.

Vulcan comes in wearing a pair of short purple shorts that barely cover his ass and a plain white shirt, low cut V in the front. He's got a bag with him I'm sure isn't just wine. He smiles as Simon slips from the stool and Damon's arms and hugs my big man.

Vulcan grins hugely, hugging him off the floor. Simon grunts and I grin. But I don't take my eyes off the twins. Their eyes scan Vulcan from the top of his dark-haired head nearing seven feet from the ground, all the way to his socked feet. Seeing every pastel tattooed bared inch in between. I also don't miss the way they stop for an extended period at his crotch.

My friend has no shame and does nothing to hide what's under his clothes. Simon was right—the twins are intrigued by big. I'm not sure they come bigger than Vulcan.

“This is Vulcan,” Simon says, grinning when V lets him go. “My twins, Damon and Declan.”

There's a moment of internal triumph when I realize I named them right in my office. Personality is the key.

“Hi,” Vulcan says, as he takes a seat next to Simon.

“Hello,” the twins say together, making Vulcan stare for a second. Then he beams.

“Freaky twin thing. That's awesome.”

Twin smiles have Vulcan laughing. He looks at Simon. “Is this normal?”

Simon looks at the twins with a fond smile. “Yeah,” he says, reaching for Declan’s hand. Declan takes it and smiles back. “More often than not.”

“Hive mind,” Declan says. “When it’s not malfunctioning.”

Damon winces.

I chuckle and turn back to the stove.

“I brought nail polish,” Vulcan says and turns to Simon, pulling out a little container. It looks like it might disappear in his big hand. “I suck at doing my own. Wanna help? I also brought wine.” He peeks into his bag. “And mini hair elastics. Just in case we want to get wild later.”

Simon laughs. “I don’t think I can paint nails.”

“I can.” I shift to find who offered. Declan moves behind Simon, leaning into his back and reaching for the nail polish. He meets Vulcan’s eyes. “If that’s okay?”

Vulcan studies him and the way he’s crowded up and around Simon. I’m sure that he’s basically on the stool with Simon right now and V is trying to figure this out. His dark eyes glance my way for a second before he once again takes in their position.

“Yeah,” he says after a second. “Okay. Thanks.”

It’s going to be a very interesting evening watching Vulcan watch how the twins remain wrapped around my boyfriend all night. I’m actually looking forward to the commentary later.

Thirty-Three

## SIMON



MY EXCITEMENT HAS me barreling through the textile building and I all but swing Quin's door open. I barely refrain as I knock far too aggressively, my hand on the door handle, turned and ready to throw it open.

Still, Quin barely has the word 'enter' out of his mouth before I'm in the office and shutting the door behind me. There's concern on his face at first, but I think he must register my excitement as he gets to his feet and comes toward me.

"What is it?" he asks. I'm not sure why, but right now, I see how utterly breathtaking his smile is. Has he always been so... so... striking? Do his students fantasize about him? If I had that kind of libido, I would have.

Wait, I might not have. I still don't think I'm gay. Have I looked at another man?

No, no. I don't think that matters, gay or not. I could look.

"Simon?"

I blink at him and laugh when I realize I was actually getting lost down that rabbit hole. Touching his lips with the tips of my fingers, I say, "Sorry. It just occurred to me how gorgeous you are."

Quin's face flushes. It's the first time I've ever seen it. His smile gets bigger. With his hands on my hips, he pulls me close and rests his forehead against mine. "Yeah?"

Nodding, I lean closer and press my lips gently to his. "I'm not sure why it just hit me when you smiled a second ago. It's

not like you don't always smile at me."

"You don't see attraction in others," he says quietly. "You tend to appreciate the beauty of a woman, but it never translates to anything you really acknowledge. Does it?"

Now that he said so, I shake my head. I guess I haven't ever really thought in terms of attraction. Because, why would I? Attraction means something very different to me than it does most people so while I can acknowledge someone's beauty—Quin's right; it's only ever been women—I don't see attraction because I don't *feel* attraction.

"Does this mean I'm attracted to you now?" I muse.

Quin laughs quietly. "I don't think you put a lot of stock into attraction. You're attracted to emotion more than how someone looks or affects you physically."

"I like that you have answers that make sense."

"Even if they're complete bullshit, because I'm just guessing based on what I know about you and what I can surmise from the situation," he says. "What has you so excited?"

"Oh! I got a job offer." The smile that spreads across my face feels far too wide. My cheeks hurt from smiling.

"That's amazing, Simon," he says, picking my feet up off the ground. As soon as I wrap them around his waist, he spins me as he kisses me. I'm nearly giddy with the feeling.

This is my first actual job. While my Sugar Daddy contract technically pays me for a service, I don't think most people would consider it a true job. I mean, I'm not sure it even qualifies as sex work anymore.

But this is a real job!

"Which one?" he asks.

"The first one I interviewed for. It doesn't begin until July first, but I have a contract and everything, guaranteeing me the job." I dig my fingers into his hair, squeezing my legs around him. "I got the job, Quin!"

He laughs and kisses along my neck. “I’m so fucking proud of you, Simon. Congrats.”

It doesn’t take more than a few minutes for the excitement to wear off. While I’m thrilled, elated, scared, all the things... I’m also sad. “It’s 623 miles away,” I say quietly.

His arms tighten around me. Quin sets me back on my feet and presses my back to the door. “Look at me, my pretty sugar baby.”

Smirking, I bring my gaze to his. His pretty blue eyes. Yeah, I’m sure that his students must fantasize about him.

“You really want to continue this relationship?”

It’s the first time I’ve heard uncertainty in his voice. I nod. “I really don’t want to live without you. But... that’s a long way away.”

“I have the summer off. You know that. So we can spend all of June together. We can spend the first two weeks of July together. If we’re compatible for more than what we’re doing, we’ll talk about it.”

“You think we won’t be?” I ask.

Quin kisses me. I wrap my arms around his waist and pull him flush to my body, humming against his mouth. “I think we will be. Baby, I have a couple more hours. How about we talk at home, okay?”

“Yeah, okay,” I nod. “Love you.”

He smiles and kisses me a lot filthier than he usually does at school. Just because the door is shut, doesn’t mean we can’t get caught. My breathing is heavy when he pulls back. But I can see the same thing deep in his eyes that sits heavy on my chest.

623 miles is too far for our relationship. I can’t live without him near me, long distance wouldn’t work for us. How exactly is this going to have a happy ending?

“I’ll see you at home,” he says. “Love you, too, Simon.”

I leave his office. As soon as the door shuts behind me, my phone rings. It's Damon and I answer. "Where are you?" he greets before I can even acknowledge him. He doesn't sound angry, though. It's... happiness?

"Leaving, uh, the textile building. Why?"

"Meet me outside."

The line beeps, and he's gone. Yeah, alright. I head outside, but before I can even plant my ass on the bench, Damon is there. He's got me in his arms as he squeezes me. I laugh, hugging him in return. For just a second, I can pretend that nothing is tense and fragile between us.

"I got a job," he says, taking my face in his hands, his smile fucking beaming.

"Really?" I ask. "I did, too!"

He laughs and then kisses me before wrapping me in a hug again. "Which one?"

"The first I interviewed for. But the position isn't available until July first."

"Bookstore manager?" he asks.

I grin again because he remembered. "Yes. The entire bookstore. I get to hire staff and order books and determine sales and shit. It's going to be so fun."

He laughs, nuzzling his face in my neck.

"You?"

"The gym. Personal trainer and nutritionist."

"The one you wanted?"

"The second one, but yeah, I think this'll be great. It's a bigger gym than I was hoping for. I prefer the smaller, more intimate ones and not chains, but for now, I think it'll be a great first job."

"What about Dec?"

As if I summoned him, he's suddenly there, wrapping his arms around both of us and his forehead against ours, so we're



a triad. “No job yet, but that’s fine. I’m not panicking.”

“All we need to do now is look for a place to live,” I say.

“Tonight? We can start looking,” Declan says.

I hesitate, and that’s enough to bring the tension back. They stiffen slightly in my hold until I pull away. It’s on the tip of my tongue to say I can’t tonight. While I don’t think this is any less important than determining how a future with Quin is possible, I already told Quin I’d be there to talk about it.

“You’re not going to be home tonight,” Damon says. He tries to keep his tone casual, but I hear the bitterness in it.

“Come over later,” I say, earning myself twin expressions of sarcastic ‘really?’s. I grin. “Yeah, come over at six. We’ll get food. Then you can take me home.”

“Why not just come home?” Declan asks.

Sighing, I say, “Because Quin and I already made plans to discuss something. Please, just come over at six.”

They nod. “Alright,” Damon says. “Where are you going now?”

“Library. I need to finish this last paper,” I say and turn toward my destination.

“Want some company?” Declan asks and I look at them.

Smiling, I nod. “Yep.”



I GATHER the books I need and bring them back to the table. While most classes are embracing the future with everything being electronic, this class wants us to use actual paper books. “So you don’t forget how to use them and cite your sources properly.” I mean, yeah, okay, but we can always look that information up *online* if the need ever arises.

Sitting between them, I can pretend that the world is right again. Declan takes my left hand in his right, linking our

fingers together as he reads over his own textbook and Damon has his hand on my thigh. They're sitting closer than we started and in a way that is completely normal for us.

Almost like there's nothing wrong at all. The ache in my chest reminds me that's not the case at all.

Quin gets home before I do, but he's still in the entry when I open the door. He has me in his arms and my legs wrapped around him before I can say anything, pressing me against the wall and kissing me thoroughly. I melt into him. Loving the way he loves me. How I can feel it in every single touch.

"I ordered pizza to be delivered in an hour."

*I can't lose this. I can't lose him.*

When he lets my mouth go and kisses along my neck, I say, "I invited the twins over for dinner at six."

"Mm," he hums.

"Damon got a job, too. We need to look for somewhere to live but... I think that needs to follow our conversation. That arrangement might change a little depending on what we agree on. Right?"

I can hear my own vulnerability. Like I'm waiting for him to tell me he's changed his mind. He doesn't want to be with me over the summer. That's too far and he doesn't think I'm worth the hassle.

Quin sighs. "I hate when you start thinking like that," he murmurs.

My breath catches. Did I say those things out loud?

"I can practically hear you convincing yourself that I don't want you," he says. His hands shift so one is holding my ass up while the other reaches behind me to push my sneaker from my foot. He repeats the process with my other and then brings me into the house further.

We stop in the living room and we drop onto the couch where he blankets my body with his. I love his weight on me. The security of it. Like he's everywhere.

“Here’s what I’m thinking,” he says. “You three find a place and once you secure it, I’ll find a short-term rental close by.”

“Yeah, but that’s not the part I want to talk about,” I say, squirming under him until he picks his face up so I can see it. My heart is racing. “I know that you’ll stay until the contract is up, but what then? I need to know what comes after that. Are you still going to love me?”

Okay, that last question wasn’t intentional.

Quin’s expression softens. “My love does not expire, Simon,” he says quietly. I release a breath. “You’re my entire reason for living right now.”

“But what happens when right now is over?”

“When right now is over, I’ll be old and senile.”

I snort but shake my head. “I’m serious, Quin,” I whisper. “It’s something I really need to know. I need us to have a plan in place to work towards or I’m going to be freaking out as every day gets closer to July seventeenth.”

He brushes a kiss on my lips. “Baby, I need to see how your twins are going to behave.” My heart nearly stops. This can’t be reliant on the twins’ behavior. It’s going to end really badly if that’s—“Stop doing that,” he chastises, nipping at my jaw. “I’m not going anywhere, Simon. I won’t live without you. But I need to see if they’re going to continue to be hostile or if we can find some peace. That’s going to determine how close I live to you.”

“So... are we talking like... in Glensdale versus here?”

He chuckles. “No, baby. In the same building, next door, down the road, across town. Maybe the next town. I don’t want to encroach on them and your space with them. I don’t want to run into them if my presence is just going to make them more belligerent. Maybe time and space will help smooth things over.”

“It really sucks that I have to split my time like this,” I say, feeling like a grumpy toddler. I’d kind of like to stomp my foot right now.

“We’ll get through it.”

His mouth comes back on mine, and we kiss until there’s a knock on the door. I can’t help but wonder what will happen even if Declan and Damon lose their resentment. What kind of future do I have moving between two houses? How can I be with Quin and maintain the close friendship Declan, Damon, and I have always had? The thought of losing that makes my chest hurt. But that same ache is present when I think of not having Quin, too.

I get up for the door, still sighing over my bleak future. Really, there’s no right answer. Shouldn’t I choose the man I love enough to want to marry and have kids with over my two best friends? But then, why is that decision so hard to make? Why does it feel wrong? Why do they both feel wrong, like no matter what I choose, it’s wrong?

Opening the door, I find the twins. They’re not smiling exactly, but they’re still tense. Always stiff and rigid when anything concerns Quin at all. Declan is holding pizza boxes.

“We met the delivery guy as we were pulling in,” he says and I nod, backing up to let them come inside. They slip out of their shoes, and I reach for Damon again, needing to hug him.

Everything feels like there’s a finite date.

“What’s wrong?” he asks after I don’t let him go right away.

I shake my head. “Nothing,” I say, and we all hear the lie. At least they don’t challenge it right now. I lead them in, and we gather around the table.

Quin nods for me to sit between them, so I do. Which seems to put them at ease. We eat in near silence. I miss Vulcan being the buffer right now. That man doesn’t like silence, but his conversation is also never forced. A pang of sadness hits me again as I realize Quin would be moving away from Vulcan, too.

He’s walking away from everything. For me.

“So?” Declan says when we finish the pizza. He looks at me while Damon stares at Quin.

I sigh. Maybe not telling them the whole truth is the best way to go. Yeah, because that's a good idea in any scenario, right?

"Quin's coming with me," I say and feel them both tense further. "I know you don't like this, but I love him." Declan winces and looks away. I grab his hand and wait until he meets my eyes again. "That doesn't mean I love you any less or any differently. That doesn't mean I want something different from what we've planned our entire lives."

"We were kids," Damon says quietly. "You're not obligated to follow through on something we planned when we were eleven."

"And twelve and thirteen and sixteen. And just last month," I say. He chuckles. "I know you'd like to think I'm still the boy you rescued from the shitty home his life turned into and wrap me up so you can protect me from the world. I know you want to take care of me and make everything else go away. But I'm not that kid anymore. That means that sometimes I still want to be taken care of. But it also means that I need you to remember that I'm an adult, too."

"You have him now," Declan says, his voice dull, but I think that's his attempt at not sounding like an asshole. "You don't need us."

"Don't be stupid," I snap, and he frowns at me. "Why do you keep insisting it's him or you? If Quin can accept it, then I don't see why you have to be such assholes about it."

"Can you?" Damon asks. I turn to find him still looking at Quin.

Quin nods. "I already do. I've never had an issue with you, Damon. You've always had one with me."

"You touched him," he accused.

"Not without his permission," Quin says. "I don't push him until he's uncomfortable, either."

Damon's jaw tenses. That's the first time I've heard Quin admonish them.

“I don’t want you to pretend to get along,” I say before he can respond. “I need you to be polite. Civil. Can you do that?”

“What if I can’t?” Declan asks.

I shake my head and pull my hand from his. He sucks in a breath and reaches for me again. “I don’t know,” I admit. “But I can’t keep living like that. Something needs to change.”

By the way the twins look at Quin, I know what they don’t want to change. They want Quin to go away.

Thirty-Four

## QUINLAN



WE FLY INTO GLENSDALE, and there's a rental car waiting for us. It's not at all awkward when the four of us climb in. I rented the car since theirs will be delivered later in the week. They'd spent the past week after graduation at the Whitaker house to spend time with the twins' parents before moving. Waiting at the terminal to board the plane was the first time I'd seen Simon in days. It took everything in me not to maul him.

In that week, their apartment was packed up, loaded in moving vans, and on the way to Glensdale. The movers would arrive a couple hours after we did. And later this afternoon, I'll meet the realtor with the key to my rental, which is four condominium complexes down the road from the one Simon purchased with the twins.

The ride is silent as we move through the new city, the only sound in the car being the navigation telling us where we're going. I pull into guest parking since their cars would be here later, too. I really like the convenience of all of their belongings arriving when they do. No wait to get comfortable.

I leave my suitcase in the car but take Simon's when the twins get theirs. Do I receive glares for this? Yes. But I could have just left it in my car so I bring it to my place; keep Simon with me. I'm not that much of a dick, though, sometimes I'd like to be.

Their condo is on the eighth floor and opens into a living area with large glass windows overlooking part of the city. Simon makes a beeline straight for it and stares out.



When he's done looking, I follow him to the three doors opposite the windows. Two bedrooms and a bathroom. The main bedroom already has a queen size bed in it. It looks dwarfed in the enormous room.

"Why don't you get a bigger bed?" I ask, looking at all the empty space.

Declan frowns at me. "We sleep in a pile. Why get a bigger bed?"

"Because you have room to do so?" I suggest.

He looks around the room and shrugs. "Unnecessary."

There's a large walk-in closet and then an en suite bathroom.

The second bedroom isn't anything special, but it also has a decently sized closet. No attached bathroom, though.

I absently wonder where they sleep when Simon spends the night with me. Is that why they have a second room? Unable to stop myself, I ask. "Why do you always have a two bedroom if you only use one for the three of you?"

"For our parents," Damon says.

"We won't ever use it," Declan says, as if taunting me that they're going to sleep with Simon. "We sleep together. Always have and will."

I shake my head and turn away. I'm not the enemy, but that doesn't stop them from trying to make me one at every interaction.

"Stop," Simon says quietly. "Don't be a dick."

At least he sees it, too.

At the far end of the condo are the kitchen and dining areas. Most of the living space is wide open; though the kitchen is tucked back between the wall to the bedroom and the wall to the neighboring unit, leaving the dining area with the city views.

"I'm hungry," Simon says as he moves to my side. "Want to order some food while we wait for everything?"

I nod and kiss his cheekbone. “Whatever you want.”

He grins and pulls out his phone, opening the food delivery app. “What’s our zip code again?”

Declan rattles it off as he stares at my arm around Simon like he wants nothing more than to set me on fire. If they weren’t being such tools at every chance, I’d have taken my hand away. But fuck that. I pull Simon a little closer. He shifts to press his body against mine, resting his forehead against my neck as he scrolls through his phone.

Declan’s eyes turn to mine, narrowing. I don’t give him any kind of expression at all. Not that I think I have a particularly good poker face. But I don’t let him see my frustration or anger or irritation with them. I won’t let them have that kind of power over me.

However, I’m also going to make it really fucking clear that I’m here to stay and that Simon is mine, too. No discussion. That’s just how it’s going to be.

Simon lists off different kinds of food and we settle on Hungarian because none of us have had it before. We decide on a whole variety of food and Simon checks out. While Declan and Damon argue about who’s going to pay for it, Simon ignores them and places the order before leveling them with a stare.

“You’ve already got a grocery delivery scheduled, don’t you?” Simon asks.

“Yes,” Damon says.

“And you paid for that. I can afford one meal, which you’re well aware of since I know you still monitor my account.”

That’s news to me and I look at the twins. They don’t pay attention to me, though. Instead, they stare at Simon. Why do they watch his account? What kind of oppressive relationship is this? Did I miss something here? Yes, I always knew that they were a little overbearing and suffocating (by a little, I mean ridiculously obsessive about it) but I had no idea that they were controlling his money flow.

Before I can get mad about it, Simon turns to me an amused smile. “They make sure it doesn’t fall below zero,” he tells me. “Not that I’ve ever let it get that low. But when they think I’m not paying attention, they deposit money into my account, so I’m never without. And now they hate to see it spike every month.”

“Ah,” I say, letting my misplaced anger go. They may hate me, but they’d never hurt Simon. Not like that. I can trust that.

“You think we were stealing from him?” Declan asks, tone sharp.

“Don’t,” Simon answers back, just as severely. “I mean it, Dec. You need to stop.”

It’s a very quiet, very tense lunch. I’m thankful when the movers come. I volunteer to get their cars taken care of just so I can get away from their glares. They need to be inside to direct the movers; I don’t. So I head downstairs and take their cars into the underground garage one at a time and park them—black, gray, white—in their three designated spots.

It doesn’t take me long, but thankfully when I get upstairs the realtor calls to tell me she’s there early if I’m in the area. Fuck yes, I am. While I mean to tell Simon I’ll be back later, he announces that he’s coming with me.

The twins don’t say anything. Just glare daggers at me as we leave. It’s really a good thing that they can’t mentally hurt me. I’m sure they would. I’d be dead a hundred times over by now.

The condo I rented is four complexes from Simon’s. We walk down the sidewalk hand-in-hand, though not talking. I think he’s relieved to have the peace. Away from the silent aggression. This is going to be even more exhausting than when we had school between us.

We meet the woman in the lobby. She shows us around the building’s amenities before leading us to my condo. It’s on the third floor and facing a different side of the city. From this side, I can see the ocean in the distance. I smile as Simon

places his hands on the glass windows and stares out with wide eyes.

I leave him there while I finish some paperwork with the realtor. Then she's gone, leaving the key in my hand. I rented one already furnished and while it's not exactly to my taste, I don't have to live in an echoing, empty apartment for nearly two months until we figure out what we're going to do when the contract ends.

I meant what I said—I'm not leaving Simon. I can't live without him, I won't. But I also meant it when I said I didn't know how to make this work with the twins' constant hostile resentment and antagonism.

When I turn to the windows to find Simon, he's not there. I slowly make my way through the place I only saw through pictures and find Simon in the big bedroom. My breath catches to find him naked on the floor. He's on his knees with his hands resting flat on his thighs, his soft cock resting along the crease where they're pressed together.

Fuck, he's... an angel. So fucking perfect it hurts to look at him sometime.

He's watching me with an almost bashful expression. But I can see the need in his eyes. While I'm sure he was glad to spend the week with Declan and Damon and their family, I could hear the stress in his voice every single day. Even without my presence to aggravate them, I don't think they ever stopped pushing Simon in their own silent, passive way. Taking advantage of his trust and love in them.

I'm starting to really detest them for it.

"Quin," he murmurs. "Make me cry."

I shiver, irritated at the way my cock floods with blood as it fattens in my pants. Shutting the bedroom door behind me, I strip out of my clothes as I get close to him. I pick him up off the floor and place him on the bed.

If it hadn't been more than a week since we've had sex, I'd find a different way to give him what he wants. I'm all too

aware that he doesn't like sex in the same way I do. But I'll also never deny him what he wants.

I lay him on the bed and then look around. "We don't have anything here. My suitcase is still in the car."

He smiles, cheeks flushing, and holds up a little packet of lube.

I groan as I let my body fall on top of him, kissing him deeply. The way I wanted to when I saw him walk into the airport. For a long minute, we just kiss. It's been far too long since I tasted him. He tastes a little like the food we ate, but he also tastes of Simon Everett. The man I've loved since he walked into my classroom almost a year ago.

"Please," he finally says.

"Yes, sugar baby," I whisper, and shift to tear open the lube.

"Don't prep. I really need to cry, Quin."

I look at him with a frown. More than a week since something has been in his ass. Pressing my lips together, he smiles softly. "I need you," he whispers. "Please take care of me."

Groaning, I kiss him again. "I hate hurting you."

"No, you don't," he says, smiling softly. "You like it as much as I do."

"Okay, I hate that you're right."

He grins this time. "That I believe. It's been a long week. Please. I need this. We both do."

I nod and kiss him while I soak my dick in lube. While I don't prep him, I do press a finger into his ass to make sure I get some lube there, too. When I'm relatively convinced I won't rip him in two, I line my dick up and press inside him.

Then I wrap my arms around him. He groans, letting his legs fall open, even as his muscles twitch with the pressure I'm creating. His fingers dig into my skin a little more with

the pressure as I press against him until I finally push through the ring of his ass.

He gasps, his body jerking in my hold. I don't stop, but gently rock as I watch his face. His eyes are wide and quickly getting glassy. He's starting to gasp for breaths, his muscles twitching under me as twinges of pain spark through his body.

Then he's whining, and tears drip from his eyes.

"Look at me," I whisper.

Simon blinks and shifts his head so he can see my eyes. "I love you." I push in deeper and a sob breaks through. "Let go, baby. Let me hurt you. Cry for me, my love."

He doesn't let go until I'm slowly and steadily rocking in him. Finally, he begins crying for real. His body shakes as he lets go of his frustrations. He clings to me and I kiss his damp skin as I use his body to please us both, only in very different ways.

"That's it, Simon," I whisper in his ear as he cries. I kiss him softly below his ear. "I love to see you like this. Just for me."

"It hurts," he says.

I shiver and my hips thrust sharply once on their own. His startled cry makes my dick throb. "Good. Hurt for me, Sugar Baby."

"Harder," he whispers. "Please, hurt me harder, Quin."

There's a part of me that wants to, but I suppress that. Not right now. Not this time.

I kiss him gently as he whines. While I have him distracted with a kiss, I move his hands so they're pressed between us, crossed over his chest, pinned there. I tangle one of my hands in his hair and he moans. My other hand drops between us and I rub along his soft dick in the way he likes.

He's not completely soft, though, which surprises me. Still, I don't try for stimulation and scold him when he tries to make himself hard. I can tell when he does because he gets tense and frustrated.

“Don’t,” I whisper, pausing my thrusts to stare down at him. “I don’t want you like that.”

“Why?” he asks.

“Because if it doesn’t happen naturally, I don’t want it to happen at all. I don’t need you to pretend, Simon. Just let me give you what you need.”

“You’re not hurting me hard enough,” he says, blinking tears out of his eyes.

I sigh and rub my thumb over his dick. He grunts when I get to the head, a shiver running through his body.

“Let me use you how I want to right now. Okay? I promise I’ll keep you hurting. I’ll keep making these pretty tears stain your face.”

“Promise,” he whispers.

I nod. “Simon, I’ll give you the fucking world. All you have to do is ask for it.”

He smiles, but tears still shine in his eyes. I shift so both of my hands are in his hair as I rub his scalp. He groans, his eyes fluttering shut. For a minute, we remain like that.

Then I start fucking him again. I keep going for a very long time, switching it up when his tears slow. I keep him crying, keep him mumbling about how he hurts, about how he wants me to make him feel good, how much he wants it to stop being too much to carry.

He’s babbling as I use him. Moving my dick inside his too tight body, making sure I bring him as much pain as he craves. I don’t think he realizes what he’s saying most of the time. But I hold him to me and watch as his expression shifts constantly.

His body is completely limp under me, which I’m always surprised by. He’s not tense at all, except his ass sometimes. When I hit him just right. I keep him in a tight grip so he can’t move. Giving him the illusion that he doesn’t have a choice but to take me how I want him. Making sure he feels that he’s secure and at no time will I ever let him fall.

I only work for my orgasm when he begins slipping into subspace. When his cries trickle off, no matter how I move him. Before he slips away completely, I release into him, keeping my dick deep while I pulse and fill his ass.

A weird vision of him in my arms as he holds our newborn flashes in my eyes. I almost snort. It's not like I can actually get him pregnant. But I hold on to the vision as I deposit my load inside him, feeling the warm ache in my chest that wants that future more than I want to live.

I roll us so I'm on my back and he's splayed over my body. When he sighs contentedly, I just hold him and stare at the ceiling. I don't know how to fix the turmoil in his life. But I need to do something.

As much as I love hurting him, love seeing him break down and cry for me, I hate how much he needs it. I hate how miserable he is when he wants to just cry but doesn't feel like he can on his own.

I'd do anything to take that away from him.



Thirty-Five

## QUINLAN



JUNE PASSES SLOWLY and while I enjoy being with my man every single day, I can see that he's looking a little more tired every day, too. He's stopped talking about the twins at all, avoiding any conversation in which they might be mentioned.

By the tenth, he doesn't like to go home. I'm not sure what's going on, but I know that he's running out of steam to keep fighting it. He doesn't sleep well with me and he's miserable at home. There's no happy medium anymore.

Every time he steps foot into my condo, he looks ragged. Then he meets my eyes and, for just an instant, his face lights up with a smile as he sinks into my arms. I put that smile there. Honestly, there's no better feeling.

But it isn't long before his stress catches up again. All too soon, he remembers. Remembers that whatever the twins are doing now is making him miserable. Remembers that his friendship with them is under so much pressure right now that it's going to crack. Crumble. Completely fall apart.

And then where will he be?

I almost wish it would already, so he can begin to heal. Don't get me wrong; I *don't* want him to hurt. And I don't want him to lose the most important people in his life. But right now, the relationship between the three of them is toxic.

However, for right now, miles and miles are spreading between us and the twins. It's the opening benefit of my father's new not-for-profit LGBT organization this coming weekend and I'm flying Simon and myself out there to support

him. Vulcan will be there, too, so Simon doesn't feel so overwhelmed being surrounded by people he doesn't know—my family.

Also, because Vulcan was ecstatic about my father's project and wanted to be involved.

The further we get from Glensdale, I can visibly see his stress falling away. It'll come back in the evenings when he doesn't sleep well, but I think, at this point, it might be worth the sacrifice. I'll get him some sleep aids if I need to.

We're already in the rental car as I drive. Simon is staring out the window with a smile on his face. "Never been to California before?" I ask.

Simon shakes his head. "No. The twins' parents used to take us on vacations, but I don't think we've ever gone to California for some reason."

"The city my parents live in is right off base, so it's not a true representation of Cali. It's a military town and overrun by men in uniform. Their families and their offspring."

"You like men in uniform?" he asks, turning to look at me.

I smirk. "You'd think, but I've been beaten up for being gay by men in uniform a few too many times growing up to be attracted to that particular look."

Simon scowls and turns back to looking out the window. I take his hand in mine. He's quiet again and I ask, "You all right?"

I'm expecting something about the twins, so I'm surprised when he answers something different. "I've never met my boyfriend's parents before."

I grin. "Your last didn't want to bring you home?"

He smirks at me, glaring out of the corner of his eye without giving me his full attention. "I've never met a girlfriend's parents before, either."

Chuckling, I squeeze his hand. "I've never brought anyone home to them, either," I admit. "Except Vulcan, but we were never together."

“Why?” he asks, looking at me.

I shrug. “I’ve dated casually here and there. There was someone I was with for nearly a year. But I guess I always knew that anyone I’d been with wasn’t my person. Why get my parents attached if I know it’s temporary?”

“Why were you with someone for a year if you knew it wasn’t going to last?”

Shrugging again, I sigh. “Dunno. Sometimes it’s nice to be in a relationship. I like cuddling and sex, and whatever. I like the quiet moments where you can just be with someone. When he wanted to move in, I broke it off.”

He laughed. “That’s harsh.”

“Yeah, I know. I could have just said no and that I wasn’t ready, but I realized he was definitely far more invested in our relationship than I was. It seemed kinder to break it off since I just wasn’t going to be in the same place as him.”

“Why am I different?” he asks.

I look at him, shifting my eyes quickly from the road for just a moment. He’s not looking at me, but the smile that had been lingering on his lips is gone. I bring his hand to my lips and press them gently to his soft skin. “You’re my person,” I tell him. Simon turns his eyes to mine. “I knew it the moment I saw you, even if I was convinced that I was just obsessed with the gorgeous man that walked into my classroom because he was breathtaking.”

He huffs quietly and shakes his head a little. A moment goes by before he says, “That’s not actually the thing I was asking why about.”

It takes me a minute to recall what I said when he asked why. “Why did I introduce Vulcan to my parents? His family is shitty, and he needed parental love. I have plenty of that.”

Simon shakes his head, though he smiles again. “Come on, Quin. You’re avoiding the obvious topic I’m asking why about, why are you avoiding it?”

I frown and shake my head. “Spell it out, love.”

“Why weren’t you and Vulcan ever together?” he says, exasperated.

Laughing, I squeeze his hand again. “That’s just not how we clicked, Simon. Nothing really to tell. We were immediately friends, and I was absolutely fascinated by him, but there was just nothing romantic or physical between us. It was always platonic.”

“I feel like that’s the story of my life,” he mutters.

I pull into a parking space at the venue and put the car in park before turning to him. “That’s okay, you know.”

Simon turns his head to look at me, resting it on the headrest. “I feel like maybe it is now, but I wonder if I’d still feel the same way if things were different.”

“Different how?”

His smile is crooked when he says, “If I didn’t feel that way about you. Not the physical thing. We both know that part doesn’t work for me, but the romantic thing.” He presses his lips together for a second. “I’ve never been good at romance.”

Cupping his face, I bring his lips to mine. “I think you fall better into the role of being romanced than doing the romancing,” I tell him. “You love romantic gestures. But you’ve never really been in a position to be the romancer.”

He sighs dramatically. “From one relationship where I’m the housewife into another. Never the working husband.”

My brows knit together as I stare at him. When he looks at me again, he bursts out laughing. Simon shakes his head. “Sorry. It was a joke between Declan, Damon, and me.” When his smile fades, he says, “It was a joke to me but maybe not to them, now that...”

Now that he knows that Declan’s been in love with him for years. I wonder why Damon hasn’t come clean yet. Maybe because they see how fucked up they’ve made this.

I’m sure that somehow Simon isn’t the complete innocent party I make him out to be. I won’t pretend not to be biased. But from where I stand, I just don’t see what Simon has done

to encourage this. Except being completely, totally and utterly naïve and oblivious.

“Ready to go in?”

Simon looks out the windshield and nods. I climb out and then round the car to offer him my hand. He’d already opened the door. We’ll have to work on that. He gives me an amused smile as he accepts my hand. Teasingly batting his lashes at me, he says, “Thank you, sweetheart.”

Shutting the car door, I press him against it and kiss him. He sighs, wrapping his arms around me. Once, his hand would have been stationary on my waist; not really sure what to do or how he felt about the whole thing. Now, he hugs me tightly, his hands running over my back, his fingers digging in. His entire body melts into me.

“Quinlan!”

Releasing Simon, I turn to find my mother hurrying toward us. She’s grinning and despite having just caught me kissing someone, her eyes are locked on me. I catch her up in a hug.

“I’ve missed you so much, Quinlan! So good to have you here.”

“Miss you, too, Mom,” I say and close my eyes for a minute.

I let her go and she touches my cheeks and then looks me over. Making sure I’m in one piece. “Thank you for coming. It means the world to your father and me.”

“I wouldn’t miss it, Mom.”

Her eyes snap over my shoulder, and I know she’s finally spotted Simon. I turn to look at him, taking in his wistful expression and the almost absent, flirty smile on his lips. Fuck, he’s gorgeous.

“This is Simon,” I tell my mom. “My boyfriend.”

My mom’s eyes get wide and then she breaks out into a grin, clasping her hands at her chest. “It’s so wonderful to meet you, honey. I hope you enjoyed your trip.”

Simon nods, his smile widening. “It’s been great so far. Thank you. It’s great to meet you, too.”

For an awkward moment, my mother just stares at Simon with a smile. Then she pats me on my cheek and turns. “Let’s go. V is already here.”

I take Simon’s hand and he falls into my side. “I can tell that you’ve never introduced her to anyone before.”

Chuckling, I shake my head. “Only if it matters,” I say, kissing the side of his head. The smile he gives me... Fuck. I melt. Also, my dick likes it so I chub a little, too. There’s no part of me that isn’t all about this man. Every single cell in my body is obsessed with him.

The inside of the building is covered in donated Pride items from furniture to sculptures and tapestries, mugs and clothing, art... everything you could possibly think of is in this building, somehow geared towards Pride. Not just in a way that can be hidden away in your home, and you can say that you supported the LGBT community without actually displaying it. The bright rainbow colors will not be muted.

Something catches my eye and I pull Simon in that direction before holding up a belt. It’s one of those weird buckle ones, but I see that there are other, more normal options. I show him one with black, gray, white, and purple colors. “Asexual,” I tell him. “This is your flag.”

Simon stares at it for a minute before taking it in his hand. Then he laughs a little. I’m surprised when I see tears in his eyes. “I always love supporting the twins. It’s weird because I always knew that no one in the community has it easy. They have to fight for their right to do something as simple as marrying who they want. But I always felt like I was on the outside looking in. I didn’t belong *in* the community.”

I wrap an arm around him and hug him to my chest. “Whether you’re actually represented by one of the letters or not, the fact that you tirelessly and without judgment support everyone who falls under one of those letters means you’re a part of it. Now, you have your own letter, though.”

“That’s what the A is, isn’t it? In the longer LGBTQIA+? It means ‘asexual’.”

“Yep.”

He huffs. “You know, if I’d have just fucking said something to them, I’d have figured my shit out a long time ago. It’s not like I haven’t heard the word before. I think I even knew that it meant not sexual. Hell, I’m pretty sure Declan has mentioned someone in a previous class as being asexual. I kind of feel stupid.”

“Don’t. There’s nothing wrong with not being ready to talk about it. Given what you thought about yourself—which I will say your twins are stupid for not picking up on it with as much as they’re all over you—I’m not at all surprised you weren’t comfortable bringing it up. That doesn’t make you stupid. It makes you human.”

“Son.” I hear my dad’s voice and turn to find him. He’s wearing an Army shirt over jeans and his hair is still high and tight. Hell, he still looks like a soldier, even with his salt and pepper hair. He’s smiling as he approaches, but unlike my mother, he takes in Simon right away.

I hug him as I did Mom and for a minute, I just sigh. I’m ridiculously thankful I have the family I do.

When I pull away, I introduce Simon. My dad grins and shakes his hand, but doesn’t say anything except about the event. I point out Vulcan to Simon, and he grins, excusing himself to go to my best friend.

Vulcan is wearing sequined pants. They’re loose and shimmer with pearly pink sparkles as he moves. His shirt is a plain white tee with a low-cut collar and short sleeves. He also wears a pearl necklace and sparkling sneakers to match. While he isn’t nearly as flesh-bared as usual, his pastel tattoo sleeves and those over his chest that are also sporting a healthy amount of chest hair, peek out everywhere. They go up his neck and disappear into his hairline.

He turns when Simon stands next to him and wraps my man up in his huge arms, bringing his feet off the ground.



My smile is far too big on my face as Simon laughs and hugs him in return.

“You look happy, Son,” my dad says.

For a second longer, I can't look away, but eventually I force myself to meet my dad's eyes. He's grinning, a look of such pride on his face that I nearly flush. “I am, Dad,” I say. “He's it for me.”

Dad smiles and claps my arm. “I can tell. I'm happy for you. And you best tell me before you have kids because we will not be living this far away.”

I laugh. “Slow down, Pops. One thing at a time.” Neutralizing twins, first. Then we can work on the baby thing.

He hugs me again, thanks me for the pieces I donated, and says he'll catch up with me later. I head for Simon and Vulcan.

“You need some sparkle up here, too,” Simon says, trying to wave his hand over Vulcan's head. At six-nine, that wasn't really feasible for my not even six-foot boyfriend.

My boyfriend!

Vulcan flushed a little. “Well, I have some makeup,” he admits before glancing around. “I just wasn't sure if... if I should, you know? It's an important event and I don't want to gather the wrong kind of attention for the charity.”

I slap his arm and he flinches, looking at me like I just kicked his puppy. “Don't you do that, V. If you want to wear a fucking speedo, you're wearing it. Don't hide.”

“Yeah, what he says,” Simon says, grinning. “I think you need sparkle. If you want to wear it, then wear it. Fuck everyone else. Besides, this is all about Pride, isn't it?”

Vulcan bites the inside of his lip before he nods, breaking out into a smile. “Help me put it on?”

Simon laughs. “V, I've never touched makeup. I don't know the first thing about it.”

“Don't your twins have any?”

“Yes, but they're twins. They do each other's.”

“Ah.” He grabs Simon’s hand and drags him away. “I’ll show you, Simon. Then you can dress Quin up.”

“No,” I say, but let them go without me as they look over their shoulders with wicked grins.

They return twenty minutes later. It’s subtle, but there’s no doubt that Vulcan feels better now that he has sparkles on his eyelids and around his eyes. There’s even some in his hair, which I almost miss because the small tiara drew my attention from his hair.

He looks radiant.

But my eyes don’t leave Simon. I’m not sure how he managed to get a tiara on Simon’s head, but what I’m really looking at are the four colored stripes in his hair—black, gray, white, and purple. When he catches me staring, his cheeks flush, but I’m so fucking proud of him I nearly cry. Especially when he smiles bashfully and lightly touches the colors in his hair.

‘Love you,’ he mouths, and I know that I’d do anything for this man. Anything at all to keep that smile on his face.

Love is not a strong enough word for what I feel for Simon Everett.

Thirty-Six

## QUINLAN



THE DAY SIMON shows up looking like he'd just been through a fucking fight, I've decided I've had enough. He climbs me as soon as he's in the door, wrapping his body around mine and clinging to me like a child.

His chest is heaving as he tries to catch his breath and hold himself together. I know what he's going to say before the words leave his mouth.

"Hurt me," Simon whispers. "Make me cry."

I swallow but shake my head. "Not this time, sugar baby. We're going to do something different."

He whimpers. "But I need—"

"I know, love," I say, hugging him tightly as I turn down the hall and into the bedroom. Setting him on his feet, I slowly divest him of his clothing. "On the bed," I say. "On your stomach."

Simon goes and lays down. I can see the tension in his shoulders; I'm sure he's riddled with knots. Then I discard most of my clothing as well, though I keep my underwear on as I head into the en suite and grab the massage oil.

I return and climb on the bed, straddling his legs. "Hard," he whispers.

"Not right now, baby," I say and rub oil between my hands. I can hear the desperation in his words when he tries to argue. With my hands braced on his back, I lean over and bite

his ear gently. “Trust me, Simon. I will take care of you. You can cry and I’ll hold you.”

He swallows. “Make me cry,” he begs.

Sighing, I nod, but I don’t give him exactly what he’s asking for. Instead, I dig my fingers into his back, and he moans as I hit the first of what is likely going to be a whole lot of knots. I move up his spine and into his shoulders, where I dig into every tense muscle I can find.

It doesn’t take long before he goes limp beneath me.

“You’re so perfect, Simon,” I say. “So sweet and kind and thoughtful. You have such a good heart.” He takes a shaky breath and I know he’ll cry for me if I keep talking to him like this. Because he wants to cry, because he *needs* to feel the release of all the shit that’s weighing him down, I keep going. “You’re so perfect. Every inch of your body. Every corner of your mind. Every sweet word from your mouth. I love how open you are for me. How easily you talk to me and trust me with your secrets.”

He sniffles and his lips part.

“You have no idea how much it means to me that you give me every uncomfortable piece of yourself and trust me to help you through it. You’re such a special person, Simon. So easy to love.”

*So soft to hurt.*

“You have such a big heart. You love with your entire being.”

I see the first tear escape his closed eyes and trickle down his nose to drop onto the bed. I dig into his ribs and he groans.

“I’m going to give you everything, sweet sugar baby. Going to keep you and give you the world. I will lay everything at your feet. I will make sure you see yourself clearly, no matter what I have to do, until you’re convinced of your perfection.”

His cries are soft, but they’re coming. I move down and start digging into his lower back and the top of his ass.

“When you finally understand how important you are to me, I’m going to convince you that you’re a damn god. Then I’m going to build you a house. A home all your own. I’m going to fill it with fluffy things you can cuddle and spoil. I’m going to have babies with you, Simon. We’re going to grow old together.”

I lean over so my lips are at his ear. “I’m never, ever going to leave you. You’re mine. Always mine. I will love you until my last breath.”

That was what he needed to make his tears flow. As he cries, I continue to dig my fingers and heels of my palms into his body, murmuring all the promises I intended to make come true.

When I’m done with his back, I roll him over and start again on this front. I don’t skip an inch of his body and I don’t stop until his cries taper off. He’s tired. Exhausted. But not falling into subspace. I think he’s actually *too worn out* for that, which breaks my heart.

I lay beside him. “I have an errand, but I’m going to wrap you up tightly and I’ll be back before you open your eyes again. All right, baby?”

Simon sighs and nods, though I’m not sure if he heard me. Quickly, I do just what I said I would. I wrap him like a burrito and then surround him with a mound of blankets and pillows I pull from the closet so he’s surrounded. I drape a heavy forty-pound weighted blanket on him and listen to him sigh. He’s used to being sandwiched between bodies, so I know this isn’t quite enough weight to simulate that, but because he’s fading into sleep, I think it’ll be enough for a short nap.

I dress quickly and leave the house. I really don’t want him to wake up alone. Though I should drive, the twins only live a few blocks away and I know I’m going to need to take the few minutes back to calm myself down.

I’m done playing nice. I can’t take this anymore.

I storm up to their floor and use Simon’s key to let me in. “We need to talk, Declan and Damon. Now.”

Following their voices, I storm into the kitchen and then stop short. The twins are there, alright, but the woman I wasn't expecting. I've seen her in Simon's pictures on his phone, so I know I'm looking at the twins' mother.

She stares at me in surprise.

"Uh," I say, blinking at her. Simon didn't say she was here. Then again, he didn't say much of anything.

*Hurt me.*

"Hi," I say. "Sorry." My eyes flicker to the twins and they're both staring at me with open hostility. It's clear that they're not going to introduce me, so I say, "I'm Quin, Simon's boyfriend."

Her eyes widen, and I wonder how she didn't know this. They were there for a week after graduation. When she glances at the twins, I do, too, and I know it's because they didn't want her to know.

She looks at me again and sighs. "This explains a lot," she says, wiping her hands on a dish towel. "I'm going to make up my room." Then she leaves and I'm standing there with the twins.

"Where is Simon?" Declan asks.

"Not here because he can't stand to be around you," I snap. He has the good grace to flinch. "Look, I don't give a fuck if you don't like me. I really, truly don't. But I'm done playing a neutral party. I've tried to support your bullshit and give you the benefit of the doubt that you're just afraid to lose him, but you better get your heads out of your asses because you're really close to doing so."

"You can't take him from us," Declan growls.

"You're so blinded by your own anger and jealousy that you can't see what's happening right in front of you," I yell as I come closer and slam my hands on the island. "You're toxic assholes. *You're* causing him so much fucking stress that he's ready to collapse. It won't be me taking him from you. It's going to be Simon walking away. You're pushing him beyond what he can handle."

There's a moment where they don't speak.

"He won't leave," Damon says.

I laugh, shaking my head as anger surges through me like a hot iron burning into my skin. "For as many good things as he used to say about you, I think he's wrong about your intelligence because you're being really fucking stupid right now."

"You came here to tell us we're stupid," Declan says, fists clenching.

"Fuck's sake." I have to force myself to breathe because all I can see right now is red. My blood is pumping so loudly in my ears that it almost sounds like a drumbeat. "No. I came here to try to convince you to grow the fuck up. Stop acting like children throwing temper tantrums because you're not getting your way. When that man walks out of this house and doesn't return, you'll only have yourselves to blame. Is that really what you want?"

I don't get an answer.

Furious, I turn and head for the door. "I really hope he does leave you," I say. "You deserve nothing more than that. You're selfish. Ignorant. Absolute dicks to the one person you claim to love more than any other."

I turn at the door, surprised to have found that they followed me. I wait, but still they don't speak.

"You think you're unhappy now? How are you going to feel when you suddenly wake up and he's not here? And you have no one to blame but yourselves?"

"It's nice that you think you have no blame in this," Declan says through a sneer.

I laugh and close my eyes. Fucking assholes. "You're right. It's totally my fault for loving him in a way that he doesn't get from you. For taking care of him and picking up his broken heart every time you tear him down. Every time you break him. It's absolutely my fault that I'm the one here trying to get you to pull your heads out of your asses before you push him until he finally snaps." I take a step closer. "I



*know* you can't stop bitching about me, but you know what the difference is between the three of us? All I've ever done is encourage his friendship with you while all you've done is tear me down. Now you're forcing him to choose."

"We've never told him to choose," Damon says.

"But you have. Every time you say something shitty about me, you're trying to get him to choose you by breaking up with me. That's the exact reason he won't. You're not a threat to me, Whitakers. Because I'm not competing for his love. You're convinced you are. When you're the only one competing in a game that only you're playing, that means there can only be a single outcome. You lose. The sad part is, Simon will too."

No answer. Surprise there.

"And yet, you're still too angry to care about that outcome."

I don't wait for anything further from them. It's going nowhere. So I leave and walk home, thankful that I didn't drive. I was right. I need the time to cool down.

By the time I'm home, I'm still jittery with frustration and anger. I don't know how to fix this, but at least I know it's not because I didn't try. Really, it's not mine to fix. I want to, for Simon's sake.

Stripping from my clothes again, I leave a trail of them to my bedroom and find Simon right where I left him. He's still sound asleep. For a minute, I just look at him.

With a sigh, I climb into bed with him. Simon rolls toward me in his sleep and I take him in my arms. "I love you," I whisper. "I'm here no matter what. Anything you need."

Thirty-Seven

## SIMON



RAINBOW DORSET UNIVERSITY is like nothing I've ever seen before. One of the reasons the twins and I chose Longwood was because it was advertised as LGBT friendly. When we visited, that was abundantly clear. It was comfortable and inviting. And close to home.

Rainbow Dorset is an entirely new world. I don't think I'd describe it as LGBT friendly. It's the damn capital of LGBT Pride. As I walk across campus with Quin, I can't help but stare. You know that classic UN picture with all the flags of the participating countries lined up out front? The campus center looks like this but with every variation of Pride flag you can think of.

I'm pretty sure that I walk through most of campus with my jaw dropped, staring at all the brightly graphitized buildings with Pride all over the place. My head spins as I see someone in a school jersey go by and I twist to follow him. It's a black jersey but the number on the front and back, along with the guy's name, is all rainbow. As is the stitching of the thick hem, also rainbow.

"This is unreal," I say.

Quin chuckles. He lets go of my hand and wraps his arm around my waist instead. "Wait till you see the school café. Even their drinks are colorful. As are their names."

Yesterday, Quin told me he was staying in Glensdale. While we'd intended to have a conversation closer to the termination of our contract (which I kind of laugh about now

since it seems like such a moot point), I was stupidly relieved that he decided to stay with me.

I know it's not easy with Damon and Declan. It's really not. Quin hasn't been back to my condo with them since the day we arrived in Glensdale. I can see that he wavers on whether he wants to come with me or not when I ask. He doesn't though, because he thinks it'll make it easier on me. You know, out of sight out of mind for the twins.

Except, that's not at all how it happens. The subtle digs and degradation and just nasty bullshit they say about Quin is like a little knife into my chest every single time. When I tell them to knock it off, they do. For about ten minutes.

It makes me sick to my stomach. I constantly feel on the verge of falling apart. Like my life is spinning so far out of control that I can't get a grip on anything. I can't make it stop. Sometimes, I just want to run away and never look back.

Except the idea of doing that hurts just as much as being there. Live without Declan and Damon? How will I do that? I've never imagined a life without them. But I sure as hell never imagined *this* life with them, either.

So when Quin told me that he'd given his notice at Longwood University and had secured a job here, I was fucking ecstatic. He's going to stay in his condo through the rental term, but he's changing units on the first of July. From the third to the eighteenth floor. Now at the top, with a wide, long balcony that overlooks the city and the ocean in the distance.

It's got three bedrooms, a dedicated office, and a wide-open living area.

The relief that swept through me when he told me he's staying was almost enough to make me cry all on its own. No pain. No endless kindness. Nothing. Just that he's staying with me. Because he loves me, and he doesn't want to be without me.

Despite the baggage that I carry, he wants me.

Today, we're checking out his new office. There aren't a lot of people around since it's summer; but like all campuses, there are summer classes. My guess is that there are also sports camps, which is why the guy in the jersey went by.

"It's pretty incredible," he agrees. "Wait till you see my office."

The school doesn't have a trades center like Longwood University does, but from what Quin says, they're looking to build it up. There aren't many trade schools in the entire state and they want to change that. Not only do they want to be *the* school for the trades, but they want expert level teaching.

They hired Quin as a really high up guy to build the department. With work-studies and everything! I forget his title. Don't judge me.

The building he leads me to is still under construction. "This is only phase one," he tells me. "Built with the trades I'm most familiar with in mind. It'll be ready by the start of the year." I look at it with doubt as we approach.

There's a single wing that looks like it's old that's open. Quin opens the door for me and we head up the stairs to the top floor. Down a hall and past an empty secretary desk, we stop in front of a door that says 'Quinlan Stommer, Dean of Trade School Professions.' I grin.

"Look at you!" I say, touching it with my finger. "I'm sleeping with a dean. This is like a professor/student romance on steroids."

Quin laughs as he unlocks the door and opens it.

There's none of his work on the walls, but the office is big with a view of part of the campus out the large windows behind his huge wood desk. It's real wood, too. Not compressed wood board or whatever it's called. Fake wood made with wood chips. Like chicken byproduct meal, but with wood.

He also has a couch and a large table. There's a mini fridge and a counter with the makings for coffee, which I think he'll

replace with tea fixings since I've never seen him drink much coffee.

I stand in front of the window and look outside. "This really is incredible," I say. Turning, I find him sitting in his chair. "I'm so, so proud of you."

Quin smiles and holds his hands out to me. I join him, dropping into his lap and letting him arrange me so he can wrap his arms around my entire body. Letting myself relax, I stare out the window with my head resting against his. "Thank you for staying with me."

"I meant it when I said there's nowhere else I'd rather be, sugar baby," he murmurs.

"About that. No more money, Quin."

"It's not July first yet."

"No more. I'm not your sugar baby anymore. I'm... something different."

"My boyfriend?" he asks, and I nod. "Mmm," he hums in response and kisses my neck softly. Over and over until I'm nearly melting in his arms. "You're always going to be my sugar baby," he murmurs. "Mine to love and spoil and give the world to. Contract or not."

"Fine, but no more money."

"Just a little bit of money."

"I have a job. I'm not even starting at minimum wage." Granted, it's a small store so, even though I'm the manager of the entire thing, it won't make me rich.

"No more money for now," he says.

"I don't—"

"I know, Simon," he says, cutting off my argument. "This isn't about whether you need money or not. It's about my need to take care of you. I *want to* give you everything. Use your money for bills and living. Let me do everything else."

It's on my lips to tell him he sounds like Declan and Damon, but I don't. These days, that's no longer a teasing

statement. It's not a fond memory or a welcome topic.

"I won't argue right now," I say, since we're still in the middle of June. Honestly, I don't hate the idea anymore.

I would have fought kicking and screaming against the twins until I got my way. But this is different. Everything about it is different. It's no lie that I love being taken care of. To be hugged and cuddled and fed. I love surprises and thoughtful gestures. I love affectionate attention.

I don't need a psychologist to tell me it derives from the sudden loss of such things when my family fell apart. It doesn't change that I'm a junkie for that shit.

It never occurred to me it could feel different receiving it from different people. I still crave Declan and Damon like a drug. They're a piece of me that's deeply fused with every part of my life. I love them with my whole heart, and I'd give almost anything to get our friendship back to the way it was six months ago.

But these same gestures, touches, and sentiments coming from Quin are an entirely new world. It makes me catch my breath. Makes my chest warm and tears constantly fill my eyes. To be loved and wanted by someone like this is just... unbelievable. How can he want *me* like that? Me? I have so much unresolved mental trauma originating from the death of my mother that I literally buried with her and never looked at that's now coming out and waving all sorts of flags.

Why does he want me?

Why do I want to tell him that I'll do exactly all that? I'll stay home, so I'm always there when he wants me in his arms. That I'll love when he comes home with presents, even though I've done nothing all day. I'll let him take me anywhere. I'll let him worship me and love me and give me money.

I'll let him take care of me because it makes him happy.

Why do I want all that when I have fought it from Declan and Damon for the past six years?

We head home after exploring the campus for a while longer. I choose to head to my condo for a bit because I really want to tell the twins about Rainbow Dorset University. It's like a school just for queers! They're going to love it.

"I'll be over in a bit," I tell Quin. He kisses me and nods.

"Sounds good. I still have some things to wrap up."

I hate to see him go. I hate to go home. With every second that ticks by while I wait for the elevator, my shoulders tense a little more. Maybe they won't be home...

But it's Friday afternoon, so I know they're both home. Damon gets out at noon on Fridays and Declan is still looking for a job. I let myself in and find them in the living room with game controllers in their hands.

Once, they'd smile when they saw me. But I think they're just as tense with my presence as I am with theirs now.

"Hey," I say, kicking off my shoes and joining them on the chair. They look at me as if sitting in the chair offends them. Maybe it does. I usually sit with them.

My skin itches with their absence, but I no longer feel comfortable between them as I once did. It's too much. Feeling their hostility. Their hate and their anger. Their resentment. I swear, it eats at something inside me.

"Hey," they say together.

"So, have you heard of Rainbow Dorset University?" I ask.

They shake their heads.

I grin. "It's fucking wild. The entire campus is a rainbow. Longwood was queer friendly. This is like, the capital of queer."

A smile tugs at Declan's lips. "Yeah?"

I pull out my phone and hand it over. They get into it without my help, as they always do. Their heads huddle together as they look through the pictures, smiles climbing up their lips.

"Cool, huh?"



“Very,” Declan says. He glances up at me. “Are you going back to school?”

“No.” I shake my head. “Quin got a job there. Dean of the new trade school they’re building.”

Their shoulders immediately tense.

“Dean, huh?” Damon says, frowning.

I sigh. “Yes. He’s good at what he does and has a lot of experience.” There is defensiveness in my tone. I hear it. I hate it.

“Of course,” Damon says.

Declan hands me back my phone.

We’re plunged into silence. I contemplate telling them about the football jersey and things I didn’t take pictures of, but... it just feels like it’s a wasted effort. Their interest is no longer fun because Quin’s involved.

“You staying? Want to play?” Damon asks.

I shake my head. “No,” I say sadly. “I’m just... going to go.”

“Sure, why not?” Declan mutters and turns his attention back to the television. “It’s not like you live here or anything.”

I don’t answer as I get to my feet and head for my shoes.

“When are you coming home?” Damon asks.

I shrug. “Is this my home?” I counter. “Doesn’t feel like it.”

“If you were here for more than two minutes, it might feel differently,” Declan says.

“If I didn’t feel like an intruder, I might,” I counter.

“Maybe you wouldn’t feel that way if you were here more,” he pushes. “Did you forget you live here? And not with him?”

The way he says “him” makes my stomach twist. My hands clench and I turn. “You know what? I can’t do this anymore. I can’t live with this. You’re right, I don’t come

home because I hate it here. I hate how you talk about Quin. I hate that you can't just be happy for me. I hate how this feels and I just... I just—"

Shaking my head, I pull open the door.

"Simon," Damon says as they both get to their feet and come toward me.

I hold up my hand and step away from them so they won't touch me. "I can't live like this anymore. I just can't. It hurts too much and I don't want to feel like this anymore."

"Where are you going?" Declan asks.

Pressing my lips together, I dare him to say anything. "To *his* place where I'm actually wanted, and I don't have to listen to how much he hates the people I love."

"Simon—" they say in unison and I step out the door as they reach for me. I can't look at their faces or I might give in. And if I give in, it'll start all over again.

"No. I'm... going to stay with Quin for a while."

I don't close the door as I practically run. Throwing open the stairwell door, I run down them, feeling like the world is crumbling behind me. If I slow down, something will fall on top of me, crush me. Flinging myself outside, I sprint down the sidewalk, nearly bowling over many people in my path.

No one says anything to me. I can only imagine the mess I look like. I practically fly up the three flights of stairs, having no patience to wait for the elevator. Every second that ticks by feels like someone is using a cheese grater on my heart. I can't catch my breath. I can't see out of the tears in my eyes or swallow around the emotion in my throat.

I'm almost falling through Quin's door in the next minute. He has me off the floor and into his arms. For the first time since I was ten, I cry all on my own. The tears don't stop as I hiccup through sobs.

"Can I stay here?" I say. Or I try to. Maybe the words come out.

"Yes."

I appreciate that he doesn't say anything else but lets me blubber like a baby. It's unclear what just happened and I think I'm going to be sick but... I feel even more sick knowing that I made the right choice. Because I no longer feel the looming dark cloud of Declan and Damon's aggression hanging over me.

Yes, I'm brokenhearted. Not even my Quin can fix the two holes in my heart. That's what keeps me sobbing long after I run out of tears.

I don't know how to live without my best friends. I don't want to live without them. But they made living with them too painful.

Once again, I feel abandoned. Even though I'm the one who left.

**WARNING: this document may be regarded as unenforceable/immoral and even illegal in certain jurisdictions. Nevertheless, this may still be used as evidence of the willingness of the parties to engage in intimate activities.**

**THIS RELATIONSHIP CONTRACT** is entered into on 17 January 2023

**BETWEEN**

1 Quinlan Stommer who resides at 48 Longley Place, United States of America; 666.371.4936 (*Sugar Daddy*)

2 Simon Everett who resides in the United States of America; 695.176.5699 (*Sugar Baby*)

**WHEREAS**

Sugar Daddy and Sugar Baby are desirous of entering into a short term relationship with each other from 23 January 2023 for a period of 6.0 months.

**IT IS AGREED** as follows:

**1. Ground Rules**

1.1 The main purpose of the short term relationship is for both parties to satisfy their intimate needs and for Sugar Daddy to provide financial support to Sugar Baby. As such, other emotions such as love, jealousy, infatuation, and other similar feelings are excluded.

1.2 Safety and Protection are Essential. The use of Protection is outlined below.

1.3 Neither party is obliged to meet and has the right to refuse to meet. No explanation is required.

1.4 This relationship is exclusive. Each party agrees to notify and terminate this relationship before embarking on intimate relationships with third parties.

**2. Communication**

2.1 Mode of communication is limited to cell phone, call or text.

2.2 Do not put any communication regarding this relationship into email.

2.3 Communication about intimate situations, soft and hard limits, and anything that might potentially make the interaction uncomfortable must be discussed as soon as something comes up.

2.4 There should be absolutely no lying between the parties.

### **3. Ground Rules**

3.1 The parties shall meet on average 3-4 times per week unless otherwise agreed.

3.2 In the event the meeting is at a paid establishment (e.g. hotel, restaurant), the cost shall be borne by Sugar Daddy unless otherwise agreed.

3.3 Hugging, kissing, and cuddling in public is strictly prohibited anywhere that either party can be recognized.

3.4 Each party is not expected to be a stand-in partner for each other (i.e. weddings, familial obligations).

3.5 Sleeping over is subject to the consent of both parties. Any personal items (e.g. toothbrush or clothing) left at the other's place can be disposed of at the other's discretion.

3.6 No birthday, anniversary, or other celebrations or gifts should be expected from each other. However, Sugar Baby would appreciate any thoughtful gifts from Sugar Daddy from time to time.

3.7 In the event that both parties are attending the same social event, gathering, or run into each other in public, unless otherwise agreed upon, the parties will behave as if they are just normal acquaintances.

3.8 Both parties will keep the relationship entirely confidential and shall not disclose it to any third party except with the consent of the other party.

### **4. Financial Support**

4.1 Sugar Daddy will provide the following financial support to Sugar baby on a monthly basis, to be electronically transferred on the first of each month:

Four thousand (\$4,000) United States Dollars

## **5. Intimate Acts**

5.1 Sugar Daddy and Sugar Baby hereby agree to the following intimate activities (the consenting party is indicated on the right):

Kissing (including French)

All kissing

Hugging/Cuddling

Hugging, cuddling, and all other kinds of physical comfort

Caressing (with clothes on)

Yes

External full body touching

Yes

Oral Sex

All forms of oral sex

Anal Intercourse

Yes

## **6. Other Activities**

6.1 The parties agree to the following additional activities: social gatherings when given a seventy-two hours advance notice: dinners, dates, conversations.

6.2 The parties consent to the use of the following device: sex toys will be discussed at a later time.

## **7. Protection**

7.1 Sugar Daddy will use condoms during sexual intercourse.

7.2 Both parties will be tested. When presented with negative tests, then the use of condoms can be discussed

further.

7.3 Sugar Daddy is a TOP but will discuss bottoming with Sugar Baby if Sugar Baby expresses a desire to do so.

## **8. Escalation**

8.1 Should the parties wish to engage in activities beyond the remit of this contract during the course of the activities, the parties may do so by adding such activities to this contract and initial the addition/s.

8.2 Should either party accidentally or by mistake engage in activity that goes beyond the agreed upon activities without intent, it shall be regarded as an accident so long as the infringing activity ceases immediately, and retroactive consent is assumed.

## **9. Terms and Termination**

9.1 This agreement shall terminate after 6.0 months unless renewed by both parties.

9.2 A party may terminate this contract at any time by giving written notice (including messaging) to the other party without any explanation.

9.3 If a party terminates or cancels a pre-arranged meeting last minute, and the other party has incurred any costs or expenses (e.g. paid establishments such as hotels) by reason of the termination/cancellation, the other party shall be entitled to recover the same from the canceling party.

9.4 If one party develops feelings such as love, infatuation, caring, jealousy, or other similar feelings for the other party, the party must notify the other party and terminate this agreement immediately.

## **10. Confidentiality**

10.1 Each of the parties shall at all time use all reasonable endeavors to keep confidential the terms of this contract and any private information in relation to the other party and shall not use or disclose such information except with the consent of the other party.

10.2 Each party agrees to respect the personal information and privacy of the other party:

1 Neither party shall take any photo, video, audio, or other recordings of the other party without consent;

2 Neither party shall make any internet, social media, or other public postings relating to the other party without consent.

10.3 The parties are permitted to use this contract as evidence of the intent of the parties.

### **11. Mutual Release**

11.1 On and from the date of the activity, each of the parties releases the other from:

1 Any obligation or liability under or in respect of the activities; and

2 Any claim which he, except for the breach of this consent, had or may in the future have had against the other under or in respect of this consent, arising in connection with the activities contemplated.

### **12. Health and Safety**

12.1 On the date of the execution of this consent and the date of any meetings, each of the parties represents to the other that he:

1 Does not carry any sexually transmitted diseases; and

2 Has no other disease which may be transmitted through the proposed meetings.

12.2 Proper hygiene is expected from both parties. Showering before the activities is a must.

12.3 The use of safewords will be employed by Sugar Baby in the event that he becomes uncomfortable. The 'stoplight' method will be utilized as follows:

1 Green: I'm good and/or enjoying this. Keep going.

2 Yellow: slow down; I'm becoming overwhelmed and/or possibly uncomfortable.



3 Red: I don't like this at all.

12.4 The use of safewords must be used immediately upon request or when Sugar Baby needs to express their feelings. Sugar Baby will not be punished or made to feel guilty, pressure, or manipulated into engaging in activities for which he's given the 'stop' safeword.

### **13. Enforceability**

13.1 Should any provision in this agreement is found to be invalid or unenforceable, all remaining provisions will remain in full effect.

13.2 Furthermore, the parties will be allowed to come to an agreement and substitute the invalid provision with a similar, enforceable term.

### **14. No Rights under Contracts for Third Parties**

14.1 A person who is not a party to this contract shall have no right under any law to enforce any of its terms.

### **15. Governing Law**

15.1 This agreement and the relationship between the parties shall be governed by and interpreted in accordance with Indiana law.

This contract has been signed by the parties the day and year written above.

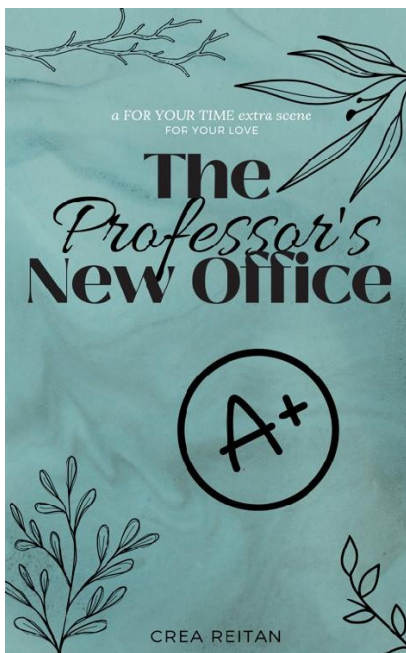
SIGNED by Quinlan Stommer for and on behalf of Quinlan Stommer

---

SIGNED by Simon Everett for and on behalf of Simon Everett

---

## Want More Simon and Quin?



Thank you for reading Simon and Quin's story. I hope you enjoyed their story as much as I loved writing it. If you're not ready to be done with them, you can sign up for my newsletter where you'll have access to another scene in [\*The Professor's New Office\*](#). (Once you sign up for the newsletter, you'll gain access when the next newsletter is sent - every three weeks!) There will also be an extra scene in my [patreon](#) (after the second book releases due to spoilers), where you'll find a whole lot of other

goodies, including N/SFW art from this story!

## Author's Note and Acknowledgments

I really, really loved writing this story. It's been in my mind for *months*. Not only have I recently become obsessed with twins and their relationships with each other and the world around them, but I've found that these two in particular just weren't going to leave me alone. Their love and devotion to Simon comes from a place of such loyalty that not showing them how they feel is impossible for them. Showing Simon that people around him love him deeply started as their only mission in life as a means to heal his heart after the loss of his parents, to defining their lives.

Simon had his struggles - the loss of his family being only the beginning. Thinking that he's broken because he doesn't respond to sexual stimuli made him so uncomfortable in his own mind that he couldn't even bring himself to talk to his best friends about it; which was a huge deal for him because they literally know everything about him. Everything. His confusion about why he usually doesn't like sex and why he'd rather get off on his own left him feeling too vulnerable to talk about it.

But when he's offered an answer, not everything in him appreciates the truth. That still makes him different. While he knows that his twins will accept that about him (when he finally finds the courage to tell them), doesn't make him feel any better.

Then add to the whole thing that maybe he's not exactly *straight*. Not that he finds he's attracted to men, because he's not. Then again, he's not exactly attracted to anyone. Anyone except Quin.

Even by the end of the book, Simon isn't clear if he's completely asexual, gray-asexual, or demisexual. And thus why he declares that he's straight but just gay for Quin. It seems to be the easiest answer until he figures himself out.

Writing Simon, Declan, and Damon's falling out was hard for me and while this might not feel like a happy ending, by the end of the series, it will be. After all, we still have twins who need their hearts healed. The question is, how are they going to find men who will accept their 'unacceptable' friendship with Simon? Some things are worth fighting for. The twins know this. But convincing someone else might not be possible.

# Books by Crea Reitan

## MM NOVELS/SERIES

### For Puck's Sake

*Shiver*

*Starting Line* (2023)

### For Your Love

*For Your Time*

*For Your Heart* (2023)

*For Your Mind* (2023)



## Poly Titles

### THE IMMORTAL CODEX

#### Immortal Stream: Children of the Gods

*Mortal Souls*

*The God of Perfect Radiance*

*The Hidden God*

*The God Who Controls Death*

*Gods of the Dead*

*Gods of Blood*

*Gods of Idols*

*Gods of Fire*

*Gods of Enoch*

### INFECTED FAIRY TALES

#### Wonderland: Chronicles of Blood

*Toxic Wonderland*

*Magical Wonderland*

*Dying Wonderland*

*Bloody Wonderland*

#### Wonderland: Chronicles of Madness

*The Search for Nonsense*

*The Queen Trials*

*Veins of Shade*

*Finding Time*

**Neverland: Chronicles of Red**

[Neverwith](#)

[Nevershade](#)

[Neverblood](#)

[Nevermore](#)

**OTHER/STANDALONES**

**Hellish Ones Novels**

[Blood of the Devil](#)

[House of the Devil](#)

**Harem Project Novels**

[House of Daemon](#)

[House of Aves](#)

[House of Wyn](#)

[House of Igarashi, 1](#)

[House of Igarashi, 2](#)

[House of Agni \(2023\)](#)

**Brothers of Eschat**

[Unsolicited](#)

[Equipoise](#)

**Paranormal Holiday Novel**

[12 Days](#)

**Satan's Touch Academy**

[A Lick of Magic](#)

**Fae Lords**

[Karou](#)

**Sweet Omegaverse**

[Alpha Hunted](#)

[Knot Interested](#)

[Omegas of Chaingate](#)

[Get Pucking Knotty \(2023\)](#)

*The Princess and Her Alphaholes Anthology (excerpt of Wrecked)*

[Wrecked](#)

[Hell View Manor](#)

[Stroking Pride \(A Sons of Satan Novel\)](#)

[A Tale of Steam & Cinders](#)

[Terror](#)

[Haidee \(A Ladies of the MC Novel\)](#)

For Your Love

NEW SERIES BEGINNING IN 2023

*This is a 3-book MM series with content not suitable for those under 18 years of age due to graphic scenes. These stories should be read in order.*

*For Your Time will be available on [Amazon!](#)*

Within the pages of book one, you will find some of these tropes among others:

- Sexuality exploration and discovery
- Gay for you
- Professor/student
- Sugar Daddy
- BFF twins crossing lines
- Breath play
- Cock warming
- Pain play
- Hurt/comfort
- Breeding
- Strict top/bottom roles
- Co-dependent BFFs
- Age gap
- Gray asexual
- Subspace
- “Virgin” gay
- “Inappropriate” friendship





*For Your Heart will be available on [Amazon!](#)*

Within the pages of book one, you will find some of these tropes among others:

- Bondage
- BFF twins crossing lines
- Strict top/bottom roles
- Co-dependent BFFs
- Hurt/comfort
- Twin bonds
- Gags/blindfolds
- Orgasm denial
- Golden Retriever MC
- First times
- Begging
- Hint at twin taboo
- Cock cage/male chastity
- Dirty talk
- “Inappropriate” friendship



*For Your Mind will be available on [Amazon!](#)*

# For Puck's Sake

NEW SERIES BEGINNING IN 2023

*This is a series of standalone MM(+) hockey stories with content not suitable for those under 18 years of age due to graphic scenes. These stories have character crossover but it is not required to read them in order.*

*Shiver available on [Amazon!](#)*

Within these pages, you will find some of these tropes among others:

- Nerd/jock with a twist
- Cruel games
- Co-dependent hockey player
- Sunshine and lovable
- Bi-awakening
- Hurt/comfort
- Opposites attract
- High emotion
- HEA

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'D. M. H.', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

*Starting Line will be available on [Amazon!](#)*

Within these pages, you will find some of these tropes among others:

- MMM
- Obediance
- Caregiver
- Sensation play
- Voyeurism/Exhibitionism
- Cuckold
- Video sex
- High emotion
- HEA

# Where To Find Me

## **My [Facebook](#) page**

### **My [Patreon](#)**

By becoming a member of my patreon, you will be gaining access to exclusive stories, bonus scenes, first looks at cover reveals and projects, discounts on my store, swag, merchandise, and so much more!!

### **My Private Reader's Group: [Crea's Godlings](#)**

This is an adult group. No drama. No judgment. No bullying, shaming, or being an ass in general. No one outside the group can see what you like, post, or comment so you're free to do as you please (as long as it's group appropriate - hot, half-naked men are allowed!). Here you will be the first to find teasers, new-release announcements, games, giveaways, and more!

### **My Instagram**

@creareitan

### **My TikTok**

<https://www.tiktok.com/@creareitan>

### **My [Amazon](#)**

If you follow me here, you'll get an email from Amazon every time I release a book! (Just in case you missed it in my group.)

### **[Pinterest](#)**

Here you will find Storyboards for every book, which serves as inspiration for scenes, places, characters, etc.

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# About the Author

Crea lives in upstate New York with her dog and husband. She has been writing since grade school, when her second grade teacher had her class keep writing journals. She has a habit of creating secondary, and often time tertiary, characters that take over her stories. When she can't fall asleep at night, she thinks up new scenes for her characters to act out. This, of course, is how most of her meant-to-be-thrown-away characters tend to end up front and center - and utterly swoon-worthy! Don't ask her how many book boyfriends she has...

When not writing, Crea is an avid reader. Her TBR pile is several hundred books high (don't even look at her kindle wish list or the unread books on her tablet). Sometimes, she enjoys crafting; sometimes, exploring nature; sometimes, traveling. Mostly, she enjoys putting her characters on paper and breathing life into them. Oh, and sleeping. Crea *loves* to sleep!

Note - Crea is an Amazon exclusive author. If you're reading this ebook anywhere other than through Amazon, it is a pirated copy and has been stolen! Please don't add to that.

# Thank You

I hope you enjoyed Simon and Quin's story. Like everything I write, I know this was a little different but I hope you enjoyed it as much as I did. While I can't say this ended on a truly happily ever after, Simon did find his love. Stay tuned for book two where we pick up with Damon's story beginning at the end of this one - *[For Your Heart](#)*.

Would you be so kind as to take a moment and leave a review? Reviews play a big role in a book's success and you can help with just a few sentences.

Review on [Amazon](#), [Goodreads](#), and [Bookbub](#)

Thank you!!

Crea Reitan

PS - If you find any errors, spelling or the like, please do not use your kindle/Amazon to mark them. Amazon's algorithms pull the book! Instead, please reach out to me on [Facebook](#) or via [email](#). Thank you!!