

**HOT**

**CEO**

AMAZON BESTSELLING AUTHOR  
**LENA LITTLE**

# **HOT CEO**

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A POSSESSIVE MAN: BOOK 33

LENA LITTLE



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## PREVIEW

Came to the bar for a drink, left with a bad case of obsession.

*Savannah.*

The most beautiful girl I've ever laid eyes on.

Tastes as sweet as she looks.

And I can't get enough.

When I find out she's coming to work for me, I feel like a starved man looking at a buffet.

I try to rein in my desire, but it doesn't take long before my tether snaps.

Savannah's mine. No matter what.

She's worried what people might think. Too bad I don't share the same concerns.

If anyone has a problem with me claiming her, they can go f\*ck themselves.

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“Oh my god, I’m so sorry!”

Ice-cold liquid douses me as the woman who’s just stumbled straight into me stutters out an apology. I don’t even have time to see who she is before she takes rapid steps backward, an empty glass clutched in her hand.

I grimace as I stare down at the aftermath of our collision, peeling the now-soaked fabric of my shirt away from my skin. The smell of fruity alcohol permeates my senses. I came here to wind down after work, and instead, some party girl cut my relaxation short by spilling the entirety of her pink drink down my front within the first ten minutes. Just what I need. *Not.*

“Let me help!” she insists, slamming her empty glass down on the bar and grabbing a handful of small square napkins. She rushes to dab at my shirt, her efforts utterly useless. The shirt’s already ruined.

Still, I let her try, staring down at her for the first time as she frantically wipes at the pink stain. I’m frozen to the spot as I take her in, unable to move away even if I wanted to. I can’t tear my eyes from her.

She’s young, her pale skin shimmery with some sort of glittery makeup, her blonde hair loose and falling around her shoulders in bouncy waves. Big, bright blue eyes framed by thick, dark lashes shine with worry and the kind of sweetness that steals all the air from my lungs. God, she’s stunning. By comparison, I’m sure my stare seems practically demonic in the face of her embarrassed innocence.



My eyes lower, needing to take in every inch of the clumsy angel still trying to clean up her spill. My jaw clenches as I fight not to let it drop open instead. The low neckline of her dress leaves little to the imagination, the skin-tight pink fabric showing off her generous curves. She totters on her matching pink high heels, making a squeaking noise as she loses her balance again.

I steady her with a hand on her elbow, the touch sending an electric shock through my arm. My eyes narrow at her as her gaze shoots up to meet mine, her hands going still on my chest. I don't want to let her go.

"What's your name?" I ask, voice rumbling like the beat of the song playing around us.

This bar is one of my favorites, with low lighting, quick service, and good whisky. But I've never seen anything as interesting as this girl in here before. The crowd in here is usually older, closer to my own age, late thirties, hardly attracting the type of girl like this. The clubs in the center of the city are more her speed, and curiosity plagues me as I cock my head at her.

"Savannah," she says, her plush lips pouting around her name.

*It suits her*, I think to myself. Sweet, but a little sinful all at once. She shines as brightly as that shimmery stuff on her skin, and I swear the world narrows around us until only she and I exist.

I smile, and she blinks her long lashes at me. Her hands are still on my shirt, napkins clutched in her fists. Savannah seems frozen under my analyzing stare, and I savor the rush her attention gives me.

"I haven't seen you here before," I tell her, trying to keep my tone steady. I don't want to fuck this up by being a bumbling idiot. She jolts a little, cheeks going pink as she untangles herself from me and steps back, dumping her handful of damp napkins next to her glass on the bar.

"I'm new in town," she admits with a shrug. "This place is close to my apartment, and I'm celebrating so..."

She trails off, not finishing that thought. I take two long strides towards her, trapping her between my body and the bar. I don't want a single inch of distance between us, and I'm determined to return to the closeness we had a second ago. Savannah has caught my attention, and now I can't imagine focusing on literally anything else but her.

"What are you celebrating?" I muse, reaching out to tuck a stray piece of her golden hair behind her ear. I don't even realize I'm doing it, driven by the need to touch her in some way. She shivers, her tongue darting out to wet her glossy lips.

"New job," she answers with a smile as soft as her hair.

"Congrats," I say, forcing myself to turn my attention to signal the bartender. He approaches immediately, and I gesture to Savannah's empty glass. "Another for us both."

"Oh, you don't have to do that!" Savannah insists immediately, shaking her head.

"You lost your drink," I remind her, eyes narrowing as I lean closer. Her breath hitches at my closeness. I catalog her every reaction with pride. I shouldn't be teasing this girl, but fuck I can't help it. She's the most stunning thing I've ever laid eyes on, and her adorable awkwardness combined with the clear kindness she's shown in the space of thirty seconds has me needing to know more about her.

I gesture to my wet shirt and grin. "I'm not sure there's anything left to salvage from the spill, but you're welcome to try."

Savannah's sharp inhale is like music to my ears. She smells like sugary perfume, and I can't help but wonder if she tastes like candy too. My mouth waters at the thought.

"Whisky on the rocks and a Cosmo," the bartender interrupts.

I slap a bundle of folded bills down on the sticky counter without looking away from the girl in my grasp.

"Th-thank you," she stutters.

Sensing her nervousness, I back off a little, handing over her drink. She takes a gulp immediately, and I watch her throat

bob with her swallow. I sip at my own drink, swirling the rich taste around my mouth and trying to remember how to act like a normal human being. I don't want to scare this angel off, not when every part of my being is drawn to her.

"If you wanted my attention, you could've just said hi, you know," I joke, though I'm far less mad about having to throw this shirt away now. As expensive as it was, it's a small price to pay for the privilege of her company.

Savannah laughs. "Damn," she murmurs with a coy smile. "That's the only way I know how to flirt."

My laugh joins hers, and I resist the urge to reach for her again. "Oh, I doubt that," I answer. "I bet you have men falling at your feet looking like that."

"Looking like what?"

God, I want to tangle my fingers through her hair and crush those soft, pouty lips to mine. Does she not know how bright she shines? How utterly captivating she is?

"Like my new favorite dessert." For emphasis, I let my gaze roam her body, making sure she knows exactly how gorgeous I find her.

When my gaze lands on her face again, I find her bottom lip trapped between her teeth. On instinct, I reach out, thumb smearing her lip gloss as I tug her lip free, wishing I could capture her mouth with my own. It takes every single ounce of will I possess to stop myself.

But then she leans into my touch, swaying closer on those sky-high heels. She tilts her head back, my grip on her chin holding her still. Every cell in my body is practically screaming at me to kiss this woman, and shit, I'm not about to argue.

Our lips graze, just enough that I can taste the sweetness of her drink and the gloss, and then she jolts away, catching herself on the bar.

"SAVVY!"

I register the new voice seconds after her as my head snaps towards the open door of the bar. A small group enters, two women and a tall man, the one at the front shouting Savannah's name.

Ah. I turn my attention back to Savannah, registering the guilt on her face as her eyes flick between me and what I presume is her group of friends. Disappointment mingles with the whisky, the combination bitter.

"Thank you for the drink," Savannah murmurs softly, her arm grazing mine as she pushes past me, cheeks red, and heads for her friends. The short hem of her dress hugs her ass as Savannah sways her way across the bar, accepting hugs from the group.

My stomach sinks. I don't want to lose her before I've even had a chance to get to know her.

I hadn't come out tonight with the intention of returning home with company, but now the idea of leaving this bar alone and going back to my empty apartment fills me with irritation.

That tiny taste of her isn't near enough. The damp fabric of my shirt is a reminder of her as I perch back on the bar stool, keeping my gaze glued to the girl I want. The girl I need. It's insane, the way I'm obsessing over a woman I've barely met, but with one clumsy accident, she's swept me up into her orbit.

After the shit show of the week I've had, I'm wound tight with tension. The long hours of interviews and reviewing CVs to replace the secretary who quit two weeks ago have taken their toll.

The only silver lining is that one of the managers found someone willing to start on Monday. I didn't get the chance to interview them myself, but the office was fucking falling apart without a secretary, phone calls getting missed and files going missing and turning a job I'm usually exceptional at into a giant pain in my ass.

The bartender tops up my glass again and I sip it slowly, considering my next move. I can cut my losses and try to forget about her, but even as the thought crosses my mind, I

know it would be impossible. There's no way in hell I could erase her from my head no matter how hard I try.

Savannah and her friends take seats at a small table, the guy nudging his chair closer to hers until their thighs touch. My grip tightens on my glass, something flaring within me.

"Send another to her table," I tell the guy behind the bar. In minutes, the cocktail arrives at her table, and Savannah's head turns to me before she can fight the impulse. I watch her friends ask her questions about it, and smile as their eyes land on me.

I swear there's a flicker of jealousy in the man's dark gaze, and I hold his stare. He puts his arm around the back of her chair, turning Savannah's attention back to them even as he narrows his eyes at me. Acute anger shoots through me at the move, the word *mine* playing on a loop in my brain. Logically, I'm aware that I have no claim to her, not really, but I can't deny the bone-deep surety that she belongs with me. Only me.

The man's brow raises, a smug smirk crossing his lips.

A challenge, then.

I hold his stare. The man looks away first.

I never lose, not at board games or chess or even silly bets made in jest. I'm certainly not about to lose the most important prize I've ever wanted.

## SAVANNAH

“Who is that?” Polly hisses from across the table, her eyes wide.

My face burns with embarrassment at my friend’s questions. I can feel the man’s eyes on me, and I’m shaking with the effort not to turn around and meet his dark gaze.

“I slipped and spilled my drink on him, so he got me a new one. That’s all,” I answer, sipping my cocktail to stop myself from saying anything more. My body hums with the memory of his body near mine, the scent of his cologne, and the warmth of his hand on my elbow, steadying me.

“He’s hot,” she says, mouth dropping open exaggeratedly.

She’s right, though. He’s so hot I swear I was burning just standing beside him. He’s obviously older than me, but in a way that gives him an aura of success and control. He’s not intimidating even though I probably should be intimidated by someone like him. Instead, his strong presence makes me feel oddly...safe.

His short dark hair is meticulously styled, his suit cut perfectly to frame his muscular body. I don’t even want to imagine how much money his shirt cost, not when I destroyed it. I doubt the meager amount left in my savings would even cover half of it.

God, I’m so embarrassed that I contemplate bailing on my friends and leaving early. Besides, there’s no chance the hot stranger is going to want me now, not with Polly here. She’s far prettier than me, with her perfect slender body and narrow

waist. She exudes confidence, and I've never seen a man manage to resist her.

I've humiliated myself enough tonight without having to deal with the rejection from the most desirable man I've ever met.

"Maybe I'll spill my drink on him next," Polly continues, wiggling her brows.

I laugh, but I'm not really paying attention. When they suggested coming out tonight to celebrate my new job, I agreed readily, thinking a drink would help settle my nerves. Instead, I'm already dreaming of the new fluffy blanket I have at home and scrolling Netflix for a rom-com to lose myself in.

I only met this group of friends a few weeks ago when I moved here, and they're nice enough and easy to be with. But it's clear I'm the outsider, even to me. The others are chatting about a party I wasn't at, and I feel awkward sitting there with Chris' arm around the back of my chair.

"I'm just gonna go freshen up," I tell them, awkwardly shuffling my chair away from the table and grabbing my handbag.

The bathrooms are through a heavy wooden door, and I nearly slip in my heels as I shove my way through. I pause for a second in the hallway beyond, inhaling deeply. The thick door blocks out most of the noise from the bar, and I lean against the brick wall.

One hot stranger shouldn't affect me so much, but I can feel the dampness between my legs. There's no denying the fact that I want him. The attraction is physical, clearly, but somehow feels deeper than that.

The few minutes I spent with him made me feel something I've never felt before, something I don't even know how to explain. I want to know him—in bed and out of it. But the fact is I can't have him. What could someone like that—attractive, confident, and clearly wealthy—want with someone like me? A twenty-one-year-old college dropout who has no idea what she wants to do with her life.

“Get a grip, Savannah,” I tell myself, refusing to wallow in self-pity any longer. This is my new start. A new city, an apartment of my own, a job with a salary bigger than any other wage I’ve ever had. “You can do this.”

“Am I interrupting?”

I freeze at that voice. Smooth and dark as leather, as intoxicating as the whisky he’s drinking.

That burning embarrassment returns along with a heavy helping of lust that makes my thighs clench. The man from the bar is standing at the door to the hallway, somehow looking just as cool and collected as ever even with the pink stain covering his well-pressed shirt. And now he’s caught me standing in a random hallway talking to myself like a crazy person. *Great first impressions, Savannah. Real smooth.*

“Sorry, I didn’t mean to block your path...” I say, trailing off when I realize I don’t know his name. “...Sir,” I tack on, cringing at myself as I do. His presence is so overwhelming I swear my brain is being fried. I shuffle so there’s more space for him to move past me towards the bathroom at the end of the hallway.

The man chuckles, and I shiver.

“My name’s Sean,” he tells me, stepping closer to me rather than taking advantage of the space I made for him. My heartbeat is so loud I’m worried he’ll hear it. God, what’s wrong with me? “But I must admit, I do like the way Sir sounds on your tongue.”

Holy shit. My nipples pebble beneath my tight dress, and I know he notices when his eyes darken and he presses even closer. My back is against the wall again, and I’m grateful to be able to lean against something steady.

“Sean,” I repeat, blinking up at him. I don’t understand what he’s doing or why he’s sought me out again.

“Savannah.” His hand is braced next to my head against the brick. I can see the strain of his biceps through his suit. He seems tense like he’s holding himself back. From what, I’m not sure.



*Don't you dare think about how he'd look without the suit on.*

It's too late because my mind has latched on to how those muscles would look anything obscuring them. The scent of whisky and spiced cologne clouds me, and I inhale greedily.

"I was just going to fix my lip gloss," I mumble, needing to fill the weighted silence between us. It's not a total lie—he smudged it when he stopped me from biting my lip and the rim of the glass took more off my lips.

"I like it like this," Sean whispers. "Messy like you've been up to no good. Fuck, sorry, that was inappropriate of me to say. I didn't mean to say it out loud."

I can't help the way I laugh at that. His charm and his efforts not to make me uncomfortable are endearing. I don't tell him that I wouldn't know what *no good* looks like because the furthest I've ever gotten is a kiss on the cheek with a frat guy whose name I can't even remember.

"I hate to disappoint," I say slowly, channeling any scrap of confidence I can find as I try to make my voice sultry. Just because I'm inexperienced doesn't mean he needs to know that. Plus, even if he didn't mean to say it out loud, I'm pretty sure he's flirting with me. "But I've been nothing but good. I imagine more than just my lip gloss would be ruined if I'd done anything...bad."

I don't recognize the words coming out of my mouth, but his presence has brought out a side of me I've never seen before. Nobody has ever made me feel this way, like if he doesn't kiss me, I might die.

Sean groans like he's in pain. "Christ, you're like something out of a dream. Are you sure you're real?"

I giggle. "Does this feel real?" I ask, peering up at him through my lashes as I reach out, placing my palm flat on his chest. His heart pounds under my touch, nearly as fast as my own racing pulse.

"Does this?" he whispers back, leaning into my touch.

I gasp as his lips claim mine, far more than the barely-there brush we had earlier before Polly shouted my name. No, this

kiss is devastating. Sean's fingers wind through my hair, carefully angling my head slightly so he can nip at my bottom lip teasingly.

Heat swirls through me as he soothes the small sting with his tongue. I press closer to tangle my tongue with his, deepening the kiss without a second thought. A whimper escapes me as his lips steal every thought from my head, my arms winding around his neck as I give in to the desire building between us.

"Fuck, need to hear you make that noise for me again," Sean growls against my lips, crushing me in another burning hot kiss. "Can I touch you?"

I nod immediately, lost in whatever magic is surrounding us. He's right. This does feel like a dream. One I'm desperate not to wake up from.

His hand trails over my ribs before he cups my breast, squeezing the sensitive flesh with an appreciative groan. I can't deny his request if I tried, breaking our kiss as his touch sends pleasure spiraling through me to settle low in my gut. My moan is shaky and full of need as I arch into his touch.

"We shouldn't do this here," I manage to babble out through the haze of lust clouding us. "This is insane."

"Why?" he counters, running his thumb over my nipple through the fabric of my dress. His voice has a rough, breathless edge to it now that makes my head spin. "Worried your friend will find us?"

"Who? Chris?" I try to remember how to speak properly in the wake of his touch.

"Is that his name?" He chuckles, dipping his head to press a gentle kiss to my neck. "Does he mean something to you? I'll stop if it's what you really want. But I'll make it clear. I don't want whatever's between us to end here. I know you feel it too."

I'm so wet my thighs are damp, and my hips wiggle in search of friction. How is he speaking so calmly while I'm forgetting the damn alphabet? "N-no, we're just f-friends. Chris and me, I mean. I don't want to stop either."

He kisses the rapid pulse point on my throat, his hot tongue tasting sensitive skin. I gasp out his name, clutching at the collar of his suit for something to hold onto.

“I saw the way he was looking at you, sweetness,” Sean says against my skin, “and the way he was glaring at me for sending you a drink. The thought of you leaving here with him and not me is driving me insane.”

“I don’t want him,” I tell Sean honestly, relishing in the way he groans. I tug on him, eager to feel his body against mine, to convince myself he’s real. He lets me pull him closer, and I sink my teeth into my lip to stifle my gasp as I feel the hard length of his cock against my stomach.

“What do you want, Savannah? ‘Cause I haven’t been able to think about a damn thing except you since I laid eyes on you. Never thought I’d be glad that someone spilled their drink on me,” he says with a laugh, eyes meeting mine. I hold his stare, unable to look away. “God, I’m hoping the way you kissed me means you want this as much as I do.”

His hands wander as he speaks quietly, like he can’t bear the idea of not touching me. Sparks trail under his touch and he rests his grip on my hip, thumb stroking up and down the silky material of my dress.

“I want you, Sean.”

It shocks me just how much I mean those words. My body is begging for his touch, even though I’ve never been touched like that before by anyone. I feel desperate and needy, my heart beating so fast in my chest my ribs ache. I shouldn’t feel this safe around a stranger...right? But something about Sean puts even the most anxious parts of me at ease.

It’s as if my heart knows his, which is impossible. I’ve never met this man before. I’m sure of it because there’s no way I could ever forget him.

---

SEAN

I'm drunk on her kisses, savoring the taste of her strawberry lip gloss.

I've never been someone who chooses cocktails over whisky or beer, but Christ, this girl might convert me if they taste as good as her. Savannah's lips are soft and plush against mine, and I groan appreciatively at the feel of her against me. It feels right, having her close like this. Like a piece of me was missing before now and I didn't even realize.

My hand squeezes her hip before it travels up, stroking over her soft stomach up to her ribs. I move slowly, giving her time to stop me, not wanting to spook her. But she arches into me, pushing into my touch, urging me on.

I keep my touch as gentle as I can with the possessive need riding me, breath stuttering in my lungs as I cup her breast over her dress. My thumb grazes her peaked nipple, teasing the stiff bud. She gasps, and I swear I've never heard anything better than the way she responds to me.

"God, you're fucking gorgeous." I pull back to look down at her. She's flushed and I've well and truly ruined her lipgloss now. I take pride in it, licking the remnants off my lips.

"So are you," she answers with a breathy laugh, eyes trailing over me. I make an effort to look after myself by keeping a strict routine in the gym. Not that I have any life outside of work. And God, it's worth it just for the way she looks at me like she's imagining tearing off the shirt she ruined.

For a minute, we just stare at each other, breathing heavily as our mutual desire fills the air. Her hand trails over my chest and stomach as she sinks her teeth into her bottom lip in a way that drives me crazy. Her eyes are hooded, and her lashes flutter as I keep up my slow touches on her breast, my other hand curved around her waist.

“Sean...” she whispers. I want to memorize the way she says my name so I can play it on loop in my head. Every inch of me wants her in every way.

“Let me take you somewhere...more private.” I’m very aware of the fact that anybody could walk in and break the spell woven around us at any time.

Savannah’s lips part in surprise, her bright eyes snapping up to meet mine. “Where?” she asks softly.

I smile at her, dropping both hands to her waist, just wanting to hold her. “Somewhere that’s not a bar filled with other men who’ll try and snap you up.” I keep my voice light despite the fact I’m utterly serious. “There’s an ice cream shop that opens late not far from here. Or we can walk through the park if you won’t be too cold. Or...” I let the word linger in the air, holding her gaze. In truth, I’ll take her to the fucking moon if she asks me to. “Or back to my place. Where I can keep you all to myself.”

“Your place...” Savannah repeats back to me as though surprised by my suggestion.

Shit, should I not have suggested that? I don’t want to be pushy, but I meant it when I told her I wanted her alone. Not just because my cock is fucking screaming at me to get even closer to her, but also because I want to spend time with her. However she’ll let me.

I say nothing, letting her think it through. I can practically hear her thoughts whir through her head. Only a few seconds pass, but it feels like an hour as I wait for her to decide our fate.

“I—”

Her answer is cut off by the blaring of a ringtone. It startles us both, and Savannah jumps, her eyes going wide as she fumbles

for her bag. She pulls out her phone, frowning at the name on the screen.

“I’m sorry,” she mouths up at me as she swipes the green *answer* button and holds the phone up to her ear.

I take a step back, giving her space without leaving entirely. I hear what sounds like crying down the line and a woman’s voice and watch Savannah’s pretty, flushed features crumple with concern.

“It’s okay, Polly. Breathe.” Her free hand fiddles anxiously with the hem of her dress. “Where are you? Outside? Okay, wait there. I’ll call an Uber...”

My ribs grow tight, disappointment washing over me. I’m going to have to let her go. The thought is as sharp as a damn knife to the gut.

Savannah is frowning as she ends the call and puts her phone back in her bag. Already, she’s moving, pushing away from the wall and smoothing her dress down.

“Shit. I’m sorry,” she says out loud this time, brows furrowing. “I have to go. My friend needs me.”

“Savannah,” I call out as she brushes past me, jogging as much as she can on her heels, heading straight for the door.

She glances over her shoulder as she pushes the heavy door open, her blue eyes shining. “I really am sorry, Sean. I hope I see you again.”

“Sav—” The door closes behind her, and my voice trails off.

And just like that, the girl of my fucking dreams disappears.



I WAKE up feeling like death. I barely slept, tossing and turning despite how comfortable my mattress and bedding are.

Even in the few moments of sleep I managed to get, my dreams were full of images of blonde hair, sparkling ocean-blue eyes, and the sweet smell of strawberries. I wake up

groaning, my dick hard and my heart pounding. No amount of imagining or longing can bring her back, and nothing can fix the soul-deep desire to be close to her.

It's six a.m. by the time I call it quits and give up on sleep. Early morning sun streams through the blinds, and I groan as I sit up, feeling stiff and sore.

Fuck, I didn't even get her number. Or her last name. Or literally, anything that could help me track her down. I go through my routine mindlessly, showering, brushing my teeth, dressing, and making the bed. But though my body moves through the motions, my mind is stuck, replaying last night on a loop as though to torture me with my own stupidity.

"Savannah." I head to my kitchen, straight to my coffee machine. "Savannah."

I savor the sound of her name, the way it rolls off my tongue. I watch espresso drip into my mug, the rich smell filling the air, as my fingers tap against the marble counters. When the coffee's finished pouring, I take it through to my office. The room is intended to be a second bedroom, but given that I'm thirty-eight and live alone, it's much better suited to me as an office.

The bright sun pours through the large window that faces out onto the city. I flop down into my desk chair, arranging the hot mug on top of a coaster decorated by my niece.

My gaze catches on the toddler's scribbles, my sister's tidy handwriting at the bottom reading, "Christmas 2022." She'd given them as gifts to all the family, and though I loved my niece and tried to be a good uncle, I'd never felt particularly paternal. But suddenly, all I can think about is having a little kid with huge blue eyes leaving scribbles on my desk, being chased about the apartment by a girl with bright blond hair and a voice as sweet as her perfume.

My hand clenches on the edge of my desk so hard my knuckles go white. The longing grows until it consumes me, regret filling me until I can't breathe properly. I haven't just lost the girl of my dreams, I've lost a future we could've had together.

I stand again, unable to sit still. My feet pace my apartment through the interconnected rooms until I'm standing frozen in the middle of my lounge. My gaze is glued to my armchair, or more specifically, the shirt thrown over the back of it.

I stripped it off as soon as I walked in the door last night and threw it at the chair intending to get rid of it in the morning. But now that morning's here, the idea of crumpling it up and tossing it in the trash is unacceptable.

Instead, I stalk towards it, snatching it up to examine. The white cotton is ruined, stained pale pink, still smelling of sweet fruit. I inhale it deeply, eyes closing as if I can conjure up Savannah if I try hard enough.

If anyone saw me now, standing alone in the middle of the room clutching a ruined shirt to my face, they'd think I'd gone insane. Not that I care. Giving a fuck about what other people think isn't what's made me one of the CEOs at a very successful, very lucrative investment firm. I lost the ability to value strangers' opinions of me a long time ago.

Except, I'd kill to know what Savannah thought of me. Is she going as out of her mind as I am? Does she regret rushing off as much as I regret not stopping her? Or has she forgotten about me entirely?

The last thought feels like a punch to the gut, and I grit my teeth. She can't have forgotten. I felt the combustible chemistry between us like a physical flame, felt the way she responded to my kisses, my touch. She was going to let me take her somewhere, just us, before her phone rang.

I fold the shirt and set it back on the chair. I can't even bring myself to wash the thing. Then I straighten, force my legs to take me back to my office, and sip my coffee as I stare at my to-do list blankly.

There's always work to be done. Clients don't care about things as arbitrary as weekends or the time. There's five emails in my inbox alone from yesterday evening, last night, and early this morning. Three of them could've been sent to my secretary to deal with...if I had one.



I sigh, pinching the bridge of my nose. My black coffee is still scalding hot but I sip it anyway, needing the caffeine rush if I have any chance of making it through the day. By the time I've answered just two of the emails with as little passive aggressiveness as I could muster, I'm thanking the universe that I'll have someone else to do this for me on Monday.

I click open the third email. It's only two lines long but no matter how many times I scan the letters, I can't focus enough to actually read them. My brain changes *sales* to *Savannah*, *broadcast* to *bar*, and *credit* to *cocktail*.

"For fuck's sake," I curse to myself, head falling into my hands. If I could just see her, talk to her, even text her, this gnawing ache would ease. I have too much to do to afford to be distracted, but no matter what I do, my head won't clear. It's like she's cast a spell over me, her magic clinging to my skin, seeping into my thoughts every time I try and force my brain to focus on something else.

Frustration builds inside me, a coil of angry tension winding tighter and tighter until I'm going mad.

I need to find her.

**T**his is either very creepy or very romantic, I think to myself as I stand outside the bar. I've spent all fucking day fixated on one thing and one thing only, and I might turn to tearing my house apart if I don't do something about it.

I hadn't even been able to eat my fucking lunch because all I craved was strawberries rolled in sugar.

So here I am. Outside the same bar I was in last night, glaring up at the old, worn sign as though I can force the letters to rearrange themselves into her address. Okay, yeah, it's definitely creepy if I turn up at her door but...shit, I'm desperate here.

I drag a hand down my face, then step inside before I make more of a fool of myself. The bar's busier than it was last night, and for a brief second, hope makes me feel buoyant. But a quick scan of the boisterous crowd reveals no sign of golden blonde locks or glossy lips.

Most of the crowd is businessmen and women shedding their suits and pencil skirts for the weekend in an attempt to pretend they have more to their lives than work. Hell, I know because I'm one of them.

Maybe she just hasn't arrived yet. It's early still, and just because she's not here right now doesn't mean she won't come at all. Regardless of my shitty internal pep talk, the bad mood that's been clouding me all day follows me as I stalk towards the bar.

“Two days in a row?” the bartender asks as I snag the last stool at the bartop.

It’s the same guy who was working yesterday, but I can’t remember his name. My brain has been cleared of any information that does not pertain to the woman I need to track down.

I grunt in response to the bartender’s question, not having the capacity for small talk.

“Hard week at work?” he tries again, and I’m about to tell him I don’t want to talk when I realize he’s already pouring me a double scotch on the rocks. My irritation relents a little as he slides the glass towards me.

“Something like that.” I run a hand through my hair distractedly.

The guy shoots me a conspiratorial look, drumming his forefinger against the countertop. “Take it you didn’t get to blow off the stress with that pretty little blonde from last night? Hard luck, man. Looked like she was into you.”

I hide the way my lip curls at his words by taking a swig of the drink I don’t even want. *Pretty little blonde thing*. It takes all my self-control not to tear into him just for that. But if he remembers Savannah and I talking at the bar, then maybe he knows more about her.

I set the glass down slowly. “Savannah,” I correct him tightly, squaring my shoulders. “You seen her here before?”

The bartender backs off a little bit, clearly sensing my displeasure. “Yeah, a couple times just recently. Not a regular or anything, though.”

Shit. I was really hoping this guy knew her well and could give me her number or something. Of course not, that would just be too damn easy. Sighing, I nod. “Know her last name or where she works?”

The bartender’s brow furrows as he gives me a look up and down. “Dunno what to tell you, man. I don’t make a habit of asking about customer’s backstories while I pour their tequila shots.”

I swallow, jaw tense. Of course, he doesn't. I probably sound like a stalker. "Sorry, just..." I trail off, swirling whisky and ice around the bottom of the glass. How the hell do I explain that I'm pretty fucking sure my soulmate spilled her drink all over me last night and now I feel like I might actually go insane if I don't get to see her again?

The bartender must have seen this nightmare run through my head because he clicks his tongue off his teeth and steps back with a smirk. "I get it, dude. You got it bad!"

I groan but don't disagree. I take another sip of my drink, but I'm not in the mood for it and I don't want to be here alone. While the bartender is serving the small queue that's formed while we talked, I grab a napkin from the stack at the front of the bar and steal the black pen he's left sitting on an order pad next to the beer taps.

The tip of the pen rips the napkin on my first try, and I ball it up before trying again. I'm usually calm and collected. I have to be to run the company. I'm great in a crisis, let stress roll off me like water off a duck's back, always ready with a backup plan. I've certainly never felt as agitated and tense as Savannah's absence is making me feel.

I force my grip on the pen to loosen and manage to get through all the numbers of my phone number without destroying the napkin. Deciding it's best to at least try to be smooth, I scribble a note down onto the uncooperative fabric.

*Can't stop thinking about you. Call me.*

I sign it then cap the pen and return it to its place before tapping the bar to get the bartender's attention. He holds a finger up to the man he's serving and jogs closer to me with a raised brow.

I shove the napkin at him with perhaps more force than strictly necessary. "If she comes back," I tell him, pressing the napkin into his palm. "Give her this for me."

The bartender tucks the napkin under the tip jar by the register, giving me a nod before he turns back to the customers. I push

my mostly full glass away, stand, and cast a last long look around the bar. Sure enough, Savannah still isn't here.

Agitation and frustration so high I swear my teeth are going to break from how hard I'm grinding them, I walk out of the bar and back to my empty apartment.

## SAVANNAH

I spend the entire weekend on edge, anxiety simmering in my stomach and ruining my appetite.

On Saturday, I distract myself by looking after Polly, which really just looks like lounging in her flat watching reruns of *Friends* while she complains about how much she hates her ex. That was the emergency she called me with—her ex texting her after months of silence. I understood her pain and her badly hidden heartbreak.

I haven't known her for long, but I find her flirty, fun, and a little shallow. Really, she's just trying to cover up her sore heart by filling the space her ex left with other guys.

But another part of me, a part I try to hide from her as we eat cookie dough ice cream straight out of the tub, can't help but resent the fact that I ran out on that man...*Sean*...for this.

Guilt swarms me as I think about it, and I bite into a frozen chunk of chocolate. Polly needs me, I'm her friend, and I should be happy to be here for her. Yet, as she tells me the same teary story of how she caught her ex liking another girl's bikini photos on social media, my brain conjures up the image of the guy I dreamt of all night.

Short, dark hair just long enough to run my fingers through. Deep brown eyes dark with desire. Muscles flexing in his arms as he backs me against a wall, expensive fabric under my hands as I run my palms over his chest, the tickle of his breath in my ear as he says my name in a whisper...

*No. Bad Savannah!* I stab my spoon angrily into the remaining ice cream and hand Polly a tissue.

“Okay, enough crying!” she declares after a deep breath, scrubbing mascara tracks off her cheeks with the tissue. “I need to focus on something else. Ooh, like that guy from the bar. I saw him follow you through to the back.” She wiggles her eyebrows at me, leaning her shoulder against mine.

“Oh, no. That’s nothing,” I say, waving away her unspoken questions. “He was *wayyy* out of my league. This is about you, anyway. Let’s not talk about me and my utter lack of love life.” I finish my sentence with a giggle that she doesn’t buy.

“I’m swearing off men,” she decides, wrinkling her nose in distaste. “That means I need to live vicariously through you. That dude was hot and rich and like totally *not* an asshole like—nope! Not saying his name.”

I sigh, giving in. “I really liked him,” I admit, and she squeals, grabbing a half-eaten bar of chocolate from under one of the blankets. She bites into a piece and nods for me to continue. “And I mean...well, okay, we kissed—”

“Oh my god! I knew it!”

I cringe. “But that’s all! I left and didn’t even get his number and I’ll never see him again. I’m sure I was nothing more than a bit of fun to him, anyway.”

Even as I say it, I know it’s not true. Sean’s voice replays for the thousandth time in my mind when he said, “I don’t want whatever’s between us to end here.”

“Just kissed?” Polly asks, pouting. “You can’t tell me you didn’t want to jump on that guy and ride him until the sun came out.”

I gape at her unashamed talk of sex. To buy time, I snag a piece of chocolate from her hand and let it melt on my tongue. I absolutely did want that, but I want more too. I felt connected to him somehow. He was sweet and protective, kind but dominant. The perfect mix of everything I’ve ever wanted.

Everything I can’t have.

I don't want to talk about my feelings or missed opportunities, so I stick to the facts. "Well, okay but..." I sigh, knowing she's going to scream at what I say next. I brace myself as I admit, "I've never...you know...before."

Polly's mouth drops open, her eyebrows hitting her hairline. "Savannah Samson, you are not telling me that you're a VIRGIN."

I groan, trying to hide from her behind a pillow. She rips it out of my hands, shaking her head at me.

"Girl, how?"

I bite my lip, cheeks heating. "I mean, look at me, Polly. I'm a mess."

"Exactly, look at you," she repeats my words back to me with a heavy emphasis that means "Don't be an idiot."

"You're beautiful, Savvy. And kinder than anyone I know. Hell, you've given up your weekend to deal with me sobbing on you all day."

My insecurity is so loud it drowns out her words. "No, you're beautiful. I'd kill for your looks, your body, your confidence."

Polly hits me with the pillow she took from my hands, a stern look on her tear-stained face. I sit there, shocked. "We are both beautiful," she corrects me, wagging her finger in my face like I'm a bratty toddler. "Different, yeah, but that doesn't mean you're not drop-dead gorgeous, babe. For one, your curves? Drool."

She points at my boobs, straining at the material of the pajamas she lent me when I stayed over. "Plus, even with your makeup all smudgy and your hair tangled, you've got the perfect cute-but-secretly-sexy thing going on."

I scoff, but I'm smiling. Her words are kind, and I'm grateful to have a friend like her that makes this new version of my life feel less scary.

"One more chick flick, then I have to go," I tell her, trying to steer the conversation away from me. "I start that new job on Monday, and I don't want to fuck it up."



“You’ll be amazing,” Polly assures me as she presses play on the TV. “If you’re as smart as you are sweet, there’s no way you won’t kill it.”

I try to keep her reassurance close to me as I call my taxi home, shower and shave, and eat the leftover pizza in my fridge. But when I wake up on Sunday, the nerves are impossible to ignore.

All day, I’m sure there’s something I’m forgetting. I read through the list the hiring manager sent over about a hundred times. I can probably repeat it from memory at this point. I’ve packed my bag over and over, making sure I have everything, though it’s not even that much. I set out my clothes, iron them meticulously, and set six different alarms in case I somehow go into a spontaneous coma overnight.

In fact, I barely sleep at all.

I twist and turn so much that I get tangled in the sheets and kick them off in frustration. My mind is a whirlwind of anxiety about tomorrow and longing for Sean. The small chunks of sleep I do get are filled with dreams of a deep voice in my ear and strong hands on my body, or nightmares of me falling and dropping piles of files or spilling hot coffee on the boss I haven’t even met.

When my first alarm goes off, I’m bleary-eyed and groaning. My muscles ache with deep-seated tension and my lips are chapped where I’ve nervously bitten them. I drag myself out of my destroyed bed, silence my alarm, and keep the water cold as I jump into the shower. The shock of the icy stream hitting my skin wakes me up a little, and by the time I’ve washed and dried off, I feel marginally more human.

I take my time applying makeup and styling my hair into a sleek bun that makes me look far more professional than I feel. I keep my makeup natural, adding concealer to hide the circles under my eyes and mascara that makes my lashes look full and swiping a glossy lip balm over my dry lips.

I dress in the new black pencil skirt and silky white blouse I bought myself, donning the outfit like armor. I stare at myself in the mirror, straightening my spine and slipping my feet into

low black heels. I give myself a stern nod in my reflection, breathing out a long breath. I can do this.

On my way out of the door, I grab a granola bar and eat it on the way to my car. I've checked the directions a dozen times, but I'm still nervous about taking a wrong turn as I drive across the city to the office building.

It's still early. I'm not technically supposed to be here for another twenty minutes, but there's only a few spaces left in the parking lot. Thankfully, my car is small so I tuck it between two huge SUVs and step out.

My heels click on the concrete as I step up to the front door of the tall building. It's a new, sleek design that mirrors the high-end companies inside. The email told me to collect a company ID from the front desk that would allow me to get past the interior door and take the elevator to the fifth floor. I repeat the instructions in my head, lips forming the words silently to steady myself.

Inside, the building is warm, not enough to be hot but enough that the thin jacket around my shoulders isn't necessary. White floors, white walls, a white front desk all gleam, the smell of a floral perfume in the air. The woman at the front desk peers at me from around her computer screen.

"New girl for Smith & Sullivan?" she asks, a kind smile on her lips.

"Oh, yes," I stutter out, cursing myself for losing my cool confident facade immediately. "How did you know?"

She winks at me before ducking her head to open a drawer beneath her desk. "It's my job to know everything that goes on here," she answers as she holds out my new employee ID to me. "Just tap it on the keypad at that door and head on up to floor five."

"Thank you." I grin at her, the ID in my hand feeling like a trophy. This job is my gateway to the life I want, security, steady pay, making a life for myself, and it finally feels real.

"Have a good first day!" the woman calls after me as I follow her instructions, tapping the card against the electronic box to

the right of the interior door. It beeps, the light turning green, and lets me through.

The elevator is empty when I jump in, pressing the button labeled *Floor Five - Smith & Sullivan*. I remind myself to breathe, to smile, to act like I'm not freaking the fuck out all day. I'm still not ready when the doors open, but I step out with false confidence, entering the lobby of a huge office.

There's a mix of large offices and conference rooms as well as desks and a waiting area at the front. I can see movement in the glass offices, people pacing and talking as they start work. The sound of keyboards clicking and male voices murmuring on a phone call combined with the smell of coffee and pastries, making the space a little less intimidating. I hover, unsure of where to go or what to do. The interview was over the phone. I've never been in here before.

Just as my anxiety gets the better of me, a voice carries across the room. I jolt, sure I'm imagining things.

"...Well, tell Preston it has to wait until the tenth...no, it's not up for debate..."

The door to one of the glass-walled offices is open. My eyes lock on it, my body driven to get closer to that voice. And then I see him.

He's holding a phone to his ear, jaw clenched, leaning one hand on a huge desk in the center of the office. His suit is navy blue, his dark hair swept back in a short, neat style, and his eyes narrow on a large computer screen.

My breath hitches, and my hands begin to tremble. It can't be...but it is.

Sean.

“Well, tell Preston it has to wait until the tenth,” I snap down the phone, fingers digging into the dark wood of my desk.

This is not the call I need to be dealing with at nine in the morning. I glance at the time at the bottom of my computer screen. Christ, not even nine in the morning. There’s no amount of coffee in the world that can save me from a weekend of no sleep, a stress headache, and having to listen to the obnoxious demands of a man over the phone that absolutely could’ve been a fucking email.

“No, it’s not up for debate,” I argue with the man on the other side of the line. I have half a mind to hang up on him and deal with the consequences later. Instead, I muster up a modicum of professionalism and say, “Look, I have a nine a.m. appointment I can’t miss. Sort it out.”

I hang up, drop my phone back to my desk, and hang my head.

“Fuck,” I mutter to myself, gritting my teeth so hard my jaw aches.

The time at the bottom of my screen reads one minute past nine. I groan. The last thing I want to do now is act pleasant and welcoming to the new secretary I need to train. I’m in no mood to be patient enough to show her around and walk her through everything step-by-step, but there’s no choice.

God, I can’t wait for this day to be over. This whole week, really. At least on Friday night, I can drag myself down to the bar in the hope of seeing Savannah again. I refuse to even

contemplate the idea of never seeing her again. I can feel it in my very bones—she's meant to be mine.

I sigh, forcing myself to stand up straight and adjust my suit jacket and tie. I can at least try to make a good first impression. After all, we need this new hire to stay. I don't have the time or energy to go through a hundred interviews again. I don't even have time to stand here like an idiot debating the state of my life.

I scrub a hand across my jaw as I stride out of my office. The other employees offer me tight smiles and nods, clearly sensing my shit mood and giving me a wide berth. Any other day, I'd apologize for my attitude and try to put them at ease, but I don't have it in me today. I'll make it up to them with a catered lunch or something. It's hard for people to be mad when they're eating free donuts.

Paul, the Smith to my Sullivan, had been the one to hire this new secretary, so I've never met or even spoken to the new hire. I was supposed to read over her CV this weekend, but instead, I spent the entire two days unable to focus on a damn thing because the girl from the bar took up every one of my brain cells.

So now, I have to go greet this secretary without even knowing her name. Real fucking professional of me. Christ, I'm going to be lucky if she doesn't just turn around and leave within five minutes.

I'm halfway to the entryway the new girl should be waiting in when I look up.

Jesus.

All the air leaves my lungs in a rush. I feel like I've been electrocuted. Frozen, sparks shooting through my veins, mouth dropping open, and eyes going wide. Undoubtedly, I look like a fucking fool, but I can't move. My gaze is locked on the woman waiting at the front of the office. Her blonde hair is swept into a sleek bun rather than falling around her face in soft waves, beautiful blue eyes framed by long lashes, full lips parted.

“Savannah.”

She looks just as edible in her black skirt that stops just above her knees and a silky white blouse as she did in that skin-tight pink dress on Friday. Hell, she’d look gorgeous in a paper bag. The shock wears off, and I rush towards her, needing to close the distance between us.

“Savannah,” I say again when I reach her, wrapping an arm around her waist on instinct. I need to touch her, to convince myself she’s actually here. “Am I hallucinating or are you actually here in my office? Because given how much time I’ve spent thinking about you the last two days, I’m not going to lie, I’m convinced my brain has conjured you up.”

She laughs, smiling, but it’s clear she’s nervous. She shuffles her feet, stepping away from my hold on her and putting space between us. My stomach drops.

“I’m real. I’m here,” she says, chewing her lip. “I...I didn’t realize you worked here.”

I clear my throat, shoving my hands in my pockets to stop them from reaching for her again. “I’m Sean Sullivan,” I reintroduce myself, scrambling for some professionalism. “This is my company.”

“Oh my god,” Savannah whispers, blue eyes wide. “So...that means...”

I realize it at the same time she does. It feels like the floor falls out from under us, my heart in my mouth, my head spinning so fast I feel dizzy.

“I’m your boss,” I finish for her, voice strained. Shit. Shit! That’s why she stepped out of my hold. That’s why she seems so goddamn nervous. She didn’t know she was coming to work for me, and not even in my wildest dreams did I imagine that Savannah of all people would be my new hire.

Nothing is ever fucking simple, is it?

“This...this is weird...right?” Savannah clutches at her bag like it’s a lifeline. Or a shield.

Every inch of me is desperate for me to gather her into my arms and hold her until she feels better. I hate the mixture of nerves and worry on her gorgeous face. I never want her to be worried about anything ever again.

“It doesn’t have to be,” I answer. Distantly, I’m aware that the other employees can probably hear and see this, but I find that I don’t really care what they think. But it’s clear Savannah is worried about it, her eyes darting over my shoulder, her teeth ripping the skin on her lips now. “Come on,” I say, trying to keep the possessiveness out of my tone. “We can chat through the paperwork in my office.”

“Paperwork. Yes, right,” Savannah rushes to say, nodding and readjusting her bag on her shoulder.

A few employees offer her smiles and quick greetings as we pass through, but I don’t stop to make introductions the way I probably should. I’ll do it later, once this shit show has been sorted out and I’ve convinced Savannah that her role as my secretary doesn’t have to affect the fact that I want her in a very non-professional way.

“Have a seat.” I hold the door open and gesture to the comfortable office chair at my desk.

I wait until she’s seated before I press the small button to the right of the door that brings down the frosted film in the glass walls, hiding us from prying eyes. She gasps as we’re hidden from view, then coughs to try to hide it, looking around at my office with interest.

I stroll around the desk, taking my own seat on the other side. The desk serves as a barrier between us, one I resent but know is necessary to keep her comfortable. The fact she’s even here feels like a miracle, and the last thing I want is to chase her away when I’ve only just found her again.

“So...uh...the paperwork,” she breaks the silence, refusing to meet my eyes now.

Oh, absolutely not. I refuse to pretend that Friday didn’t happen. Not when it changed my damn life. “I’ve been thinking about you for days,” I tell her again. “Not getting

your number is the biggest regret of my life. I can't believe you're here."

"Sean, I...I need this job," she says quietly, voice shaking. "I'm sorry for running on Friday. Polly, my friend, she needed me and I wasn't thinking and I...well, I've been thinking about you too."

Hope rises in me fast, and she must see it in the grin that spreads across my face because she shakes her head quickly. "But we can't be together."

"What?" I snap immediately.

"You're supposed to be my boss." Her eyebrows pull together. "It's not...I mean, is that even allowed? Isn't there a rule against fraternizing with employees? I'm sure that sort of stuff isn't, like, HR approved..."

"Trust me, sweetness, fraternizing doesn't cover the things I want to do with you." I lower my voice and lace it with desire. "Besides, office romances aren't not allowed. There's HR paperwork and things to sign but that's all. I'm the boss, Savannah. I make the rules."

"Oh. But even still...I mean... God, what will everyone else think?" She ducks her head to try to hide her blush. I see it anyway, taking comfort in the fact that I clearly still affect her the way she affects me.

"I don't care," I answer without a second thought.

"But I do," she whispers back, stopping me in my tracks. "You have to know how this would look, Sean. Like I've been hired just because I'm...dating..." She stumbles over the word, flushing, unsure of what to call this. "...the boss. There's boundaries now. This changes things."

"I want you, sweetness," I repeat, undeterred by her argument. Fuck everyone else. Fuck the rules and fuck the boundaries. I need this woman in my life, and I know she wants that to. Christ, even now, the air between us is practically crackling with electric attraction. "I don't care if I'm not supposed to. You weren't my employee when we met, when you tripped



into me and stole my breath, when I kissed you. You can't tell me that you can't see how good we could be together."

"You don't even really know me."

"I want to. I want to know everything about you. Give me a chance." I'm leaning across the desk now, a pencil snapping under my palm, invading her space but managing to keep my hands to myself.

"I can't," she says softly. "I'm sorry, Sean. I don't want to be known as the girl that's fucking the boss. Everyone will hate me. Please, just let's go over the paperwork and get started, okay? I promise I'm actually a really good secretary."

Even if she's the worst secretary I've ever had, there's no fucking way I'll let her go. She's said no, and I'm not so much of an asshole to push that. But I will change her mind.

She's it for me. I'm sure of it. Everything I've been waiting for is wrapped up in one stunning package.

And I'm going to prove it to her.

## SAVANNAH

I'm hiding in the bathroom. It's immature of me, I know, but I don't care. It's only my third day here, but I can already feel cracks forming in my defenses.

On the first day, Sean ran me through my training. Most of it is stuff I already know and am used to, but with the heat of him at my back, the deep purr of his voice in my ear, and the scent of his cologne scrambling my mind, I could barely spell my own damn name, never mind remember all the technical things.

I try to be a big girl and do the right thing by telling him we should keep things professional. Yet here I am, just two days later, already kicking myself for it.

Yesterday, I sat in on a meeting in the conference room, taking notes and learning to decipher all the business chat that seems like another language. By the end of it all, the talk of investing and reports and predicted outcomes was practically ingrained into my brain.

Sean sat me right next to him, then tugged my chair closer because he wanted to check the notes on my screen even though I only had a blank document open, and I spent the entire rest of the hour trying to remember how to act normal with his thigh pressed against mine under the table.

So, yeah. I'm crumbling and fast. But god, he's just so...hot, obviously, but also sweet and kind and patient and everything I've always imagined the love of my life to be.

“He’s also your fucking boss, Savannah,” I scold myself in the bathroom mirror, scowling at my reflection.

Though, Sean doesn’t seem to think that his position matters at all. He doesn’t understand that it’s not simple, at least not for me. How can I possibly hope to find a place here at this company, make friends with coworkers, and settle in if everyone thinks I only got hired because I’m sleeping with the boss? I don’t want to be that girl.

I glance at the time on my phone, cursing when it tells me it’s three minutes past nine. Rushing, I scamper out of the bathroom and back to my desk. My face flames when I realize Sean’s standing there waiting for me.

Shit.

I begin to blabber apologies, ducking my head to try and hide my embarrassment. “Sorry, sorry. I was just—”

“What are you apologizing for?” he interrupts, giving me a heated once-over with his dark gaze. I sink into my chair behind my desk, unable to stop the shiver that runs through me under his inspection.

“I kept you waiting,” I say, smoothing my hair out of my face.

“For a minute,” he answers, rolling his eyes. “I’m a patient man, Savannah. I will wait for you as long as it takes.”

Why am I being tortured by the universe right now? Seriously, this can’t be legal. It’s inhumane what he’s doing to me.

“W-what can I do for you?” I look up at him and put on my best customer service face.

“Your coffee order.”

“What?”

“Coffee,” he repeats with a smirk that disarms me completely. I swear I’ll swoon if I’m not sitting down. My knees feel weak. His voice is low and smooth as he adds, “How do you take it, sweetness?”

My traitorous mind conjures up an image of him asking the same thing in bed. Braced over me, strong arms flexing on

either side of my body, that sinful voice asking me, “How do you take it, sweetness?”

“Latte,” I fumble out, shaking my head rapidly to try and clear the dream. It’s too late. I’m already craving him in every way. “Shouldn’t I be the one getting everyone their coffee? I’m just the secretary, you’re the boss...”

“You can come with me if it’ll make you feel better,” he offers, shrugging as though we’re on the same level. Does he truly believe that? “If anyone’s calling the front desk at ten to nine in the morning, they deserve to wait anyway.”

I gape at him. From what I’ve gathered, he’s laid back but clearly excellent at his job. I’ve seen the numbers reports on the email chain to the accountant. The sheer amount of zeros in the profit margin column made my eyes bulge out of their sockets.

Yet, he’s not a tyrant. He doesn’t boss people about or make employees so stressed they cry like I’ve seen in my past jobs. Everyone I’ve spoken to seems to genuinely enjoy working here, though there’s not exactly time for deep and meaningful conversations with my coworkers during the work day. Still, nobody has warned me to run while I can, like a waitress once did when I started a local hostess job. That has to be a good sign. Damn him for making it so hard to find something wrong with him. No man can be this perfect.

“I’ll go see what everyone else wants,” I rush to say, pushing away from the desk and practically sprinting onto the main office floor before the filter between my brain and my mouth fails and I say something truly stupid.

I find a cluster of my coworkers in the kitchen, some already clutching mugs of instant coffee. They sigh happily and give me wide grins when I tell them I’m doing a coffee run, and I type out their orders on my notes app. I try to dawdle, needing to take some space away from Sean and his irresistible presence, but five minutes later, I’m waiting for the elevator with him at my side.

“So, how are you finding the work?” he asks. To everyone else, I’m sure it seems like a nice boss checking up on his new

hire. But I can't help reading into every word out of his mouth, dissecting his tone in search of hidden secrets.

"Good," I reply, thankful when the elevator comes.

The doors slide closed after us, but he doesn't press the button for the ground floor. I'm suddenly very aware that this is far worse. I'm stuck with him in a small space alone.

"You're killing me, sweetness." He ambles towards me. I step back, my back hitting the mirrored wall of the elevator. There's nowhere for me to run, but even if there is, I know I won't. I want to be caught by him, even though I know it's wrong. "Having you so close but not being able to touch you... You're incredible, Savannah. Smart and strong and stunning—"

"And your secretary," I add, my voice shaking.

"That is not a disincentive."

He's so close now that if I push up on my tip-toes, I can kiss him. It's so tempting. This whole thing is killing me too, but shit, I'm just trying to do the right thing here. What if I give in, let him seduce me, end up in his bed, and then he decides he's done? I lose more than just a man. I'll lose my job, too.

I can't afford to lose either.

His lips graze mine carefully. The touch is so soft, barely there, just a tease of a tease. I tremble. My body leans forward instinctively, wanting more of this man, wanting whatever I can get. My mouth presses against his before my brain can kick into gear and stop me.

The kiss is chaste, mouths closed, tongues safely hidden away, but he may as well be undressing me for how wildly it lights my body up. Need hits me like a train, my thighs squeezing together. I want to kiss him forever.

Of course, I can't. As quickly as it started, it ends, Sean pulling away first. Pink lipstick is smeared across his top lip. I'm burning up, breath hitching, and gripping the metal bar behind me to stop myself from grabbing at him for more.

“I’m not going to take more than you’re willing to give,” Sean says gruffly, eyes meeting mine. “I meant it when I said I can be patient, Savannah. I won’t push you, sweetness. But whenever you need me, I’m here. I want whatever I can get.”

My lips part in a silent *o*, but I can’t make any words leave my lips. He presses the button for the ground floor, and I panic.

“Lipstick,” I whisper, clearing my throat. “You have... lipstick.”

Sean smirks. “Does it suit me?”

I laugh shakily, ducking my head. I like the sight of him with my lipstick on his lips far too much to admit.

When I look up again, he’s wiped it off, and the doors are opening. There’s a small group of people waiting to get into the elevator, so I force my legs to work and stride out with as much confidence as I can manage, sure that everyone there knows what’s just happened. The words *I’m falling in love with my boss* may as well be written across my forehead.

“Come on, Savannah.” I realize he’s already nearly out the door. “I’ll show you the best coffee shop in this city.”

I can’t help but return the smile he gives me and follow him out the door. His hand grazes the bottom of my back as he guides us toward the coffee shop, and I have to force myself to concentrate on walking in a straight line instead of the soft warmth of his palm on my body.

It’s a wonder I don’t spill everyone’s coffee down my front before we get back.

“IT’S LUNCH HOUR.”

I jump, not realizing Sean is there until he speaks. I try to recover some pride, clearing my throat and turning in my chair to meet his eyes. I’ve barely recovered from the incident in the elevator this morning, and not even diving into the admin tasks I have lined up has helped my mind settle.

“Oh, I’m not hungry so I can just work through it.” It’s a lie. I am hungry, but the idea of leaving the safety of my desk and

braving socializing with the others chases away any desire I have to eat.

“That’s not going to work for me. You need to eat, Savannah. The work can wait. Do you like tacos?”

I gape at him. “Anyone who doesn’t like tacos cannot be trusted,” I say seriously, though I’m grinning now. At the mention of the food, my stomach rumbles. Traitor.

“Finish up,” he tells me, pulling out his phone and tapping at the screen. “Food will be here in fifteen minutes, and I expect you to be in the kitchen by then.”

“Or what?” I can’t believe the words leave my mouth. I’m playing with fire here, and though I know it’s going to burn, I can’t help it. The warmth is so tempting. The adrenaline and anticipation and eagerness overwhelm me.

Sean looks up from his phone, tilting his head at me. One eyebrow raises. The corner of his mouth twitches into a tiny smirk. He pockets his phone and then braces one hand on my desk, leaning over so his words are private, a secret meant only for my ears. “Or I’ll teach you a lesson, sweetness. I’m very invested in making sure you take good care of yourself, and I’ll do whatever it takes to make that happen. Even ordering you about under the threat of punishment.”

I blink, inhaling the spiced scent of his cologne mixing with my vanilla perfume. He wants me to...take care of myself? I can’t remember the last time someone who wasn’t my own parents cared whether I ate three meals a day and looked after myself. It’s as comforting as it is thrilling—a dangerous combination.

“Well, I’m a fast learner, Mr Sullivan,” I say in my best professional voice, the one I use to answer the phone. His eyes flash and I smile. “I won’t let you down.”

“Oh, Savannah.” He straightens again, nodding to an employee returning from their own break. When they’re a safe distance away, he adds, “You couldn’t disappoint me if you tried.”

He walks away to the kitchen while I stare at his back, struck dumb by his words. I can't help but think he might have been totally serious when he told me he wanted me...as his. Not just for a night but forever. But that's insane, isn't it?

*You want him too*, the devil on my shoulder whispers in my ear. I groan, pushing my hair out of my face as I log out of the computer and stand. I do. I really do.

It would be so easy to give in, to let him in, to give myself to him. But what happens when he realizes that I'm not everything he wants? That I'm just a twenty-one-year-old nobody from out of town and he's a super successful CEO who's got his shit together and can have literally any woman he wants.

Oh, and he's nearly forty. Seventeen years older than me. Fuck, this is a mess. I'm a mess.

And yet, none of the obstacles I've listed make my heart want him any less.

The delivery guy arrives, breaking up my chaotic thoughts, and I thank him, mouth-watering as I take the warm bag. The smell of the tacos is heavenly. It'll be worth the pain of close confines with Sean for the food at least.

He's waiting at the table in the office kitchen when I enter. There's a few others in the room, and they greet me happily when I put the bag down and Sean unpacks the food. There's so much of it, my eyes grow wide. When he sees my questioning stare, he only shrugs. "I didn't know which was your favorite."

"But this must have been so expensive," I argue, even as I slide a container towards me. I moan as I take my first bite, the taste even better than I imagined. Is it considered acceptable to eat tacos for breakfast, lunch, and dinner? I'm sure I can live off these. They're so damn good.

Sean smiles, shaking his head a little. "I'd pay millions to make you as happy as you are with that taco," he jokes, or at least I think he's joking. When I peek up at him, though, he



looks deadly serious. I swallow quickly, thankful when he scoops up a nacho and begins eating too.

He chats to the other employees for a while until their breaks are up and they take cups of coffee and tea back to their desks. Given that I didn't take my break until halfway through the hour and Sean's the boss so can take whatever break he wants, their absence leaves us alone in the kitchen. Suddenly, the spacious room feels much too small. Finished with my food, I start tidying up the boxes just to distract myself.

"Thank you for the food," I tell Sean over my shoulder. I rummage around in the fridge, well-stocked with water and cans of soda for employee use, grabbing one at random. My mouth feels very dry all of a sudden. I drink three large gulps, feeling his presence at my back like my brain's attuned to his every move.

I turn slowly, facing him. He's tidied up the last of our lunch, and now, he's standing right in front of me. The small of my back presses against the counter. For a moment, we just stare at each other, my breath stuck in my throat, his gaze trained on me.

"I should get back to work." My teeth scrape my bottom lip.

"You have twenty minutes left on your break," he counters, stepping towards me.

"I know," I whisper, but he's so close that I know he can hear every word. God, he can probably hear how fast my heart is beating too. "But I don't trust myself to be here...alone...with you."

"Why's that?" he asks, his gaze dropping to my mouth as he says it. I shiver.

"You know why, Sean."

I pause in my prowl towards Savannah, satisfaction rolling through me. She wants me, and more than that, she's admitting she wants me. The mixture of relief and need that her admission sends rushing through me makes my head foggy with desire.

Her expression falls a little as I step backward, moving away from her. I walk faster, never wanting to be the one to cause even a second of sadness to grace her beautiful face. When I reach the door, her lips part in silent surprise. Because I'm not leaving, far fucking from it.

The lock snicks closed, the sound loud in the quiet kitchen, shutting the rest of the office out.

"Explain that for me, sweetness," I urge as I stalk towards her with long strides, eating up the distance between us. "Why is it that you can't trust yourself to be alone with your boss?"

Her face is flushed and her breaths are uneven, and fuck, I've never wanted anything more in my entire life. I fist my hands at my side to stop myself from reaching for her. I need her to say it first. I need permission.

"Because..." she whispers, swallowing thickly as she gathers courage. "Because I want...you." Her eyes dart up to meet mine, and I watch determination settle over her pretty face. "I want you, Sean."

That undoes me. Her soft, shaky words are a drug to my system. I want to make her scream them. I'm ravenous, and there's only one thing that will feed my hunger.

“Fuck me, Savannah,” I groan, my hands on her waist. “I need a taste of you, sweetness. I won’t survive without it. Be a good girl and spread your legs for me.”

She whimpers as I lift her onto the counter, sitting her perfect ass on the edge. Her ocean blue eyes are wide, her hands scrabbling at the edge of the counter for something to grip onto. That won’t do.

I drop to my knees with a wide grin, loving how reactive she already is. So sweet. So beautiful. So *mine*.

“I gave you an order, gorgeous,” I say slowly, tapping her knee. Slowly, she parts her thighs, her skirt riding up at the movement, revealing more of her perfection. My groan makes her shiver where she’s perched. The tease of white lace between her thighs makes my mouth water. I’m fucking drooling over her. “Wider.”

“Sean...” she whines, and I have to squeeze my eyes closed so I don’t fucking embarrass myself. Nobody has ever driven me as absolutely insane as she does.

I grip her thighs, her soft skin silky smooth under my palms, and press a wet kiss to the sensitive skin there. Before I bury my head between those perfect thighs, I pause, looking up at her. Carefully, giving her a chance to stop me even as I pray she won’t, I pry her hands from the counter and lift them to my hair. Instinctively, she runs the strands through her fingers, tangling her hands in my hair.

“The only thing you’re holding on to while I’m between your legs is me. The door’s locked but this room isn’t sound-proof, Savannah. Try and stay quiet for me, yeah?”

I don’t give her a chance to answer. I’m too desperate. I shove her skirt up higher, not even bothering to wait long enough to take her panties off. Instead, I cover the white lace with my mouth, tasting how wet she is through the fabric.

At the first taste of her slick warmth, pleasure zips down my spine. I nearly fucking come in my pants right there, moaning as she does. I knew my nickname for her was right—she’s sweeter than anything I’ve ever tasted.

Roughly, I yank her panties to the side, needing to get rid of any barrier between us, to taste her fully. I want to devour her.

“So wet for me,” I groan, voice rough. “You’re so pretty here, sweetness.”

There’s no filter between my thoughts and my speech, but she doesn’t seem to mind my blabbering dirty talk. Her hands tighten in my hair.

“Oh—oh fuck!” Savannah moans as my tongue sweeps through her folds hungrily, collecting her desire on my tongue and savoring my first proper taste. God, I’m already addicted.

I find her clit, teasing the tight bud with the tip of my tongue in small circles. Her hips buck and more of those stunning sounds fall from her lips when I find the rhythm she likes. She’s clearly trying to be quiet, such a good girl for me, and I desperately want to grab her and haul her home so she can be as loud as she wants. I want the walls of my apartment to shake from her cries.

“Need to feel you come,” I growl against her flesh, dipping my head to press my tongue inside her. She gasps, and I can feel her pussy tighten around me with pleasure. My cock is so hard it hurts, but I care far more about her relief than my own.

“Sean!” Savannah shakes under me, and I groan, encouraging her. Her voice breaks, one hand leaving my hair to muffle her moans.

The door handle rattles. Someone knocks. I don’t give a fuck. I don’t stop. Nothing will keep me from making my girl come.

“Sean, oh...I’m gonna—oh fuck!”

She comes with a choked, half-muffled cry. I work her clit with my tongue until she’s whimpering from the overstimulation and tugging me away from her. Reluctantly, I back off, kissing her thigh gently before I stand. My mouth is damp from her release, and her eyes catch on it, pupils blown wide. Her hand is still pressed to her lips, and I tug it away, leaning in to kiss her.

“You taste like heaven, Savannah,” I whisper, licking my lips.

“The door,” she whispers, slipping off the counter hastily. Her legs are still weak from her orgasm, and I catch her with a hand around her waist before she falls over. “Oh my god, I can’t believe we just did that.”

I smile at her as she tugs her skirt back down, trying to put herself back together. I open my mouth to reassure her that everything’s okay, to praise her again for doing so well for me, but instead, my name is shouted through the door.

“Sean? You in there? The Weston meeting starts in like...thirty seconds!”

“Shit.” I’ve lost track of time, but I don’t regret it at all. I don’t want to go to that meeting. I want to put Savannah back on that damn counter and see how well she takes my cock. Her panting breaths fill the air as I rake my hand through my hair. “Give me two minutes!” I shout back at my partner, knowing I’ll be late.

When I turn back to Savannah, she’s flushed and her skirt is creased, but she’s as stunning as ever. Even more so because I can see the shine of pleasure in her eyes.

I grab her chin between my thumb and forefinger, and she doesn’t fight me as I tilt her head back to look at me. “This isn’t over,” I promise her. “Now that I’ve had a taste of you, I’m never letting you go.”

This girl is mine even if she’s still fighting it. It’s a damn fact.

“Wait for me after work tonight,” I whisper urgently. “Let me make you dinner and finish what we started.”

She inhales sharply, but I don’t wait to hear her answer. It isn’t optional. I need her in my home, in my bed, in my life. And I won’t fucking stop until she is.

I turn away, despite wanting to do the exact opposite, and unlock the door. I stride out to go spend an hour pretending to focus on the meeting instead of savoring the taste of my girl on my tongue.

## SAVANNAH

**H**ow the hell does Sean expect me to get back to work after that?

I wait in the kitchen after he's gone, trying to get my breathing back under control. My panties are practically ruined, the fabric damp and uncomfortable. My skirt is rumped, and my face is hot. I can still feel the ripples of pleasure between my legs from what he did to me.

I can't believe he did that. I can't believe I let him.

But I can't bring myself to regret it.

A few minutes and half a bottle of cold water later, I leave the kitchen wearing what I hope is an inconspicuous smile. Everyone's already back at work, so nobody questions me, but I still rush back to my desk faster than normal as though a coworker could read my thoughts just by glancing my way.

*Wait for me tonight...let me make you dinner and finish what we started.* His words replay on a loop in my head. I can't focus on anything else. It gets so bad that I have to write the same email three times because my fingers keep fumbling on the keys. Need pulses between my legs, and I shift awkwardly on my chair.

The memory of his mouth...down there...makes me blush, and I have to hide my face in my hands, hoping nobody notices. Nobody's ever done that to me before.

The hours pass slowly, *so damn slowly*, and I spend each one of them thinking about what's going to happen tonight. Will he

lick me like that again? Touch me? I saw the bulge in his trousers when he stood up after. Would that even fit inside me?

The idea scares me as much as it thrills me.

By the time five o'clock rolls around, I'm so ready to leave that I pack all my stuff away in under a minute. A quick glance over my shoulder confirms that Sean is tidying up in his office, but I don't want to be seen leaving together.

As much as I want him, I'm staying firm on the fact that I don't want to flaunt it to the whole damn office. So I hop in the elevator with a friendly female employee who I think is named Sarah. We chat about how excited she is for a glass of wine when she gets home and she shows me photos of her cat—a super cute ball of fluff that momentarily distracts me from my racing thoughts—until we step out at the bottom floor.

It's October, but the air hasn't gone cold yet. The evening is a little gray, but it's warm, and I'm grateful for that fact as I wait at the side of the building, leaning against the stone as I watch people walk past.

“Savannah!”

I jolt, turning towards the voice shouting my name. I smile when my gaze finds a familiar face. “Hi, Chris.”

“Hey, how are you?” He joins me at the edge of the sidewalk, getting closer to me to let other people move past.

“What are you doing round here? I thought you lived near me?” I respond, happy to have company to pass the time while I wait for Sean.

Chris makes a face I can't decipher, like he's tasted something sour. “Just out for a day in the center,” he answers cheerily, but his smile is tight and his voice sounds forced.

I frown, cocking my head to the side. I haven't known him for long, but he's always been easygoing and kind. Is something wrong?

“Are you okay?” I ask gently, concerned. “You seem a little... stressed?”

His smile drops, and he sighs heavily. The sudden change in his expression surprises me, my eyes widening. “I saw you with that guy,” he says slowly, jaw tense. “At the coffee shop.”

“Oh! My boss,” I supply, nodding. Our daily coffee runs are becoming a sort of routine. Sean had memorized my coffee order on day two.

“He’s also that guy from the bar, right?”

I will myself not to blush. I don’t work with Chris. There’s no reason to hide this from him, not really. But...I don’t like the weird way he’s looking at me or the way he’s talking about Sean. I shuffle slightly, moving away from him. He takes a step towards me, not letting me get more distance. My heart rate spikes.

“Yeah,” I say quietly. “Just a coincidence.”

Chris snorts, his lip curling in a sneer. “Do all your bosses put their hand on your waist like that? Or flirt shamelessly with you? Is that the kind of girl you are, Savannah? Had me fooled. I thought you were sweet, not some shameless slut.”

I feel like he’s slapped me. “Chris!” I hiss, horrified. “What are you talking about?”

“I can’t believe you,” he snaps, and too late I realize that I’m trapped between a pillar and his body. I can’t back away anymore. “You blew me off for him? What is it? Were you hoping for an early bonus, huh?”

“What?! Of course not—”

“Then what’s that rich prick got that I don’t?”

“Chris, please—”

“After everything I’ve done for you, Savannah,” he continues, disappointment and darkness leaking into his voice. I’m frozen under the hatred in his gaze. “Don’t you think I’m owed better than this for all the kindness I’ve shown you? You wouldn’t even know Polly if it wasn’t for me. You’d be alone in this city.”

“I don’t...Chris...what are you doing?” My voice comes out as small as I feel. Fear makes my stomach churn. My chest



hurts with how hard my heart is beating against my ribs.

His touch burns like a brand as he grabs my wrist. I yelp, the sound broken with fear.

“Oh come on, Savannah.” His tone switches to false kindness. His mood changes are giving me whiplash. I can’t keep up. His fingers are tight on my wrist. I wince. “I’m a nice guy. I’ll forgive you for all of this. Come back to my place, apologize properly, and we can put this behind us. We can start our dating journey on a much better foot, yeah?”

“No!” I struggle, but he doesn’t let go.

“Savannah, stop being so difficult—”

Suddenly, Chris is ripped away. I topple forward as his grip releases, gasping. It takes me a few seconds to work out what I’m seeing, but when I do, all the air leaves my lungs.

Chris is lying on his back on the sidewalk, scrambling to get back to his feet as Sean gives me a once-over as though checking I’m all in one piece. Noting that I’m not injured, he turns back to Chris, the other man shaking on his feet. Chris isn’t a small guy. In fact, he’s a similar height and weight to Sean by my guess, and with the anger vibrating off them both, I shiver, choosing to focus my gaze on Sean to try to soothe my nerves.

Sean, my kind, protective, hot-as-hell Sean, is furious.

“What the fuck do you think you’re doing?” he seethes, fisting Chris’ t-shirt and shaking him. Chris blubbers, waving his hands about.

“It was just a misunderstanding man, that’s all!”

“You had your hands on her.” Sean bares his teeth and shoves Chris away roughly, and he stumbles. “She is not yours to touch. When a woman says no, it fucking means no.”

“It wasn’t like that! Come on, Savannah. Tell him.”

Sean’s hand is around Chris’ throat before I can say anything. He pins him to the side of the building, ignoring the people scurrying around us. Chris’ face is red, his eyes bugging out.

“Keep her name out of your disgusting mouth,” Sean warns.

I think I should be scared, especially when Chris tries to fight again and Sean’s fist hits his face, but I’m not. I’m far less scared now than I was before Sean appeared. With him here, I feel...safe.

Chris doubles over, coughing, and Sean crouches so his next words are whispered into the other man’s ear, just loud enough for me to hear.

“Stay the fuck away from my girl,” Sean snarls, stepping on Chris’ stomach before standing and smoothing his hands down the front of his suit. “Come on, sweetness. Let’s get you home.”

I take his extended hand and together, we leave Chris bent over on the sidewalk, groaning in pain.

When we turn the corner, Sean tugs me to a stop, crowding me with worry in his eyes.

“Christ. Savannah, are you okay? I’m so sorry I wasn’t there sooner. Did he hurt you? I’ll kill him, I swear to god—”

“I’m alright,” I say quickly, leaning into his touch as he cups my face, thumb stroking my cheek. It’s an innocent touch, but it sends sparks spiraling through me regardless. “He only grabbed my wrist. He didn’t hurt me really. He just...” I bite my bottom lip, a sudden rush of sadness rising.

“Are you upset? Did you not want me to hurt him?”

I am upset, but not because Sean beat him up. I’m decidedly not upset about that. At all.

“No, I’m...I kind of liked the way you defended me,” I admit, swallowing. “He just scared me a little. I didn’t think he was like that. Thank you for...what you did.”

He leans down, planting a soft kiss on my forehead that makes me smile.

“I don’t want to think about him anymore,” I decide, stepping away so I can look Sean in the eye. “Take me to your place like you promised?”

“Anything you want, sweetness.”

## SAVANNAH

“Oh my god, your apartment...” I gasp as we step inside and get my first look at where Sean lives.

“Is that a good gasp or a bad gasp?” Sean chuckles, his hand on the small of my back as he encourages me to walk forward. “Have a look around while I get dinner started.”

I nod dumbly, still in shock. I know Sean’s rich, he’s my boss for God’s sake, but this is on a whole other level. My little apartment must look like a cupboard to him. His whole space is bright and open, with an open-concept living room and kitchen area that makes the floor space look even bigger.

A huge TV takes up one wall, with a black leather sofa and a plush armchair facing it. A fluffy white rug covers the floorboards, making it feel more homey. The kitchen is stunning, with white marble surfaces and shiny silver handles. It smells like Sean’s cologne in here, and I inhale greedily.

He told me to explore, but my feet take me straight to where he stands in the kitchen, already chopping up ingredients. I don’t want him out of my sight.

“I can help—”

“Let me spoil you the way you deserve, ” he says with a slow smile. “Next time, I’ll take you out to my favorite restaurant and buy you one of everything to try, but tonight, I want you all to myself.”

I shudder, licking my lips. “This is crazy.”

He shrugs, putting down the knife and grabbing two wine glasses and a chilled bottle of expensive-looking white wine. “Sit,” he instructs, and I obey mindlessly, perching on the bar stool and accepting the glass of wine. “Dinner won’t be long.”

“And then...what happens?” I can’t help but ask, swallowing a mouthful of sweet wine. I make a surprised happy noise at the taste.

“Like it?” he asks, grinning. I nod. “I need to brush up on my cocktail-making skills, but I remember how much you like sweet drinks.”

I flush, ducking my head. “I’m still sorry about your shirt.”

“I’m not,” he answers easily. “It’s my prized possession now. But to answer your first question, what happens after is up to you.”

“I...” I want him. I want more of what happened in the kitchen. I want to please him in return even if I have no idea how. What if I’m bad at it?

“What I want is to have you spread out on my bed,” he says, sensing my hesitation. “I want to feel that pretty pussy around my cock. I want to make you scream my name, Savannah.”

Oh god. I clench my thighs together, nodding eagerly.

“But I’m not a total heathen,” he adds. “You need energy for that, so drink your wine and stop distracting me.”

I laugh, but I do as he says, watching him eagerly as he prepares a quick pasta for us. Watching Sean cook—the veins in his hands as he chops, the muscles in his back as he turns and sets the pans on the stovetop, the hint of his chest when he unbuttons the top two buttons on his shirt—is better than any movie.

I’m ready to skip dinner and let him do whatever he wants to me by the time he serves me a big bowl of delicious-smelling pasta. But he’s right, I do need to eat first, and when he sits across from me, I’m hit with a storm of butterflies in my stomach.

It feels so...domestic, eating dinner together in his kitchen. I feel comfortable here with him, not as out of place as I probably should feel in a place as nice as this.

“What’s your favorite color?” Sean says as we take our first bite. The question surprises me, and I laugh.

“Pink. You?”

“Black.”

“That’s not a color,” I argue, pinning him with a stare. He rolls his eyes.

“Favorite food.”

This time, I point my fork at him. “What is this, a pop quiz?”

Sean smirks. “Well, I know your favorite drink, your coffee order, and that you think the best part of a cupcake is the icing, but I want to know everything I can about you, sweetness. So answer the question for me.”

I’m taken aback, blushing furiously as I take a sip of wine to try to cool myself down. He’s been paying attention. Close attention. I’ve never had anyone care enough to do that before.

I humor him, answering his questions like this really is a first date. I learn his favorite food is a very specific, fancy kind of risotto from a restaurant I can’t pronounce but he promises to take me to. Then, I feel a little silly telling him my favorite is pizza.

He asks me about my hometown and my family, taking interest in every part of me. By the time our plates are clean and our glasses are nearly empty, his questions have gotten more specific.

“Gold or silver jewelry?”

“Gold.”

He nods like he’s taking notes in his mind. “Favorite position.”

My eyes widen. “Uh...what?”

His eyes darken, and the air between us grows electric. “In bed, sweetness. How do you like to be fucked?”

I swallow thickly, every inch of me on high alert. God, I want him to touch me so badly. I need it. But first... "I don't know," I admit with as much confidence as I can muster. "But I want you to teach me."

He's out of his seat faster than I can track, coming around to trap me between him and the counter, looking as wild and as desperate as I feel. "Savannah..." he grinds out through clenched teeth like my admission pains him. "You're a virgin?"

I nod, biting my lip. "Is that...a problem?"

"Fuck no," he growls, and I yelp as I'm suddenly in the air, held tightly in strong hands, then thrown over his shoulder. "I'm going to be the only man to ever fucking touch you, to feel that sweet pussy around me. I'm going to fill you with my come, and one day I'll put a baby in you too. You are mine, Savannah, only ever mine. Fuck, that's so damn hot."

I'm shaking at his filthy words, moaning affirmations as he throws me down onto a soft mattress. He looms over me, shirt rolled up to his elbows, fists clenched in the sheets.

"Please," I whimper, reaching for him. I might not have had sex before, but I want it so badly all the same.

In a blur of hands and fabric, he undresses us both, caressing my skin as he does, making me arch up against him. I stare at him when he throws his clothes to the floor, taking in the view for the first time. My mouth waters at the muscles on display, my eyes traveling down his defined abs to his cock, hard and heavy between his legs. Oh my god.

"You won't fit," I breathe, staring at it.

"It will. You'll take me like a good girl," he promises darkly. "And nobody else. Only. Me."

"Yes," I pant as he parts my legs and drags a finger through my soaked center. I'm still doubtful I can physically take him, but god I'm willing to try. "Only you. I only want you. Please, please, please."

"You're so beautiful," he murmurs as he slips one long finger inside me. I gasp, the intrusion feeling tight but so good.

“Christ, so fucking tight, sweetness. Relax and let me play with what’s mine.”

His words are like a drug. I’m not nervous, not anymore. All I feel is pleasure. Desire. His mouth on mine, the taste of sweet wine on his tongue, the curl of his fingers—two now—inside me. My legs shake. It’s so much but not enough.

“You feel like heaven around my fingers,” he groans, thrusting them inside me. I can’t remember how to form words. “So soft, so hot. So perfect. Come for me, sweetness. Soak my hand so I can give you my cock.”

This orgasm is even better than the one he gave me in the kitchen. I shatter, screaming his name, my walls clenching around his fingers desperately. And then his hand is gone, leaving me feeling empty.

“Look at me,” Sean says gruffly, and my eyes snap to his. His body covers mine, and I feel the thick head of his cock rub against my clit. “Keep your eyes on me as I take what’s mine, Savannah. Your pussy, your body, your virginity—it’s mine.”

He’s wild with desire, but so am I. “Yours,” I agree, circling my hips to try and make him move faster.

“It might hurt at first, but I’ll make it feel better,” he says, pressing dizzying kisses to my neck. “I’ll make you feel so fucking good.”

My hands are on his back, nails scratching at his skin, feeling the rippling of his muscles. His hand holds my hip, angling me for him, and then he’s pushing inside me. I gasp, a strangled moan leaving my open mouth, at the overfull stretch of it. There’s resistance, and he’s right. It does hurt a bit, but the pleasure is overwhelming.

“More.”

“I’m trying to go slow for you,” he says through gritted teeth. I can tell from the tension in his body that he’s holding back, and I want to snap his control.

“Fuck me like you own me, Sean. Give me everything.”



He growls, and the sound sends shivers through me. Then he thrusts hard, shoving the rest of his length inside me, breaking through the resistance of my body. I scream, not in pain but in pleasure as he hits a place inside me that makes me feel like I'm on fire. The stretch stings, but the bite of pain only makes it feel better. So good. I didn't know it would be this good.

He fucks me with hard, fast strokes, reaching deep inside me. I hold onto him, letting him pull me under a wave of desire.

“God, Savannah. Fuck. So tight, so fucking perfect,” he groans a list of dirty compliments in my ear, and I wrap my legs around him, another orgasm overtaking me. “You were fucking made for me.”

Then, we're falling over the edge together. I feel the hot rush of his come inside me as my pussy tightens around him while I shatter too, stars bursting in my vision, my body electric with pleasure.

Sometime later, when we can both breathe again, he cleans me up and tucks me against him, limp and exhausted. I'm too tired to even speak, and I fall asleep in his bed, sated and happier than I've ever been.

I t's been a week since the night I took Savannah's virginity, and my obsession with her is only growing.

There's no getting her out of my system. All I want is more, more of her in every way. I want everything. It doesn't matter how much time I spend with her outside these walls. I want every second of her time at work too.

Savannah knocks on the glass door of my office, trying to balance two steaming cups of coffee in her hand. The sight of her still takes my fucking breath away. Immediately, I stand, rushing to hold open the door for her so she can enter, pressing the button to frost the glass at the same time.

"I made you coffee," she says with a sweet smile, setting one of the cups on my desk and cradling hers in both hands.

"Thank you." I ignore my coffee in favor of holding her instead. I pluck her cup from her hands and set it down before I wrap her up in my arms.

"Sean!" she squeaks, pressing her palms flat against my chest as she leans back. "What if someone comes in?"

"If they enter my office without knocking, that's on them," I scoff. "I miss you, Savannah. It's torture having to pretend I'm not drooling at the thought of my secretary the entire day."

She laughs, the sound light and musical. Everything about her makes me crazy.

"So dramatic," she teases, rolling her eyes at me playfully.

“Not nearly dramatic enough,” I grumble in response. I know she wants to settle in and find her footing here without the complication of our relationship, but every time another male employee so much as looks her way, I want to growl at them like some sort of guard dog. She’s *mine* and I want every fucking man in this city to know it.

“The second we leave this office, I’m all yours.” Savannah giggles, pulling away from me with a stunning smile.

“You’re mine every second of every day,” I tell her. “I’ll prove it tonight.”

“I’m counting on it,” she says sassily as she spins out of my reach and leaves, taking her cup with her.

I un-frost the glass so I can see her at her desk, sipping the coffee and leaving shiny pink lip gloss marks on the edge of the cup. She takes a call, and I watch her mouth form words I can’t hear. Obsessed is an understatement. I’ve thought of nothing but her since she spilled her drink on me two weeks ago.

Like promised, she waits for me after work and I drive her back to my place. It’s become a routine, one I look forward to from the second we step into the office every morning.

Tonight, I let her pick pizzas from her favorite place and order them while I test out a strawberry mojito recipe I found online. It’s overly complicated and takes a ridiculous amount of time to make, but the moan she makes when she takes her first sip is worth every second of effort.

“It’s Halloween next week,” I tell her when our pizzas arrive and we’ve taken our first bites.

Savannah’s eyes widen as she puts her slice back on her plate. “Oh my god, I don’t have a costume yet!”

I laugh. “There’s still time.”

“But I haven’t even picked what I want to be. Last year, I was Barbie and I suppose I could just wear the same costume again...” She pauses, pinning me with a look. “What are you going to be?”

The seriousness in her voice is adorable. “I don’t dress up. I’m too old for that,” I say with a smirk.

She pouts at that. “Nobody’s ever too old to dress up for Halloween,” she argues. “Besides, you’re thirty-eight not ninety.”

“I’ll dress up on one condition,” I tell her, smirking. She leans forward eagerly. “The company hosts a Halloween party every year. Come with me.”

She shrugs. “Sure. I’m an employee after all, so—”

“No,” I interrupt, shaking my head. “Come with me.”

Savannah’s plush lips part in surprise. “Like...as your secretary? Or as more than your secretary?”

“You’ve always been more than my damn secretary,” I remind her. I bite my tongue to keep from adding, *If I have it my way, you’ll be my wife too*. I know her well enough to know that it would scare her, despite the truth of it. I’ve known since the start that she’ll be wearing my ring on her finger one day.

“Won’t it be weird?” she asks, but the way her brows are pulled together tells me she’s thinking about it. I take that as a win and press my advantage.

“Announcing it outside of office hours is a compromise,” I tell her. “People will be drinking all the free champagne they can get, and these parties always get a little wild.” I pause, chuckling as I remember the last one. Someone ended up passed out in a bush, and my partner ended up in an entirely different costume than the one he’d shown up in. It was good-natured fun, helped along by the free drinks.

“I don’t know...”

“I don’t want to hide how much you mean to me,” I say quietly, hoping she knows how sincere I am. “I promise you, sweetness. Nobody will say a single bad word to you about it.”

If they do, I’ll fire them.

Savannah takes a long sip of her cocktail and sighs. “Okay,” she agrees softly, a small smile on her lips. “But you have to do a couple’s costume with me.”

I'll agree to pretty much anything she asks. I nod immediately, grinning. One more week of secrecy and then the entire world will know that she belongs to me. I'm in love with this girl, and I don't give a single fuck if people judge me for the fact she's my employee. No part of me is ashamed of how badly I want her.

"I don't like hiding it, either," she admits. "I saw how that woman was looking at you in the meeting yesterday." She frowns, adorably grumpy.

"I didn't notice," I say honestly. "You're the only woman I see, sweetness. I spent most of that meeting imagining bending you over the table and shoving that tease of a skirt up so I could make you scream my name."

"Sean!" she complains, but she's smiling as she says it. "How am I supposed to concentrate on work knowing you're thinking of...that?"

I raise a brow at her. "How do you think I feel? God, the amount of time I spend fantasizing about eating you out in the kitchen again..."

"Fuck dinner," she groans, jumping out of her seat and reaching for me.

"Need something, sweetness?" I ask, faking innocence. My cock's been hard for her since we got home. I'm dying to show her just how much I think about her.

"You," she demands, grabbing my hand and dragging me to the bedroom.

## SAVANNAH

I bite my lip as I check my outfit over again in the bathroom mirror.

Nerves and excitement have me bouncing on my feet, all that nervous energy demanding that I move. We still have two hours before the party starts, but I've been thinking about it all week.

Tonight is the night Sean gets to tell everyone I'm more than just a new employee, and I've imagined every possible scenario a thousand times. I like my coworkers, and I don't want them to think of me differently because of this.

But...I more than like Sean. As much as I try to hide it from myself, I'm in love with him. It seems insane to feel so strongly so quickly, but everything with him feels natural. We spend every second we're not at work together. I've barely been to my own apartment at all, and I don't miss it. It doesn't feel like home...here does.

Sean's place has become our place in my head. He bought vanilla syrup for my morning coffees and a million fancy cocktail ingredients to make me drinks at dinner, and my stuff is slowly leaving my own apartment and staying here much like I am. I have my own drawer in his dresser, and my makeup is currently covering the vanity behind me.

I'm his and he's mine, and tonight we won't have to hide it anymore.

I grin at my own reflection. A sparkly halo floats above my head, attached to the headband in my hair. A little pair of

feathery wings bounce on my back. My boobs are barely contained in the white corset-style top, decorated with sequins and sparkles.

The tutu-style skirt tops off the outfit with its layers of short glittery white tulle. I look like the world's naughtiest angel, and it's perfect. Perhaps a little too much or too little for a work party, but I feel good in it despite how much of me is on show. Sean's adoration of my body and the compliments he showers me with constantly have me looking at myself with kinder eyes.

"You're killing me here, sweetness," Sean's voice calls through the closed door. "Stop making me wait and let me see you."

I unlock the door to find him waiting right outside, his hand braced on the doorframe. His eyes widen as he takes me in, and I shuffle on my feet shyly.

"Fucking hell, Savannah," he groans. I'm about to ask him if he likes it, but all that comes out of my mouth is a shriek as he grabs me, throws me over his shoulder, and carries me to the bed.

I land on my back, and in seconds, he's over me, his hands finding mine and pinning me down. I bite back a moan, desire pooling between my legs. For someone who was a virgin until a couple of weeks ago, Sean's turned me into a sex addict. I want him all the damn time.

"Do you like it?" I manage to ask breathily, blinking up at him.

"You are not wearing that outside this house," he growls, making me shiver. I pout up at him.

"Why? I like it!" I argue playfully, watching as he goes feral.

Once again, he grabs me, moving my body into whatever position he wants. I squeal as I'm flipped over, braced across his lap with my head pressed against the blankets and my ass in the air. I wriggle, but I can't move much under his hands.

"Do you like driving me fucking mad, sweetness?" Sean growls, his hand trailing up my bare leg to cup my ass beneath

my skirt. I'm bared to him in this position, the tutu doing nothing to hide my skin from him. "Such a filthy little angel. Look at you, already dripping for me. Christ, Savannah. You're fucking gorgeous."

I whimper at his words and the way he strokes the skin of my thighs and my ass, so close to where I'm desperate for him.

"Who do you belong to, sweetness?" he asks, a dark demand to his tone.

"You," I answer immediately, pressing myself against his hand, silently asking for more.

"Exactly," he growls, and I jump as his hand comes down hard on my ass. Oh my god, he just spanked me. "You're fucking mine. This perfect, sinful body is mine. Mine to touch and mine to fuck and mine to see."

I nod into the mattress, his words casting a hazy spell over me. Anticipation winds me up tight.

"Only. Mine. Savannah." Every word is punctuated by another slap of his hand, my ass burning with each strike.

The pain is sharp and hot, but I don't shy away from it. It drives my need higher, making me feel just as crazy as he says I make him.

"You might be dressed like an angel, but you're a very bad girl," Sean tells me, squeezing the sore part of my ass as I moan. "Bad girls get punished, sweetness."

"Please," I beg, feeling my arousal soak my thong.

Sean chuckles, and his finger is pressed against my center, swiping through the wetness there. "Three more, angel," he says. "Count every one for me like a good girl."

"One," I gasp as he spanks me, delicious pain blooming. My hips buck, searching for friction as my pussy pulses with desperation.

"Do you know what I'll do if anyone else sees you dressed like this?" His voice is close to my ear, warm breath tickling my skin. "If anyone sets eyes on this gorgeous fucking body?"



He spans me again, and I gasp out as I try to concentrate on his words. "I'll fucking blind them, sweetness."

"Three!" I whimper, dizzy from his words and his touch. "Sean..."

"Nobody gets to look at you but me. Do you understand me?"

"Yes!" I shout as he cups me possessively, pressing his fingers against my swollen clit. I grind down on him as best I can in my position, searching for relief.

"Do you feel what you do to me?" he groans as I wriggle in his lap, feeling the long, hard proof of just what I do to him against my thigh. "Fuck, I need to have you. Need to have my come dripping out of this sweet pussy so you don't forget who you belong to all night."

I'm pretty sure I'm begging him for it now, but my words come out all garbled and wobbly. I'm putty in his hands as he shifts us so I'm on my knees on the mattress instead of his lap. I hear him shove his jeans down, but I can't see anything from my position.

It only makes my arousal grow stronger, and by the time his hands are on my hips again, I'm whimpering. He doesn't tease anymore. No, he thrusts the full length of his cock into me in one swift motion, ripping a strangled cry from my throat. Immediately, my body reacts to him, pleasure racing through me. It's easier to take him than it was at first, but the size of him still steals the breath from my lungs in the best way.

"That's it, sweetness. Come around my cock like a good girl," Sean growls, and I'm helpless to do anything but what he wants. His brutal thrusts send me flying over the edge, bliss overwhelming me. Sean curses, pushing deep as he comes, hot spurts of his release filling me.

It takes a long time for me to come back down to earth, my ass stinging and Sean still buried inside me. My thighs are damp from both my orgasm and his, and I'm pretty sure my makeup is ruined.

"We're going to be late." I giggle as Sean nips at my shoulder playfully.

“Worth it,” he answers easily, and I laugh, craning my head to kiss him.

I can tell Savannah is nervous by the way she's fiddling with her skirt—a longer one than she had on before that hits her mid-thigh rather than showing off the curve of her ass—and biting her bottom lip. Still, she takes my hand without hesitation and lets me help her out of the taxi.

“Ready?” I ask as I tuck a lock of her golden hair behind her ear, lacing our fingers together. She leans into my touch, and I pull her closer, kissing the top of her head as she sighs.

“Nope.” She laughs. “I doubt I'll ever feel ready, but I want to do this.” I can't tell if she's saying it to herself or me. “Let's do this.”

Excitement and relief flood me, and I nod, catching her lips in a quick kiss so as not to smudge her glittery gloss before I lead her up the stairs and inside. The band is already in full swing, and the bar is crowded with our colleagues and employees. It's still early despite the fact we're running fifteen minutes late, but the atmosphere is relaxed and friendly.

Paul and I have worked hard to make our company a good place to work for everyone, and it always fills me with a sense of pride to see how our efforts have paid off. I squeeze Savannah's hand as we walk up to the bar to join the crowd eager for their first drink of the night.

My eyes scan the cocktail list and I grin. “Porn star martini?” I ask her. “Or a sex on the beach?”

She laughs, elbowing me in the side for my teasing, but when I hand her a pink cocktail, she sips it happily.

“Incoming,” I whisper to her as we step away with our drinks, my arm around her, resting my hand on her waist possessively. One look at us, and it’s obvious she’s mine. As it should be.

Savannah stiffens a little as my partner walks up to us. Technically, he’s as much her boss as I am, but Paul’s nearly always out of the office on business trips. I don’t mind, preferring to manage the office in person anyway.

“Sean,” Paul greets with a nod of his head, given that both my hands are occupied. There’s a knowing glint in his blue eyes. “And Savannah. Lovely to see you again.”

“Hi,” Savannah says at my side, clearing her throat as she shuffles on her feet. I tighten my hold on her, trying to reassure her silently that everything is okay. Despite how well she fits in at the office and the fact she’s truly excellent at her job, she’s still worried about how people will take the news of our relationship. I’m eager to prove her wrong.

“I see you and my partner here are getting on spectacularly,” Paul says with a wide grin, raising a brow at me. “I expect a nice bunch of flowers to say thank you.”

I scoff, rolling my eyes at my old friend. “Thank you?” I sip my whisky and shake my head. “For what, exactly?”

“Hiring this one.” Paul shrugs like it’s obvious. He turns his smile on Savannah, who looks a little shocked at my side. “Though, I think I should be the one thanking you, Savannah. I see you got Sean here to dress up for once. I’ve been nagging him for years to embrace the spirit of Halloween, but he never listens to me.”

Paul is dressed as a vampire or some sort of ghoul, with a drip of fake blood at the edge of his lip and a black cape on his back.

Savannah giggles. “I tried to get him to wear the tail, too, but he refused,” she says, pouting dramatically.

I scowl. I conceded to the devil horns she made me wear, but the red pointed tail was where I drew the line. “I should’ve known you two would get on far too well.”

But Savannah has relaxed at my side, even leaning into my touch as she and Paul tease me mercilessly about my reluctance to “properly” dress up, and not a single part of me is mad about it. When she tilts her head to grin at me, I take my chance to steal a kiss, and she lets me.

“I bet you can’t get him to dance, though,” Paul says to her just as someone shouts his name, summoning him away from us.

Savannah jumps at the chance. “Oh, really? I bet I can.”

“Winner buys the next round,” Paul challenges and starts to walk away.

Savannah shouts at his retreating back, “You’re on!”

“I am absolutely not dancing,” I tell her with a smile, and she raises a brow at me.

“Wouldn’t want another drink spilled on you, would you? I need you to keep me steady on the dance floor.” She beams, and I groan because I know for a fact she’s going to win this stupid bet.

This girl owns my heart, and there’s no way I’m going to be able to watch her dance in her little angel outfit, sparkling and gorgeous, and manage to keep my hands off her.

“Sean! Who’s this? Oh! Savannah, I didn’t realize...” Judy, one of our managers, says as we approach, surprise in her wide eyes. I can practically feel Savannah’s renewed worry flood her.

“I...uh...” she stutters, clearly unsure of what to say.

Judy’s gaze softens. “Oh, I don’t mean anything by it.” She shakes her head, the cat ears in her hair bobbing about with the movement. “It’s about time Sean found a nice girl to settle down with. Getting old there, boss.”

I roll my eyes for what must be the thousandth time. I was right that Savannah had nothing to worry about, but clearly, I should’ve been more prepared for my entire company to take the piss out of me for this.

“She keeps me young,” I say back, making Judy laugh.

“I knew I liked you,” Judy tells Savannah, raising her glass in a cheer.

“You...you guys really don’t mind?” Savannah blurts out, immediately sipping her drink as she ducks her head in embarrassment.

“Mind?” Judy waves her hand through the air like the notion’s ridiculous. “Since you started working here, everything is about a hundred times more organized, and I don’t have to come running every time Sean forgets where he put a file. I promise you, Savannah, nobody is going to have anything but good things to say. As long as you’re both happy, and you don’t ever quit, I’m pleased for both of you.”

“Oh,” Savannah breathes, eyes wide. “Thank you.”

I lean down as I whisper, “I told you so, sweetness.”

The night passes in a whirl of congratulations and pink cocktails, Savannah dragging me onto the dancefloor with a cheer of victory against Paul. I don’t let her leave my side the whole night, my hand in hers or on her waist or her thigh under the table the entire time.

She collapses against me as we leave, still laughing and dizzy from spinning around to the music. I catch her happily, staring down at her. Her costume is fitting. She is an angel. My gorgeous, perfect, sweet angel. *Mine*.

“I love you, sweetness,” I whisper the words against her lips, tasting the sweetness of her drink in our kiss.

She moans, wrapping her arms around my neck to keep me close. “I love you, too.”

“Home. Now.”

I love the way she shrieks in laughter as I throw her over my shoulder and into the waiting car.

I don’t let go of her all night, and I plan to keep it that way for the rest of our lives.

## SAVANNAH

“Sean? What’s going on?” I call out as I unlock the door and step into our home.

I officially moved in two weeks ago, but really we’ve been living together since we started dating. Even a second apart is too long, and that hasn’t changed. Which is why it was so odd when he said he was going home early today, and he’d see me when I finished work.

“Welcome home, sweetness,” he calls out from somewhere inside.

I hang up my bag and blazer and set out to find him. “If you’re going to jump out and scare me, I swear I’ll—”

The joke dies on my tongue as I set eyes on him. He’s silhouetted against the sunset streaming in from the huge windows, and as I gasp, I inhale the sweet scent of roses.

My eyes blur with tears as I take in the scene. Dozens of red roses, the floor scattered with petals, and candles making everything glow warmly. And Sean, the love of my life, his hand held out for me. I step towards him, my heart beating so loud I can barely think.

“What’s all this, Sean?”

He grins as he lowers to one knee, my hand still clutched in his. “Savannah, from the second you spilled your drink all over me, I knew you were mine.”

I laugh, cheeks wet as giddy tears spill over.

“Only mine, sweetness. Forever. Mine to hold, mine to touch, mine to love.”

He pauses, reaching into his pocket and pulling out a small velvet box. I’m already nodding, and he hasn’t even asked me anything yet.

“I love you. Every single inch of you. My life has been so much sweeter with you in it. Savannah, will you do me the honor of being my—”

“Yes!”

“Let me ask properly.” Sean laughs. I’m bouncing on my feet, unable to stand still, slapping a hand over my mouth to stifle my squeal as he opens the box. “Will you do me the honor of being my wife? Will you marry me?”

“Of course I will. Oh my god. Yes, yes, yes!” I barrel into him the second he stands up and kiss him halfway through saying yes again. My lips are wet from my tears, murmuring how much I love him against his mouth. He kisses me deeply, tongue swiping against mine and making me moan.

He pulls away too fast, and I pout before I realize that he’s taking my hand to slide the ring on. I gasp as I focus on the ring for the first time. It’s...stunning.

“Oh my god, Sean. It’s beautiful.”

I hold my hand up to my face. The thin gold band fits perfectly, and I have no idea where or how he got my ring measurement. This man still manages to surprise me with how well he knows me.

The center stone is a huge, oval-cut diamond that shines in the candlelight. On either side, little pink stones sit, hugging the diamond. It’s the most gorgeous ring I’ve ever seen and so *me* that it makes me tear up again.

“Do you like it?” he asks, sounding genuinely concerned. “I would’ve asked you ages ago, but I wanted to find the perfect ring for my perfect girl. But if it’s not, we can keep looking—”

“No!” I shout, hugging my hand to my chest. “It’s incredible. I’m in love with it. Don’t you dare change it.”



He laughs at my argument and nods, taking my hand and kissing my ring finger gently.

“I can’t wait to marry you.” I wrap my arms around his neck and tug him close. “I’ll be Mrs. Sullivan.”

Sean growls at that, grabbing me by the waist and lifting me. Immediately, I wrap my legs around his waist, my heels tumbling off to the floor.

“Now I’m going to fuck my fiancée wearing nothing but that ring,” he growls and I moan in agreement, desperate for him to do just that.

“Mine forever,” I say, claiming him the way he always claims me.

“Always.”

## EPILOGUE

SEAN

“**S**ean, she’s only six months old. She doesn’t need sandals!” My wife giggles as I show her the tiny pair of pink shoes before packing them into the diaper bag.

“We’re near the beach. Of course, she needs sandals.” I give her a wide grin, stepping closer to kiss the top of our baby’s head. She’s fast asleep in her mother’s arms, face pressed against Savannah’s chest. The two most beautiful girls in the world. My chest swells with pride.

“You spoil her rotten,” Savannah teases me, rolling her eyes even as her lips tilt up in a smile.

“Her and her mama,” I answer with a wink.

It’s true. I take every opportunity possible to spoil the hell out of her. Savannah loves it even if she teases me about it. Plus, the tiny pink sandals are so adorable, how was I supposed to resist?

We’re in the Bahamas after all. Our daughter has to be dressed for the beach. True, she’s only six months old and can’t walk yet, but that’s not the point.

God, these girls have turned me into such a sap. Not that I’m complaining. I’ve never been happier.

Ever since we found out Savannah was pregnant on our honeymoon, I’ve doted on our daughter. Savannah has given me the most precious gift, our little family, and I intend to

make sure she and our daughter always know just how incredibly grateful I am for them both.

Nothing compares to being Savannah's husband or Sophia's dad. No amount of career success or money even comes close to the utter joy and love they bring.

Savannah sways side to side, keeping the baby settled in her arms. She's an incredible mother, a total natural. I didn't think it was possible to love her more than I already did, but seeing her with our child is like all my wildest dreams come true.

I step closer, wrapping my arms around my wife's waist and leaning down to kiss the top of the sleeping baby's head gently, holding my whole world in my arms.

Sophia stirs, blinking her big blue eyes open. She looks so much like Savannah, with soft blonde hair and those ocean-blue eyes. She yawns, and Savannah and I both coo over her.

"Come on, angel. Let's go to the pool!" Savannah says in a baby voice, lifting Sophia up high to make a face at her. The baby laughs, reaching out her chubby hands for me.

I scoop her up, kissing her cheeks and tickling her as Savannah gathers up towels and the baby float for the pool.

I help Savannah get settled at the side of the private pool before ducking back inside to grab refreshments from the fridge. When I return with a tray of watermelon and pineapple and a sugary drink for Savannah, she gives me a smile that makes my pulse kick into overdrive.

"Thank you," she says, popping a piece of fruit into her mouth.

"Anything for you." I dip my head to kiss her, tasting the pineapple juice on her lips. "You look fucking incredible, sweetness."

She blushes. The pink bikini she's in hugs her curves and shows off her soft skin. Savannah is the most beautiful woman in the world, and I take every opportunity to remind her of that and savor the way she turns pink with my compliments. Making my wife blush is my favorite hobby.

“I love you.” She smiles, the sun making her shine even brighter than usual.

“I love you endlessly, sweetness.”

Our baby squeals excitedly, making grabby hands at her pool float. I chuckle.

“We’re going to have to get a house with a pool,” I muse as I grab the float and scoop my daughter up.

Savannah laughs, thinking I’m joking. “What on earth do we need that for?”

“For our little water baby,” I say, then turn to Sophia in my arms. “Tell Mama you need a pool to play in whenever you want. Don’t you, baby?” Sophia giggles, showing off her single tooth. “See? How could I say no to this face?”

“You’ve got your daddy wrapped around your little finger.” Savannah coos to our daughter, standing to join us at the side of the pool.

“A holiday home then,” I tell her as we slip into the warm water. Sophia immediately flails her arms around, splashing us all eagerly. “Somewhere hot so you can sunbathe in all the bikinis you want, with a private pool for all the kids—”

“All?” Savannah bounces Sophia up and down in her arms as the baby plays with the water.

I know she’s teasing me, considering we both want a big family, but I let her get away with it...for now. I’ll punish her for being a brat later, and she’ll enjoy every second of it.

“Somewhere we can go to get away from the city and work.”

“Somewhere like this? I mean sure it sounds amazing, Sean.”

I grin, wading into the pool further so I can wrap my arms around her again. The water makes her skin glisten, the ends of her hair wet and sticking to her shoulders.

Sophia kicks her legs happily as Savannah holds her. Clearly, Sophia is on my side. She loves it here, and I know Savannah does too. And what she loves, she’ll have.

“Then it’s yours,” I say simply.

Savannah rolls her eyes and laughs. “You can’t just decide to keep this place.”

“I didn’t just decide. It’s already yours, sweetness. I just wanted to make sure you loved it before I told you, in case I had to find somewhere else.”

Savannah goes wide-eyed, her mouth dropping open. “You’re joking.”

“You know me better than that.”

“You...you bought me a house?”

“Yes.” I grin. “It’s perfect, is it not? More than enough room for all the babies we’ll have. The perfect place to escape to for the holidays.”

“Oh my god,” Savannah breathes, but she’s smiling beneath the shock. “You’re insane, Sean.”

“For you.”

“It’s really ours?” Her eyes flick from me to the beautiful house behind me.

“Really. There’s nothing I wouldn’t do to make you happy.”

“You and Sophia are all I need to be happy. But I do love this place. Thank you, Sean.”

She tilts her head back to kiss me quickly, her skin warm from the water and the sun, before she pulls away.

Savannah’s eyes sparkle and she bites her bottom lip, readjusting her hold on Sophia so she’s securely held in one arm. I know she’s up to no good even before she helps our daughter splash me with water, soaking me.

I blink away the water to the sound of my wife and daughter’s laughter. Savannah shrieks as I steal my daughter, holding her up so she can kick her legs and splash water everywhere, returning the favor. Soon we’re all thoroughly soaked and our stomachs hurt from laughing, and Sophia is yawning from all the excitement.

Together, we towel off. Then, Savannah takes Sophia inside to put her down for the night while I tidy up quickly.

When everything's cleared down, I head to find Savannah, intending to ask her what she wants for dinner. Instead, I find her and Sophia curled up in our bed, the baby taking up half of the mattress with the way she starfishes out. I pause in the doorway, staring at them for a long moment.

I am the luckiest man alive.

## EXTENDED EPILOGUE

SAVANNAH

I stare at myself in the mirror, fidgeting with the fabric of my dress.

It's gorgeous, made of a glittery silver material that catches the light beautifully. But I can't help but tug at the way it clings to my stomach, highlighting the weight there. Having four kids, two of them being twins, has changed my body.

And as much as I adore being a mom, it's hard not to feel insecure about myself now.

"Fucking hell, sweetness. You look edible," Sean says and I jump, not realizing he's there.

"Really?" I ask doubtfully. "I mean, I love the dress but it just..."

I bite my lip, sighing a little as Sean comes closer, wrapping his arms around my waist from behind. "I just...I look so different now. Are you...still attracted to me?"

Sean growls, and I gasp as I'm flung over his shoulder, his grip on me tight. Even after all these years, he still likes to do this any chance he gets.

"Put me down!" I squeal. "I'm too heavy for you to be doing this now!"

"It's like you're asking to be punished," Sean says darkly, throwing me down on the hotel bed. The suite is huge, but the bed is so big it dominates the space. "Have you lost your damn mind, sweetness?"

He hovers over me, bracing his weight above me as he kneels on the mattress. I'm trapped by the heat in his gaze, lips parted in anticipation. It's been over ten years. Yet having him this close still makes heat pool low in my gut, my thighs clenching together, my body ready for his touch, craving it.

"Your body is fucking perfect," he snarls, leaning down to nip at my earlobe and whisper the words in my ear so he's sure I've heard them. "It was perfect ten years ago when I first saw you and you stole my damn heart. It was perfect when you were growing our babies, and fuck it's perfect now. Every single inch of you is perfection. If anything, I adore your body even more than ever knowing it's grown our babies."

He swears softly, then pulls back so he's staring into my eyes, his jaw tense. "Fuck, I can't think about you pregnant."

"Why?" I breathe, blinking up at him, entranced by his words. All my doubts are gone as he showers me with compliments, sincerity and desire burning in his gaze.

"Because all I want to do is fuck you and fill you up and put another baby in this perfect fucking body."

I can't help it when I whimper at that, eyes fluttering. We definitely have our hands full with four kids already but...

"You mean that?" I ask, biting my lip.

"Do I need to prove it to you?"

And god, does he prove it.

Afterward, with my ass stinging from his little "punishment" and my body limping from pleasure, I lie on his chest, my dress somewhere on the floor.

"We're going to be late for our dinner reservation now." I giggle, but he just tightens his hold on me, keeping me close.

"Worth it," he answers, kissing me softly.

In my mind, I remember that Halloween party all those years ago. We were late then too for the same exact reason. I guess some things never change. I grin against my husband's bare skin, pressing a kiss above his heart.



My mom is watching the kids for us tonight so we can celebrate, and as worth it as it was to have Sean prove his point, I really do want to go to dinner. Since Sean fulfilled his promise of getting me to try everything at his favorite restaurant, I've fallen in love with their food. I craved their apple pie constantly when I was pregnant with our last little boy.

He helps me redress, zipping up the back of the dress again, and I quickly reapply my lipstick and smooth down my hair. Ready, I turn to Sean, and he takes my hand as we head out of the hotel room and down to the restaurant.

“Happy anniversary, sweetness,” he says as he stares down at me with utter love in his eyes. I stare back at him with hearts in mine.

“Happy anniversary, love of my life.”

*The End.*

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