

MASTERING THE  
*Minotaur*



AMI WRIGHT

# Mastering the Minotaur

# Table of Contents

[Title Page](#)

[BLURB](#)

[ONE](#)

[TWO](#)

[THREE](#)

[FOUR](#)

[FIVE](#)

[SIX](#)

[SEVEN](#)

[EIGHT](#)

[NINE](#)

[TEN](#)

[ELEVEN](#)

[TWELVE](#)

[THIRTEEN](#)

[FOURTEEN](#)

[FIFTEEN](#)

[SIXTEEN](#)

[SEVENTEEN](#)

[EIGHTEEN](#)

[NINETEEN](#)

[TWENTY](#)

[TWENTY ONE](#)

[TWENTY TWO](#)

[TWENTY THREE](#)

[TWENTY FOUR](#)

[TWENTY FIVE](#)

[TWENTY SIX](#)

[TWENTY SEVEN](#)

[ABOUT THE AUTHOR](#)

[MORE BY AMI WRIGHT](#)



# BLURB

## **Could you master the minotaur billionaire?**

I'm not a dominatrix. I'm just a single mom struggling to pay the bills and raise my two kids. But when my sister, Kalli signs up as an escort for a demon and ends up with a billionaire demon boyfriend, I can't help wondering if I should re-think my work situation.

I'm not looking for a boyfriend, but if the huge, handsome, rich minotaur wants to pay to get on his knees for me, I'd have to be stupid to turn that down, right?

**Jarradek is a politician with a problem: he's bored of girls who want to fawn over him. He's looking for something more!**

Controlling him is such a rush. Every time this powerful monster submits to me, it gives me back something I never even knew I was missing. He can't be caught seeing an escort weeks out from the election, but he can't stay away. What happens when people find out the guy who wants to be in charge of the city just wants me to tell him what to do?



# ONE

*Dear reader, content warnings for all my books can be found on my website: <https://ami0099.wixsite.com/ami-wright/content-warnings>*

**Mel**

“Mom! Mom! I said I’m hungry.” Damian tugs so hard on my arm I enter the last digit of my pin code wrong and the machine beeps.

Payment declined.

I glare at him. “Would you stop? I heard you the first time.”

His small lip trembles and his little face crumples into tears and I could kick myself. That’s the third time I’ve made him cry today by snapping.

I’m so damn tired.

I sigh and try entering the pin again, certain this will solve the problem.

When the machine beeps again, the cashier at the checkout gives me a sympathetic smile.

“Hey, Mom. When we get home, can we watch that video with the funny cats again?” My eldest, Elsa, smiles up at me with an enchanting smile and bats her dark lashes at me.

“Yeah, yeah. I just need to finish paying for this stuff, so we can get home and I can cook dinner, OK, honey?”

The woman behind the checkout leans over to frown at the machine. She pushes her glasses higher on her nose and looks up at me with kind brown eyes. “I’m sorry, ma’am. It says the card’s been declined. Have you got another?”

“Huh? No, that’s not possible. Can we try again?” The child support payment should have gone through today. There should be plenty in the account to cover a few groceries. I fumble for my phone as she rings up the sale again and pushes the machine toward me.



I freeze. My banking app stares back at me, the two digit number on the screen mocking me. How is it possible I've only got fifty-eight dollars in the account?

“When you're ready, ma'am.”

Behind me in the line, an older man with a packet of mints and a loaf of fruit bread sighs loudly and rolls his eyes.

*If you're in such a hurry, use the automatic check out, Dennis.*

I don't say it. Of course I don't. I don't even know the guy. Plus, I have to try to set a good example for my kids. But I sure think it as hard as I can in his general direction.

Beside me, Damian is still whimpering, and the checkout lady is staring, and Elsa is prodding at something on the display.

“Use this one.” I thrust my credit card toward the machine, trying not to cringe when I think about the money I already owe on it.

My sister would help me out if I asked her for money. Kalli's recently moved in with her billionaire demon boyfriend and the two of them are so cozy together it's sickening. I'm not asking my baby sister for money, though. Besides the humiliation, if I know anything about relationships, sooner or later her boyfriend Rin will resent being asked to support Kalli's drop-kick older sister who somehow landed herself with two kids and a dead-end job, and a shithead ex who apparently can't pay child support.

I swipe my hand across my sweaty forehead. Would this day end already? There are still hours and many jobs before I get to collapse exhausted on the sofa and fall asleep in front of some show I don't care about. That's the high point of my day, most days.

The walk back to the car is painful. My arms hurt from carrying the bags of shopping and Damian, who sat down outside the store and refused to budge. Elsa whines because I said she can only watch one hour of television before she has

to go to bed tonight. The last thing I feel like doing is cooking dinner.

It's gotta be done, though, so I push through.

When I set the spaghetti on the table, I'm met with instant tears. Damian's little face crumples up and he pushes his bowl away.

Elsa gives me a horrified look. "You put the sauce on the pasta, Mom! You know I don't like sauce on pasta."

I know that now. Too bad last week she wouldn't eat the pasta plain and complained when I didn't make enough sauce for hers.

Guess who ate plain pasta for dinner that night?

I scrape the sauce off the pasta, wash the pasta, set her bowl in front of her. She takes two bites and declares, "I'm full."

As they both rush back to the living room, I sink my head in my hands and try to breathe through the tears of frustration. It's not their fault. That's just the age they are. They'll grow out of it. They don't really hate me.

I just need a break. I need a change from the same old routine of going through the motions, trying to pretend everything's OK. I need a break from the constant worry about not having enough money and not letting Kalli see I don't have enough.

I guess, maybe, I could do what she did and join that monster escort service.

I shake my head. It's a stupid idea. No one wants the single mom with the small tits and the c-section scar as their escort. They want young, pretty, sexy girls, like my sister. My sister has always had a body I'm envious of. Soft, generous curves, full breasts, and wide hips.

I look like a scrawny rat compared to her. I've always thought that. Two pregnancies and breastfeeding later, it's only gotten more pronounced. I thought breastfeeding was meant to

make your tits bigger. Well, it didn't do that for me. Just gave me mastitis.

I push up from the table, collect the dishes, and do the washing up. I need to stop having my pity party and focus on my kids. Despite all the frustrations, they are amazing and I need to remember that.

Doesn't matter what happened between me and James. My kids are beautiful and I wouldn't change it if it meant giving them up.

When they're finally in bed, I switch on the TV and play the first thing my streaming service suggests. I'm not really watching it, so when I pick up my phone, I decide I might as well look into the whole Monstrous Deals thing. It won't hurt to look at their website, right? I'll just read their requirements for who they employ, and that will rule me out, and then I won't have to think about it anymore.

Only their website says they take people of all body shapes and sizes, all ages and genders. You don't need any experience, and you don't even have to be prepared to do full-on sex work. They offer a range of services from simple companionship to full, penetrative sex.

I snort. Companionship. I'm not really what you'd call good company right now. Then again, if someone was paying me, I could probably put on a smile and some lipstick and pretend to have a good time. After all, eight years in a relationship with James was good practice for that.

I download the app and open the form. Before I know it, I've got it half-filled out, and I'm staring at the list of services wondering how far I'll go.

I don't want to have sex with a client. I don't think I could do that. I've never been any good at the whole casual sex thing.

I don't really want to do anything that involves taking off my clothes. I might be prepared to strip down to lingerie, if I could choose something that would cover my scar.

So I don't check any of the boxes for penetrative sex, stripping, lap dancing, video sex, or modeling for erotic photos. As the list goes on, though, I do check some things. Companionship for one. Hand jobs, oral sex. I mean, if I could do them with my clothes on.

God, who's going to want that?

Then I get to something I don't recognize. Femdom.

I'm not even sure I've heard of that before. So I look it up. My eyes go wide. Being in control of a guy isn't something I've ever considered before. The more I read, though, the more fascinated I become. I can't believe there are guys who want to be humiliated or locked up in a cock cage. I find images of guys wearing leather and gags and ladies' lingerie and—

I gasp and flip over my phone when Elsa comes out of her bedroom rubbing her eyes. "Mommy, I can't sleep."

Guiltily, I lock my screen and clear my throat. "That's OK, baby. I'm coming." I curl myself around her in her single bed, mind still whirling with ideas and the Monstrous Deals form still half-completed on my phone. When her soft snores reassure me she's asleep, I sneak it from my pocket and open the femdom website again.

Financial domination. Service subs...

Could I?

Before I can back out, I click the femdom box and hit submit. It's done. It's out there. I've actually signed up to be an escort. Good thing no one will want to hire me, and I'll probably never have to think about this again. Imagine actually having to go through with this stuff!



# TWO

## Jarradek

Maurice slides the beer across the dark wooden counter of the Monster Bar and gives me a nod, making a few strands of his shaggy blond hair fall into his eyes. “What’s happening, Jarra? How’s things?”

I shrug, accept the beer, and take a long drink before setting it back on the bar. “Same old. Nothing new.” I sigh. Even the beer tastes old and dry somehow. Lately, nothing tastes good, feels good.

The blond werewolf pauses in the act of slicing lemons and gives me a look. “You’re looking down in the mouth, my friend. What’s eating you?”

I scratch the base of one curved horn. “That’s just it. I don’t know. Can’t put my finger on it.” Nothing is really wrong, per se. Things have been going so well that maybe I’ve started taking them for granted? “I’m just in a bit of a rut.”

He gives me a wink. “Well, you’re in the right place, then. Time for some excitement. You haven’t made a booking in a while. Why not see who’s new?”

“Eh.” I take another long drink. “What’s the point? They’ll all be the same. The workers here are very good, but they’re all so...” I wave my hand in the air, trying to put my finger on what the problem is. “...so accommodating. They’re so eager to please.”

Maurice cocks an eyebrow at me. “And you don’t want that?”

I huff. It sounds ridiculous, but I don’t. I’m bored of that. Bored of the girls who throw themselves at me because minotaurs are flavor of the month right now in Heartstone. I’m bored of sweet, good girls who I pay to do exactly what I tell them. Hell, I’m bored of thinking up what I want them to do. “The thing is, I spend all day giving commands, telling people what to do. And everyone jumps to obey me.”

Maurice nods. “Sounds to me like you need to find yourself a *domme*.”

I stare at him. I’ve never considered that option. It’s not like I have an objection to women in power. Hell, some of the strongest, smartest creatures I know are female. I just never considered looking for that in my sex life.

“I...” I can’t think of any good reason why I shouldn’t at least give it a try. “Why not?”

The werewolf grins back at me. “Trust me, you’ll never look back. Actually, pretty sure we have someone new on the books who might have some experience. What are you into? Chains, cages, pegging?”

His sharp-toothed grin is way, way too enthusiastic. “Ahhh...” I scratch the base of my horn again. “Maybe this is a bad idea. I really just want a woman who’s going to boss me around a bit. I don’t know about all that other stuff.”

Maurice winks. “Hey, don’t knock it til you tried it.”

At my horrified snort, he lifts his hands, palm up. “Hey, hey. Don’t freak out, man. I get it. I’ll talk to Sofia. We’ll find you someone.”

I tug at the collar of my custom-made business shirt. I might have bitten off more than I could chew. But what the hell. Nothing like a challenge to cure boredom, right? “Just make sure she’s discreet,” I tell him. “I can’t have this leaked to the media.”

He nods seriously. “We’ll put it in the contract. Don’t worry about it.”

Fuck, the last thing I need right now is the Heartstone Sun blasting all across town how the first monster to ever run for Mayor is a kinky freak. Not that I’ve got anything against people who’re into that stuff. Clearly, Maurice is a mate of mine. But I’ve got slim chances of winning as it is. I don’t need to create another uphill battle for myself. I can trust Maurice, though. He’s a good guy. I’ve been coming to the Monster Bar since I first moved here ten years ago, back when it was a secret venue just for supes. Now that we’re out and

humans know about us, Sofia's business has boomed and things are always busy, but Maurice and Sofia always have time for me.

I linger for another drink, but things get busy and Maurice is run off his feet when a hen's night group makes an appearance. Monsters still might be considered a novelty, but at least to lots of people we're no longer the enemy. I watch the ladies for a while. They laugh and drink and flirt with the supes at the bar. When one of the bridesmaids makes eyes at me, though, I pay my bill and say my goodbyes. I do not need to be another human girl's popping-my-monster-cherry one night stand. Nine times out of ten, they see my massive cock and can't go through with it anyway.

I shove my hands in my pockets and lean into the wind as I walk around the block to where my driver parked. The city's cold this time of year with bitter evening winds that cut right through a jacket. My penthouse apartment feels cold when I get home and step through the door, despite the passive climate control. Maybe it's just me, but the place feels more empty these days. Stupid thought. I haven't lived with anyone since I was a stripling calf and living with my parents on the ranch out west.

Despondent, I head for my office and switch on my computer. I flick through ten new emails I don't feel like reading. I should, though. I'm behind. I'm always behind these days. I feel like I'm chasing my tail.

It doesn't help that I somehow talked myself into running for mayor. All that's done is ramp up media attention, and give all the staff I hired for the campaign a reason to tell me not to have any fun.





# THREE

## Mel

My phone buzzes in my pocket and I sneak a look at it just to see who it is. I don't recognize the number, though and that annoys me. The lady whose house I clean on Thursdays gets annoyed when I answer my phone while I'm supposed to be cleaning. She never says anything, but I can see it in the way her jaw goes firm and her lips get really thin. I bet this is one of those bastards who never leaves a message.

I stick my phone back in my pocket and bend over to keep scrubbing the bathroom tiles. I'd love to be doing just about anything else right now. When I was in school, I had dreams of being a teacher. Never finished college, though. I dropped out when I got pregnant and I thought me and James would get married and live happily ever after.

Ha!

I rinse the shower, fold the towels neatly, and pack up my things. I've got twenty minutes to grab something to eat before I have to start the next job a few blocks away.

On the walk over, I check my voicemail.

"Hi Mel, this is Sofia here from Monstrous Deals. I'm calling about your application to join our team. I'm excited to get to know you better and set you up, so you can start taking bookings. When you have a moment, could you give me a call?"

I pull the phone from my ear and stare at the screen so long the message starts repeating. At the angry sound of car beeping, I realize I've stopped by a crossing. They're probably wondering why I'm not going when it's my right of way.

I give the driver an apologetic wave and hurry across the road, heart thumping in my chest. I never thought I'd really do this. Before I can think how to react, my phone buzzes with another call.

It's Jack, the guy who's house I'm walking to for this afternoon's job. "Hi Mel, I'm so sorry. I forgot to let you know we'd be out of town this week and we're not back until the twenty-ninth. I hate to have to do this, but you know how Pam gets about leaving the key."

I sigh. His wife seems to think I'll rob them the second their backs are turned and has refused to let me have a key. One of them always insists on being home while I clean, which is awkward as fuck.

"Sure. Just let me know when you're back," I tell him, biting back my frustration at this week's cut in pay.

Next week, too. The twenty-ninth isn't until the week after. What am I going to do?

There's a simple answer to that question, but it makes me want to puke. Finding a nearby bench, though, I dial Monstrous Deals.

The woman who answers has a warm, reassuring sort of voice. "Monstrous Deals. How can we make your dreams come true?"

"Uh, hi. You um... you called about my application."

"Mel? Hi! Thank you so much for calling back so quickly. Yes. In fact we're looking for someone with experience in domination, so I was excited to read your application form."

"Oh." I don't know what to say. Of course I don't have any experience, but the form said to put down anything I was willing to offer. Still, I need the work. "Sure. Um, what happens next?"

"Well, the next step is a face to face meeting at our office. I'll give you an orientation and run you through some safety procedures and so on. Following that, I'll set up your profile on our app and you'll be ready to take bookings."

"Uh, great." I wipe sweaty palms on my dirty leggings, glad she can't see how damn nervous this all makes me. I'm sure a real dominatrix wouldn't get nervous.

Before I know it, I've arranged to drop by this afternoon, while my kids are still in school and childcare. I don't have time to waste, so it's probably for the best. I rush home to shower and make myself look presentable, then make my way to the address Sofia gives me.



I blink in surprise at the brightly painted semi-detached that looks absolutely nothing like the office of a monster escort service. Not that I would know what a monster escort service office looks like. I guess it looks like this. I could slap myself. I already feel irritated at the way thoughts are whirling around my head.

I'm sure I'm going to piss off Sofia. I make a mental note to say as little as possible. Which, to be fair, is my MO.

"Mel? Hi!" When I ring the buzzer, the woman who answers is absolutely not what I expected. Her short blond pixie cut and long dangly earrings draw attention to her petite angled features and her long neck. She's wearing a floaty, layered skirt and a cardigan, the sight of which makes me brush my hands nervously over the knee-length black skirt and blouse I'm wearing. It looks too much like I borrowed my mom's office wear from the early nineties. But I don't have anything nicer, so here I am.

I tell myself off. They're looking for a dominatrix. I straighten my spine, force my shoulders down, and give Sofia the most confident smile I can muster. "Hello."

Sofia clasps my hand, her many bangles clinking with a soft bell-like sound. "Oh, I've got a good feeling about you. Come on in."

It feels so much like she's welcoming me into her home that I start to feel some of the confidence I'm faking creep under my skin. When she invites me to sit on the sofa in the reception room, my smile is slightly less stiff.

"Thank you so much for coming in so quickly."

I nod. "No problem. I had a cancellation this afternoon."

Sofia's eyes widen. "Oh! Are you working with another agency? I wasn't aware of anything else for monsters in the area, but perhaps you work with humans, too?"

She thinks I had an escort job. Rather than tell the truth, I shrug. "A private client."

Sofia smiles. "Lovely. Well, feel free to keep seeing your private clients. There's no exclusivity clause in our contracts. It's all freelance. However, if you do like the way we run things and you'd like to consider bringing your clients on board, we can offer added security and screening for you."

"Thank you."

Sofia claps her hands together in her lap. "Well, I'm so excited to meet you. We've been looking to add a domme to our books for a while. I think you'll find we've got some great clients who will be very eager to meet you. How many are you looking to take on?"

I clear my throat. The thought of even one client is making my palms sweaty, and my heart thunders in my throat. "Perhaps I'll start with one booking and go from there."

"Of course. In that case, I have an excellent request for you to consider. One of our long term patrons has asked for a booking with an experienced domme. He's very reliable. Very safe. It will be his first experience with that type of play, however."

I almost let all the air rush out of my lungs in a huge whoosh. If it's his first experience as well, then perhaps he won't notice how little I know. "Sounds perfect."

She asks me a few more questions that I fumble through as best I can. It's clear I'll need to do some research before I meet this guy. Then something occurs to me. "What... what kind of monster is he?"

"Jarra is a minotaur."

I swallow. A minotaur. A huge creature with a bull's head and man's body. They expect me to control him? Now, I really really feel the need to research.

I travel home in a daze, worried I've bitten off more than I can chew. I don't have too much time to stew on it, though. As soon as I arrive at Damian's daycare, the educator greets me with a worried smile and tells me that he had another two accidents today and had to borrow some spare pants.

He trails disconsolately behind me on the walk to Elsa's school and the two of them bicker all through dinner. Usually I'd snap, but tonight I'm numb to it. I seem to have shrunk somewhere inside myself, wrapping myself in armor as best I can to protect me from thinking too hard about what I'm about to do.

When the kids are in bed, I check my phone. There's a notification from the Monstrous Deals app. A booking request. The day after tomorrow. He wants to meet me the day after tomorrow. Oh god!

I spend hours reading up on BDSM and watching porn videos of gorgeous women subjugating eager slaves dressed in leather gimp suits until my eyes are drifting closed and I can't concentrate anymore. It doesn't do anything for me, and I'm still no closer to knowing how the hell I'm going to do this.



# FOUR

**Mel**

“You look good!”

Kalli gives my outfit a long look up and down when I open the door. All I feel is flustered. The tight black bodice that cinches up my small breasts is digging into my ribs and the high-heeled black boots feel foreign after years spent in flats. I used to wear heels. I don't know who that person is anymore.

“Thanks.” I lead my sister down the corridor and wave my hand frantically in the general direction of the lounge room and the kids' bedrooms. “They're all tucked up and you shouldn't hear a peep. But please, call if you need anything. Or they do. I really appreciate this.”

Kalli waves me off. “Stop it. You know I'm happy to babysit whenever.”

I run madly through the house, searching for my purse, aware I'm probably already late. I can't be late. This is work.

“So do you have a date?” My little sister holds out my purse to me and once again, I feel like a failure. I accept it with a smile.

“Um... not really. I'm meeting someone?” It's not a question. So why does it come out sounding so unsure? God, I need to get a grip. I'm going to walk into that restaurant and act like I'm in charge. No! I'm going to *be* in charge!

“OK, well have fun. And don't rush back.”

I hug my sister and scoot out the door before she can ask any more questions. I couldn't bring myself to tell her I'd actually signed up for Monstrous Deals. Not that I have any judgment of her and Rin. She met the most amazing guy through her escort work, and it turned out he wanted far more than a contract. These days, she's living in billionaire bliss in the ritzy townhouse they share uptown and runs her own business out of the shopfront he bought her. So, yeah. No pressure on me or anything.



God, if tonight goes down without a hitch—if I get through it without him walking out as soon as he realizes I’m a fraud—I’ll be relieved.

I stand on the street opposite the restaurant for a full fifteen minutes just staring at it, unable to make my feet take another step. Rich, royal blue paint covers the elaborate facade. Curling iron lamps hang above ten thin windows, giving me a glimpse of a softly lit interior where candles glow on tables and well-dressed couples talk and eat.

I don’t belong here.

My ribs ache already from the tightly cinched corset, and my stomach rumbles. I’m used to eating dinner with my kids at five o’clock. In my purse, my phone buzzes.

*Bullistic: When you get here, give the maitre’d your name. She’ll bring you to my private dining room. I’m sorry I can’t meet you in person. I’ll explain why when I see you. Looking forward to meeting you xx*

Well, that’s a good reminder this is just a job. This guy is clearly too ashamed to be seen with me in public.

Straightening my back and lifting my chin, I march into the restaurant.

“Good evening, madame, do you have a reservation?” The maitre d’—what even is that? Is that a jumped up waitress?—greet me with a sniff of her thin nose and a raised eyebrow.

“Yes. Actually my friend is already waiting for me. He said you were expecting me.”

“Ah, Mel?”

I nod.

“Very well. Right this way, if you please.”

She leads me away from the double doors with square glass windows showing off a dining room full of patrons, and down a corridor to another door. This one has no windows, so I have to wait for her to hold it open for me before I can get my first glance at my client. When I do, I stumble a little in the

heels I'm not used to and clutch the doorframe, though I manage to walk through as I take him in.

He's broad. His shoulders are wide and strong, bulging against the fabric of the pale pink shirt he wears. His large hands are clasped on the table in front of him. Thick, masculine hands with immaculately trimmed fingernails and a gold ring that make me swallow down a sudden wave of desire.

But I can't stop staring at his face. His jaw is elongated. Not a true bull's profile, but he certainly has a longer face than any human man. Large eyes framed with long lashes and heavy brows make him seem serious, until a smile stretches across and I'm caught by his beauty. Not the sort of beauty I could ever have anticipated, but the lashes and the smile, and all of him looking so put together, does something to me I can't explain.

Not only that, but I realize I've seen his face before. It's on every second billboard, poster, and ad all over Heartstone. *This* is Jarradek Tarvost, the monster who's running for Mayor!

He stands.

My god, he's tall. I have to tip my head back to look up at him.

"Mel. I'm so glad you came. Is it OK for me to call you Mel? Perhaps there's another name you'd prefer." He glances over my shoulder at the maitre'd who disappears so fast I can hardly believe she was ever here.

I clear my throat. Do I offer him a handshake? A kiss? What's the protocol here?

Settling with a smile and a nod, I move toward the nearest chair. "Mel will be fine for now. Before we go any further, we have some things to discuss."

Jarradek whips around the table to pull out my chair. The unexpected gesture has my silly heart fluttering. Not a single guy in all my life ever pulled out a chair for me like I'm some kind of lady.

Trying not to let my expression give me away, I thank him and sit. He returns to his own seat and we look at each other across the table for a long moment.

I thought about how to play this before I arrived. According to my research everything is negotiated and we both set firm boundaries before we even start to agree on anything intimate. Since I'm really not sure what I'm doing, I'm hoping I can get him to tell me exactly what he wants. Only, I can't believe my client is Jarradek Tarvost.

"Are you sure you want this?" I blurt the words before I can really think.

Jarradek smiles. "Oh, I'm sure. Why? Don't think the straight-laced politician has a kinky side?"

I snort and wish I could call it back. "Oh, I have no trouble believing that. I'm surprised you'd go looking for an escort now, weeks out from the election."

He shrugs. "I need something. Let's call it a release. I've never explored this side of myself before, but with such high pressure in my public life, I'm hoping this might be a way for me to unwind. To find a little enjoyment again."

I nod. I can understand that. I found a thrill in being out tonight, dressed up to meet Jarradek in this fancy restaurant. To be honest, I haven't been out at night for months. I feel almost like the old Mel. The pre-kids Mel who used to love going out and having fun once upon a time. Like a part of me has been kept tucked away and, now I'm here, she's not quite ready to go back into her box. "That makes sense."

Jarradek seems relieved. "Then you'll take me? As a client, I mean?"

I blink. Did he think I would turn him down? But of course, I have the power here. I sit up a little. "Let's talk some more and we'll see. First, I want you to tell me what you want."

He lifts a large hand to scratch the base of one curved horn. "Well, I thought you might handle that."

I frown. Not what I wanted him to say, but I have a plan. “Well, if you want to be my client, you’ll have to do better than that. Before we meet, you’ll do your research. Watch porn, read books, find out what you like, and what you don’t. I’ll need a list of things you won’t do as well. Your hard limits.”

Jarradek nods. “I can tell you some of those already.”

“Very good.”

“Obviously, you can’t reveal my identity to anyone. We’ll have to meet discreetly. I had Sofia write that into the contract.”

I nod. “That’s not a problem.”

“You can’t cage me.”

My brows lift.

“I don’t think I could do it, and I can’t be found out by anyone. Under any circumstances.”

I smile. I’m not sure I am ready for that anyway, so it’s a relief he doesn’t want it. “Anything else?”

“I’m not sure. I’m not sure how far I want to take this. But I do know even searching for it has made me feel more alive than I’ve felt in months.”

I wonder to myself why his election campaign hasn’t made him feel that way. It’s not my place to ask him why he’s working so hard for something that clearly doesn’t bring him joy, though.

A waiter enters the room and we fall silent. He places two large white plates in front of each of us with a tiny serving of food. It looks like a teeny tiny bowl of soup with orange fluff on top. I eye it suspiciously. It smells delicious, though.

The waiter leaves, closing the door behind him. Jarradek lifts his spoon. “I hope you enjoy the food here. I chose this place because it’s a favorite of mine and of course, they’re very discreet.”

I lift my spoon and prod at the orange fluff. It squashes under my spoon, leaving me with the creamy soup. I take a small sip. My eyes widen. This is amazing. It's creamy and rich, yet there's a bite to it and just enough salt to make me go back for spoon after spoon until the entire tiny bowl is gone.

I look up to find Jarradek grinning. "The bisque is one of the best things on the menu."

I flush. I should be more controlled. Perhaps cold, even.

He scrapes his spoon around his dish and finishes the last of his starter. "I hope you won't mind if I tell you how beautiful you are."

I nearly spit my soup back into my bowl. I suppose he must like the way I look well enough. He selected me from the app after all. I just thought it had more to do with me claiming to be a dominatrix, and less about my looks. I can't believe anyone would choose me for my looks.

"I thought you'd be a little—" He breaks off.

I frown. "A little what?"

"A little sterner." He laughs. "So far you don't strike me as a very firm mistress. I'm not sure how you're going to keep me in line!"

I set my spoon down carefully. Then I give him the look normally reserved for when my kids get out of bed for the fifth time in a single evening. "I can be stern. I haven't agreed to play with you, yet. So, don't make any assumptions."

This gets more of a reaction than I expected. He seems to freeze for a moment. His nostrils flare. The tip of his tassled tail flicks above the surface of the table. Then he huffs out a long breath. "I very much hope you do. Very much."

I lift a brow, trying to pretend I'm not desperate for the work. "We'll see." An idea occurs to me and I run with it, letting the power get to my head a little. "So tell me a dirty secret. Something naughty that you've never told anyone else before."

Jarradek chuckles. “Apart from trying to hire you, you mean?”

I nod.

The waiter returns and leaves us with the second course. It looks like a thin slice of toast with some kind of pudding on top. I’m not really paying attention, though. Instead, I’m waiting for him to leave, so Jarradek will do as I asked him. I suddenly find myself very curious to know.



# FIVE

## Jarradek

“Tell me something naughty you’ve never told anyone else before.” Mel’s little smile curves the corner of her lips before she looks back down at her plate. I catch it, though.

Sends a thrill through me and makes my tail flick.

She’s nothing like I expected. I had imagined a leather-clad domme. I had visions of a woman who would strip me down here, in the back of the restaurant, and force me onto my knees under the table to lick her cunt. Not that I would object if Mel asked me to do it. Above the delicious scents of the dinner and the pleasant light aroma of the flowers in the corner, the scent of her permeates my consciousness. Musky, sweet, fragrant, and hinting of secret depth.

My mouth waters and it has nothing to do with the food.

“You want to know about my bad behavior?” I tuck my finger under the collar of my shirt and give it a tug. Damn thing was custom made and it’s never felt this uncomfortably tight before. Will she reject me if she knows?

She leans forward a little. “Well, now I do. And don’t try to pretend you don’t have something very bad to share. I can see it in your face.”

She takes another sip of wine and I swear to god the movement of her lips against the rim of the glass does things to me. It’s been a long fucking time since something so simple moved me like that.

“Well...” I’m stalling. I already know what I want to tell her. I need to use the right words. “I’ve had a lot of females approach me. Particularly lately. Usually, I pretend I’m not aware of the passes they make at me. I make a few jokes, switch the subject, and that’s that. But two weeks ago, I was feeling restless.” That’s an understatement. Nothing was giving me the buzz I’ve been seeking. Not girls, not the success I’ve had at work, nor my business ventures. I suppose



I've had to step back from the ruthless way I've been doing business in order to try to make myself more palatable. Maybe I've been missing the thrill of a cutthroat deal or a takeover.

Mel doesn't say anything. She watches me and lifts a morsel of food to her mouth thoughtfully, like she's weighing me up and hasn't decided if she's found me wanting yet.

Does she see it? What those other women see in me? I can't tell.

"On that particular night, I was having a drink in a bar alone. I wasn't really looking for anything. I just like the atmosphere of being out with other people."

She says nothing. It's a little unnerving.

"These two human women approached me. Very flirtatious. They were leaning close, letting me see right down their dresses. They asked me if I remembered them."

Mel lifts a brow. "You knew them?"

I shake my head. "No. I'd never seen them before. They just wanted an in. I bought them a drink, because it's clear that's what they wanted. We flirted for a while. Then the blonde asked me if I was ready to take them home."

If Mel is surprised, she says nothing. I thought I'd at least get a reaction.

"I told them I don't take girls home. It's not strictly true, but I don't take complete strangers home. Too much access to my personal space. I told them they could follow me to my car, and I would drive them to their homes."

"And did you?" Mel takes the final mouthful of her dessert and chews it slowly.

"Not right away." I was proud of that moments ago. I thought this story was going to reveal how virile and masculine I am. My stamina, my sex appeal. Something. I think what it's actually revealing is less positive, and I'm having trouble reading in her face exactly what that is.

"Uh huh."

I clear my throat. “I’d taken the Chrysler that night, to drive myself. There’s not a lot of room in there, but somehow they managed to climb all over me.”

“I see.” Is that scorn in her voice?

“I’d parked in a dark spot and they were hot for it. Wanted me to fill them both. They took turns sucking me with the front seat reclined until I got sick of that and put them over the hood one by one.”

Mel lifts her cool gaze to meet mine. “And you thought that was wise, to be engaging in that sort of activity right before the election? In public?”

I laugh. “Of course not.”

“Then why did you do it?”

I thought I knew. I thought I had wanted to. Now I’m reflecting on it, I’m realizing I wasn’t that interested in the first place. In fact, by the end, I pretended to come on the ground rather than let them continue to choke down my cock. I sigh. “I’m not really sure.”

“Hmm.” She leans forward and places her chin on her hands thoughtfully. “Did you enjoy it?”

“Not really.” I flick a little bit of my dessert around my plate with the tip of my spoon rather than keep looking at her. Why do I feel so pathetic after recounting that? How did she get to the heart of it before I did?

After a while, Mel pushes aside her plate. “And you’ve never been dominated before?”

I look up. “No.”

“Then what made you seek it out?”

I nearly say Maurice convinced me, but she’s looking for a better answer. “I’m bored.” It surprises me. I wasn’t planning to be so honest with her. I can’t seem to help it.

Her brows shoot up. “Bored?”

I squirm in place. “That makes me sound spoiled, and I guess I am. I want to know if there’s more, you know?” I hope

she does. I'm not sure I really do. I just have this feeling.

She seems to consider my words for a while.

"I think I know what you mean, yes." Mel sets down her spoon. "And now I have two tasks for you before we meet again."

My ears perk forward.

"I want your lists, of limits and desires. And I want you to do something you think will please me. When you've done those two things, I'll accept another booking."

My cock stirs in my trousers. Her no-nonsense tone of command is arousing. I grin confidently. "Well, in that case, I'd like to make another booking tomorrow night. It shouldn't take me too long to do my homework." I lean back in my chair and fold my hands behind my horns.

She snorts. "We will see." She takes her phone out of her purse and glances down at it. "And now your time is up. Thank you for a lovely evening."

I'm still off balance when she stands and pushes in her chair.

"Wait. We're not going back to my hotel?" I scramble to stand.

"Not tonight."

My jaw just about hits the floor. "I paid for tonight!"

She lifts her chin and glares right at me. "You paid for a *domme* and a *domme* is what you got. You're not ready to play. Book me again when you are."

She turns and walks out before I've collected my wits enough to come up with a response.

Fucking magic. My cock is swelling, my mouth is still watering for her, and I'm as hungry as if we hadn't eaten. I haven't felt this alive in months. Years!

She is exactly what I need.

I collapse into my chair and bring up the Monstrous Deals app, my mind still spinning.

*Bullistic: what will please you, mistress?*

It's an age before she writes back.

*Mel: it would be too easy if I told you, now wouldn't it?*

*Mel: And I prefer My Lady.*

Fuuuuuuuck!



# SIX

## Mel

I nearly lose my fancy dinner as I scramble out the door and hasten to the subway. I might have just made a terrible mistake. I have a paying client who treated me to a dinner I couldn't afford with two months' savings; I told him no and walked out on him after making a series of demands. But...

Isn't that what he wants?

My hands are shaking when I reach for my phone and check my messages. I could cry with relief when I open the Monstrous Deals app and read his text.

*Bullistic: what will please you, mistress?*

I had my doubts about My Lady. I mean, I'm about as far from nobility as you can get. Yet mistress sure doesn't feel right. Nor does Mommy or any of the other more common titles for a dominatrix I read about. Seeing his message confirms the feeling.

I slump onto the seat of the train and stretch my aching feet out in front of me. It's been a long time since I wore heels. If I'm honest, trying to be a good domme isn't the only reason I cut tonight short. I'm also scared.

I'm scared of failing. I'm scared of chickening out. Most of all, I'm scared of how attracted I feel to Jarradek.

He's a fuckboy. No question. That story he told about his threesome in the car makes me want to roll my eyes. He didn't even enjoy it. That's the sad part. It's like he's going through the motions to try to impress someone. It sure as hell doesn't impress me.

I can't believe someone could seem so mature and so put together in his election campaign, but be such a boy under the surface.

Though I have to give him credit, he was refreshingly honest. At least, I think he was. I can't quite tell, but it didn't

seem like an act. It really felt like all of it took him by surprise as much as it took me.

I think about him all the way home. When I let myself in the front door and call out quietly to Kalli, I have to take a few deep breaths to calm my pounding heart and shaking hands.

She stands from the couch and stretches. “Did you have a nice time? You’re home earlier than I expected.”

“Yeah. Uh... it was good. I didn’t want to keep you. I can’t tell you how much I appreciate it.”

She gives me a hug. “Anytime. I mean it, Mel. You never ask for anything. It was nice to be asked.” She squeezes me then lets me go and I duck my head to stop the tears from welling in my eyes.

“Thanks, Kalli.” I don’t want to say that I’ll probably need her to babysit again soon, but I will. I don’t really have any other options.

I wave her goodbye and take myself to bed. It’s hours before I sleep, though. I can’t stop thinking about the date and his large brown eyes and the way he seems to have gotten under my skin. I wonder what he’ll come up with to please me.



I don’t have long to wait. In the morning, I wake, groggy, to a pair of little round faces staring right at me.

I jump. “Gah! Elsa! Damian! Haven’t I told you not to wake me like that?”

They giggle and climb into bed, squirming and jumping and flinging themselves all over me, until I give up and stagger to the kitchen to make us breakfast.

While they munch their cereal and I sip my coffee, I check my phone. There’s a notification from the Monstrous Deals app.

*A client wants to send you a gift. Please indicate your approval.*

A gift. So that's his go-to. Should have figured. I hit accept. I have to admit I'm curious to see what he's done.

I roll my eyes when a bunch of red roses turns up on my doorstep half an hour later.

"Ooooh, Mommy, these are beautiful." Elsa pokes her head around my hip as I collect them.

"Well, be careful. These have thorns. You can put them in your room if you like, though."

I don't like them enough to keep them in the living room. Besides, Damian will probably pull them over and spill the water everywhere and spike himself.

"Really? Where did they come from?"

I smile. "From a friend."

"Don't you want them?"

I shrug. "It's complicated, sweetie. Let's find a vase, huh?"

I usher Elsa into kitchen and we find a vase. It's not really big enough. Jarradek is nothing if not ostentatious. The roses are huge and they do smell good, but roses would never be my choice. Flowers wouldn't really be my choice at all. If I wanted flowers, I'd choose lilies. Their elaborate, fragrant petals are far more beautiful.

Setting the vase on the bookshelf above Elsa's bed, I message Jarradek.

*Mel: you'll have to do better than roses if you want another booking*

*Bullistic: How can I, when you won't tell me what will please you?*

I don't answer. Again, I hope I'm making the right choice.

An hour later, I get another message.

*Bullistic: what size are you?*

*Mel: not the right track at all!*



*Bullistic: then I can't buy you lingerie?*

*Mel: focus on pleasing me not you.*

A few hours later, while I'm on my knees, scrubbing the bathroom of the five bedroom house up the road, my phone buzzes and I surreptitiously check.

I almost close it again instantly when I see the picture he's sent me. A dick pic? Really? Then I notice the large words scrawled in black above the tight black briefs hugging a frankly impressive package. 'Property of Lady Mel'

I squeeze my thighs together before I even realize I've done it. Then I freak out a little. He hasn't had it tattooed?! No. Of course he hasn't. It would be red and raw looking if it was a tattoo.

I hastily type a message.

*Mel: warn me next time before you send a picture like that. I'm at work...*

*Mel: ... well done. That's very pleasing. I wonder how long it takes to wash off, though*

I grin to myself. What I really mean is how long before he washes it off and fucks someone easier. Not that I care. This is only work after all.

His message back is instant.

*Bullistic: It stays for as long as it pleases My Lady*

Oh boy. Now I'm really conscious of the flutter low in my belly and the tingle in my fingers. He course corrected far better than I thought he would. And now I have no choice but to accept the booking request he sends through moments later. Wednesday night. Two nights away. Not much time to get a babysitter.

In the end, I settle on taking the kids to Kalli and Rin's place for a sleepover. I feel less bad that way for inconveniencing her. It will mean I have to get up an hour earlier to get there and get the kids to school on Thursday, but it's worth it. I already feel guilty for how much I'm asking for favors.



# SEVEN

## Jarradek

I take one final moment to admire the writing across my taut lower belly before I drop my shirt and find my trousers. A fucking stroke of genius that. Nevermind the effect on Lady Mel, it's doing things to me, and has been since I wrote the words there. I have just redrawn them after showering, making sure I'm groomed and fresh and ready to please her.

God, I hope I can please her. Something tells me she's not going to make it easy on me.

The West Boulevard Hotel is one of my favorite spots in Heartstone. The staff are well-trained and discreet, and the rooms are well-appointed with excellent views. Almost as good as my penthouse. As much as I'd like to host her at my place, I need to know her a little better before I do that.

The evening is a beautiful one. Lights twinkle across the city as the last smudge of orange fades on the horizon and night takes hold.

My cock is already semi-hard. I've been waiting all day for this. I ignore it, however, and run over my game plan in my head one more time.

It's clear she didn't enjoy my story the other night. So I need to keep my mouth shut and be respectful, and pray she gives me what I need so badly. I haven't come since I wrote the words on my belly two nights ago. It didn't feel right. I haven't gone this long without coming since I was about twelve, and I hope I haven't made a terrible mistake. It would be mighty embarrassing to spill on her leg or her palm like a fucking calf.

A knock at the door makes me spin. I hurry over to open it and my breath catches in my throat at the sight of her. She's wearing a simple black dress under a slightly faded jacket and the black heels she wore to dinner the other night. No jewelry adorns her neck or ears or fingers. She doesn't need it. The

beauty in her stern face is breathtaking. Yet it makes me yearn to buy her pretty things.

“My Lady.” I hold the door open and stand aside so she can enter.

Her gaze sweeps the room.

“Huh. Nice.”

Not the reaction I was hoping for, but it could be worse.

She walks to the coffee table and sets down her bag, then she continues to the floor to ceiling windows looking out over the city. I drift into place behind her, longing to touch her, but trace the contours of her neck and shoulders with my eyes instead.

“You made your list?” She doesn’t turn.

“Yes, My Lady.”

“Tell me.”

“Hard limits are anything public. Marks on my body that people could see, branding, wax play, cock cages, chastity, knife play, feminization, and ahem... piss and scat.” I did my research.

She coughs. “Fine. Good. Soft limits?”

“Pegging? Assplay.” I can’t believe I’m saying this, but under the right conditions, I’d consider it. After all, I’m here to test my boundaries. To find the new and exciting, right?

She makes that little huffing sound again. I can’t decide if she’s impressed or amused. “Desires.”

“You, My Lady. I haven’t been this captivated with anyone in a long time.”

Now, she turns. Her small face tilts up to smile at me. “That’s good.” She nods her head at my belly. “Show me.”

With a growing tingle low in my spine, I lift the hem of my shirt to reveal the writing.

“Good. Now the rest.”

I grin. “You want me to undress?”

“Yes, please.”

I unbutton the shirt and drop it to the floor, already reaching for my belt. “What about you, My Lady? Do I get to see more of you?”

“We’ll see.” She lifts a brow when I pause and I laugh.

So, that’s how it is. It’s a good game. One I’m keen to play. Like weighted striptease where I’m guaranteed to lose. I can’t say I’m disappointed. I work out. My body is lean and built. She’d be an unusual female if she didn’t appreciate the way I look.

Come to think of it, Lady Mel is an unusual female. Perhaps she won’t be pleased.

The worry hits me as I unzip my fly, the bulge of my semi-hard cock, which had been straining and growing, gets a little less insistent. Nothing for it now, I suppose.

Her expression is fixed on me as as I pull down the trousers and step out of them. I palm my cock over the tight briefs. Is it my imagination, or does her mouth part slightly? She slicks a pink tongue over full lips, making them glisten.

Fuck!

My cock swells against my hand, back to full confidence again.

“And the underwear.”

Never taking my eyes from her, I pull the waistband of the briefs out and over my cock, letting it thwack against my belly. I take one moment to savor the look of undisguised interest in her face before I slide the briefs down and off.

When I look back up Lady Mel is smiling a bigger smile than I think I’ve ever seen from her. I can’t tell you how relieved I am. For a moment there I thought...

Her voice cuts into my thoughts. “I remove an item of clothing every time you come.”

“W-what? How much jizz do you think a minotaur has, woman? I assure you, it’s plenty, but if you want me to be able

to perform later, you might want to reconsider.”

She lifts a brow. Then she just looks at me until I squirm.

“Please?”

A slow shake of her head is all the answer I receive.

Fine. Fine. I can do this. There’s the jacket, the dress, and presumably panties and a bra. She can leave her shoes on for all I care. I only have to come four times. The first few should be easy enough. My cock is already throbbing and leaking under her speculative gaze.

I get to work. Fisting my length, I squeeze the shaft to let moisture bead at the tip.

Fuck, I’m close after moments, speeding my hand up and down over my length.

I grunt and force the urge back down, not wanting to demonstrate exactly how weak I am until finally it’s no use.

“I’m going to come.” I keep jerking. “You might want to get a—”

Reaching behind her, she plucks a towel from the sofa and tosses it at my feet. Not a moment too soon.

My balls tighten. I huff a long breath. My cock erupts and hot seed spills over my knuckles and onto the towel.

Lady Mel gives me another cool smile. “Well done.” She slips her left shoe off and drops it to the floor.

“Wait! Don’t I get to pick?”

“No.” She laughs. “I thought I was in charge here. Now hurry, before I lose interest.”

Sweet spring goddess, this woman is electrifying. Like I took a cattle prod to my rear, I speed into motion again, moving my fist over a cock that hasn’t fully softened. The pleasure is more intense this time. An edge of pain, since I didn’t wait between rounds. But I can do this. I’ve done this before. My cock doesn’t let me down. All the waiting and anticipating has done wonders for my performance, after all. A few minutes of stroking and I’m already on the edge of another.

I laugh triumphantly when a second spurt of come spills to the floor at her feet.

“Good.” Lady Mel removes the other shoe.

I’m panting. My heart is beating fast. I hardly felt the orgasms; I was so focused on her reaction, on achieving my goal.

This time I can’t stay hard. I try, but my cock won’t cooperate. I groan in frustration when Lady Mel steps back to sit on the couch and watch me. She’s still fully dressed except for her shoes. This is not the way I thought the evening would go.

“Give me a little help, My Lady.”

She considers. “What help would you like?”

“Your jacket? Your dress? A helping hand.” I gesture pathetically at my stubborn cock.

She tuts. “No. A deal is a deal. I told you an item of clothing for every time. I said nothing about any assistance. Still. I’m feeling generous since it’s our first meeting.”

I wonder what she means until she sits back a little and her legs fall open. The hem of the skirt rides up and gapes. I catch a glimpse of black panties.

That’s all it takes. My cock twitches back to life again, spurred on when her smile widens. “There. You see? You’re doing very well on your own.”

The praise fires me like nothing else. It’s amazing. I’m used to girls fawning over me, but this woman with a few words has unmade me and reformed me into her slave. I’m gripping a cock that has swelled again when she spreads her legs wider and pulls up the skirt of her dress.

Fuck me.

The panties are lacy and if I squint, I can almost see a hint of a pretty pussy. Is there a light dusting of hair beneath the fabric? I can’t quite make it out. I work myself faster, grunting and sweating, longing for a closer look.

This time when I come, there's not much. The orgasm feels weaker, less satisfying.

I bellow in frustration when she slips the jacket over her shoulders and pulls her skirt back down. "Carry on."

My cock is limp. I stagger to her and drop to my knees. "Please, My Lady. Let me have a taste. Over the panties. I won't look, I promise." This close to her, the scent I remember drifts into my nostrils, making me hunger for her. If I could get my mouth on her little cunt, I know I could get hard again.

A flash of something flickers across her expression. It's gone too soon for me to make out what it is. The next moment she leans back. She pulls the skirt all the way to her waist; I can't wait any longer.

I bury my face between her thighs. She gasps when my horns force her legs wider. I should stop. I know I should. Only I can't. All I can do is breathe deeply and inhale the scent I hunger for. I rub my wide nose up and down over the seam of her cunt. Lady Mel holds very still, not moving. I can hardly hear her breathing. Any moment she could end this and I will be left so unsatisfied despite my recent orgasms.

Unbelievably, my cock twitches to life again. It's not fully hard yet, but the movement gives me hope.

I lap at her panties, my long thick tongue moistening the outside of the fabric, wishing it was her damp flesh. The hint of her sweetness permeating the material is almost too good to be true. Fucking heaven.

Mel groans and pushes me away with a hand on each horn. Reluctantly, I let her.

That has done the trick, though. My cock is hard and standing to attention as if the poor thing hasn't already been overworked.

She looks slightly flushed when she sits up and pushes her skirt back into place. "I'm waiting."

I want to beg her to take pity on me. To show me that pretty cunt instead of removing her dress next as I know she will. I don't. I grit my teeth and force the orgasm from my



unwilling body. The pleasure is only a tiny spike of what it might have been.

I grunt, I jerk, and it's done.

I sigh.

My Lady stands.

My mouth waters while I wait for her to lift the dress. She skims the hem up her thighs slowly, inch by inch, revealing all that pale, perfect skin.

Then she stops.

Instead of pulling it over her head, she hooks her fingers under the waistband of her panties.

Holy shit!

As I stare, she pulls the panties down, not even giving me a flash of pussy as the hem of the skirt drops back into place. Then she steps forward and drops the panties into my open palm. I blink up at her.

“Well done. You've impressed me. So I thought I'd take pity on you and give you these now. Isn't that what you wanted?”

What I want? What I want is for her to bring that luscious little cunt and sit on my face. I want to lick and lick until she has to grip my horns to keep from falling down. I can't form the words.

“Have you got any more left?”

It takes me a moment to process what she's said. I glance down at my cock. Poor withered thing looks like he's just run a marathon. I shake my head. “Give me twenty minutes, My Lady.”

She glances at her phone. “I'm afraid this booking was only one hour. Perhaps next time. Please keep the panties. I'll see myself out.” With that, she slips on her shoes and gathers up her handbag.

I've got nothing. I don't even have the voice to call her back again.

What the devil just happened here? I'm pretty sure I got screwed without her ever even touching me. And I'm pretty sure I fucking love it.

I stagger to the bedroom and collapse onto the freshly made bed with a sigh.

Magnificent. What the hell have I been doing with all these girls when there are real women out there?

Maurice was right. There's no going back now.



# EIGHT

## Mel

I walk out through the hotel lobby on legs far too shaky, with a pussy that's far too wet. I can't bear to take the subway when I feel like this, like everyone who sees me will know how desperate I am to run straight back up to that hotel room and let Jarradek do all the things he wants to me. Instead, I hail a cab and slump back against the seat, press my eyes closed and rub circles around my temples to dull the headache coming.

Forget what Jarradek wants to do to me. I can't stop thinking about all the things I want to do to him!

I want to stretch my hand around that long, fat shaft and measure it for myself. I want to feel the silken smooth skin there and the heat of him under my palm. I want to feel his hot come in my hand and on my belly, and I want to take the pen and write on every inch of his skin until there's not a spot left that doesn't say my name.

God dammit, what is wrong with me?

This is a job. Just work. I'm in charge here. He's paying me to be in control and I should have enough discipline to be in control of myself, too. Only the arrogant billionaire who has it all but dropped to his knees in front of me, just to sniff my pussy, makes me wild with longing. Isn't that the kind of devotion I always dreamed about? The kind James could never give me. Not even in those early years when things were new and exciting.

That's all this is, of course. It's the first flush of arousal. I've denied Jarradek something he wants. I did it deliberately, because I know all too well that's the way to build obsession. So, when I give him attention and affection slowly, bit by bit, he'll become hooked. Only with Jarradek, it's different. He and I both know where we stand. A mutually beneficial arrangement. Nothing more.

It's dangerous to wish for more. And ridiculous. If I could have picked a worse target for my dreams than my ex, it's Jarradek. He's untouchable for a woman like me. Even if he wanted me, acknowledging he's dating the sex worker would end his career. Not that a guy like that will want me for long. He's only on the hook as long as I can keep him from getting what he wants. After that, all bets are off. So, I have to draw it out as long as I can. Keep him booking.

Going home to an empty apartment is strange and unnatural. It's too quiet. Even though the kids would be in bed asleep by now, without them here, there's no soft white noise from the bedroom. There's no gentle snores from Elsa. I stand in the doorway and look into the dark, empty room just to prove to myself I'm OK. Lord knows I should be enjoying the chance for some uninterrupted sleep.

I brush angrily at the two tears that dare to wet my cheeks when I climb into bed, though. I don't even really know why I'm crying. My kids are only uptown with Kalli. I'm not lonely. Not exactly.

I'm pent up and worried and I feel the need for release, but I don't want to touch myself or get out my vibe while I'm feeling like this.

Eventually, I fall asleep dreaming of a huge wet tongue, wishing I knew how it felt on my body instead of my clothing.



I'm on the way to drop Elsa at school when the notification pops up on my phone the next morning.

*Booking request.*

When I finally get a chance to look after nine, I see Jarradek has requested a booking for tonight! As if!

I hastily reject the booking and stash my phone in my pocket. Today's job is a rental clean. I've only got two hours and the place has to be spotless. So it's not until almost twelve that I see all of Jarradek's messages.

*Bullistic: My Lady, did I do something wrong?*

*Bullistic: Please, My Lady. I need to see you*

Letting out a long sigh, I wonder how much to tell him.

*Mel: I can't see you until next week. You haven't done anything wrong*

I struggle with the words, delete them, type them again. I don't want to come across as emotional. I don't want to be too stern, either. I'm certainly not ready to break the spell and tell him I'm a single mom with two kids and a shitty day job trying to get by. To him, I'm something more and I'd rather keep it that way.

*Bullistic: Is there something more I should do to please you?*

I consider.

*Mel: Keep the writing and don't come until I see you again*

The three dots appear instantly, indicating he's writing back. I chew my lip, wondering what he'll say. Did I go too far?

*Bullistic: all week!?! The writing stays. No question. But pls let me come. I promise I'm not seeing anyone else, but a bull has needs*

I roll my eyes. If I had a dollar for every time I've heard guys have some kind of next level needs, I wouldn't need to be escorting.

*Mel: I thought you wanted to please me. But, after all, you are the paying customer. It's up to you*

I expect him to thank me. To tell me he's sorry and he'll make it up to me next week. Instead the three dots appear and disappear over and over, until I give up and lock my screen and head to my next job.

When I check my messages again on the way to pick up Elsa, I find:

*Bullistic: you're right. I do want to please you. Please forgive me. I won't come until I see you*

I blink down at it in surprise. That's not the response I was expecting. That's kind of adorable, actually. It was clearly a struggle for him to make that promise. I find myself grinning as I walk through the school gates. My leggings are faded and my sneakers are scuffed and my hair's a mess, but my chin is up. I could be the queen of the world the way I'm feeling right now.

I'll have to be careful. This whole *domme* thing could clearly get addictive.





# NINE

## Jarradek

I force the corners of my mouth to stay in their position—curved into a smile I don't feel. My cheeks ache and my neck is tense, and between my horns a headache is budding.

Tonight.

I only have to make it through another few hours and then she'll let me come.

It's not fucking natural. I'm a twice a day kind of bull.

This last week has been a special kind of hell. And I've had to do it all while on the campaign trail. After each long, long day was done, I didn't even feel like I could go for a drink or out for a nice dinner. Scared of what I might do when presented with temptation, I hid away at my penthouse, ordering in, and basically living like a recluse.

All so I can please her.

My god, I hope she's pleased with me when I see her. Even if she only tortures me the way she did last week. Even that would be bliss compared to what I'm suffering.

When I finally make it to the executive suite of the West Boulevard, the steaming shower I take does nothing to loosen my muscles or wash off the stink of raw need I know must be emanating from every pore.

Leaving the door unlocked, I ensure the writing on my belly is in place, then kneel and wait.

A soft tap at the door minutes later makes my heart thump and swells my cock to semi-hard instantly.

"It's open."

Lady Mel pushes open the door. At least, I assume it's her. She doesn't speak. From my position with my head lowered, I can only make out her legs and feet as she strides into the room. She is wearing the same heeled black boots from the

first night we met. When she stops in front of me, I force myself to remain still, head bowed.

“Who told you to kneel?”

“No one, My Lady. It seemed right. Does it please you?”

There’s a long pause.

A troubling pause.

Her voice is soft when she answers. “I like the sentiment. But I think I like it better when I can see exactly how big and strong you are.”

My tail flicks and my chest puffs out. She likes my strength. “Then shall I stand?”

“I think you should sit, actually. On the bed.”

That makes my cock sit up and take notice. I hurry to the bed and sit, placing my hands on my knees. It gives me the chance to take in her appearance as she crosses the room toward me.

She’s dressed in the same tight top she wore at the restaurant. Her small waist is nipped in and her breasts are pushed up. Her black boots make almost no sound on the plush carpet of the hotel room.

She’s so beautiful. Her hair is loose, grazing the tops of her shoulders and her plump lips are glossy pink. It’s a softer shade than the bright red I’ve seen her wear before, and I think it suits her. She might be firm, but Lady Mel is kind. That I’m sure of. She’ll be kind to me tonight.

“Pants off. Cock out.” She smiles down at me and I begin to wonder whether I’m wrong.

I wriggle out of my pants, my cock already fully swollen from her nearness and my lust for what comes next. “Please say I get to look at you tonight. All of you.”

Her smile grows wider. “Oh yes. Tonight you can look. You might even be allowed to touch, but you must not come.”

I gape at her. She can’t be serious.

She is, though. Instead of arguing back, I press my eyes closed and draw in a long breath through my nostrils. This only fuels the flame. Her scent is everywhere, growing richer and sweeter while she stands there. My cock throbs and I reach down to adjust it.

Mel laughs. “You told me last time that I couldn’t keep milking you. Don’t worry. I listened. I will always listen. Tonight, I won’t milk you at all. And if you do very, very well, then you might get to please me.”

Fuuuuck!

I wrap my fist around my cock and begin to pump, assuming that’s what she wants.

She stops me.

“Not tonight.” Then before I know what she’s doing, she’s on her knees between my thighs. I nearly come right then. Mel replaces my hand with her small, soft one, and I tremble in her palm as she inspects me.

“You do feel so nice here.” She strokes slowly down, then back up.

I whimper.

“So very nice.” She does it again. Soon, she’s increased her pace until it’s a steady torment. Her little hand moves along my shaft and my belly tightens with pleasure. “Is this what you wanted the other night?”

“Yes! No. I wanted to see you. To make you come.” My god, the things she’s doing to me with just one hand.

She stops.

I gasp. Lady Mel steps back before I can do anything so foolish as grab her and she begins to undress. The corset top unhooks at the back. She slips it off as easily as a butterfly lifting off from a flower and drops it to the floor. I stare at the two most perfect tits I’ve ever seen. They’re small. I could fit one whole breast into my mouth. Curl my tongue around it. Fuck, I want that. My mouth is watering when she unzips her skirt and steps out of that too, leaving her in nothing.

Nothing!

No wonder her scent is everywhere. Her pussy is bare and smooth and right in front of me. The noise that comes from me is not a word. It's guttural. Raw need.

Lady Mel lifts the same delicate hand she was tormenting me with and gestures. "Lie back."

Does this mean what I hope it means?

I crawl back onto the bed, pushing aside the pillows so they don't get in the way of my horns. My cock juts up proudly, waiting for her. Longing.

Lady Mel climbs over me, but instead of doing what I'd hoped, she lowers herself down onto my chest. I'm forced to endure the proximity of that luscious cunt so close to my cock and my mouth, but on neither.

I groan as she takes me in hand again. She's facing away from me, so I can't see what she's doing. I only feel the pleasure as she jerks my cock in short swift movements that have me clutching the bedding.

I grunt when she slows, longing for more. When she speeds up again, I can hardly think as she takes me right to the edge.

I grit my teeth and let out a long, low sound. "My Lady! If you keep that I'm up, I'm going to—"

"Going to what?" She never slows for a second.

"Come! I'm going to come!"

She keeps pumping my cock and I hear her laughter and feel it shake her small body. "Don't you dare. You hold on now."

I curl my toes and suck in a breath, and hold with all my might. It's coming anyway. Pleasure rises until I'm about to spill.

She stops.

I curse.

She applies a firm pressure to my shaft, and I'm guessing she is using both hands.

My breath catches in my throat.

I was perilously close to disappointing her.

My chest rises and falls despite her small weight. She holds still a long moment while I recover.

Just when I think she might take pity on me, she releases the pressure on my cock. "Again."

Her hands move on me again, stroking, drawing pleasure back right to the edge of my control. Her hips rock. She grinds her hot pussy over my bare chest and I moan aloud with delight, feeling how wet she is. I hope she leaves me dripping with her. I'd like to tell her to leave a mess, but I can't. My entire being is focused on doing what she told me. I must not come.

I'm not going to come.

I'm wrong. I'm going to come.

She stops again.

This time we're both breathing harder. If I could think straight, I'd better appreciate the effect this is having on her. Finally!

I wish I could take it in. For now, I'm only congratulating myself for surviving thus far.

Her need is strong, lush, fragrant. I can almost taste it on my tongue with every breath. Why is it so good? Of course I like the way a female smells and tastes, but there's something about Mel that has me a little bit crazy. "Please!"

She doesn't answer.

I gasp again, needing to ask her. "Please, Mel. Let me make you come."

In my dazed state, I forget the honorific. She seems not to notice.

She still says nothing. But very slowly, she shifts, rolling her hips until her pussy is presented for me. "As you wish."

She pushes back against my mouth and I stick out my tongue, drawing in her essence. All I can think is I was right. This is the best fucking flavor in the world. I lap and suck and coat my tongue with it as she moans and writhes. I should be paying more attention. I should be noticing each motion that draws a sigh or a roll of her hips. Instead, I'm wrapped up in my own damn pleasure, lost in the taste and scent and feel of her smooth pussy in my face.

A small hand wraps around my cock again and I almost lose control.

Somehow I hold on while she works me up and down. How? I've never felt like this. Never edged for so long, never felt so desperate to come. I've also never been so focused on giving a female pleasure before. On the taste of her.

There's something more to this. Something I can't process right now.

Somehow, I don't spill, even as pressure tenses my belly and I fist the bedding.

Somehow, I hold back until, with a final shudder, she cries out and convulses against my mouth.

Then I erupt with a force I haven't felt in all my life. My vision blacks around the edges. I bellow. My back arches. When I finally stop, my come covers my belly, the sheets, the pillows, and Mel herself.

Fuck me. I'm a changed bull. Something dances on the edge of my consciousness, but all I can think of is her.



# TEN

**Mel**

Pussy still squeezing from my unexpected orgasm, I wipe the warm come from my cheek with a breathless laugh. It's everywhere. My neck, my breasts. Probably my hair.

Beneath me, Jarradek is very still.

“Sorry.”

I crawl off him and turn. “What for?”

He leans up on his elbow and brushes more come from my hair with a guilty wince. “That’s an extra big mess, even for a minotaur. And you told me not to.”

I draw in a breath. I’d forgotten my role in the heat of the moment. In the heat of the pleasure that seized my body and made me come apart on his long thick tongue.

I clear my throat. “You are forgiven.” That sounds so cold.

He still looks worried.

“In fact, I liked it.”

“Really?” He sits up a little more, gaze locked onto my face.

In this position, we’re face to face. Quite close, but not touching. I’d like to touch him. I’d like to bury my face against his broad, smooth chest and have him stroke my hair, but that wouldn’t be right, would it? I’m supposed to be the *domme* here. I’ve just worked him hard after tormenting him for a week. I should be giving him aftercare. That’s what I read.

“Really. You um... you did well.” I struggle for the words. I know some people use specific praise like ‘good boy,’ but that doesn’t seem to fit. So I do what feels right.

“You didn’t come at all this week, did you? Like I told you?”



He shakes his head. “No! Do you know how hard that was?”

Cupping his chin with my hand feels strange. His elongated face is large in my small palm, but the feel of him leaning into it does something warm and strange to my insides. “It was hard, wasn’t it? But was it worth it?”

He closes his eyes and lets out a long sigh, warm and ticklish against my arm. “Oh yes. So worth it. Thank you, My Lady.”

“Let me get a cloth and I’m going to clean you.”

Reluctantly, I pull away from the soft look in his large brown eyes to go fetch a damp cloth. I wipe him off gently and keep my eyes on my task, to avoid looking too long at all his masculine, monstrous beauty. It’s strange how much his looks affect me. I’m not normally the sort of person who cares very much if a guy is good looking. I mean, it’s nice. I used to think James was gorgeous, but after a while, maybe those early hormones wore off, or I saw the ugliness underneath. Since then, I don’t normally notice guys. Not like that.

I notice Jarradek, though.

I notice the way his taut belly jumps as I wipe him, careful not to smudge the words I’d like to keep there. I notice the way his tail flicks against his side when I wipe the cloth higher, across muscled pecs.

When I’ve finally run out of excuses to keep using the cloth, I’m still not done touching him. I set the cloth aside with a thundering heart and trail my bare fingertips over his skin. He feels hot and smooth. Almost as good as the feel of his hard cock in my hand before.

At the sound of his sigh, I look up to see him watching me. This time I can’t look away.

“You are so beautiful when you come,” he tells me huskily.

A little flutter low in my belly dares me to deny his words mean something. “Thank you.”

“So beautiful. Thank you for giving that to me.”

Inside me, butterflies are having a party in my stomach, but I do my best to keep my expression calm. “If you’re very good, I’ll let you do it again next time.” My wet, tingling pussy would like me to climb back onto him and insist he do it again right now, but that’s not how this works, is it?

I don’t know. I don’t really know what I’m doing. The rogue desire only makes that clearer.

Shaking off the feeling, I gesture to Jarradek. “Roll onto your tummy. Let me rub your back.” After all, he’s the paying client. That feels right.

When Jarradek does as I request, I climb over him and rub my hands up and over his broad shoulders. His groan of pleasure suggests this is just what he needs; I have to admit this is not much of a chore for me either.

We’re quiet for a while. I concentrate on teasing out the knots around his neck and in his upper back, kneading with my knuckles and working in small circles until his back feels looser. I’m hyper-conscious of the heat of his body between my thighs.

After a while he asks, “May I ask you if you have other clients? Is that why you’re hard to book? I’d see you every day, if I could.”

Unsure how much to say, I pause. “No. No other clients right now.” I don’t want to admit I’ve never had any other clients except him. Despite the fact he seems well pleased, I need his business too much right now.

He falls silent again and I knead into his lower back, shifting so I’m sitting on his taut ass.

“Then, can I see you more often? Please. I need more of this.” His voice carries so much sincerity. The moment is so tender.

I feel bad. I’d honestly like to take the extra bookings, but I’d need to arrange proper childcare. Before I know it—before I mean to—the truth slips out. “I can’t.”

His tail flicks against my leg. “Why not?”

“Because I’m also a mom.”

I still, waiting for the negative reaction. Guys like this don’t want to know the reality. Why did I even say it? I should have kept up the facade of mysterious and alluring mistress.

Then Jarradek surprises me. “How old?”

“Huh?”

“How old are your children? If you don’t mind me asking.”

Tentatively, I resume massaging. “Three and seven.”

A low rumble comes from deep in his chest. “I bet they’re gorgeous. And I bet you’re a great mom.”

I shake my head. There’s no reason why his simple words of praise should make my throat go tight and tears spring to my eyes. Only, I don’t think anyone has ever told me that before. I never realized how much I wanted to be told.

I brush back a strand of hair from my face, flustered. “I’m not sure that’s true.”

I continue with the massage.

He captures my hand when I rub up and over his shoulder. His large, warm hand feels firm, but not forceful. “I’m sure it is true.”

He can’t know it, but Jarradek’s words stay with me. I choke out some response. I hardly know what. But I think about what he said hours after I’ve gone home, lying awake staring at the dark ceiling of my bedroom.

I want the words to be true.

Usually, I’m afraid to think too hard about whether or not they are. I avoid thinking about all the times when I was still with James and I wished I’d never gotten pregnant. All the times I wished there wasn’t something so concrete tying us together.

Now that I’m free, I still wish sometimes I hadn’t. Right up until the moment one of them smiles or makes me laugh, or

cries and needs a cuddle. Then I know it doesn't matter what I have to face, it will always have been worth it for me.

I only hope they look back and remember those times, and not the times I cried or snapped, or forgot something they wanted at the store, or made the same dinner every night for a week.

I hope they don't know a part of me still wishes for the girl I used to be. Because I'm not her anymore.



# ELEVEN

**Mel**

A noise wakes me while it's still dark. I don't know what time. I rub my eyes, trying to process what it is.

Another sound. Banging. Getting louder.

Then shouting.

I recognize that voice. Recognition does nothing to soothe the fear that's creeping into my gut. Oh no.

James bangs on the door again. Thump, thump, thump! I stagger from the bed, pulling my discarded cardigan around my shoulders, and stumble to the door.

I freeze. Wait. How did he find us? I deliberately didn't tell him our address, and I've always been very careful to make sure it's not on any of the documents from Elsa's school or the correspondence from the lawyers.

Does he know we're here, or is he just guessing?

I brush back my hair from my face with a shaking hand. I don't know what to do. He's only banging at the door. He's made no threats. He never actually hit me, even when we were living together.

It wasn't like that. He just liked to control me. Control our money, our lease, our kids. Everything.

The police would never come out for this.

I'm still frozen when a groggy Damian pops his head around the corner in time to hear the next round of banging.

"Mel! Mel! Open up. I know you're in there. Open the door." James' voice is loud. He's sure to wake the neighbors. They'll be angry. They're always complaining the kids are too loud.

"Daddy?" Damian's little face is screwed up into a frown; he looks between me and the door.

“Damian? Damian, tell your mom to open the door. I need to see you.”

Fuck.

No chance of pretending we’re not home now, or that he has the wrong address. Pressing my eye to the peephole, I catch a glimpse of James’s red face as he glares at me.

“Mel, stop playing these fucking games. I’m their father. I deserve to see them.”

“Let’s not do this now.”

Damian is cowering against my leg, sensing, if not understanding, the tension.

“Can I call you tomorrow?”

“Like hell. You won’t call. You won’t even answer my calls. Fucking let me in.”

I gasp and pull away as he pounds on the door again.

Damian starts to whimper.

“James, you’re scaring him. Can we just talk later?”

I’d like to tell him maybe, if he paid his fucking child support and didn’t disappear for months on end, he could see his kids. I don’t. I don’t want to talk about it in front of Damian. He’s little now, but he already understands way too much.

Another voice sounds in the background. I can hear the murmur, but I can’t make out the words. James stops beating on the door. “It’s my family in there, and I’ll do what I fucking want. Don’t tell me what to do!”

This time I hear the response. “Listen, if you don’t stop making a racket, I’m going to call the cops, and I don’t care who you are. And you can tell Mel that I’m making a noise complaint to the building manager. This is ridiculous.”

“Fuck you!” James goes back to pounding on the door.

I’m going to have to do something, but what?

Just then he breaks off again and another neighbor yells, “Shut up, would you? I’m calling the cops.”

There’s a scuffle and more thumping, then the sound of footsteps.

I peer through the peephole, but I can’t see anything.

“Mommy?” Damian lifts his hands and I pick him up, tucking him on my hip and holding him close.

“It’s OK, sweet. It’s going to be OK.”

I can’t decide what to do. I walk back down the hall and pause at the door to his room in indecision. It’s late. He should be asleep. We all should be. I should put him back to bed, but instinct screams at me to get out. What if James comes back? What if he somehow gets in? Or makes more noise and we end up getting evicted?

“Baby, find your jacket, OK?”

“Why, Mommy?”

“Please see if you can find it, sweetheart.”

When I look in on Elsa, she sits up, blinking at me and rubbing her eyes. “Was someone yelling?”

That decides me. Everyone’s awake anyway. We’re getting out of here while we have the chance.

I stuff supplies into a backpack. Clothes, water bottles, some toys. Anything I can grab. I stuff the kids into their jackets and lead them to the window. “We’re going to play a little game, OK? It’s called fire drill. Time to make sure we all know what to do if there’s a fire.”

Elsa gives me a knowing look, but she plays along. Damian is confused at first, but when I open the window and step out onto the fire escape, his little eyes widen.

“You said we were never allowed to go out here.”

I nod. “And you’re not. Not without me, but when there’s a fire, this is how we have to go.”



I hold out my arms and he lets me help him through the window. When Elsa is out, too, I shut the window and we begin the climb down to the street. It's dark and windy. The wind whips my hair into my face and makes it difficult for me to keep watch to make sure James isn't down there.

I can't see him anywhere. In fact, there's no one on the street. When we get to the last ladder, I wonder if I've made a mistake. Then I remember the awful trapped feeling of standing behind that door, not knowing what to do. The same feeling I used to get every day living under the same roof as him.

I need to stop doubting myself and trust my instincts, trust my ability to be in charge of my life and my kids' lives. Taking a deep breath, I lead them down the last ladder and we all hold hands and rush for the car. I keep it parked a street away and the dash through the dark is as terrifying as if we're really being pursued.

When I unlock the door, I bundle the kids into the car. I have an awful moment where I wonder if it will start. It's been weeks since I had to use it. It's too expensive. I keep meaning to sell the thing.

I turn the key and the engine starts. I'm so glad I didn't sell it. I don't even buckle Elsa and Damian in. Instead, I flick the headlights on and take off before something can happen.

A few blocks away, I stop and crawl into the back to do up their seatbelts. Damian is giggling and Elsa gives me a horrified look. "We weren't buckled in!"

I stroke her face. "I know, baby. I forgot. Here we go. All sorted now. We're just going to go find a park, OK. Only it's a bit dark, so we might have to wait a while."

She looks skeptical, and I don't blame her. I turn and take off before I have to face any more of her questions. Turning the stereo up, I blast Cocomelon, so I don't have to be alone with my thoughts right now.

I can't go to Kalli's. I can't turn up on her doorstep in the middle of the night. Besides, what if James can find us there?

I'll call her tomorrow and we'll sort out something. I just need to find somewhere safe to park the car until morning and everything will look a little brighter.



# TWELVE

## Jarradek

It's blisteringly early. The air is frosty and huge billows of steam puff from my nostrils as I shift from hoof to hoof trying to stay warm. The park is already busy. All these good citizens out for an early morning run before work. They run past in their activewear, socks pulled up high, headphones in, chins up. As if they're already congratulating themselves about how damn virtuous they are just for showing up.

I don't really know why I'm in such a sour mood.

Usually, I like this part of the job. Meeting people, charming people. Today, I'd rather still be in bed. Not because I'm not a morning person. I mean I'm not, but today, I'm in a sour mood, specifically because I'd rather be in that hotel bed with Lady Mel wrapped up in my arms and that has me shaken.

I'm not normally that guy.

I normally kick them out well before that. If they're lucky enough to make it to a bed with me in the first place.

Maybe it's the fact that she didn't have to be booted. Maybe that's it. The fact that no matter how lovely she is and how good the play is, she's always holding back. It's not just that she's a sex worker. I've hired sex workers before and, despite the money, I've never felt this much of a barrier. Perhaps it's the *domme* thing.

Maurice was right. It's amazing.

My breath blows out even hotter when I remember her telling me I did well. That I pleased her. I want more of that.

I should be trying to get people's attention. We're down here handing out coffee on the off chance some of these fitness wankers will have the time of day for us, but it's not working. They're all in their own world.

After a quick word to my assistant, I step away from the booth and pull out my phone. I don't actually have a call to make. I want to check the Monstrous Deals app for the millionth time this morning and see if Mel has returned my message yet.

I wander off between the cars in the lot, furtively opening the app and checking to see that no one is looking.

Moments later, I scowl down at my phone.

Still nothing.

I'm about to go back, when something in the car beside me catches my eye. A movement.

I peer in through the smeared and fogged up glass of the beat up old Ford, and a little human face pops up. I curse and nearly drop my phone. Another tiny human face appears, wiping at the fogged up glass to press her nose against it and peer out at me.

Are these children alone? Where are their parents?

I lean down to get a better look and let out a snort of astonishment.

In the front seat of the car, a human woman sleeps, her head tucked on her arm and her feet curled up on the seat. Even scrunched up like that, with her blonde hair mussed and her striking blue eyes closed, I'd recognize Lady Mel anywhere. Her image is seared onto my consciousness. These two rugrats must be the kids she told me about.

What the hell are they doing here at this time of the morning? She must be exhausted to have fallen asleep like this here. A very black cloud gathers at the back of my mind where my imagination conjures up reasons why they would be here.

It doesn't matter. My campaign doesn't matter. Nothing does until I know she's safe. In that moment, a world-shattering realization crystalizes in my mind. I'm distracted, obsessed, possessed. It's not the leaving thing. It's not the *domme* thing. It's her. She's mine! There's absolutely no fucking way I'm leaving her and her kids here. That's for damn sure.

About to tap on the window, I hesitate. I don't want to alarm her. How will she feel if I see her like this? I'm anxious about her reaction, but not enough to keep me from doing something.

She saves me the problem of waking her by stirring. Brushing her hair away from her face and sitting up, she turns to look around at her two children. They're still blinking through the glass at me, two button noses pushed up into a snub-faced expression against the window.

"Elsa, Damian, what are you—oh!" She catches sight of me and starts, clutching at her chest. Then her eyes narrow. "Jarradek?"

I nod.

She rubs at her eyes. "What are you—" She breaks off to wind down the window a crack. I note that it's a manual wind-down window. How old is this trash box anyway? "What are you doing here?"

I snort. "I was wondering the same thing. Damn cold morning for campaigning. And now I see I was meant to be here, so I could come to your assistance."

Her mouth falls open. Her two children look back and forth between us, gazes speculative.

"Don't be ridiculous. We were just leaving."

"Mom! You promised if we were good, we could play on the swings when the sun was up, and it's up." The blonde-haired girl looks indignant.

Mel runs a hand through her hair. "And now I've changed my mind. How about we go get hotcakes for breakfast instead?"

A cheer comes from the back seat and Mel gives me a triumphant look. "Nice running into you." She reaches for the key in the ignition and turns it.

There's half a second pause where the car's engine chugs very slowly. Then it stops altogether. Mel turns the key again. Nothing.

Then the most unexpected thing happens. Her face crumples and she bursts into tears. My heart is wrenched forcefully out of my chest, while I stand there not knowing what the fuck to do.

Fuck!

Stretching up to my full height, I glance behind at Stuart, my public relations manager. “Stuart! Get my car!”

He blinks at me. “Your car?”

“Yes. You heard me. Get my car.”

While he hurries off, I reach down and gently pull the door handle. It doesn't open immediately. The car is locked. I have to be pleased about that. I hate the thought of her sleeping here in the public park with the door unlocked. Right now, though, I'm struggling because I also need to get to her. It's palpable. Physical. I need her in my arms. She'll never let me, though.

I'm about to ask her to open the door, when a small hand snakes through from the back seat and lifts the lock. The girl gives me a bright grin.

I open the door while Mel looks around at her kid, horrified.

“Please, My Lady. Let me help.”

Her face goes an even deeper red color and she jerks her head at her kids. “Don't call me that now.”

My eyes widen. God, I'm making a hash of this. “Uh, sorry. Mel.” My heart's pounding over the stupid name without the honorific. What has she done to me? I clear my throat. “Please. Let me take you home.”

Her face drops its color. “That's OK. We're fine.”

My fists clench at my side. Is it me she objects to, or is she worried about going home? That makes me want to gore someone. Letting out a hot huff of breath, I gather my wits. “Then somewhere else. A friend? Family?”

She shakes her head and clasps her bottom lip between her teeth when it trembles. “No.”

“Then, let me take you to my place.”

She stares at me. “Your place? But you don’t take—I mean you don’t—”

I smile ruefully. “This is different. Please?”

She gives me a brief nod. “Thank you.”

Thankfully, at that moment, Stuart brings the Chrysler round. “That’s my car. Come on.”

She glances to the back seat, then back at my car. “Elsa, Damian, get your things.” She winds up her window and gets out of the car to unbuckle the little boy’s belt. The kids scramble out of the car and she takes one of their hands in each of hers. “This is my friend, Jarradek. He’s going to let us visit for a few hours until I decide what we’re doing next. And I want you to be on your best behavior.”

They nod.

She turns and steers them toward my car. The boy swivels his head to stare intently back at me. I grin. He quickly turns away. It’s all I can do to keep from bursting into laughter when he turns back a moment later to check if I’m still looking.

I give him a wink, then hurry forward and open the back door for them. There are no child seats, but Mel shakes her head when I offer to get hers from her car. “It’s fine. I don’t want to be a hassle.”

“It’s no hassle—”

I’m interrupted when Stuart opens the driver’s door and steps out. “Uh, Mr. Tarvost, should I arrange a driver?”

I shake my head. “No need. I’ll take them myself.”

“But, sir!” He doesn’t need to say it. I’m supposed to be at the park for another two hours before heading downtown for an appearance on a midday television show.

“Clear my schedule as best you can, and let me know what you can’t change. I’ll make the Daily Show, but see if you can arrange to put off everything else. This is important.”



Stuart looks between Mel and her kids and me one more time, then he gives a long suffering sigh. “Sure.”

I clap him on the shoulder. “Good man. I’ll see you at the studio.”

He swallows. “Yes, sir.”

When I turn, Mel has finished buckling her kids in and has climbed into the passenger seat. I get into the car and put on my own seatbelt with an odd sort of satisfaction. I’m going to be of real use to her today. She might not trust me enough to tell me exactly what happened yet, but I’ll get it out of her. Then, I’ll find out how I can really help.

I pull out of the park with high hopes, driving more carefully than I think I’ve ever driven in my life. Today, I’ve got precious cargo. Strange how people all across the city will be voting for or against me as mayor in just a month; how I’m representing the entire supernatural community; yet I’ve never felt the weight of responsibility so heavily as I do on my shoulders in that moment.

“Mom?” One of them asks from the back seat. “Do we still get hotcakes?”



# THIRTEEN

**Mel**

Trust my kids to make an awkward situation worse. I bury my face in my hands, avoiding looking at Jarradek. “No.”

“Yes!” Jarradek’s deep voice cuts over mine and I look around surprised. He gives me a shrug. “Unless you don’t want me to stop.”

“I don’t want to be—”

He snorts. “A hassle? You’re not. In fact. You three are my saviors today. I don’t know what I would have done if you hadn’t been in that park.”

“We are?” I can tell Elsa and Damian are bursting with curiosity. They’re practically bouncing on the fancy leather seats of Jarradek’s sports car. I’m lucky he clearly favors cars with lots of cabin space to fit his horns, since there’d probably be no backseat in a Lamborghini.

“Oh you most certainly are. Do you know how boring it is standing around in the cold trying to convince people they should vote for me? It’s horrible. But my public relations guy says I have to, so there I was.” He rolls his eyes dramatically and gives me a grin.

Despite my lack of sleep, my sore neck and the incredible embarrassment I’m feeling at being found like that by a client—by *this* client—I can’t help the way the corner of my mouth quirks up in a half smile. I like this playful side of him. I like seeing glimpses of his different moods. It feels like he’s letting me in. Which is ridiculous. I’m just his sex worker.

Only, he apparently wants to take me and my two kids back to his place.

I’m a little stunned.

No, make that totally stunned. He detours to pick up drive-though, jokes with my kids all the way back to his uptown apartment complex, keeping them so entertained they’re

basically howling with laughter. I don't even have it in me to do anything other than soak it in.

When we get to his apartment building, he clicks the remote for the garage door and turns back to the kids, slinging his arm across the back of my seat. The gesture somehow feels intimate. I catch myself wondering what it would be like to have a guy like this around for real.

“My parking spot has a turntable, just like batman, but it makes the back seat impossible to get out of, so you two will have to jump out first, OK? Who wants to push the button on the remote?”

They both squeal with excitement and Jarradek hands the little gray remote to Elsa. “You're the big girl. So it's up to you to make sure your brother gets a go, too.”

She blinks back at him in awe, nodding with all the seriousness of a seven year old handed a very important task. “I will.”

Jarradek parks in a spot so narrow it makes me wince at the way he casually swings the wheel. The kids scramble out and he winds down the window, sticking out his head. “Push the red one, but stay over there where I can see you.”

He quickly tucks his horns back inside the car and I expect a joke or flirtatious comment. Jarradek snaps straight into serious mode, though. He pitches his voice low and leans a little closer. “Are you OK? Are you safe?”

I bite my lips together, clamping down on the urge to cry. “We're fine. We just had a bit of a scare, that's all. This is very kind of you. Are you sure you wouldn't rather we get a taxi to go see my sister? I'm sure she's awake by now.”

He fixes me with a look. “Mel, I want to help. If it helps you to stay here a few hours, a day, a week, then stay. If it helps you to use my money to hire a hotel room, or a hit man, then do that. If we need to bury someone in legal paperwork, I can arrange that, too. I'm yours. I mean it. For anything. Just say the word.”

I'm too flustered to reply. The car finishes its rotation and the kids are squealing and clapping. I open my door and scramble out, buying a few more minutes until I have to react.

I thought he might make this sexual. Flirt and expect things from me.

Now, I feel bad for underestimating him like that.

The thought of letting Jarradek take care of all my problems with James is pretty damn tempting right about now. God, even the way he framed that still made the decision mine, the power mine.

I'm so caught up in my head I almost walk in the opposite direction from the elevator. Damian tugs on my shirt. "Mom. Here."

I follow Jarradek into his private elevator and up to the most plush penthouse apartment I could have imagined. The ceilings are so high they could easily have fit another level in here. I stare in wonder at the designer furniture in odd, curving shapes that looks like something that belongs in a spaceship rather than a real home.

Damian and Elsa shriek and run to press their noses against the huge windows. "Mom! Mom!" Damian is too excited to form words and just points, stabbing his little finger at the glass until I come over to look at the infinity lap pool and outdoor spa below.

"Wow."

Jarradek's large, warm presence behind me makes me aware of the unanswered half-question from earlier.

"Make yourselves at home," he says. "There are two bedrooms upstairs if you need to get some sleep, a shower. I can order more food. Whatever you need." He squeezes my shoulder briefly before leaning down to Damian. "Pretty sure there's ice cream in my freezer too. Cause dairy products are my comfort food."

Yeah, I have questions, but they're less important than what I'm doing here.

My kids look at me with puppy dog eyes, so I smile and shake my head. “Yes. You can eat ice cream. Go on.”

“Kitchen’s that way.” Jarradek points them in the right direction and they race off, Elsa leading the charge like she didn’t just have drive-through hotcakes for breakfast.

“We won’t stay long.” It wouldn’t be smart. In a place like this, a girl might start dreaming silly dreams.

“Stay long enough to get some sleep at least. You look like you need it.”

I’d protest, but I know he’s right. I’m still wearing my pajamas and my hair is probably a bird’s nest. I’m willing to bet all my pay for this week that I have big black circles under my eyes. God, why did I agree to come here?

“I’ll watch the kids.”

“No, they can be a handful—”

“Mel, I’m hoping to be mayor of Heartstone. Surely, I can handle a couple of kids.”

I give him a skeptical look, though it’s somewhat spoiled by the huge yawn I can’t hold back.

“Please?”

“Just twenty minutes.”

He grins. Then he steers me up to a mezzanine level where an enormous bedroom looks down over the pool. A press of a button and soft, duck egg-colored blinds roll down from the window frame, dimming the room.

“Come on, my housekeeper even changed my sheets this morning.”

I stare. “Then this is your bed?” The place doesn’t look lived in. I guess because he has staff. It makes me wonder how often he’s actually home, though.

Jarradek nods. At a crash from the kitchen, he chuckles. “I’m going to go check on them. Relax. Please, take your time. I will get you if we need you.”

I chew my lip. “Promise?”

He smiles solemnly. “Promise. Let me take care of you.”

Another crash makes him trot back down the stairs, leaving me alone and staring at his huge bed. I pull back the covers and catch a hint of his warm masculine scent. That decides me. How long has it been since I slept in a bed that smelled so good? Like a man—a man I’m desperately attracted to...

I snuggle in and close my eyes, inhaling his scent on the pillow. Just a few minutes won’t hurt.





# FOURTEEN

**Mel**

I open my eyes at the quiet clink of glass on glass to see Jarradek setting water by the bedside. I push my hair off my face and sit.

He turns. “Sorry. Did I wake you? Probably best to have something to eat and drink now, anyway. You’ve been asleep for a while.”

I fumble for my phone and realize I don’t have it. He holds it out for me. It’s two in the afternoon! “Oh my God! The kids!”

“Asleep. Crashed out on the sofa after too many movies and too much junk food.” Jarradek winces. “Sorry about that. I wasn’t sure what to feed them.”

I laugh. A day of bad food won’t kill them. I’m just grateful he seems to have coped so well. Then I remember. “Your interview!”

He shrugs. “Called in a favor and we did it remotely. I may have had to stream nearly all seven seasons of something called Pinky’s Funhouse to achieve it, but I think it was worth it.”

My lip trembles despite myself. “Thank you. You’re amazing.”

Jarradek kneels by the bedside, bringing his long, serious face closer to mine. “You’re amazing, raising those little balls of sunshine and coping with whatever you had to cope with last night. I’m just here to help.”

That does it. The tears I’ve been holding back well until my vision is blurred and my throat is sore.

Jarradek looks stricken. “Mel.” He lowers his voice. “My Lady—”

I hate this. I hate reminders that I’m weak. That James still controls a little part of me. I’m not her anymore. But no matter

how many times I think I've broken free, he always finds a way to affect me. To creep back into my life like a cockroach.

I want to be the person I am when I'm Lady Mel. When I control Jarradek and his powerful body.

So I fling my arms around his neck and kiss Jarradek. He responds instantly, as if he's been waiting for me to do it. His mouth is hot, and just wet enough to make me moan into it. Pressing closer, I open to find his long thick tongue is almost as fun like this as it was on my pussy.

I crawl into his lap, straddling the leg he has propped up, and grind on him shamelessly. Lady Mel doesn't wait to be given pleasure, she takes what she wants and demands more.

I break away from the kiss and use a hand on his horn to steer his lips over my neck. Delicious sensations sweep through me as he follows my silent commands. I gasp when a warm wet mouth closes over my nipple through the fabric of my pajamas. "Make me come." It's not a request. I don't have any doubt Jarradek will obey me.

He stands and effortlessly lifts me onto the bed and gently lays me down. His voice is husky when he says, "May I?" He jerks his head to indicate my pajama pants.

"Yes." I do my best to keep my voice firm, but I'm certain it's breathy with need. He slides my pants and underwear over my hips in a single motion while I lift to allow him access.

Then he lets out a long, shaky breath over my mound as I part my legs. "My goddess, you are so beautiful here." His thumb drifts up my inner thigh and over the outer lips of my labia as if he hardly dares to touch me.

When I don't stop him, he repeats the motion. Warm, smooth pleasure glides with his touch, up my leg and into my core.

Jarradek fingers me tenderly, parting my inner lips to gather moisture from my cunt and spread it over me until I'm aching. Normally, I'd appreciate his gentle touch, his reverent care. Today, I'm starved for something to bring me over the

edge immediately, to erase my thoughts and take my mind elsewhere.

Sitting, I grab his horn and force his head between my legs.

He groans when his mouth meets my wet pussy and for a moment that true, mindless bliss is all I feel. Then his long, thick tongue goes to work and I'm bucking and shuddering with the intensity. It's like nothing a human man could ever achieve. His tongue is everywhere, parting my vulva, spearing into me and bringing me more fullness and satisfaction than a human cock.

Jarradek reaches further inside my channel, curls his tongue and presses it against my inner walls. I cry out. My hands grab tight to the firm, bony surface of his horns. I press his mouth close. Then I'm tumbling along the rapids, through white waters of pleasure that suck me under and spin me around and spit me back out the other side into a torrent of feeling.

When I emerge gasping, I pull his head down to rest on my belly for a moment while I catch my breath. Then, I brush his hair back from his face. "Well done, gorgeous. Now what do you need? Do you need to come?"

Jarradek lifts his heavy head, big brown eyes seemingly solemn. "No, My Lady. That was for you. Only for you. That's all I need."

I search his face, wondering for a long time if he's telling the truth, or if he's just telling me what he thinks I want to hear. I don't know. I don't know which one makes me more uncomfortable.

I can't dwell on it now, though. I should get up and check on the kids. With a sigh, I roll over and put my legs on the floor.

Jarradek anticipates me. "I'll go. Take a shower first. Relax. I'll bring something you can change into."

I shouldn't, but I accept one more offering from him, though I'm already feeling guilty about everything he's done

for me. What kind of *domme* am I when I can't accept his devotion and believe I deserve it?

A fake one, that's what kind. It's never been more clear to me than now. I've never wanted to conceal it so badly. I don't want him to know I'm a fraud. That he's been spending his money and giving his trust to someone who doesn't deserve it.

So I promise myself to work harder, so I do. Just like I do whenever I shout at the kids or do a rushed job on a clean instead of giving it my best. I promise myself I'll do better next time and work hard to be that person.

When I force myself out of the enormous rainforest shower and dry myself with a towel that feels more like a blanket, I pull the shirt Jarradek left me over my head and roll up the sleeves. It smells of him. Of his spicy cologne and the rich, masculine scent I will now forever associate with luxurious daytime sleep and plush comfort.

I pad down the stairs barefoot and find my two children sprawled out on the biggest armchair I've ever seen. The thing is the size of two couches with about a hundred cushions scattered on top. They're both laying, arms up, snoring softly in the sweet pose from their toddler days. Poor babies. They're exhausted. We all were.

I walk over to where Jarradek sits frowning down at his phone. As soon as he notices me, he sets it aside. As I draw near, he spreads his knees wider and I step between them into an intimate embrace I wasn't expecting. He lays his head on my chest and even though his horn digs into my side, I don't move him. It feels too nice. I stroke my hand through his hair. "Thank you for today. For everything. I'm going to wake them and we'll go to my sister's."

"Not home?" He doesn't ask the real question. He doesn't have to.

I sigh. "Not home. Not yet. Their dad—" I break off when Elsa begins to stir. Much as I might loathe James, he's still their dad. I try to avoid talking about it in front of them.

Jarradek nods as if he understands, but how could he? His life is Vogue magazine perfect.

“Will you let me take you there?”

I pull myself away from his inviting arms as Elsa sits.

“I’m hungry,” my daughter says.

Jarradek laughs and it eases the tension from my chest.

“Will you let me feed your little rays of sunshine again, then take you there?”

I look up at him as he smiles and something passes between us.

Finally, I nod. “I’d like that.”



# FIFTEEN

## Jarradek

Mel gives me a long look as she gently shuts the passenger door. I have to stop myself leaping out of the car to haul her back, strap her in, and drive off with her. Her kids are already running up the path to the front door of the townhouse where Mel tells me her sister lives with her boyfriend.

Frankly, I'm surprised. I got the impression Mel was struggling. Not that she would ever let on. This neighborhood is not the kind of neighborhood where I expected her sister to live. This has upmarket conservative voters who expect monsters to be hiding under their bed, not running for mayor.

Why isn't her sister helping her more?

I know the answer, of course. Mel won't let her. Mel's too proud to let anyone give her charity. I'm honestly surprised she let me help as much as she did today.

It makes a little place below my sternum ache just thinking about it. She's not even out of my sight when I bring up my phone and type into the MD app.

*Bullistic: my place will feel lonely without you now*

She pauses at the door, fishes her phone out of her bag, then looks back at me with a scowl I know is fake. The last thing I see is a curvy blonde answering the door. They all enter. Mel glances back at me one more time. Her expression is unreadable.

A few moments later she answers my message.

*Mel: you're full of shit. You'll like it much better now you have some peace and quiet!*

I grin. I've got mountains of work from today to catch up on, but I already know I'm about to spend far too much of the rest of my day chatting with her. It feels like one of those stone walls somehow crumbled, and I'm about to do my damndest to bring the rest down.

Not sure what the hell I'm going to do once they're down, but I know I need them down.

I'm replying even as I pull out of the street and turn back toward the motorway.

*Bullistic: I won't. I'll prove it*

I smile to myself as I drive home. My mind is still on the faint smell of her that clings to my nose and, when I step inside, the scent lingers in the apartment itself. I snap a quick picture of the empty apartment and send it.

*Bullistic: see? Lonely \*sad face\**

A reply pops up an instant later.

*Mel: \*eye rolling emoji\**

I chuckle. I sit down with my laptop and pretend to answer some emails, but I'm distracted. I keep catching a whiff of her on my skin and fuck does she smell good. Her perfume grows more fragrant as the afternoon wears on. Soon, I'm sinking back on my sofa chair with a growing cock, remembering how soft and wet she was when my face was buried between her thighs.

I snap another picture, this time of my crotch with the bulge in my gray sweatpants very obvious.

*Bullistic: look how lonely. No one here to play with me. Should I play with myself?*

*Mel: Don't you dare! That belongs to me.*

Holy fuck. A thrilling little jolt runs up my spine at her message and my cock is all the way hard in a second.

*Bullistic: Yes, Ma'am!*

There's a pause. I'm not ready to let the conversation drop, but I don't want to disobey her. I need something to take my mind off playing.

*Bullistic: then will you distract me, My Lady? Maybe you could tell me who I should kill for forcing you to sleep in your car last night.*



Three dots appear on the screen, then disappear, then reappear, and my heart lurches. I was being flippant. Maybe I've upset her. Maybe I shouldn't have raised the issue again. It was clear she wasn't ready to talk about it earlier.

Then she responds.

*Mel: I know you're only joking. And for your information, it was my ex.*

*Mel: It's complicated. I didn't think he knew where we live. Now I'm not sure if I should be worried or not.*

Bile rises in my throat. I stalk to the kitchen and pour a glass of water, then change my mind and pour a glass of whiskey. Even that doesn't erase the bitter taste in my mouth. But I can't solve this problem for her. She won't let me. I can be an ear to listen, though.

Forcing myself to stay calm, I type back.

*Bullistic: what worries you?*

*Mel: he never actually hurt me.*

I let out a long huff of breath and set my glass of whiskey back on the table.

*Mel: It's not like that. And he'd never hurt the kids. He just likes to control everything. When we were together, he used to have everything in his name. Bank accounts, lease. Everything*

There's a pause. I'm still weighing up what to say.

*Mel: God, sorry. I don't know why I'm telling you all this. Should we just go back to dick pics?*

*Bullistic: No!*

*Bullistic: I mean my dick is yours whenever you command, but I'm glad you could tell me. I'm here to listen. I'm here for whatever you need*

*Mel: thank you xx*

I put down my phone, certain she's cutting me off. When I check it a few minutes later, though, she's sent another message.

*Mel: I'm so mad. I'm mad that I thought I got away, and here he is again, barging in, sneaking back into my life when I don't want him around. But how can I deny that he has a right to see his kids?*

I scratch the base of my horns. This is tricky. I know what my gut's telling me: she should get a whole team of lawyers to make sure he can't set foot within half a mile of her or the kids. But I've seen the way Mel works. That's not who she is. Not unless he has to. She's trying to be a good mom to those kids despite what it costs her.

*Bullistic: he scared you last night. That's not OK. You're not a bad mom for making sure he can't do that again. Does he know where your sister lives?*

*Mel: No. I don't think so*

*Bullistic: good. If anything changes, or if you need somewhere to go, I will arrange it. I mean it. Doesn't have to be here. Can be a new apartment, a hotel. Anything. I can transfer you the cash and you can arrange it yourself so I don't even have to know where.*

I get a little work done after that.

Not half as much as I should, though. It makes me feel better to know she confided in me, if only a little.

I pick up my phone an hour later to another message from Mel.

*Mel: the kids are up way past their bedtime. I blame the guy who stuffed them full of junk food and let them sleep all afternoon*

I laugh.

*Bullistic: you're welcome. Babysitter extraordinaire at your service anytime*

*Mel: LOL I'd rather your pussy eating services. Those are top quality*

I can't help puffing out my chest a little.

*Bullistic: Oh, you think so? Glad to be of service. That's also yours anytime you want it \*winky face\**

*Mel: You'd like that, wouldn't you?*

I grin. Laying back, I snap a picture of me lying on my back.

*Bullistic: your throne is ready for you, my queen*

*Mel: It'll cost you next time. Last one was a freebie*

I don't even hesitate.

*Bullistic: doesn't matter. I'll pay happily. Ur worth every penny xx*

It is, too. I'd pay just for the privilege of eating her out all damn day and never coming. The knowledge astonishes me, but there it is. This woman has me so deeply under her spell I can't even deny it.



# SIXTEEN

## Mel

When the kids are finally in bed and settled, I tuck my bare feet under me on Kalli's sofa and pull out my phone. I can't help grinning when I read what Jarradek sent.

Stupid, stupid, stupid.

This guy flirts like he breathes air. It doesn't mean anything. I'd better keep trying to tell myself that. A few more hundred times might do it.

Does it mean something that I let him kiss me and touch me like that when he wasn't paying?

"Who are you messaging?" Kalli takes me so by surprise I jump and switch off my screen.

She hands me a large glass of white wine and gives me a knowing look.

"No one."

Kalli snorts. She takes a seat beside me on the sofa, mirroring my pose and taking a sip from her own glass. "That old chestnut, huh? Never worked on Mom, either."

I laugh, remembering when we were younger how Kalli used to cover for me while I'd sneak out to meet James. God, I was stupid.

"OK, it might be someone, but it's not what you think."

"What do you think I think?" she asks me.

"I think you think I've got a new boyfriend, but I don't. He's just... someone I know from work." It's a lame cover. Kalli quirks a brow at me and takes another sip of wine.

"Not the married guy whose wife is a bitch?"

I almost snort my wine at the question. "No! Kalli, I would never."

She laughs. “I know. I’m only teasing. But you like whoever he is, don’t you?”

I hesitate. It’s true. I don’t know how it happened, but somehow I genuinely started liking Jarradek. I nod. “Guilty.”

“Is this the guy you went out with before? You should see him again. Suggest he comes out for dinner or a walk or something.”

I sigh. “It’s complicated.”

“Well I’m glad you’re getting out there again. You deserve someone special. Just tell New Guy to make it uncomplicated or you’ll find someone else!”

I smile. Kalli has this beautiful way of seeing the world like it’s full of possibility. I love that she can. I think maybe I was like that once. Before life showed me most possibilities turn out to be dead ends. “Haha, yeah. Something like that.”

Kalli’s expression grows serious and she sets down her wine. “Mel, is everything OK? I mean with James?”

I swirl the liquid in my glass, keeping my eyes down. “I don’t know.” It’s the honest truth and I owe it to her. It scares me to say it out loud, though.

“You know if there’s anything I can do—”

I reach over to take her hand, something that shouldn’t feel awkward, but still kinda does. “You are doing it. Trust me. It means so much to have your help. But I need to work this out for myself. You know?”

She nods. “Yeah. I get it. Just know that I’m standing by ready to jump in on your team whenever. And you should know that Rin has some pretty crazy-ass tendencies when it comes to being protective and I’ll totally set him on James if you want me to.”

Our shared laughter breaks the uncomfortable moment. I let go of her hand and take another sip of wine.

“Thanks.”

We end up putting on Gilmore Girls and binge watching half of season one before I can't keep my eyes open anymore. When I snuggle into the big soft bed in the second guest room, I grin when a message pops up from Jarradek.

There's a picture of his big bed, still looking ruffled from my midday nap and... other activities.

*Bullistic: this picture would look better if you were in it xx*

God damn this guy. Maybe I should get mean with him if he's going to get all cute. I don't respond.



When I wake up the next morning, I reach immediately for my phone, but there's no message from Jarradek. Not that weird, I guess. I will admit, I was expecting one.

Hours later, I've dropped the kids off at school and childcare and finished my first job, but when I check there's still nothing.

Huh.

Finally, that evening when I've checked my phone every ten minutes for hours, Kalli nudges me. "Call him."

I grimace. "I can't."

She rolls her eyes at me. "What's the point of playing hard to get if it's giving you no joy?"

I blush. "No, I mean I can't. I don't have his number. We met on... an app."

Kalli is fishing through scraps of fabric, to lay out a patchwork dress for Elsa. When I say this, though, she looks up at me. "What app?"

I squirm. But what's the point in hiding it? "Monstrous Deals."

Kalli's mouth drops open, but then her budding smile turns into a frown. "Oh, but Mel, that means it's just work."

I nod. "I said it was complicated."

Kalli chews her lip for a moment, playing idly with the fabric in her hands. “But he messaged you all day yesterday.”

I nod. “He did. And today, nothing.”

I should be worrying about what I’m going to do about my apartment. If we’ll go back there or if I have to search for a new place. I should be thinking of ways to stop James coming back to bother us again. I wonder if he’d stop if I just stopped asking for child support. He hasn’t paid it in weeks, anyway.

Rin comes home from work, and he and Kalli make cute eyes at each other while pretending not to. Eventually, I go to bed to give them some privacy. It’s clear that’s what they want; I’m only a little bit jealous. Mostly, I’m happy for Kalli. She deserves to have found a beautiful man who dotes on her. Even if her beautiful man is a strangely obsessive oni demon. Still beats James, so who am I to judge, right?

I’m lying in bed when my phone buzzes.

I pick it up and my heart lurches when it’s a notification from the Monstrous Deals app.

A new booking request from Jarradek! When I open the request, something isn’t right. It doesn’t load. An error message pops up. Unable to locate booking.

I frown. Opening a message, I figure I’ll just ask him.

*Mel: Did you try to make a new booking?*

There’s no reply.

I try to settle to sleep. I’ve brushed my teeth and I’m lying in bed waiting for sleep to come, but it won’t. I’m just drifting. My phone buzzes again.

*Bullistic: sorry, My Lady. That was a mistake. Better if I don’t make a booking right now*

I can’t understand it.

I don’t even bother to reply. There’s nothing I can say that won’t either reveal the level of hurt I’m feeling right now and make me feel vulnerable, or make me sound like a crazy bitch.

I can’t sleep, though.



Hours later when I'm still trawling through the internet mindlessly, I come across the story.

### *NEW LOW FOR MONSTROUS MAYOR*

*Mayoral candidate, Jarradek Tarvost has been caught out again. Everyone knows the minotaur has an appetite for women as big as his assets are rumored to be. This time our sources aren't sure who his flavor of the month is, but there must be one. Sources we trust say that he's been booking private rooms at restaurants across town and spending on lingerie and gifts. You have to ask yourself is this monster really who you want as mayor?*

God, I feel sick. My stomach roils and I sit, fumbling for the glass of water on my bedside table. Is this why Jarradek didn't contact me today? Because he's playing some game? Was he just bored yesterday and today his new girlfriend got back in touch, so now he's dropped me like a sack of potatoes?

You know what? Fuck that!

I didn't ask for this shit. I didn't ask for him to get all cozy and start sending me cute texts. I sure didn't ask to be halfway to getting the feels for him.

If this is where that ends, so much the better. I'll go back on the app, find a new client, and move on with my life.

Only, right before I shut my eyes, I give in to the stupid urge to send one last message. Just to see. I have to know if that's what's happened.

*Mel: so who is she? I thought you were mine to do what I wanted with*

I instantly regret it. I'm about to delete the message when the symbol below it changes to show Jarradek has read it.

Oh shit!

What have I done? I exit out of the app so fast I almost drop my phone. I lay there with trembling fingers and a racing heart. I can't believe I sent that stupid message like a jealous girlfriend. I can't believe I did that.

I'll have no one to blame but myself if he never books me again.

Right when I was really, really hoping he would.



# SEVENTEEN

## Jarradek

It's stupid. Too stupid for words. I have to see her, though.

She stopped answering my messages on Thursday, right after I freaked out, spent all day ignoring her, booked her, then canceled my booking.

I wipe sweaty palms on slightly creased trousers and press the button for the elevator. I would prefer to meet her at my place. Now she's been there, I wasn't lying when I said the place feels lonely without her in it.

How can a few hours accomplish that?

I have no idea. All I know is I'm so glad she accepted this booking. I was on the verge of doing something completely crazy like showing up at her sister's place and demanding to see her.

She's going to be mad, though. She has every right. I didn't communicate at all, just shut down when I read that story. So I know I'm about to be in for a world of pain; I can't decide if I'm excited or terrified.

When I use my pass to enter the suite, her voice stops me as I step through the door. She beat me here!

"Clothes off. Kneel and wait for me there."

"Yes, My Lady." I hurry to obey, stripping off my suit trousers, shirt and tie and leaving them in a pile by the door. I kneel and lower my head. I don't see her approach, but suddenly the cool, ticklish touch of leather slides up my side. I feel the snap and sting of a riding crop on my shoulder.

"Shoulders back. Present yourself nicely for me."

"Should we talk first? About the other day?"

"You will remain quiet until I ask you a question. You will obey me perfectly or this ends. Do you understand?"

She is angry. I probably deserve it. I should have called her before she had a chance to read the article, or after, to explain. I didn't know how to explain and I worried that I'd only make it worse. She doesn't deserve to be harried by the media, or for her kids to read some article by some scumbag pretending to be a journalist. What will the next one be like? I know the kind of things they write about women like her.

"Yes, My Lady." I concentrate on my posture, put my shoulders back, and tense my stomach muscles, holding myself still.

She runs the crop up my side again, this time bringing the leather pad under my chin and directing me to look at her. "You may speak to tell me that you need to end the scene if this becomes too much. Tell me stop and this ends."

"Yes, My Lady." I don't argue. I can't imagine what she could do to make me tap out, but I'm not prepared to risk she stops it before it's even begun.

She glares at me for a moment longer. "Fine."

She whips the crop around and slaps my ass so hard I hear the snap and feel the bite of leather.

"Up. On the bed. Lie on your back."

She follows me through the suite to the bed, a large king with a luxurious fabric headboard and dozens of throw pillows. I remove them one by one until another crack of the crop on my ass makes me jump.

"Too slow. I'm getting impatient."

I push the rest of the cushions off with a swipe of my arm and crawl onto the bed. I might be nervous about what she's about to make me suffer, but my cock has no such hesitations. He's hard and throbbing already. As I lie on my back, it jumps, the foreskin pulling back a little more to reveal the crown already deeper in color and more swollen.

I suck in a breath when she trails the crop along my belly and over my nipples. My nipples are sensitive and she smiles cruelly when she discovers this, twisting the crop over them, teasing them into stiff peaks.

After a series of stinging slaps on my nipples, I'm sweating. I grit my teeth and try to stop my back from bowing off the bed. The sensation is too much and not enough at the same time. My poor cock is hungry for attention.

Mel trails the leather back down my belly and I think for a moment she'll touch me where I want it. Take pity on me. I'm already begging her in my mind. She still hasn't laid a finger on me. All she's doing is teasing me with the fucking toy.

I have a heartstopping moment where she lowers the crop so the leather grazes my aching balls. She lifts it quickly and I brace to feel the punishing smack. It never comes.

I open my eyes to find her watching me.

In a huff, I let out the breath caught in my chest.

"Stay there." She walks to the nightstand and retrieves a little black bag. I watch carefully to see what new toy she wants to use on me. My cock jumps in anticipation. I'm surprised when she pulls out a clear fleshlight. Then it hits me. She still isn't going to touch me.

I could sob, though I bite it back, when she applies a liberal squirt of lube to the toy and brings it down over my shaft.

It feels good. Of course it does, but it's not her. It's not her mouth or her pussy, and the scent of heaven that's teasing my nostrils means I can hardly think about anything else. Will she at least give me a taste?

Instead of taking her position on my chest as she did last time we played like this, she stands between my legs. Bracing one hand on the bed, she works the fleshlight over my cock slowly while glaring at me, daring me to speak. Daring me to end the scene.

I press my lips together, holding her gaze. I'm not going to break so easily. If I'm good, maybe she'll give me a reward. Maybe that's what all this is leading to. I'll be good. Surely, she'll let me lick that sweet little cunt if I'm good.

God it's hard, though. She moves slowly, deliberately, never giving me the speed and friction I need to come. It feels

only good enough to be torment and not nearly good enough to let me finish. All she's doing is keeping me hard.

I want to beg her to touch me. Really touch me. Fondle my balls or stroke my belly. Take the damn toy off my cock and replace it with her fist. I long to feel her soft hands on me, her wet mouth. But she doesn't and I can't ask her.

A low moan erupts from me before I can hold it back.

“Are you going to come for me?”

I shake my head.

She pumps faster. “What if I give you no choice?”

I grunt. The increase in speed tightens my balls. She knows it. She pumps the fleshlight over my cock in a steady rhythm and I'm dragged closer to an orgasm I don't want.

“Well?” She never stops thrusting the toy over me. Up and down, the thing slides over my cock and draws my seed closer to spilling.

“Please!”

Lady Mel cocks her brow. “Please what? You want to come?”

“N-no.”

She moves faster now. The toy is a blur over my cock as she works my shaft. The wet sloppy sounds of the lube in the toy mix with my grunts and moans to fill the room.

“No! I don't want to come. Not like this.”

Lady Mel scowls. She keeps working me, but I hang on. Clutching the sheets in sweaty fists, I press my eyes closed. I will not come. I can't. I need her touch.

Just when I feel my balls readying for release, she stops.

She's breathing hard.

She still holds the fleshlight in a tight fist.

Lady Mel looks down at me. “What do you mean?”

I gasp a shuddering breath and try to find the words. “I want you. I need you. Your touch, your hand, your mouth. Not like this. Please!”

Something in her stern expression softens.

The next moment, she gently removes the toy from my shaft. My cock is throbbing. The head is so swollen and angry it weeps a tiny rope of moisture from the tip.

“You want me?”

I nod. “Only you. I meant to tell you before. Did you think there was someone else? There isn’t. Did you think I could want anyone else but you?”

Lady Mel drops the used toy on the bed. Her lips part.

In the next moment, she’s climbing me, mounting me. I’m already shuddering under her. She lifts her skirt and pulls aside her underwear.

Her molten hot core slides into position over my cock; I almost come right then. I’m not even inside her! What the fuck has she done to me?

Her small face presses into my neck as she molds herself to me, holding me close. “Then you don’t have a girlfriend?”

“No. I’m not seeing anyone except you.”

She lifts her head and despite the sniff and her watery eyes, she’s scowling. “Good! You better not. You belong to me!”

Laughter bursts from me. She’s so small and fierce. She has me in such a fucking chokehold.

I groan as she covers my mouth with hers and kisses me roughly.

She reaches between us and guides my cock into her slick wet channel. I nearly die from the bliss of finally being allowed inside her. She’s impossibly tight. So wet. I can’t last.

Lady Mel grabs my face and forces me to look as she glares at me. “You will last until I say. Do you understand?”



God damn, rip my heart from my chest and hand it to her. She has my cock and balls, might as well have that too.

She rides me fiercely until it almost breaks me.

Lucky she's so maddeningly beautiful riding my cock I can't bear the thought of it ending.

When she finally slows and shudders over me, a long groan rips from my chest. Her pussy tightens around me. Searing pleasure shoots up my spine.

"Now," she whispers. "Now, Jarra. Now you come for me. Fill me up."

I erupt in a series of hot spurts that have my belly clenching and my hips bucking. I cling onto her for dear life and fill her as full as a tiny human girl can be filled. She has the soul of an ogress, though. She takes it all. Swallows my huge cock to the hilt and flutters around me as I come over and over.

When it's over, I release the tight grip I have on her hips. "Thank you." There's no way to invest the words with enough reverence, but I try.

She lifts off me, slumping to the bed with a long sigh. When I roll to look at her, she pulls my head onto her lap and strokes my hair. "You're welcome. Don't make me mad or I'll have to do that again."

Her belly rises and falls with soft laughter. I can't help laughing, too.

"Oh, I don't know. I'm mighty tempted to do it so you will."

Her small fingers tease through the hair at the base of my horns and I moan.

"Did you mean it?"

"Hmm?"

"That there's no one else? You're not seeing anyone?"

I lift my heavy head reluctantly, but she needs to see the truth in my face. "No one, My Lady. I belong to you."

She pulls my head back to her lap and continues stroking me. Then she lets out another long sigh. This time I get the feeling it's not a sigh of contentment, but something else. She doesn't say anything more and I don't want to break the spell, so I don't ask.

Sometime later, I roll off her to shower. I'm loath to wash the scent of her off me, so I only wash with water, rather than using the perfumed soap the hotel supplies.

When I emerge from the bathroom, Mel is still lying on the bed, staring up at the ceiling. Some instinct kicks in, accompanying a flutter in my belly and a flick of my tail. I approach the side of the bed and clear my throat. "Is everything OK?"

She rolls and props her head up on one hand. "Yes." There's a pause. "Jarradek, I want you to be honest with me. It's important."

"Of course."

I expect her to ask me a question, but instead she sits and begins searching for her clothing.

"About something in particular, My Lady?"

"No." She picks her underwear off the floor and her skirt falls into place again. "Just promise you'll always be honest with me."

I nod.

She moves toward the bathroom, but I can't help feeling like there's still something not being said here. "Will I wash you?"

"No, thank you. I'll let myself out when I'm done. You did well today."

"Thank you."

Her words feel hollow. There's definitely something more to this, but my come-drunk brain can't work out what it is.

I leave discreetly, slipping to my waiting car with no one the wiser. At least I hope so. It was a risk seeing Mel again

today. But one I couldn't deny myself.

Surely, things will get better after the election. After all, I'm hardly likely to win. I'm an outside chance at best. It's really just a move to put pressure on local government to consider supernatural affairs with more care given a larger chunk of voters are supernatural than they account for.

After it's all done, I'll be more free. Then I can see Mel as much as I like and I can bring her back to my place. I can do what I've wanted ever since that morning in the park when I brought her home. I can ask her if there really is something between us. Something more than the words we speak in the height of passion. I know I'm paying her and it's arrogant to think so, but I can't help feeling she feels the same way I do. I can't help thinking she might be prepared to make this something real.

Of course, it's that causing the tension I felt between us. The unspoken fact she's my mate and I haven't told her yet. I should have told her today, but it wasn't the right time. After the election. When she can accept me without worrying about all the extra problems that might bring. Then I'll tell her.



# EIGHTEEN

## Mel

I spend the next two days trying to forget about the way it felt so right having Jarradek inside me. How his body seemed to fit mine so perfectly, and how he came for me with just a word.

God, it's impossible!

To distract myself, I resolve to make an appointment at Legal Aid to talk to someone about my options for keeping James out of my life once and for all. I feel guilty doing it, but I can't pretend anymore that he's ever been anything to my kids other than a burden and a stress on me. He only ever cares about them when it suits him. He misses birthdays and Christmas, and calls at random times to talk to them when they've already gone to bed, or when he thinks I might be out having fun.

I've given him plenty of chances to change. He won't. I realized something the other night. He just wants a way to keep me off balance. I'm not prepared to let him use Elsa and Damian like that.

The lady in the stuffy little office smiles kindly at me and ushers me to a seat. Her kind, round face has the sort of wrinkles at the corners of her mouth and eyes that show she smiles often. For some reason that small thing makes me feel a bit teary. I look down at my lap while she speaks, twisting the strap of my worn handbag in my fingers.

"Mr. Romilan won't be long. I'll let you know when he's ready to see you."

I nod. I wonder if I should have brought some paperwork with me. I'm not sure what I could have brought that might be useful, but it feels odd coming empty-handed.

A few minutes later, a middle-aged man with short dark hair and warm brown eyes steps out of a room down the hall. "Ms. Karas? Please come through."

I stand, clutching my handbag to my chest. The guilt squeezes me like a mop through the wringer as I follow him down the hall to his office. When I sit in the squeaky vinyl chair, I'm sure my failures as a mother are written on my face as if I'm stained with dirty water.

Mr. Romilan sits and folds his neatly manicured hands on his desk and gives me a smile. "What can I help you with today?"

Here it is. Why can't I choke out the words?

I clear my throat. "I want to file for sole custody of my children."

Mr. Romilan nods, slowly. "What's the current arrangement with their father? How much access does he have?"

"We agreed he'd see them every other weekend when things ended. But he barely sees them. And he hasn't paid child support in months." I take breath, reminding myself I don't need to go on a tirade. Not yet, anyway.

Mr. Romilan makes a note on his computer. "Have you got records showing the date of the last payment?"

I nod. "Yes."

"And have you sent a letter of claim?"

I shake my head. "I didn't know I had to."

"That's no problem. I can arrange that. It's best to do that first. You might find that's all it takes to get him to pay. However, sometimes there are extraneous factors. Has he recently lost his job or found a new partner?"

I shrug. "I really don't know. We don't speak anymore. Not civilly anyway."

He nods again. "And if he pays child support, do you still wish to proceed with filing for full custody?"

I twist the strap of my handbag hard against my fingers until I feel the pinch. "Yes. I do." It feels like it deserves some explanation. But Mr. Romilan's expression doesn't change.

“Then we’ll need to gather some further evidence. Have you got any reason to believe the children might be at risk if they stay with him?”

I hesitate.

Mr. Romilan waits for a while but, eventually, he gently goes on. “Perhaps unsafe living arrangements? Not enough food?”

I shake my head. “He always seems to have enough money when they visit. Not that he actually has them often. I think it’s been almost a year. It’s not that.”

“Then what is it? Has he ever hurt them, or you?”

I shake my head. “Never physically. Once I thought he might, but it never came to that. He only likes to control things.” I sigh. “This is silly. He’s their father. Of course, he needs to be in charge.”

Mr. Romilan stops me with a light touch to my arm. “Ms. Karas. It’s important that I know everything. When you say controlling, was there ever verbal abuse? Did he withhold things from you and the children? Affection? Money?”

I nod. “Money. He was always in control of the money. He used to have everything in his name.”

He makes a note on his computer and turns back to me. “And did he track your whereabouts and who you spoke to?”

“Yes.”

“And since you left the relationship, has he ever tried to exert control? Or done things which made you uncomfortable or afraid?”

I nod. I tell him about James showing up at my apartment, about the two or three times he’s tried to get access to my bank details, and the time he turned up at my work. The more I recount, the more I feel sure this was the right move. It’s crazy I let these things pile up like this without doing anything about it. Never saying them aloud like this, never listing them, I suppose I never saw how bad they are.

Mr. Romilan gives me a grim smile. “If nothing else, Ms, Karas. I think we can make a solid case here. I’ll send you an email with a list of documents you may be able to provide to support the case. In the meantime, do not try to contact him, and make a note of any contact he makes with you or the children.”

“Thank you.”

I shake his hand and step out of the office with a straight back and a lighter heart than I had half an hour ago. It might not be easy, but at least this feels like the right thing to do. Starting the process feels like I’ve already got one monkey off my back.

Now, if I could just sort out what the hell I’m going to do about Jarradek.

My mind turns to him as I ride the train home. The way our last booking worked out hadn’t been the direction I was planning on taking things. I hadn’t intended to let him come at all. I was too mad about that stupid article.

I’m still not sure whether to believe him about not seeing anyone else. I got carried away with his sweet words and his passion in the heat of the moment, but looking back afterwards, it seems strange he didn’t say anything when I held him. I guess I was expecting... I don’t know... not a declaration of love, but something. Feelings. Maybe this is another case of me falling too fast for a guy I can’t have.

The only thing I can be proud of is the fact I didn’t go gushing about my feelings. I somehow held back. At least I can retain a little dignity on that front. I’m certainly not about to admit to the playboy politician who’s paying me as his escort I’ve somehow caught feelings. Not unless he says it first.





# NINETEEN

## Mel

It's a bitterly cold afternoon standing in the shade at the park. Huddling into my jacket, I pull my scarf up to cover my face a little more. It's still better than being cooped up at home with the kids fighting, though. Sometimes, Sunday afternoons feel long and I don't want to wear out our welcome with Kalli and Rin.

"Mom." Damian runs over and tugs on my sleeve. "Can we get ice cream?"

I shake my head. "It's too cold. Besides, you already had chocolate today."

He scowls. "Awww, no fair. I wanna go back to visit Jarradek. He gave us ice cream and chocolate."

I roll my eyes. This must be the fifth time Jarradek's name has been thrown at me because I've made a decision that didn't go Damian's way. I wonder if it's partly a reaction to having a fun male figure in his life for once. The twisted feeling pulls at my guts again when I think about the custody case, but James has never been fun or positive. I have to remember that.

"I'm bored." Damian crosses his arms across his chest and stomps his little foot. "I want ice cream!"

"Well, hullo. I definitely thought I recognized that little squirt." I have a second to process the rich, masculine tones of a voice I'm becoming far too familiar with before Jarradek reaches down to ruffle Damian's hair. My son's scowl turns into the biggest grin I've ever seen and he squeals with delight.

"Jarra!"

"Where's your sister?"

Damian points at the playground where Elsa is swinging on the swings with another little girl.

Before I can stop him, Jarradek waves at Elsa, who immediately jumps off the swing and runs over.

“Jarra, Jarra! Do we get to come back to your place again? I want to swim in your pool.”

He laughs and I shift awkwardly, putting a hand on his shoulder and answering before Jarradek can. “Not today, sweetheart. I’m sure Jarradek is busy today.”

“Actually, I have just snuck off for a moment of peace, but I do have to get back.” He points across the park where a trestle table with lots of bright bunting is set up beneath a sign with his face on it.

“No fair! Mom is always talking to you. Why don’t we ever get to join in?” Damian is back to scowling.

Elsa elbows him. “No, that’s not it. Mom’s not always talking to Jarra. Auntie Kalli says Mom always wants to.” She gives me a far too innocent look that I’m not buying at all. Little ratbag!

“We were just leaving ourselves, actually,” I say to Jarradek. “So nice to run into you. We’d better let you get back to it.”

Jarradek quirks a brow at me. “What? Now? Before the kids have a chance to tell me exactly what Auntie Kalli says? I was hoping you could rescue me from work like last time we met in a park.”

That’s just what I need. My kids blabbing about how Kalli has been ruthlessly teasing me about my growing crush on Jarradek. “Sorry. Not this time. We have errands to run.”

“Mom! I thought you said we could stay at the park for ages.”

“Look at the time. It has been ages.” I hustle them into finding their drink bottles and tow them by the hands out of the park while they twist their heads to look back at Jarradek.

He gives me a cheeky grin that tells me I haven’t heard the last of this and I squirm inside. He’s going to make fun of me, isn’t he? If he even calls me at all. If he thinks I’m falling for

him, maybe he won't call. Maybe that will be enough to put him off.

Damian tugs on my hand. "I don't wanna go."

"Two minutes ago you were bored and didn't want to stay."

"That was before Jarra turned up. I want to go back and talk to him."

I navigate Damian around a pile of dog turd, while he cranes his neck, still trying to see Jarradek despite the fact that we're almost out of the park and Jarra has no doubt gone back to work.

"Honey, Jarra is busy. He doesn't have time to hang around with us all afternoon."

"Why not? He said he wanted to. I thought he was your friend."

I tug at my scarf, suddenly feeling a little hot around the neck. "Ah, yes. He is, but it's complicated. He's really more of a work friend."

Elsa gives me a funny look. "But he's going to be mayor. How can he work with you if he's going to be mayor?"

Sometimes kids are too damn smart for their own good. "I'll explain it when you're older." *And when hell freezes over.*

I'm rushing. I don't dare look back or I know my whole face will turn bright red and the kids will know something's up. The further we get from him, the more embarrassed I feel by the encounter. I don't know where the lines are with this escort thing, but I'm sure he doesn't want my kids nagging him to buy them ice cream. And he doesn't need me fawning over him.

I don't even really pay attention to the pile of leaves. But the next moment Elsa slips and her knee hits the pavement. She lets out a long wail. Damian breaks free from my grip.

I turn to check on Elsa and my heart breaks seeing her little face crumpled up as if she's shed about five years. She's almost past the age of crying like this, but every now and then

I'm reminded of the little baby who used to fit in my lap and look up at me like this when I couldn't figure out why she was crying.

One minute I'm cuddling her close, the next I'm looking around, frantically searching for Damian and he's gone.

I struggle to my feet. Elsa is so much heavier in my arms than I anticipated. "Damian!"

Elsa sniffles, but stands when I put her down. "Damian! Where are you?"

A man walks past with a little white dog that yaps at us. A dragon with a pram is strolling the other way, and a little boy bounces by in a jacket almost the same color as Damian's. I think for a moment it is him, but then I look more closely.

Shit. He's gone. How did I lose my son? How can I have full custody when I can't even keep them both safe with me at the park? Sound rushes in my ears like the roar of waves and Elsa hurries after me as I search frantically through the park. I pick her up and put her on my back when she starts to whine that she's tired and her knee still hurts.

I still can't see him anywhere, though we go back to the playground and to the ice cream stall, and everywhere I can think. The sky is blanketed with dark gray clouds by the time we give up and sit on a park bench. The sort of clouds that threaten rain any moment.

I've been so distracted, I didn't even notice the five messages on my phone. When I pull it out ready to call the police, I see them.

Jarradek has sent me five messages on the Monstrous Deals app. If it was only one or two, I'd ignore them. Wait until later. Something about the number of them makes me wonder...

*Bullistic: Damian is with me*

I let out a little cry and Elsa looks up at me.

*Bullistic: Mel? Please answer. I really need your number*

“Oh, Jarra has Damian. He’s OK.” I’m so relieved my hands are still shaking and I don’t know whether I want to laugh or cry.

*Bullistic: I’m taking him back to the playground*

*Bullistic: he says he needs the toilet. Fuck! What do I do?*

*Bullistic: we’re at mine. Get a taxi and I’ll pay. I promise he’s fine. Also, apparently it was a false alarm. How the fuck do you do this? You must have nerves of steel!*

Shaking my head, I take Elsa’s hand. “They’re at his apartment. So I guess Damian got what he wanted after all.”

Elsa grins. “Yay! We’re going swimming.”

I laugh because I can’t help myself, but I try to make my expression stern again quickly. “We are not going swimming. It’s freezing. We are going to get Damian, and then we’re going back to Aunt Kalli’s house and never leaving again!”



# TWENTY

## Jarra

The little boy grins up at me, his dirty blond hair falling into his face as he pulls off his beanie and tosses it onto the marble floor of my spotlessly clean apartment. “Can we have ice cream now?”

“I thought you needed to use the bathroom?”

He shrugs. “Nope.”

“W-w... I...”

I shake my head and check my phone for the hundredth time since he launched himself at me as I was trying to hand a pamphlet to an old lady walking her dog. The dog was busy barking at me and the lady was giving me side eye and trying to escape, right up until Damian greeted me so enthusiastically. Then she was happy enough to talk to me.

Of course, I looked around, expecting to see Mel, even hoping she’d changed her mind about running off and had come to hang out with me.

I must be crazy, wishing my dominatrix escort would come help with my election campaign, but the truth is all I can think about these days is seeing her. All the time. It feels like hell waiting until the election is over to tell her how I’m really feeling.

“Well...” I scratch the base of my horns. “I can’t get in touch with your mom yet, so I guess we can have some ice cream. But don’t tell her, OK? It’s our little secret.”

Damian squeals and rushes to the kitchen without needing to be shown where the freezer is. I hope there’s still some ice cream in there. My housekeeper usually keeps the place well stocked, but I haven’t paid much attention recently. I haven’t had time.

I park Damian in front of the television with his ice cream.



Why does it feel so much scarier looking after him when she's not around? What if I do the wrong thing? I manage to keep my cool for approximately ten minutes until I finally get a message back from Mel.

*Mel: B there soon. Thank you so much for keeping him safe and I'm sorry. We'll get out of your hair quickly, I promise.*

I want to write back and tell her she's welcome to stay, but she won't listen. I have a better chance of convincing her with both kids to back me up, and I'm not above using any and all forms of manipulation.

When the buzzer goes, I dash to the security system to let her up and wait with a huge damn grin spread across my face for the elevator to arrive. I immediately feel bad when I see how stressed she looks as the doors open. She's clutching Elsa's hand tight and her hair, swept up into a messy bun beneath a green headband, is coming loose, trailing enticing strands over her ears and onto her cheeks.

I want to brush it back. I want any excuse to touch her, but I don't know how she'll feel about that in front of the kids.

"He's fine," I tell her quickly. "He's in the living room watching TV. Are you OK?"

She gives me a tight nod. "I'm fine. Thank you." Her head is up and her lip doesn't even wobble, but I know a female who is blatantly not fine when I see one.

Is there something else going on here?

Mel sweeps past me and glowers at Damian, who cringes into the sofa. "Damian Russell Smith! You give me one good reason why I don't ban you from TV for the rest of the month!"

His face gets all pinched and then he bursts into tears and she crouches by the sofa to gather him into her arms. "I was so worried."

"I'm sorry." There is a small whine behind the boy's words. I might not know kids, but Damian is clearly a master manipulator. First me, then his mother. I'm impressed!

Mel strokes his hair and Damian sobs into her shoulder.

Elsa tugs on my sleeve and I look down. “Did Damian get ice cream?” she whispers.

Mel, who must have supersonic hearing, whips her head around to glare at me. “Did he?”

I squirm. “Ah... well...”

She turns back to Damian, holding him by the upper arms so she can glare at him. “Damian. I told you no ice cream. There will be no dessert tonight, that’s for sure.”

“Awww. Why does he get ice cream?”

Mel pinches the bridge of her nose and lets out a long suffering sigh. I had no idea I had buried such a landmine here.

“Don’t you start.”

“But, Moooooom!”

Like an idiot, I butt in, horns first. “There’s more. I’ll get Elsa one, too.”

“Don’t you dare!” Mel stands and puts her hands on her hips and it shocks me to see her eyes are watering, too.

“Come on,” I say more gently, daring to reach out and put a hand on her shoulder. Thank god, she doesn’t pull away. “I think I know someone else who could do with some ice cream today, too.”

Mel shakes her head. “We should go.”

“Not yet. Please. Stay for a little while.” I give her my best pleading look and I watch her waver.

“Well...”

“Please, Mom?” The kids have got the puppy dog eyes routine down and I silently applaud their performance.

Mel sighs. “Well, OK, but only for a little while.”

“Yay!” Elsa takes this as permission to get ice cream, and she and Damian rush off to my kitchen to further raid my supplies.

Mel frowns. “We should leave. You have things to do.”

“Are you kidding?” I push my luck and step a bit closer. “I still have lots of questions to ask you.”

I want to know all about the little nugget Elsa dropped earlier, but at that point the kids rush back in, both carrying an unwrapped ice cream. Mel takes the ice cream from Damian before he can take a second bite. “One was enough.”

He starts to whine, but she gives him such a look both kids hurry to sit on the sofa and innocently watch TV without another word.

I laugh. “Come on. Sit down. Relax. Do you want anything else? I’m pretty sure I have tea and coffee.”

She smiles and actually goes to sit on the lounge at the other side of the room, facing the window. I join her.

“You don’t know if you’ve got tea and coffee?”

I shrug. “Someone else does my shopping for me, so I’m only guessing.”

Mel rolls her eyes. “We come from different worlds.”

I shift a bit closer to her, watching her for signs she’s going to pull away. “Not so different really.”

She snorts and takes a lick of her ice cream which does very naughty things to my nether regions. I try to focus.

“Well I’m really glad you’ll never see inside my house and my fridge to see just how different.”

Is that her feeling insecure? I hate that, but I can’t think of what to say. Instead, I indulge my curiosity—probably an unwise move. “What’s this about you always wanting to talk to me, then?”

She colors and presses her lips together, dropping eye contact. “Nothing.”

I stare. “Is this—are you embarrassed?” I’m grinning. I can’t help myself.

She only scowls more. “No.”

“You are!”

Mel’s scowl turns into the same sort of fierce glare she directed at Damian moments ago and she gets up from the sofa. “It’s unkind of you to mention it, then.” She goes to hand me the ice cream, but I stop her, my hand over hers.

“Mel. I’m sorry. Don’t be embarrassed. The truth is I’m feeling the same way. I didn’t bring it up yet because of the election and well, I wasn’t sure if you would.”

She blinks up at me. Now we’re standing, she’s forced to tilt her head back to look up at me and I’m very aware of all the places our bodies aren’t quite touching. “You are?”

I nod. “Have been for a while. Couldn’t you tell? I can’t stop thinking about you. I message you all the time. Christ, I’d book you every night, if you’d let me.”

Her expression shuts off a little and I correct myself.

“No. That’s not true. Because what I want—what I really want—is not to book you. I want to ask you on a date. I don’t know if that’s allowed. But that’s what I’d like.”

“You want to ask me on a date?” She stares up at me and my heart thuds in my chest. She still hasn’t said yes.

“Is that allowed?”

A little smile creeps onto her face and then she looks like she’s considering it. “Perhaps.”

She hasn’t noticed the ice cream she’s holding is melting as we stand and look at each other. I reach out to swipe a drop from the edge with my thumb and bring it to my mouth. Her eyes follow the movement as I lick the sweet, cold flavor from my finger. Her mouth parts, so I let my tongue dart out further than necessary to remind her how long it is and how much she likes it.

I’m rewarded with an indrawn breath. Mel steps nearer. She still hasn’t answered my question.

“Go on a date with me? Because I’m free tonight...” It’s stupid. I should be waiting, but she’s right here, and I can’t deny that’s all I’ve wanted these past weeks.

She bites her lip. “The kids.”

We both look around to where they both sit on the sofa grinning back at us.

Mel slaps a hand over her face and steps away. “We’re going.”

“Don’t go.” I try to catch her hand, but she pulls away.

“We’re going, but I’ll give you my number and you can call later, OK?”

I beam at her. “Deal.”



# TWENTY ONE

## Mel

Jarra looks so excited when the door to the elevator opens and I step back into his apartment later that night. I brush a hand anxiously over the jumper dress I'm wearing. It's nothing like I'd wear if he had made a booking, but tonight it's just us. Just two people—or one person and one monster—being real with each other. I'm excited, nervous. Giddy, like I was after my first kiss or the first time I snuck out to meet my high school boyfriend after my parents were asleep.

Only, I can't help feeling a little bit sad Jarra might not want me to boss him around anymore. I kinda like it!

“You look good.” He makes sure to look me up and down and let his appreciation be known and I smile and, yeah, I give my step a little strut as I walk past him to put down my bag. This dress is short and worn with long socks, it makes me feel so good about my legs and butt and I can't help wanting him to look. Besides, I know he likes the way I look. Hard to believe, but true.

“Can I get you anything? Wine? Cheese? Popcorn?”

He invited me over to watch a movie with him and I feel like he nailed my ideal date. I grin. “Yes. All of the above!”

He gets the things and sets them on a tray and puts on the TV. Then he sits in the enormous sofa chair stretches back with the remote in his hand and gives me a smile.

“Should I come sit with you?”

“Of course.” He pats the chair beside him. Despite it being big enough for about four adults, I snuggle in next to him. Only, I don't know what to do with my hands. I fold them in my lap for a while. When I reach for my wine, it's too far away.

Jarra sets down the remote and looks at me. “You seem different. Is everything OK?”

I sigh. “I don’t know what it’s like to be just Mel with you. It feels strange.”

He huffs a warm breath and it tickles my arm. “Did you act differently than you usually would when I was paying you?”

I shrug. “Yeah, maybe.”

He’s about to speak, when I butt in.

“Maybe, but I liked it. I liked who I was when I was Lady Mel.”

He smiles. “Then be her too. Be whatever you want in the moment you want it. I fell for the feisty lady as much as I did for the loving mom and the playful person you are when your walls come down a bit. I like all those things about you.”

“You do?”

“I do. I don’t want you to stop bossing me around. I think I need that. I want to see all the parts of you and get to know you. And I want to see a lot more of you, if that’s OK.”

I relax. Being with Jarra the way we are makes me feel more confident and sexy than anyone I’ve ever been with. It’s funny, but the way I trained myself to be when I’m Lady Mel has come to feel more natural to me than anything else. As if it’s been inside me all along, and Jarra just helped me to let it out. I’ve been stressing about trying to be something different because I thought he wanted to see the real me, but maybe he’s seen more of her than I thought.

I snuggle in closer and he puts one big arm around me and it feels, honestly, like the best thing in the world. His strength, knowing it’s mine to command whenever I like. “Will you get me my wine.” It’s gentle, but it’s not a question. I still feel the need to qualify it somewhat. “You have long arms.”

He grins, so I know I’ve done right. “Certainly.” He reaches the table easily, hardly disturbing me. “Now, is there anything else?”

“Yeah.” I grin. “I thought you said there was a movie.”

Jarra hands me the remote and I swear my heart skips a beat. That might just be the height of romance as far as I’m



concerned!

We settle in to watch the rom-com I select with only some mild eye-rolling from Jarra. Soon, he's too busy pushing up my dress and completely distracting me from watching any of it anyway.

Some time after my third orgasm with his tongue licking at my G spot, I stop him. "Oh my God, Jarra!"

He grins up at me from between my legs.

"Take me to bed."

He lifts me instantly, hardly seeming to make any effort at all. Then he trots up to the bedroom and lays me carefully on his bed. He steps back and looks at me for a moment. "You look so good here."

When he snuggles in behind me, I reach back to stroke his hair and a long ear. "Fuck me just like this?"

Jarra lets out a low groan and his hot breath caresses my neck as he pulls me closer. Then, he tugs down my panties and his hard cock nudges at my cunt.

"Like this, Lady?"

"Yes." I reach back and grasp at one of his horns, tugging his head close to mine. "Yes. Just like this. Fuck me just like this."

He pushes into me and his size and the position with my legs pressed together makes it so intense I cry out. When he hesitates, I tug harder on his horn. "More!"

Jarra grunts and pushes home, filling me so completely little white spots blur the corners of my vision for a moment.

When he begins to move, I relax into the feeling, rocking my hips and holding tight to him as my pleasure builds. My pussy is sensitive from his tongue and lips. It doesn't take long before I'm shuddering and breathing hard. Jarra's breath on my neck is just as ragged as mine. He grips my hips and drives into me at exactly the pace I like.

"I'm close. Come with me."

He makes a low moan. “I don’t want to stop.”

“Neither do I, but I want to feel you come with me.”

His pace speeds up. He pushes me to my belly and lifts one knee so he can spear me deeper. The push and pull between us is gentler than it has ever been before. But what we’re doing now feels right for this moment. There will be time later for teasing and play, and all the other things I’ve come to love. This moment is about something else. Something I feel crashing over me alongside the orgasm that clenches my belly and squeezes the walls of my cunt tight around his massive cock.

“Are you mine, Jarra?”

“Yes!” He reaches round my leg to hold my clit and takes my fading orgasm to renewed intensity again.

“Fuck! Are you mine? Then come for me. Give me what’s mine.”

He pushes so deep inside me I’m pinned completely to the mattress. He bellows, and his body tenses. Then my sweet monster erupts inside me so powerfully I can feel the pulsing of his cock. Moments later, warm moisture pools under me as he spills from me.

“Fuck, Mel. Fuck! God, you feel so fucking good. I’m yours, I promise. And I want to be yours for real. I want everyone to know.”

He rolls off me soon after, and I turn and snuggle into his arms. Laying my head on his sweaty chest, I listen to his breathing slow.

“You mean it?”

He strokes my back with long languid motions that have my eyes drifting closed despite how much I want to cherish this moment.

“Of course.”

“How does that work, though? What about the election?”

“Well, how would you feel about making up a bit of a cover story about how we met? And not disclosing the sex work?” He adds quickly, “It’s not that I’m ashamed of it. I just know how people get about it.”

I tease my fingers across his lower belly, remembering the words he wrote there for me. “I don’t love it either. At least, I don’t want my kids to know. I told them we met at work.”

Jarra chuckles. “We did.”

“I’m not really a dominatrix, you know.” I blurt it out before I’ve really considered the implications.

“Could have fooled me.” He doesn’t sound at all fazed.

“Well, I mean, I did my best, but you were my first sub.”

He hums low in his chest and the vibration travels through me. “I like that. This gets better and better. You were my first mistress, but you knew that.”

“You’re not angry?”

His hand on my back presses me close against his chest. “Never. I couldn’t tell. So as far as I’m concerned, I have no complaints. But what do your kids think you do for work?”

“Cleaner.” I mumble it, into his skin.

Jarra chuckles. “Are you embarrassed?”

I lift my head to scowl at him. “Are you sure you want anything to do with me? Seriously?”

His laughing expression turns serious instantly. “Absolutely. I haven’t been this sure about anything in a long time.”

I settle back with a sigh. “You always have this knack of making me feel at ease. No wonder you’re such a good politician. People must trust you easily.”

He strokes my back for a moment. “I think you do the same thing for me. I think you’re so honest and caring it’s impossible not to like you.”

I laugh. “Tell that to my clients on Drushna Street. They think I’m out to rob them or something.”

Jarra scoffs. “So you’re a cleaner, huh. Then that’s easy. We met because I hired you to clean my house.”

“But Elsa and Damian know I hadn’t been here before. What about your office? Do you have an office?”

“Yes! Perfect. And my PR guy has a whole write up of stuff he wants to give you. Is that OK?”

“You really want to be open about dating me? You really want to date me?”

“Of course. If I don’t get to see you at least once a day between now and the election, I’m going to snap. This whole thing is driving me up the wall.”

“It is?”

“I’m not cut out for it. Can I tell you a secret?”

“Of course.” I’m toying with the thick base of his cock and he moans as it starts to surge to life beneath my questing fingers.

Jarra laughs. “When you do that I hardly know my own name, so if you get a scrambled secret, that’s on you.”

I grin. “Keep going.”

He sighs as I tease my fingers further from his cock.

“I don’t really want to be mayor.”

“Jarra!” I give him a playful slap.

“No, really. I don’t want the job. It’s just that monsters in this city get shafted, and even though most humans think we magically appeared from nowhere a few years back, in reality we’ve been here for years, running respectable businesses and going about our lives.”

“So you’re running for mayor to make a point?”

“In a way. I’m hoping to get recognition and win some clout even if I don’t win the election. I don’t think I can win. But I didn’t see anyone else doing anything about the

problems with the Anti-Supes Task Force or the discrimination against monsters in the recent bill on property ownership.”

I sit and look at him more closely. “You’re really serious about this, aren’t you?”

He nods, then eyes me suspiciously. “Why?”

“It’s nice to see you serious. You’re so often ... not.”

Jarra sits, but in the next moment he hauls me toward him until I flop onto the bed on my back with my legs in the air. “I’m serious about two things,” he tells me. “Monster rights and giving this delicious pussy the licking it deserves.”

I laugh and groan when his long tongue goes to work on me again. Pretty soon I’m coming for him with my legs somehow hooked over his horns.

When he eventually takes me home, I feel like a naughty teenager sneaking into my bedroom after being out with my boyfriend while everyone else sleeps.

Only this time, I’m pretty certain I’ve made a much better choice of boyfriend.



# TWENTY TWO

**Mel**

*Stuart: Ms Karas, I hate to bother you, but we need to find a time to meet*

I scowl at my phone. That's the third message he's sent me this morning. Sunday morning, for God's sake!

*Mel: sure. Like I said, finding a time is tricky. Maybe a phone call would be easier*

*Stuart: if you absolutely cannot make a time, then I will call. Of course it's always best if we meet in person*

*Mel: how about you call at 2?*

The kids will probably be distracted by then, and it's probably the best chance I've got for an actual conversation. I wish he'd just send me the brief. Jarra says he has some questions for me though, but he wasn't sure what they were.

I remind myself again Jarra is worth it. The stuff with the election is only temporary. He assured me things will settle down after and we can be a lot more private.

I am nervous about media attention, but that's one of the things Stuart is supposed to help with. He's supposed to give me things to say and tell me how I should act.

I hope Jarra hasn't made a big mistake.

"Mom, where's the paint?" Elsa calls from the other room.

I hurry in to find her standing on a chair reaching for the top shelf in the cupboard where she knows I keep the paint so Damian can't get to it. We're back at our apartment. After a week and a half of no contact from James, I figured it was safe enough. The lawyer said he's filed a temporary restraining order and if James turns up I can just call 911.

"Honey, it's not really a great time for painting."

"Why not?"

I spread my hands and gesture around the tiny living area to the piles of stuff that somehow appeared in the space of a few hours since we've been home. Damian merrily tosses another toy over his shoulder and gets up to find something new.

I sigh. "Because look at this place. Where will you even do it?"

I end up forgetting about the phone call until in the middle of a Damian meltdown over Elsa saying she's never watching his favorite film again because it's for babies. My phone rings.

At first, I ignore it, but as soon as the first call ends, a second one comes through. I curse, hush Damian uselessly, and snatch the remote from Elsa to switch on Peppa Pig. Elsa starts wailing just as loudly as Damian and I put my hand over my ear to block out the joined cacophony of the TV and both my children when I answer.

"Hello?"

"Ms. Karas, it's Stuart. I'm glad I caught you this time."

Ugh, it was literally ten seconds between his first call and this one. I bite back my frustration. "Yeah, sorry. I've kinda got my hands full here."

"I've sent you through some documents to the email you provided," he says, ignoring my statement. "And I have a few questions before you'll be allowed to appear with Mr. Tarvost in public."

Allowed? Who is this guy?

The wailing from the other room reaches a new level of intensity and I cringe, shutting the sliding door between the corridor to the bedrooms and the living area. "I don't have long."

I really, really must be crazy about Jarra to even consider taking this call. The truth is I've been daydreaming about his dumb smile and running my fingers through the hair on his belly all day. How his hand is so big it completely covers one of my breasts. And let's not even mention his tongue.



“Firstly, what are your qualifications?”

I blink. “To be Jarra’s girlfriend?” The word sounds a little odd in my ears, but I don’t have a better one.

“Professional qualifications.”

I open my mouth, then close it again. I’m pretty sure Jarra didn’t tell Stuart about where we really met, so he can’t be asking me about my qualifications as a pro domme. “I don’t have any. I never finished high school and I didn’t do any other education.” I cut myself off before I start imagining what he must be thinking of me.

“OK. And can you tell me about your family? What family do you have in Heartstone?”

Not that I have anything to hide, but I can’t see why this matters. “Well, I have a sister, and I have two kids.”

“That’s it?”

“Yes. That’s it.”

“No living parents?”

“My father is alive, but he doesn’t live in Heartstone. Mom died a few years ago.”

“What about your children’s father?”

“What about him?”

“Well, do you have contact with him? Who is he? Does he know about your relationship with Mr. Tarvost?”

“We’re not in contact.”

“Hmm.”

What does that noise even mean?

“And what are your hobbies and interests? Are you a member of any clubs or political organizations?”

I snort. “Hobbies? I’m a single mom. That’s my hobby.”

He gives me a polite chuckle and then there’s a pause. My stomach twists.

“Do you have active social media accounts?”

“Yeah, I guess—”

“Fine. I’ll need a list of those, and you’ll need to make sure you post only the supplied images and copy for the next two weeks.”

“Sure.” I hate this more and more, but Jarra is worth it. It’s only a couple weeks.

“Finally, is there anything you can think of in your background or personal life that could have an impact in creating a negative image of Mr Tarvost?”

“Um, no?” Apart from the fact that a week ago he was paying me to whip him with a riding crop and tell him whether or not he could come...

“Thank you very much, Ms. Karas. If you wouldn’t mind, there are some signatures required on the documents I sent that I’ll need returned today. And if you do think of anything else, please don’t hesitate to get in touch. It’s always best if we’re prepared. I’m sure you understand.”

I don’t really. I find it hard to believe anyone will care about me one way or the other, but I thank him and hang up. Opening my email, I pull up the documents he mentioned. They’re so long. The kids are still screaming at each other.

I stuff my phone into my pocket and hurry back into the living room to find them both pulling on one end of the remote while the TV flicks between channels.

“That’s enough!”

They turn guiltily, their noise subsiding at my snappy tone.

I take a breath. “Listen. Either you can agree on something to watch, or we all watch nothing. Got it?”

Damian’s lip wobbles. To Elsa’s credit, she gives a long suffering sigh and folds her arms across her chest, letting Damian have the remote. “Fine. We can watch Finding Nemo. But then after that, I get to choose.”

I give her a smile. “I actually think that’s a great compromise. What do you think, Damian?”

“We can watch Nemo! Yay!” He plonks himself down in the middle of the floor and switches the TV to the streaming channel. I try not to think about the fact that my three year old knows how to work the TV remote and help him switch on the movie.

Once peace settles in the living room and I’ve picked up most of the toys and put them away, I go to the kitchen to see what food we have in the house. I’m dreading going to the shop because the kids have settled in. Getting them dressed and ready will involve a lengthy argument. My phone buzzes.

It feels odd getting an SMS from Jarra, instead of a message through the Monstrous Deal app. I smile.

*Jarra: I’d like to drop by and see you on my way to the function I have this afternoon. Is there anything I can bring you?*

*Mel: LOL can I send you a shopping list?*

*Jarra: of course, My Lady \*winky face\* it would b my pleasure*

I grin and press the phone to my chest for a moment. Why is he so damned perfect?

Then, before I can let myself feel guilty, I type my shopping list and send it to him.

Another message pops up pretty soon after.

*Jarra: NGL I’m going to get my housekeeper to do your shopping bc I’m short on time today, but I will have that all to you by this afternoon. Now, can I come see u? What’s your address?*

I don’t even hesitate. The place is still a mess and it’ll probably look worse by the time he gets here, but suddenly I can’t wait to see him either. If he can’t handle my house and my mess, then there really is no chance for us. Might as well know now from the start.

Then I remember the documents. I quickly open and sign without truly reading. I’m sure everything is fine. I trust Jarra and if this is important to him, it’s easily done. I send them off

to Stuart and spend the rest of the time before Jarra arrives madly cleaning the house I said to myself I wasn't going to worry about.



# TWENTY THREE

## Jarra

I'm already in the car driving to Mel's place when Stuart calls. I know something's up from the way he's all formal.

"Sir, I wondered if you had a moment to discuss something significant."

I sigh. "Yeah, but make it quick, Stuart. I'm trying to fit in time to see Mel before my three o'clock."

"Ah, that's just it, Mr. Tarvost. I don't think that's a good idea. At least not until I've fully vetted her background. What do you know about the father of her children?"

I stifle a growl. "I know he's a dick and she's better off without him."

Stuart coughs. "Yes, well let's consider for a moment that if that's true, we might be better off without the connection, at least until after the election."

I roll my eyes, slowing the car to take a right hand turn. "I can't really see how him being a dick could have any impact on me seeing Mel. It's a good thing, right? Their relationship is over. There's a firm line under it. I'm not going to be seen as anything but the good guy here."

Stuart is quiet for a moment. I glance at my phone to check he's still there, but the call is still active. "Well, bad guys have a way of slinging mud at good guys. And as we all know, mud sticks. If there's any chance he still wants to be on the scene, you being such a public figure will be too tempting for him to resist."

I scoff. "I don't even think he wanted to be on the scene when they were together."

I conveniently don't mention the other night when he turned up at her place uninvited and unwanted. No need to get Stuart's panties in a twist; Mel is sorting that. "In fact, she's filed for full custody."

Stuart makes a choking noise. “There’s an active custody battle? Jarradek, please, please reconsider.”

I frown. “Stuart, I promise I’ll be careful, but if I have to wait weeks before I see Mel again, then I’m going to lose it. If I’m continuing with the campaign, then this—she—is what I need.”

I hang up before I can really growl at him. He doesn’t deserve that. He’s just doing his job. The thought of putting this on hold or losing Mel or giving up on her is not one I can entertain right now. My whole damn day is planned out for me and I’m snatching time to spend with her.

I pull up outside the block of apartments and take my first look at where she lives. I try, I really try to see the positives. It looks safe. It’s well built. It’s sturdy. But it’s fucking depressing. And boy, don’t I feel like a prick for even thinking it?

I have to stoop and twist my head to the side to get through the door for fear of catching my horns as I go. I make the climb up the three stories and knock on her door. I forget all about my criticisms of the apartment complex and all my frustrations with Stuart when she opens it and smiles at me.

Her hair is gathered in a tie at the top of her head and wispy strands trail down to tease at her ears and neck. My eyes trace the curve down to where the light tan of her skin disappears beneath the plain gray T-shirt she wears and I’m about to lean in and run my nose and lips across the same path when two piercing shrieks from behind Mel make me wince.

“Jarra!” A tiny weight hits my thigh with the force of a charging bull and another hits the other leg seconds later. I look down to see Damian and Elsa beaming up at me.

Mel laughs. “Hi. Damian, Elsa, let’s at least let Jarra in the door before you start climbing on him.”

I stoop down until they can each take hold of one of my horns, then I stand up tall, lifting them into the air to renewed squeals. “Oh, I don’t mind. I’m very climb-able.” I give her a wink as she steps aside to let us pass and am rewarded with a

roll of her eyes and a smile she can't hold back though I see her try.

I do spend the next hour having some very dirty thoughts about her climbing me and riding me and commanding me to make her come around my cock. What we actually do is play with the kids and make play-dough, and that's almost as good. When I finally have to drag myself away, I go with a kiss from Mel and a promise that I can come back and see her later.



I still wake up alone. Something that never used to bother me and now feels like a great indignity. I roll over into the cold patch that should be hers and sigh. This really is the mate bond, isn't it? I'm not crazy.

I'm staring into my morning coffee still trying to work it out when my phone rings. I grin.

"Mom, Dad! Hang on. Let me prop this up on something."

I rest my phone on the side of my mug and adjust the screen so I can see the video. They look well. Dad's right horn has been worn down and he wears a metal cap these days, but there are no cracks. Mom is a witch whose magic is focused through her textiles work and she's always got a ball of yarn or a cross stitch or something in her hands. Today, she's knitting a chunky pink and purple scarf with fat wooden needles.

"Hi, son. How are things? It's been too long since last time we spoke."

I nod and rub a hand over my face. Dad's right. I should call them more often. Somehow they always seem to call me right when I need to speak to them, though. I'm sure Mom has something to do with that. "Yeah, not bad. I'll be glad when the election's over, though."

"I bet."

Mom pauses her knitting and lays a hand on Dad's arm. "Jarra, is everything OK?"



“Yeah, well, not yet, but it will be. There’s actually something I need to ask you both.”

They share a worried look. I plow on. “You see, the campaign’s been really stressful and—”

“Oh, Jarra. We saw the news story.”

I stumble to a halt, tripping over my last few words at the look on Mom’s face. “The ... news ... story?” Oh. Fuck. I haven’t checked the news this morning. How could I not check the news this morning?

My phone buzzes and two messages come through at the same time. One from Stuart and the other from Mel. The notifications only pop up for a moment before they disappear behind the video call and I can’t read them.

“The hooker—”

Mom nudges Dad. “Zyphius, don’t call it that!”

Dad’s brow furrows. “Well what do they call themselves?”

Mom clears her throat. “Sex worker is the correct term these days.”

Oh fuck, no. Why am I having this conversation with my parents? I go straight into politician mode.

“Mom, Dad, I can assure you, the story was mistaken. Whatever you read, it’s just someone looking to sling mud before election day.”

Mom picks up her knitting again with a sniff. “There’s no need to lie to us, son. You’ve gotten far too good at lying to everyone else, but not to us, please.”

I open my mouth to double down, think better of it, and shake my head to clear my thoughts. “OK. Listen. Help me out. I haven’t read the story. What did it say?”

Mom gives a long-suffering sigh. “How about you just tell us if everything is OK?”

I let my head fall forward into my hands for a moment while my brain tries to flood my mind with all the possible scenarios that could have led to a story about me and a sex

worker breaking today. It has to be Mel. I mean, she's the only sex worker I've seen for months. How unfair, given she's technically no longer my sex worker. I thought Monstrous Deals were more trustworthy than that about protecting client privacy.

Then a horrible thought occurs to me. I never asked her if she had other clients. I assumed. She said she wasn't really a dominatrix and I just assumed.

I should have asked her. I didn't even consider that me not paying her probably means she needs money. Isn't that why she started in the first place?

I'm a prime idiot.

"Listen, I was seeing a sex worker," I blurt.

Dad's face goes red and Mom knits faster, her hands a blur.

"I was seeing her and then I stopped, because I realized something. She's my mate."

"Your what?!"

My parents leap to their feet and Mom drops her knitting and I think for a horrifying second they're about to lose it. Instead they both snatch for the phone and their faces fill the screen until Mom takes hold of Dad's horn and shoves him out of the way.

"Jarra! I'm so happy for you. I wondered when you were going to find her. You've needed her for a very long time."

I gape at my phone. "Then, you're not upset... about the whole sex worker thing?"

Mom purses her lips. "It's not up to us to tell you how to live your life. But I know one thing. We gave you a roadmap your whole life, but you've never had a compass."

Dad frowns at her. "Huh?"

"Oh, hush up." She turns back to the camera. "Now you listen to me. You make this work. You get one chance. So, you do whatever it takes."

I grin, even as another two messages from Stuart pop up and disappear. I give Mom an exaggerated mock salute. “Yes, ma’am.”

“Good boy. And don’t leave it so long before you call us next time.”

I nod. “I won’t. I promise. I’m going to bring her home to meet you, OK?”

Mom beams. “Too right.”

“Oh, and she has kids. Two!”

Mom’s face lights up. “I’m a grandma?”

Dad coughs like he’s about to choke.

“Yeah. You’ll love them. Two little rascals. But that’s nothing you can’t handle, I know.”

I give her a wink and she gives me a pretend scowl. We say our goodbyes while Dad is still recovering and I end the call to deal with the fallout from whatever has happened.

It’s not good.



# TWENTY FOUR

**Mel**

I'm staring at my banking app in dismay, wondering where I'm going to find enough to buy Damian a new pair of shoes, since he won't wear Elsa's hand-me-down pink ones, when a call from an unidentified number comes through.

I hate not knowing who I'm about to talk to, but I hate when they hang up and never leave a message worse, so I pick up.

"Hello?"

"Mel Karas?"

"Uh, yes. Who is this?"

"My name is Samantha Reynolds. I'm a reporter with the Heartstone Sun. If you have just a few minutes to talk to me, I'd be happy to offer you compensation. It's a story that's of interest to a lot of our readers right now, and I'd really like your take on it."

"You would?" I lift my phone from my ear for a moment, but the number is still one I don't recognize, and I can't work out why on Earth someone from the Heartstone Sun would care about my thoughts on anything... unless...

A horrible prickling sensation starts up on the back of my neck as the woman speaks again.

"We'd love to have the full story about the relationship between you and Jarradek Tarvost."

I hurriedly think back to the portfolio of approved lines Stuart gave me to memorize, all of which seem to have floated out of my head in the heat of the moment.

Samantha continues. "How long was he a client of yours? How long have you been doing this kind of sex work? Did he have any unusual requests?"

Oh, shit.

Oh, no. Poor Jarra. This is exactly what Stuart was worried about, and why we've tried to keep things low key.

"How did you get this number?"

"It's not a private number, is it, ma'am? My mistake if that's the case, but I had the impression you might be interested to know that the Heartstone Sun can offer five thousand dollars for your story."

I almost choke on my own saliva. Five thousand? That money would last me weeks. Months! But I can't do that.

"I'm sorry," I mumble. "I think you have the wrong number after all. Please don't call again." It's the only excuse I can think of and one I'm sure she'll see through straight away.

I fumble with my phone and call Jarra, but the line is busy. So I text.

*Mel: Problem! Call me!*

My belly feels suddenly very empty, but I'm not hungry. I hate this.

*Mel: I'm so sorry. I don't know exactly what's happened, but someone found out*

I pull up a search engine and type in Jarra's name trying to push down the sick feeling in my belly. Two seconds later, I see exactly what I've been dreading. A photo of Jarra leaning down to kiss me outside my apartment complex. It must have been taken yesterday when he was here. But how would anyone get sex worker from that? That's the creepy thing.

They must have somehow found out my name and found my listing on Monstrous Deals.

How could I have been so stupid?

I dial the number and wait anxiously for Sofia to pick up. "Monstrous Deals, how can we make your wish come true?"

"Sofia! It's Mel. I need you to take my listing off your app. Can you do it?"

"Oh, Mel, is everything OK?"

“Yes. No. I don’t know. Someone must have found it and leaked it to the media that I’ve been seeing Jarra, and now there’s this ugly story and magazines contacting me...”

Sofia makes an indrawn breath. “Oh, Mel. I’m sorry. I’ll get it down straight away, and I’ll have our lawyers contact whoever ran the story. They shouldn’t be able to pull private information like that without your consent.”

I sigh. “It’s my fault. I should have used a fake name. That’s probably how they found me.”

I had been meaning to ask her about some different work. Maybe phone sex or companionship, something that wouldn’t feel like cheating on Jarra but would still help me pay the bills; I feel too sick to bring it up now. After Sofia apologizes again, I hang up and try to focus on my next job.

When I let myself into the Gerret place, though, toys all over the floor, so before I can vacuum, I have to spend half an hour picking everything up. It puts me behind, but they won’t be happy if I don’t get the vacuuming, the bathrooms, and the kitchen done, regardless of what state they left the place.

That flows into delays on the next job and the next. Soon, I’m scrambling to get to Elsa’s school on time to pick her up. When I rush through the gates, she’s the last kid standing there, the teacher beside her in an otherwise empty playground. Mrs. Jameson gives me a tight smile. “You know after school supervision only goes until three thirty, Ms. Karas.”

I nod. “I’m sorry. I know.”

It’s only three thirty-five, but I get it. She wants to go prep lessons or have a cup of tea, or just put her feet up. She’s entitled. I’d be feeling pissy, too, if it was me.

Elsa kicks a rock in front of her and drags her bag on the ground as we walk back out through the gates onto the street. “Come on, honey. Can you hurry a bit? Damian is waiting for us.”

“I was waiting!” she wails.

I stop and turn to see her lip wobbling. Quickly, I stoop and gather her into my arms. “You didn’t think I’d forgotten, did you?”

She nods against my shoulder.

“I would never forget you. You’re my little girl. I just had the day from hell.”

She giggles. “Mrs. Jameson says we shouldn’t use that word.”

“Yeah, you probably shouldn’t in school, but you can use it when it’s only us. And I did. I had the day from hell.”

Her little arms go around me as far as she can reach and she sniffs. “Me, too. Rosie said she didn’t want to play with me anymore because I don’t have a Sunshine Doll, and all the other girls have one, and that’s all they want to play at the moment.”

I grimace. Something else I can’t afford to get for my kid, when I bet it’s the simplest damn thing. She should have stuff like that. She shouldn’t feel like she’s missing out. It’s also shit of these girls to do that to her, I bet some of them have more than one and they could let her borrow one, but they start young, don’t they? I remember what it felt like not to fit in, to be the girl at school who didn’t have all the right clothes and the right shoes. Whose parents didn’t drive the right car or send them to the right summer camps.

“Oh, sweetheart. I’m sorry we can’t get you a Sunshine Doll. I know you really want one. Maybe if you’re really lucky, Santa might have something for you at Christmas, OK?”

She gives a long sigh, but nods. “It doesn’t matter. They will probably have something else by then, won’t they?”

She puts her hand in mine and I give it a squeeze, smiling when she squeezes back. How’d she get so smart? “Probably. Aren’t there any other people you’d like to play with?”

By the time we get to Damian’s daycare, Elsa is feeling a bit better and the promise of burgers for dinner perks them both up. They’re so excited they both run straight through the



front door shouting about how many nuggets they want and what they want on their burgers. They don't even see the slip of paper and I'll admit, I nearly walk over it, too.

I pause, looking down at the slightly scrunched dirty white paper. I'm sure I didn't leave that there this morning. Probably it's something that fell out of one of the kids' bags. A note from the school asking for more money for some field trip I can't afford.

I sigh, reach down, pick it up, and unfold it.

My stomach lurches when I recognize the messy handwriting: James.

*You dirty whore. Good luck with your legal bullshit now. I bet they won't give you the kids when they find out what a slut you are*

I drop all the schoolbags right there in the hall along with my handbag. And I tear that stupid note in thirty-two tiny pieces, hating the way my fingers shake as I do. I march straight to the bin and dump it in.

I knew he'd find a way to get back at me about this. And what for? He doesn't even want the kids. He just wants to control my life, like always. Have I handed him the key?



# TWENTY FIVE

## Jarra

It's way too fucking late in the afternoon when I finally scrape myself away from the car crash of my campaign to go see Mel. With Stuart's warning ringing in my ears about how I shouldn't, I park my car, slam the door, and glare daggers at every single motherfucker I see hanging around outside her apartment building.

Was it the guy with the brown jacket and the dirty jeans sitting on the bench, smoking a cigarette? Was it him who took that fucking pic?

Was it that old lady walking her big fluffy dog? Unlikely, but I glare at her, too.

I barely remember to stoop and turn my head to the side and nearly do damage to the door with my horns on the way in. Most of all, I hate the really long, really silent pause when I knock on her door.

I didn't message first. I should have messaged or called. I just wanted to see her, to have her in my arms when I tell her how bad today was. I want her to stroke my ears and tell me I'm not the biggest clown in existence, and maybe I can rescue this campaign, as unlikely as that seems right now.

Most of all, I want to hold her.

The shuffle of feet sounds behind the door. A moment later, she opens it and just about collapses into my chest. "Jarra! It's you. I thought—"

She straightens and tugs me inside, shutting the door quickly.

"What are you doing here? You shouldn't be here!"

I hang my head. Of course she doesn't want me here. She must be so mad at me about the photo and everything going public. "I'm sorry. Should I go?"

She doesn't answer. In the background, I hear the television and something bubbling in the kitchen.

"Don't go yet. Not now you're here. God I'm glad you're here."

She throws her arms around my waist and presses her head against my chest in a fierce hug that catches me completely by surprise. When she lifts her head up again, I almost think she's going to cry.

"Jarra, what have I done? I'm going to lose the kids," she whispers. "He's going to take the kids just to spite me."

I shake my head. "I thought they were already permanently with you?"

"No." She takes my hand and pulls me through to the kitchen where she rushes to the stove to check a pot of something and stir it. She sniffs. "I went and got a lawyer who was going to help me get custody, but it's still before the magistrate, and now this sex work thing has come out and—"

She presses the hand with the spoon against her mouth as she visibly chokes down tears. A drop of orange sauce splats onto the floor and I stoop to swipe it away with my finger. Then, I go to the sink to find a cloth.

She stares at me like I've grown another set of horns. "Thank you. Why are you so sweet?"

I blink at her. "Why what? Because of that?"

I wipe wet hands on my trousers, not caring about the tailored fabric. Then I grab her and shove the spoon on the counter and pull her into the kiss I should have given her before. She doesn't resist.

When I pull back, I rest my forehead on hers for a minute. "I'm sorry. I'm sorry that no one was taking care of things for you like they should have been. You deserve that. You deserve not to have to deal with any of this. With me, with this story, with anything."

"Jarra, I want you! I just think I messed up."

I shake my head. “It’s my fault and I’ll fix it, if you’ll let me, but I can’t work out how to do it without making it seem like I’m taking over. I don’t want to take over.”

I pull her into my lap on the nearest chair. It groans under our weight, but it’s worth it to have her here. “If you tell me to, I’ll leave you alone and never contact you again. I’ll put out a statement that I never booked you, and I’ll pay to make sure Sofia says so, too. She will. We can claim the person on the site wasn’t you. We can make up a fake identity or something. Fuck, I can help you take your kids and go to Australia, but I don’t want that.”

“You don’t?”

“I want to have you with me all the time. But I realize what a dick that makes me. That I’ve come in, destroyed your life, and now I’m staking a claim.”

She cups my cheeks and lifts my head until my gaze returns to hers. “What claim? What are you suggesting, then?”

“That I pay for the best fucking lawyer, and we smash that motherfucker, and show everyone what an abusive coward he is. And then you move in with me and be my mate and...” I trail off and take a breath. “I’m moving too fast, aren’t I?”

She nods sadly.

“No, I get it. You know the saying: a minotaur in love is worse than ten bulls in a china shop.”

She laughs. “Funnily enough, I never heard that one.”

“Well, I might have just made it up, but it’s true.” I die a thousand tiny deaths while I see she’s weighing up what I did. The word I used.

Then she smiles and the tightness in my chest eases, just a little. “In love, huh?”

I nod. She leans in and kisses me so softly, so tenderly, I get distracted. She stops.

“Well I’m glad to hear that. ’Cause I’ve been having some pretty big feelings myself. But I’m not ready to put a name to it. Not yet. I hope you can understand.”

“Of course.” It’s more than I was expecting, to be honest.  
“So what now? How do I make this better?”

She shakes her head. “You don’t. We make it better together.”

I nod slowly. “Yeah. You’re right. So how do we do that?”

“I need somewhere else to live.”

“Easy.” I grin. “Please, let me take care of that for you.”

She frowns.

I cut her off before she can protest. “Please!”

She huffs a laugh. “OK, but nothing fancy. Just basic.”

I nod. “Right. Basic everyday luxury. Got it.”

“Jarra!”

“Come on, let me spoil you a little. What about the legal case? You need a private investigator? A better lawyer?”

She sighs. “Probably all of the above.”

“Done.”

“And um... I was thinking...” My heart speeds up as I worry over finding the right words. I practiced this in my head, but now I’m here, nothing I thought of sounds right. “It might look good if we got married.”

Her eyes widen. “Married?”

“I mean, it would look good for me, but would it help with the custody case?”

Thank god, I found a good woman. Instead of being mad about my clumsy proposal, she laughs and tugs my horn.  
“Jarradek Tarvost you better be about to get down on one knee and ask me again if that was genuine. And don’t make this about anything other than what you want.”

I jump to my feet with her in my arms and gently set her on the chair again. Then I do just what my lady commands and kneel before her.

She smiles.

“Mel—”

“Melody Karas.”

My eyes widen and I repeat the name to myself under my breath. “Melody Karas, My Lady, will you please be kind to me and give me exactly what I want, rather than what I deserve?”

Mel pulls me in for a kiss. “How about I give you both? But let’s have a long engagement and give the kids time to adjust.”

A squeal from the door alerts me moments before two tiny bodies collide with ours. “They’re getting married! Damian, Mom’s gonna be like Princess Anna!”

Mel rolls her eyes, but she’s grinning at her kids’ reaction. “We’ve spoken about this. Elsa is the smart sister. Anna was silly, and she picked the wrong guy.”

Elsa puts her hands on her hips and gives her mother a stern look I absolutely recognize. “Mom, Jarra is Kristoff, not Prince Hans. I bet he even knows some trolls. Do you?”

I laugh. “Actually, I’m pretty sure I do, but they’re a lot bigger than the movie.”

Damian steps back and looks between Mel, Elsa, and me. “I think he looks more like Sven.”

Poor kid pouts when we all burst into laughter.

“What? Sven’s the only one that’s got horns.”

Eventually, the kids get distracted and go back to playing. Mel and I sit at her little kitchen table with cups of tea, and I feel like a different monster.

“What will you do about the election?”

I sigh. “I don’t know. I might have messed up. It might be too late. I have to go back and meet with Stuart and my team again, and tell them you might have agreed to rescue me again.”

She grins. “We can rescue each other, then.”

“And if not, there’s a light at the end of the tunnel.”

“What’s that?”

“I get to quit! And go back to running my business again, like any sane bull would do.”

She laughs. “Don’t lie. You love schmoozing people.”

“I do, but I don’t think I need to be the guy in charge.”

She nods wisely. “Better find yourself a political party then, and appoint someone else as leader.”

Fucking genius.

I nod. “Yeah. Why the fuck didn’t I think of that before? There must be other monsters out there who would do this.”

She puts her hand on my arm. “Don’t make this bigger than a troll’s dick.”

I laugh. “Who told you that one? Whoever it was should have said minotaur. Definitely minotaurs who have the biggest.”

Mel snorts. “Maybe I better take on a few troll clients, and we can compare.”

“Fuck, you’re hot when you talk like that. You better let me watch, My Lady, that’s all I ask.”

She shakes her head. “No more clients. No trolls, no other monsters. Just you.”

Yeah. There’s no way I need anyone else, either. Not the way her little statement makes me as weak as a kitten. Not a chance.





## TWENTY SIX

**Mel**

I kneel down and place my hands gently on Damian's shoulders, looking into his blue eyes. "Are you sure, sweetie?"

He nods.

"It's OK, Mom. I'll look after him." When Elsa takes Damian's hand, I swallow down my tears as my big girl gives me a bright smile.

"You don't have to do this if you don't want to."

"We do." Elsa's expression is firm. "We want to come and live with you and Jarra, and we don't want Dad to mess that up. That's what we'll tell the judge."

I nod, choking on the words I wanted to say. Kalli bends down to hug Elsa and Damian, then puts her hand on my shoulder. "You're going to be great. Your mom is so proud of you."

The secretary who has been quietly waiting to take them into the interview room gives me a smile. "The judge won't keep them long. You'll be able to sit right there and watch on this screen."

She points up at a flat screen TV attached to the wall, the monitor on and showing a room with a basic brown table and four vinyl chairs.

"Thank you."

The secretary takes Elsa and Damian into the little room and pulls out a chair for Damian. When the kids are sitting in their places, a kind looking woman, with dark gray hair cut into a curly bob, comes down the corridor. I blink twice when I notice she has dark gray horns poking out from her hair and scales around her chin. I didn't expect the judge to be a supe. Silly, really. Jarra said they've been working and living among us all along, quietly getting on with life. I feel reassured by this little reminder of him here in this moment.

“Ms. Karas? I’m Ms. O’Connor, I’m the magistrate assigned to your case. I’m going to ask your children a few questions, and then I’ll review all the evidence again and make my decision. Do you have your lawyer with you?”

I nod, glancing back to where the solicitor Jarra hired stands holding a stack of files. She gives me a small nod and a smile.

“She can advise you, but if at any time you feel uncomfortable, press the buzzer and we’ll stop the interview.”

I nod. Kalli squeezes my hand.

Ms. O’Connor goes into the interview room with Elsa and Damian and closes the door softly behind her.

On the TV screen, I see her smile at them as she sits. “Hello, Damian and Elsa. My name is Mabel. I need to ask you a few questions about your home and your parents, and I want you to answer me as honestly as you can. Is that OK?”

Elsa nods. Damian turns his face toward his sister and won’t answer. I have to fight back tears when Elsa puts her arm around him. “It’s OK, Damian.”

Mabel gives them another kind smile. “You live with your mom at the moment, is that right?”

Elsa nods.

“And I bet she takes good care of you.”

“She does. She’s a great mom.”

Kalli nudges me and I brush a tear from my cheek.

“They’re doing so great,” my sister whispers.

“Now, how often would you say you see your dad?” Mabel continues.

Elsa is quiet for a while. Damian lifts his head and, surprising me, he speaks up. “He doesn’t come anymore. He used to come, but now he’s always busy.”

Mabel nods and looks to Elsa.

“That’s true,” Elsa says. “We used to see him every other weekend, but then he kept being busy, and then it just sort of stopped.”

“And when you do get to see him, what’s it like? What sort of things does he do with you?”

Elsa shrugs. “Not much really. A couple of times he took us out and we went to the movies and had ice cream and that was great. But last time, we only went to his house and he ignored us the whole time, and Damian had an accident.”

“The toilet was yucky,” Damian wails.

Mabel nods and makes a note on a piece of paper. “And what’s his house like?”

Elsa scowls. “There aren’t even any toys. It’s no fun at all. Not like Jarra’s house. Did you know that he got us floaties to wear in his pool, and he always makes sure we get our favorite flavor of ice cream.”

I put my hand over my reddening face. Now the magistrate is going to think we’re bribing the kids to like us better or something.

Mabel only smiles. “That sounds great. Is Jarra your mom’s new partner?”

Elsa nods. “They’re getting married, and it’s going to be just like Anna and Kristoff. Not in the first movie, though. In the first movie, they fight all the time, but Mom and Jarra aren’t like that. Mom tells him what to do and he does everything she says.”

Unexpectedly, Mabel’s face splits in a big grin. “Well, he sounds like a great partner.” She leans in close but the audio catches her whispered words. “I wish my mate did that a bit more often.” Then she straightens. “Now, Elsa and Damian, I need to ask you a very important question, and I want you to think about it carefully before you answer. Can you do that?”

They both nod.

“Where do you want to live? Do you want to live with your mom or your dad?”

“Mom.” Elsa answers straightaway and Damian nods. “We want to live with Mom and Jarra, and if Dad promises to be nice, I will visit him at Christmas and maybe his birthday. But if he’s not nice, I won’t visit at all. I don’t like it when he’s not nice.”

Kalli gives me another nudge and I turn to bury my face in her shoulder. I’m not crying. Not yet. But if I keep looking at Elsa and Damian and their brave little faces, I will. Mabel asks them a few more questions, and then the interview is over, and my kids come rushing out of the interview room and into my arms.

“We told her, Mom. We said we want to live with you and Jarra. Is it done now? Is that the end?”

I nod and brush her hair back from her face and hug Damian with my other arm. “You did so well, baby. And you, my big boy. Well done. Ms. O’Connor still has to make her decision, but I think we get to go home now.”

I look around at my lawyer and she gives me a little nod. “I will wait for Ms. O’Connor to make her ruling, and I’ll be in touch with the final paperwork.”

I thank her, then Kalli and I herd the kids out the door and down the big steps back to the car Rin has waiting for us. We slide into the luxurious seats and Damian climbs into my lap.

“Where would you like to go now?” Kalli asks me. “Do you want to come back to my place for a while? Do you want to be by yourselves? How are you feeling?”

Damian twists to look up at me. “Can we go see Jarra? I want to tell him all about court.”

Kalli beams at us. “I guess I might finally have to stop calling him New Guy and come up with a better name.” She taps her chin. “Maybe Kristoff. Or Sven.”

“Kalli!” I scold. “Don’t encourage them.”

The kids are already bouncing in their seats, chanting, “Sven, Sven, Sven!”

I can't help laughing, though, when Kalli asks the driver to take us to Jarra's apartment. For the first time in forever, I feel like nothing's in my way.

Yeah, I definitely watched that movie way too many times.



## TWENTY SEVEN

**Mel**

“Again, again!” Damian and Elsa are both shrieking when Zyphius bends so they can each take hold of one of his horns.

“You’ll put your back out again.” Sarah rolls her eyes. She leans in and mutters to me. “And then you don’t want to know how many hours I’ll have to spend massaging him.”

“Oh, I’m fine. I—Ah!” He breaks off and grabs at his back.

Jarra retrieves the kids, and Sarah and I help Zyphius sit down. “See,” she tells him.

He only rolls his eyes and gives me a wink. “You can’t beat her massages. Twenty five years I’ve been saying this. I swear to God she’s got the hands of a blacksmith.”

“I heard that!” Jarra’s mom swats his dad over the head playfully.

I love the dynamic between the two of them, and I can definitely see where Jarra got his playful nature.

“We’re going now, Mom,” Jarra says, putting his arm around me. “You sure you’ve got this?”

She scoffs and gives us a little wave of her hand. “I’m all over this. These two are going to be good as gold, aren’t you, kids?”

My two little ratbags do their very best angel impersonations. I fix them with a firm glare that lets them know they’re not fooling anyone.

“In bed by seven thirty and lights out fifteen minutes later,” I scold.

Jarra nudges me. “Come on, eight. It’s a special night. Let them stay up a bit later.”

I roll my eyes. “OK, but no later than that.”

“Yes, Mom,” they chorus.



I grab my bag and we hurry out the door. Jarra's parents are staying over at my apartment with the kids while we go back to his place to celebrate.

His hand goes automatically to my thigh as soon as I slide into the passenger seat of his Chrysler. He gives me a squeeze. "I arranged a dinner I know you're going to love. Don't worry, I thought of everything. And best of all, we get to sleep in tomorrow."

I snort. "That's really the best thing?"

He gives me a sidelong look and waggles his eyebrows at me. "Why? What do you think the best part is going to be?"

I unzip the front of my little black dress, which conveniently zips down the front, and reveal the brand new black corset I've bought especially for tonight. The lace on the bra cup only barely covers each nipple. Jarra looks for so long, though, I get nervous he's going to crash.

"Jarra!"

He drags his eyes back to the road, but it's not lost on me that he definitely speeds up anywhere there's not too much traffic.

"You should be more careful."

He shakes his head. "Any cop that saw what I've just seen would tear up the ticket straightaway."

I don't even dignify that with a response, but it does make me all warm inside, like so many of the things he says to me.

When we get through the door, he goes straight to the kitchen and opens a bottle of expensive champagne. He's just pouring the second glass, when the buzzer sounds. "That will be the dinner."

I laugh and glance at my phone to realize it's only six thirty.

Jarra shrugs. "We eat at kid-o'clock now, and I didn't want to waste any time that could be spent doing other things."

"Is that right?"

Already moving to the door, he nods.

I tease, “Who says there will be any other things on the menu?”

He clutches at his chest like I’ve stabbed him. “Oh, come on, My Lady, you won’t be so cruel to me tonight. I know you can’t resist me.”

He’s not wrong, but I try not to let it show. Despite the fact ninety nine percent of the time he sees right through me, it’s a game we play, one I know we both enjoy.

I have just enough time to strip off down to the corset and panties, leaving on my heels.

When Jarra returns with the bags of food, his mouth drops open.

I grin. “You next. Strip down. Then go find that apron I bought.”

“Fuck, yes.” He sets down the food in the center of the table and trots to the kitchen. When he returns moments later, he is wearing only the apron.

“Good boy. Now serve me my dinner.”

Jarra’s tail flicks while he gets to work plating up the food and laying things out neatly in front of me.

Do I delight in smacking his ass as he moves around me to set out the chopsticks and top up my drink? You bet I do.

The growing bulge in the front of that apron tells me we’re both getting exactly what we want—exactly what we need. God, it’s been too long since we really got to play like this.

He serves the eggrolls and I put my feet up on the table to eat mine, reclining in my chair and considering all the things I’d like to do to him tonight. There’s one thing we haven’t tried yet, even though we’ve talked about it. I wonder if he’s ready.

“On your knees for me, gorgeous.”

Jarra kneels beside my chair and I hand feed him his food, loving the way he sucks my fingers into his mouth and looks

at me with those too-beautiful eyes.

How did I ever write this wonderful guy off as a fuckboy? There's so much more to him than any of the different labels or jobs he has. He's absolutely amazing with my kids, he's a caring and energetic guy, and most of all, he dotes on me. I never realized how much I need that.

When we finish eating, I can feel the tension radiating off him. Hell, it's probably coming off me in waves, too. "Go shower. Make sure you wash up well and then lay face down on the bed and wait for me."

He stands and gives me a quick kiss, then he hurries to obey. I take the time while the water is running to gather the things I've tucked away out of the reach of small hands. It's been good to have my own place. I love that Jarra did that for me. The reality of the last few months, though, is that me and the kids have stayed over here more nights than we've slept at home. I had to take extra precautions to make sure they didn't find any of our toys by mistake!

By the time I make my way to the bedroom, I'm already anticipating Jarra's reaction. He looks so good stretched out on the bed, I take a moment to drink in the sight of him, taut ass, tassled tail, and wide shoulders. Makes me giddy to know all that power is mine to command.

As soon as he feels my hands on his naked back, he groans. I take my time, massaging over the muscles and kneading away any tensions I find, while appreciating his warm skin and masculine shape.

When I come to his ass, I pay special attention. I work the tight globes well, gradually slipping my fingers closer and closer to his little hole.

"Remember your safeword," I whisper.

Jarra groans and presses his face into the bed. "President Bush. Fuck. Why did I pick that?"

We're both laughing. Then I press one slippery, lubed finger against his asshole and he freezes.

"Bad?"

“No.” His tail flicks out of the way and I notice he’s lifting, pushing back toward me. “Really good, actually. Keep going.”

“What was that?” I scold.

“Please! Keep going, please, My Lady. Apologies.”

“Much better.”

I work around his asshole until he is nice and wet, then I dip my finger inside and he sucks in a breath. At first, it’s tighter than I thought. He tenses, then releases the muscles, and suddenly my finger slips a lot deeper. He moans.

Pretty soon, I find a rhythm. It’s not much different to putting a finger inside my own pussy, except for the angle and how tight he is. When I feel him relax further, I decide it’s time to try a little more.

“Turn over.”

He turns and his eyes widen as he takes in the sight of me kneeling over him. I have a strap-on harness fixed around my hips and the slim black dildo attached. I reach down and touch it. Something about this makes me feel incredibly powerful. Maybe it’s the edge of fear in his eyes or the wild laughter, but a lot of it has to do with the way his thick, engorged cock jumps as he looks at me.

“My god, you look fucking dangerous like that.”

I grin. “Thank you. I’m not sure we should use this today, but I wanted you to see it. I want you to feel it against your thigh while I finger you. You ready?”

He nods. I see his throat bob as he swallows.

“Don’t come, though, will you?”

“Holy, fucking shit.” That’s the last coherent thing I get out of him for quite a while.

I take his cock in one hand, slowly pumping up and down the length, while I slip two fingers into his ass. I work them in and out, trying to match the rhythm of my strokes. He tightens

and releases over and over, gasping and grabbing at the bedding.

His head tosses and his horn lodges in the rubber backed bedhead we had installed. That keeps him still for a while.

As I work him, his shaft grows thicker in my palm, weeping at the tip until I know he's ready to blow.

I've hardly noticed my own reaction since I've been so focused on Jarra. When I pause to let him rest, I realize how wet and sensitive I feel, though I haven't been touched at all.

I'm breathing hard when he catches my wrist a few moments later. He's telling me he can take more.

My pussy clenches around nothing as I work his shaft again, up and down. Slowly, I take him right to the edge a second time. He's shaking by the time I stop. God, so am I.

But I want to feel him snap. Feel him lose his control a little bit.

Withdrawing my fingers, I lean in so he feels the press of the silicone strap-on against his leg. He jolts. "Fuck."

"You did so well. Did you like that?"

"Far, far too much." I can see by how thick and veiny his cock is he's not lying.

"Then next time you get my cock."

A little shudder runs through him and I smile.

"Not yet, though."

"No?"

"No. Now I want you to fuck me. My pussy is so wet for you right now. But you have to wait until I tell you it's time."

He lets out a long, low groan as I remove the strap-on and set it aside, turning and lowering so my pussy is hovering right above the tip of his cock.

He pulses and his cock bobs, dribbling a drop of moisture that slides along the crown as I watch from above. "Wait for it."

“Fuck.” He breathes the curse as I let my wetness graze the tip of him, mingling us together.

He feels so good, though, I honestly don't know how much patience I have to wait either. This is like torture for both of us since my pussy feels swollen and empty, needy and so stimulated all at the same time.

I rock my hips and tease him for a few more moments. Under my hands, his thighs tremble; my legs feel weak, too.

“Please, Mel. I've been so good. Let me feel that juicy wet pussy around my cock. Look how hard I am for you.”

“You are, aren't you?”

He hisses a yes.

“And I know just what to do with you.”

His laughter has more than a little worry in it as he holds perfectly still under me.

I finally give him the permission we both crave. “I think you should put that cock where it belongs and fuck me like you mean it.”

With a shout, he pulls me down onto him and lifts his hips, entering me in a single thrust.

The burn of the stretch snatches my breath for a second, then the pulse of pleasure that follows makes my eyes flutter closed.

Jarra holds me against him for a moment longer. I can feel his cock surge inside me. Then without needing to speak, we both begin moving at the same time. I rock my hips as he grasps me with large hands, helping to support my weight. At first, he lets me set the pace, then as we find a rhythm, he lifts his hips, fucking up into me as I grind against him.

“Woman, your ass is a thing of beauty.”

I reach back to hold his hand and direct him to squeeze my ass. “It is, isn't it? And you know what? It's all yours to enjoy.”

Never in a million years before I met Jarra would I have spoken to anyone like I speak to him. But it's easy to be sassy and confident when the reaction I get is his groans and the huff of breath he lets out as he fucks me faster.

I might love the feeling of riding him, but I do get tired after a while, no matter how good it feels. Lifting off his cock, I lean forward and brace on the bed, giving my ass a shake. "Your turn to do the hard work."

Jarra sits and is behind me in a second, hands gripping my hips as I arch my back. His thick cock slides back inside me and I gasp at the intensity of the new position. With a few slow thrusts, he works into me until I take him fully. Then he sets the pace he knows I like, balls slapping against my body. His hips snap forward over and over.

I moan as my body tightens and pleasure rises. Jarra reaches around and slips his finger over my clit, and it's like a lukewarm shower when someone finally turns up the heat.

Everything is suddenly ten times better, though he's doing exactly the same thing he was doing a moment before.

I'm pushing back against him, squeezing my eyes shut tight, and my orgasm is building toward the point of no return. "That's it. Right there."

He thrusts and thrusts, bringing me closer.

"Keep doing it, just like that."

I hit that swell as another slap of his body against mine jolts me. If he wasn't holding me so firmly, I'd be knocked over.

"Come with me." I gasp as he spears me again. I'm so close, but suddenly it feels important to reach it together.

Jarra groans. "Can I?" His large hands squeeze my hips and he somehow finds the energy to go faster. "Fuck."

"Yes, gorgeous. Come with me. Come on."

He pounds into me faster and faster, his finger slipping across my pussy as his cock slides in and out. I burst across

the finish line and sensation centers for one long moment where our bodies join.

Then it's spreading. He's bellowing, coming into me as I come around him in a flurry of final thrusts and grunts. On the final thrust, warm wet liquid drips down my thigh. Jarra freezes, buried deep inside me.

A moment later, the world rights itself again and he lets out a long sigh. "Oh, God. It's been way too long since we did it that way. Look what a mess I made of you."

He disentangles himself from me only to flop onto the bed and pull me into his arms, giving me no chance to look at the mess between my legs or for my pussy to stop pulsing.

One arm wrapped around me tight, Jarra sneaks his other between my legs to rub me slowly.

I moan and spread wider to give him access. Using the slippery moisture coating my pussy, he rubs me to another, slow, sensuous orgasm before pressing a tender kiss on my forehead.

"You're the best thing that ever happened to me."

I snuggle a little closer into him, brushing my cheek against the rough hair on his chest. "Pretty sure you're the best thing that ever happened to me, but I'll take it."

Jarra sighs. "So, when are we getting married? I believe you made me a promise some time ago."

I chuckle. "But I know how much you like it when I make you wait, baby."

His chest rises and falls with his own soft laughter. "Yeah, you know it. Still. Mom's nagging me 'cause she wants to put a plaque on the family tree for Elsa and Damian."

I grin. Jarra's family tree is a literal tree on his parents' farm and when he says that his Mom wants to put a plaque up that almost brings a tear to my eye. "Well, that's the best reason I've heard so far. In that case, we can do it this year, as long as you don't want anything big."



“Oh, I think we have to go big. It’s a political statement, after all.”

I roll my eyes. “We can have a professional photoshoot and a media release, and all that stuff, but let’s keep the actual wedding small. After all, you’re just a municipal councilor, not the mayor.”

“Good thing, too. Though we might have to invite the new mayor. Pretty sure I owe him a favor. And the manager at La Dolce Vita and Sofia, and—”

I cover his mouth with my hand while he continues to mumble names into my palm. “You get ten guests. That’s it. Pick them wisely.”

“Ten!” I don’t need to move my hand to hear him loud and clear.

“Ten.”

He sighs and rests his lips against my forehead in a lingering kiss. “Well, you know what, as long as my bride is there, I don’t care.”

My fingers trail down to the patch of hair I love on his lower belly and I sigh. “Jarra, can I tell you something?”

“Mmm?” He’s probably sleepy. If I know Jarra well, and I do, he’s about to fall asleep on me for at least twenty minutes, so I have to hurry up and spit it out. Only I’m nervous. Silly isn’t it?

I tease my fingers over his belly a moment longer. “I think it’s time.”

“Huh?”

I grin up at his confused expression. “I think it’s time to say I love you. ’Cause I do. And I’ve felt it for a while, I was just worried about saying it.”

“You do?”

I nod. “I do. And I can’t wait to be your bride, even if you insist on inviting all of Heartstone.”

His arms tighten around me. “I’m so lucky. So lucky.”

He gives a huge yawn and I chuckle to myself. Soon his deep, slow breathing tells me I wasn't wrong. I pull the covers over both of us and snuggle back into his arms for a little while.

I'm the lucky one. I'd given up on ever finding anything that came close to this before I met Jarra. Somehow, this gorgeous guy found me and I'm finally starting to believe I deserve him.



THE END

Thank you for reading. I hope you enjoyed Mastering the Minotaur.

Have you read the first book in the series, [Deal with a Demon](#)? Waiting for Worshipped by the Werewolf? You can get a sneak peek on my [Patreon](#) where patrons get early access and bonus content including character art, future projects and previews.



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Ami Wright is a proud history nerd, foodie and tragic fan of trashy reality TV, smutty romance, good wine and too much cake. She loves heroes who burn, pine and (think they're going to) perish for wanting their women, and heroines of every description!

Ami lives in Australia with her partner (who disappointingly is not called Mr Wright) and their two small children. If she ever gets any spare time between writing smut, teaching and mothering, she reads, cooks, watches history documentaries and dreams of the days when international travel becomes a reality again!

You can find out more and connect with Ami at:

<http://linktr.ee/AmiWright>



# **MORE BY AMI WRIGHT**

## **MONSTROUS DEALS**

[KEPT BY THE KRAKEN](#)

[DEAL WITH A DEMON](#)

[GIVEN TO THE GARGOYLE](#)

[TREASURED BY THE TROLL](#)

[MASTERING THE MINOTAUR](#)

## **ALIEN BILLIONAIRES**

[ALIEN BILLIONAIRE'S ASSISTANT](#)

[ALIEN BILLIONAIRE'S FAKE GIRLFRIEND](#)

[ALIEN BILLIONAIRE'S NANNY](#)

## **FORBIDDEN MATES OF THE ARDUN ROYAL GUARD**

[FARROKH](#)

[AMIR](#)

[HESAM](#)

[MALIK](#)

[SATTAR](#)

[JARO](#)

[IKKAD](#)

## **ANCIENT MYTHS AND MONSTERS**

[ASTERIUS](#)

[SILENUS](#)

## **THE LOST ROMANS**

[SAMPSON'S SAVIOR](#)

[RESCUED BY THE INTERSTELLAR AGENT](#)

[TRAINED BY THE INTERSTELLAR RENEGADE](#)

RELEASING THE INTERSTELLAR CAPTIVE

CONNING THE INTERSTELLAR CONMAN

STOLEN BY THE INTERSTELLAR ANDROID

MARRIED TO THE INTERSTELLAR COLONIST

**FATED MATES OF THE QOL'RAKII by Ami Wright  
and Maddie Syn**

ALIEN PROTECTOR'S LADY

ALIEN PROTECTOR'S SUNSHINE