



MY BF'S BOSSY DADDY

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MY BOYFRIEND'S BOSSY DADDY

MY BOYFRIEND'S DAD: BOOK 1

LENA LITTLE

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PREVIEW

My name is Kenneth Klein, CEO of Klein Investments Inc. and one of the richest men in the world.

Few things faze me but when I see Kasey at a company retreat in Hawaii, something roars in me from out of nowhere. A hunger. A primal need to be with her and claim her as my own.

I think for a moment that finding out she's my son's girlfriend is enough to quash my animalistic desire. But he breaks up with her in front of me—in front of my other employees—and humiliates her. Protectiveness surges in my chest but a dark part of me is ecstatic I can now have her for myself.

The more time I spend with Kasey, the more consumed I am by this obsession. Obsession to make her mine. And mine alone.

I am nothing if not persistent.

And I feel sorry for anything—or anyone—who tries to get between me and her. Only fools will want to stand in my way.

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KENNETH

I know I've fucked up immediately.

I curse every cell in my body for burning with need as the young woman turns to face me, tears in her glorious, intoxicating eyes. I want her, down to the animalistic part of my soul. There next to her, with his hand on the small of her back, is my son.

Fuck. Dammit.

I knew he was bringing his new girlfriend, but never in a million years did I expect to feel such a rush of possessiveness the second I lay eyes on the girl.

At 41, I don't have many new, novel experiences in my life these days, but my first moment of eye contact with Kasey Mulligan surely tops any I've ever had before.

I rip my eyes away from her, pulse thundering in my ears, and try to ignore the quizzical look my son Devin is shooting me. Then, the worst thing that can happen right now, does.

He pivots Kasey in my direction, and the couple makes their way over so he can introduce his girlfriend to me—his father and employer. Devin looks happy to see me, and Kasey looks like a deer caught in headlights.

I clench my teeth, flex my leg muscles to keep my blood from pooling in my groin and making me hard just at the sight of this girl, and put on the most neutral expression possible. I've got to get through this.

But fuck, does she make it hard.

WE ARRIVED by plane in Hawaii in the late afternoon, which made it a rush to get ready for the gala I had scheduled as the opening event for the weekend work retreat. Klein Investments Incorporated has almost tripled in value over the past few years, and at the suggestion of my son, as well as other high-ranking employees on the board, I have finally decided to give in and spring for a celebratory retreat for everyone that made my company's success possible.

I haven't taken a vacation in years, at least not since Devin was young enough to still be interested in them, and he's 20 now.

To be fair, there will be plenty of work-related tasks and networking to handle while we're here at Lava Rock Resort, right outside of Honolulu. I chose this resort solely because it's a popular destination for other like-minded business owners and other individuals that I plan to engage with, so I won't be totally out of my element.

I knew that Devin planned to disappear in a cloud of smoke as soon as his responsibilities were attended to, with his new woman on his arm, but that life isn't for me.

My son flew in business class like the rest of the employees, much to his chagrin, but I flew in first. I love my boy, I do, but he has to work his way up to my level just like I did at his age. Plus, he's shown a streak of laziness and even cruelty in some ways that I need to excise from him if he is ever going to succeed in this world.

There's no room for unwarranted selfishness and entitlement in my company...I don't know what's come over him, but I have a hope that some time away from the daily grind will help him remember who he is.

I had no problem with him bringing his girlfriend, and up until this moment, I've even been anticipating meeting her. I neither ignore nor run away from problems when they arise, preferring to face them head-on, but I can't deny the slight

relief I feel when Devin and Kasey are intercepted by another couple from work and I'm able to slip away into the hustle and bustle of people mingling and chatting amongst themselves.

My eyes roam the room, scanning for anyone or anything that might catch my attention enough that I can put off the inevitable meeting, but my escape is short-lived. Again, I see her, but this time she doesn't notice me, and I look my fill.

She stands at the other end of the lobby, looking around with wide eyes, a hint of apprehension on her face. Devin must have lost her in the crowd, and she looks lost.

Her golden hair cascades down her back, the soft waves framing her heart-shaped face perfectly. Kasey is small but curvy in all the right places, her skin fair but kissed by the sun. There is a smattering of freckles on her nose, shoulders, and chest. I immediately think about how I want to trace the path of them with my fingers and tongue until they disappear beneath the neckline of her gauzy dress.

Knock it off! I tell myself mentally, closing my eyes so I can get a reprieve from this forbidden temptation in woman form.

This is a mistake, though, because when I open them again, her emerald green eyes meet mine for a moment, and something hot and raw pulses in my veins. Something about her draws me in, and I can't tear my eyes away as I move toward her.

The way her dress clings to her curves has my thoughts racing. The fact that she's off limits to me seems inconsequential when our gazes are locked like this. I'm used to getting what I want. And what I want right now is her.

Then, like clockwork, my son is there again, putting his arm around her shoulders and his fingers brushing her bare arm. I can't hear what he's saying, but it's obvious he's trying to charm her. The thought of that makes my blood boil. I already feel my competitive nature kicking in—he might think he has a chance with her, but he's no match for me.

This is your son! I remind myself, clenching my fists. *The answer is NO. You CAN'T have her!*

I watch as they exchange a few words, and I notice Kasey's demeanor change. She looks sad, and it only intensifies my irritation toward Devin.

What the actual fuck is he doing? What could he have possibly said to make her look like that? As he turns to walk away, I catch a glimpse of his smug smile. That expression is the same one I've taken notice of on my son's face right before he does something cruel or thoughtless, and now he's wearing it with his back to Kasey.

Shit. Something is off. That girl deserves better, and I'd do anything to make sure she gets it—if only that were an option.

Devin finally reaches me and tugs me toward where he has left Kasey. "There you are, old man! I thought I lost you again. Come meet Kasey."

No excuse comes to my lips. What can I possibly say? *"Sorry, son, I'm not interested in meeting your girlfriend because every time she looks at me, I want to fuck her into next week?"*

Yeah, that probably won't go over well.

So, in seconds, she's right in front of me. More than a foot shorter than I am, Kasey has to tilt her chin up to look at me, and once more it feels like all the air has been sucked out of the room. Damn everything to hell...how did Devin manage to land the only woman on Earth who I've ever had this sort of connection with?

"Dad, this is Kasey. Kasey, Dad." There is a rushed note to Devin's voice like he's anxious to get all the formalities out of the way and go back to having Kasey for himself.

"It's a pleasure to meet you, Kasey," I introduce myself, nodding. I consider kissing her hand, desperate to drag my lips across her knuckles, but I'm afraid that once I get any sort of taste, there will be no stopping me.

"A pleasure to meet you too," she replies, and her soft voice unfurls something in my chest—something like primal hunger. She's nervous and normally, I won't give a fuck, but it's her. Her. Possessiveness roars through me, making me want to

protect her, shield her from everything, and... Make. Her. Mine.

We chat for a few minutes, and there's a connection building between us. I can't explain it, but I've learned that some things in life must be experienced without too much questioning. This is one of those things.

The conversation is supremely surface level, with Devin losing interest as soon as the introduction is made. I've barely said a few dozen words to each of them before they're moving on. I watch her walk away, admiring the way her ass sways with each step. I know I have to have her...if my son separates from her for any reason at all, I'll do whatever it takes to make her mine. Only my loyalty to my family is keeping me from doing it right now.

I turn my attention back to the lobby and scan the room, taking in the elegant decor and luxurious surroundings. This resort is one of the most exclusive in all of Hawaii, and I spared no expense in booking the presidential suite for my stay. The suite is the epitome of luxury, with a spacious living area, a king-sized bed, and a private balcony that overlooks the ocean.

It's a power move against myself, the more I think about it, because I'm making it so there is no other choice but to relax some of the time. That said, I'm looking forward to enjoying the personal infinity pool and hot tub once the rush of the welcome gala is over.

Slipping into the role of CEO is effortless, and while the now-thrumming need and awareness I have for Kasey is far from gone, I can at least put it at the back of my mind and focus on what I'm doing right now.

I'm standing at the edge of the room, pretending to listen to one of my board members talk about a fishing excursion. My attention is drawn to the view of the ocean outside when I hear a loud crash. The noise silences everything else in the room, and not a single soul is speaking as we all pivot to see the source of the sound.

My thoughts stumble to a halt when I see that it's Kasey, at once pale from something that has shocked her, and ruby-red

high on her cheekbones and over her chest as she flushes from embarrassment. At her feet are the shards of the piece of art she's knocked over in her effort to retreat, but all I can see is Devin.

He looks pissed and in one of those moods he's had since he was a teen that he has a hard time shaking off. Devin's anger can soar to incredible heights, but unlike me, he has no control over it. I am calm and collected in the heat of my rages, and it rarely spills over no matter how hot it burns.

With Devin, though, there is no restraint. He breaks things, screams at people, and has a hard time taking any sort of accountability. I hoped it was a trait that would dim once he was finished with puberty, but here we are, and it's worse than ever.

And, for the first time since I was his age, I feel like the leash on my own temper is much thinner than usual.

Devin's face is beet red, and he's got his finger pointing in Kasey's face even as she turns away from him. He's hissing something at her, and as she ignores him, he pays no mind to the crowd watching him and begins to yell at her. Before I can stop myself, I'm moving toward them, and the crowd around me parts like the sea.

"I can't deal with you anymore!" Devin complains. "You're always so needy and insecure, but at the same time, you have no interest in MY needs! It's exhausting."

Kasey is choking back a sob as she replies, "I'm not needy or insecure! I just want you to pay attention to me sometimes."

When Devin starts to speak again, she doesn't let him, speaking louder herself. "And I don't mean attention as in SEX! It's all you ever want to talk about!"

Devin's laugh is sharp and mean. "Ha! You've led me on for months now, Kasey. I've paid for everything during our relationship, taken it slowly with you, and all you think you owe me is a make-out session every once in a while? HA!"

His sarcastic smirk turns into a sneer as he leans close to her to say the last thing, and if I hadn't been nearly on top of the both

of them, I wouldn't have been able to hear what he's saying, "You know what, Kasey? Put out or get out!"

I approach the couple, my anger barely concealed. "What's going on here?" I demand. "Is everything all right?"

Devin scowls at me, but I ignore him. My attention is focused solely on Kasey. She looks up at me, her eyes wide and frightened, and fury curls hot in my gut.

"It's nothing, Dad," Devin says, his voice tight with anger. "Just a little lovers' spat."

"Just a spat, huh?" I grab my son by his upper arm, forcing him away from Kasey effortlessly. "Is that why I just heard you tell her that if she doesn't sleep with you that she has to *leave*?"

"We've been dating for weeks," he points out as if that matters to me at all. "I get that I'm her first boyfriend, but I'm a man and I have needs."

I can't help the bark of laughter that bursts out of me. "A man?! Hardly. Not when you're speaking about a woman the way you are."

"Things are different these days," Devin shrugs, his voice low as it begins to dawn on him how public this argument has become. "She's just a college student, and as a successful man, I have certain expectations—"

Shooting him a hostile glare, I huff out an exasperated breath. I can't stand the way he talks about her like she's some kind of inconvenience. That he thinks he can demand sex from her like it's nothing. What kind of man-child is he? Real men don't demand women to sleep with them. Only pathetic losers do.

Jesus Christ. Is this the boy I raised?

"You should treat her better than that," I say, my tone hard and unyielding. "I have *never* taught you to treat someone like this, Devin, especially a woman." Devin tries to speak, but I cut him off. "I don't want to hear it. The way you're speaking to this young lady is completely unacceptable."

Kasey's gaze is on us, and I know that she's crying at this point. I quickly look at her, and the sight of mascara-tinted tears streaming down her cheeks makes me want to shake my son until his teeth rattle.

"Franky, Dad, it's none of your business, and—"

Devin tries to defend himself, but my rage only intensifies. "As the owner and CEO of this company, it is absolutely my business. And I won't tolerate any mistreatment of my guests, especially not from my own employees, even if he is my own fucking *son*, Devin. Get the hell out of here. *Now*."

He shoots one last look at Kasey, who is being handed a small stack of tissues by one of the gala servers, and storms off. I watch him go, headed straight for the bar, and wonder briefly if this is because of something I've done wrong as a father. But the thought can't stay because someone else is waiting behind me, patting a tissue on her face to soak up her tears.

I turn to her and momentarily forget everyone else in the room. Even crying, she's stunning, and she doesn't flee either. Kasey is brave, but I know in my bones that she's desperate to get out of this situation without looking like she's weak.

This woman—this beautiful, wounded woman—needs me. And I'll be damned if I'm going to let anyone hurt her again.

"Are you okay?" I ask, my voice coming out deeper and more commanding than I intend. The other partygoers stare at us. Let them. All I can think about is this woman in front of me.

She looks up at me. "I'm fine," she says but her voice trembles slightly, betraying her words.

I can't stand to see her in pain, especially not at an event that's meant to be a celebration. "My son...he's a real piece of work at times," I say, my jaw clenching with anger. "You deserve better than him."

She looks surprised by my bluntness, but I don't care. I'm not usually one to mince words, especially when it comes to protecting what's mine. And something about this woman makes me feel like she could be mine. No, that she *will* be.

“Better than your son?” Kasey asks, tilting her head to the side as she contemplates my words. “I would have thought that as his father, you’d be trying to convince me that he’s not always like this and that I should give him a second chance or something.”

“No,” I tell her simply, moving close enough to her that no one can eavesdrop on our talk. “I’ve never raised Devin to expect anything extra just because we’re wealthy. He is his own man and as of right now, a poor one in my eyes. And you—” I can’t help myself as I reach out to tuck a strand of that golden hair behind one of her ears, making her eyes go wide. “You, Kasey, are something special.”

“T-thank you,” she breathes, her chest rapidly rising and falling.

Kasey looks up at me with those big, shimmering green doe-like eyes, and my resolve starts to crumble. I want to wrap her up in my arms and make all her problems disappear. I want to show her what it feels like to be loved by a real man, not some boy who doesn’t know how to treat a woman. But I can’t let myself get carried away.

She might be a beautiful, captivating girl but still my son’s now ex-girlfriend, and I’m a powerful CEO with a reputation to uphold. Logically, I know I need to keep my distance.

Every part of me that isn’t logical, though, is taking control.

I’ve got to break away and get myself under control before I make a stupid mistake. Most of the crowd has gone back to mingling and celebrating, but there are quite a few sets of eyes still watching the two of us. I take a small risk laying my large hand on Kasey’s shoulder, making sure all of her attention is on me.

“Go get yourself a drink, Kasey,” I command. “It’s an open bar, so get whatever you want to settle your nerves. Hell, order a bottle of champagne if you want. Then, go back to your suite, order whatever services you want from the spa, and put it on my tab. Do you understand?”

She nods slowly, opening her full lips to say something else to me, but I break away and stalk towards the table where a few of my big investors are seated, needing to get some distance between the girl and myself. Just the feeling of the skin of her shoulder in my palm was too much to bear, knowing I can't have more. And yes I want more. So much more.

I walk away hoping no one notices the sudden swell in my pants. There's a lot going on in my mind, not least of all the long-overdue talk I need to have with my son, who is nowhere to be found now. I make my rounds through the gala, talking to everyone and welcoming them to the retreat, shaking hands and exchanging pleasantries for what feels like hours.

For some time, I think I might be able to get away from this night without having to face the object of my desires again... but fate, the universe, or whatever the fuck it is, has something else in mind.

From the corner of my eye, I see the familiar silhouette of my son, and he's got his arm around a woman. For a terrible moment, I think that Kasey has already gone back to him, but when I turn to get a closer look, I realize that the woman is one of the secretaries from my office building—Tina or Tara. Both she and Devin look beyond drunk.

Worst of all is Kasey, standing in front of them, with her eyes once more full of tears and her mouth pulled into an expression of outrage. Devin is flaunting another woman in front of the girl he left *less than an hour ago*. A vein pulses in my temple and I ball my fingers into a fist. What the hell does he think he's doing after just dumping Kasey and humiliating her in front of my guests?

Devin sees me before either of the women, and he removes his arms from around Tina or Tara quickly, trying to act nonchalant. He's telling Kasey that he's done with her for good and he's moving on with his life. But he looks guilty. He knows he's done wrong.

"What the hell do you think you're doing, Devin?" I say, my voice low and full of danger.

He turns around, his face confused and then embarrassed when he sees that I'm not leaving. "Uh, Dad, I didn't see you there," he stammers, rubbing the back of his neck nervously. "I'm just trying to settle things here with Kasey so there aren't any hard feelings."

"Settle things?" Tina or Tara snips, looking up at Devin. "You said you wanted to show her what a real woman can give you." She motions up and down to indicate herself, and Kasey is sputtering with annoyance at this point.

I almost scoff. She has nothing on Kasey. If Devin thinks she does, then my son is a bigger fool than I initially thought.

"Settle things? A *real woman*?!" She turns her lovely green gaze to me, angrily dashing away unshed tears. "Your son came over here to tell me that he's taking this lady upstairs with him since I'm not *tending to his needs*! He said—he said —" She snuffles but straightens her spine and forces the words out. I'm impressed by her bravery but get thrown through a loop as I process her words. "He said that if I decide to give up my virginity, then I know where to find him."

My vision goes red, and Devin seems to shrink down as I focus on him, eyes narrowing. "You *what*?" I grit out, my wafer-thin control almost snapping. "Are you an animal, Devin? Were you being raised by wolves when I wasn't paying attention?"

"She's making it sound way worse than it is!" he protests.

"I don't care," I growl. "You're fired. You're done. And don't you ever come near Kasey again."

Devin looks shocked. He's ruined everything. Kasey's hurt and I'm enraged. If he thinks I'm gonna let his behavior fly just because he's my son, he's got another thing coming. "But Dad, I didn't do anything wrong," he pleads. "I broke up with her, and now there's no issues with me taking Tina upstairs. That's how this works! It's not like I'm cheating on her."

I give him a hard look, sighing heavily. "Devin, it's been less than an hour since you fought with Kasey, so as far as I'm concerned, it's a fucking disgrace. You think humiliating your

girlfriend in public is okay? You think that's acceptable behavior for an employee of my company?"

Devin tries to argue back, but I wave him off. "Save it. You're done. Don't come back to the office. Don't come near Kasey again."

"But—" he tries, but I cut my hand through the air to silence him.

I step forward, towering over him. "Is this how you treat a woman, Devin? Using and discarding them like trash? You have no respect for anyone, not even yourself. And you dare to do it at an event like this where everyone in the company can witness? Where is your head, boy?"

Devin tries to defend himself, but his drunken state only makes him more belligerent. He tells me again to mind my own business, but I'm well and done with the *boy* that I know I raised better than this. I grab him by the collar and push him up against the bar, watching his eyes go wide with fear. I've never struck my son, but the urge is there, and it takes conscious effort to push it down.

"You listen to me, and you listen good. You may be a big shot around here, but in my world, you're nothing. You treat Kasey with the respect she deserves or you answer to me. I'm only letting you stay because all the rooms are fucking paid for already and because you've got responsibilities with the company that you need to see through."

"You just said I was fired," he chokes out, eyes wide.

"Don't fuck up anymore on this trip, take care of your obligations, and *maybe* you will just be demoted when we get back to New York. Any more fuckery, Devin, and I'm throwing your ass on the first plane home. Do you understand?"

Devin looks me in the eye and sees the fury there. He knows I mean business, and once he nods, I lower him to the ground. He slinks away, quickly followed by Tina, leaving Kasey and me alone.

I turn to her, my pulse already picking up from her nearness, all while a different voice is roaring in my head, demanding that I take care of her and claim her as my own.

“Let’s get some air,” I finally say instead of all the other phrases that might scare her off. “Follow me.”

I take Kasey’s delicate hand in mine and guide her outside to the expansive patio overlooking the ocean. The moonlight casts a soft glow on her, illuminating her beauty. God, I can’t get enough of looking at her. Devin fucked up royally. This girl is out of his league.

Kasey exhales slowly and turns her face to the sky, seeming to relax now that we’re away from the din of the gala.

“Take a deep breath, Kasey,” I say, my voice laced with concern. “We’re in paradise, remember? Let it all go and just *feel*.”

She follows my lead, inhaling the salty air, and a faint smile tugs at the corners of her lips. In that moment, I see a glimmer of the strong, resilient woman she truly is. It’s all I can do not to pull her into my arms and taste her mouth.

“Thank you for getting me out of there,” she says, her voice soft.

I nod, placing a hand on the small of her back. To my pleasant surprise, she doesn’t pull away. “Of course. You looked like you needed to escape, and I’m happy to help.”

We stand there in comfortable silence for a moment. Part of me still knows that this is wrong and that I’m lying to myself if I can’t admit that this is just the beginning of a slow seduction, but it’s a very, very small part at the moment.

“You know,” I say, breaking the silence. “I have a feeling that you only met my son so you’d be able to walk into *my* life, not his. I promise I’m more reliable, at least.”

She laughs. “I think you might be right about all of that. At least then there would be some meaning to him dragging me across the ocean to tear me down in front of, like, a hundred people.”

As we continue to converse, her laughter breaks through the night a few more times as she relaxes. I can't even remember what I said to make her laugh, but I'm well aware of my entire body responding to that sound. My fingers ache from the need to touch her. I become acutely aware of her presence, the magnetic pull between us impossible to ignore.

Then, a song that we both recognize comes over the speakers dotted about the terrace, the first one that isn't simply instrumental, and on a whim, I ask her to dance with me. Kasey flushes but nods. After all, we're alone out here, so what's the point of resisting? I'm past the point of caring anyway.

Gathering her into my arms, my muscles are strung tight under her touch. Heat is radiating off her, the electricity coursing through my veins as we move in perfect synchrony.

The initial feeling of possessiveness starts to intensify. Pressing us together, the softness of her against the hardness of my body, I get the sensation that I'm claiming what is rightfully mine. She fits perfectly against me like this has always been where she belongs.

I don't want to think of her as my son's ex. Not at all. Instead, I force myself to see her only as the woman that she is.

I breathe her in and fuck if she doesn't smell good enough to eat. We're close enough that I can see the pulse hammering in her throat. She feels it too, whatever this is. Her breathing is ragged, and she's swallowing hard.

Good to know I affect her as much as she affects me.

As the song comes to an end, I hold her close, unwilling to let go. The weight of possibility hangs in the air. My head is foggy with desire, and it's all I can do not to act on my thoughts.

Kasey has awoken something deep inside me, a primal need to claim her as my own. In that moment, I make a silent promise to myself. I will fight for her. I will protect her. And I will do whatever it takes to win her heart. She doesn't know it yet, but she's about to spend the rest of her life with me.

The need to kiss her is strong, almost impossible to deny. Kasey softens against me, gazing up with a hooded, needy look in her eyes, and I know beyond a shadow of a doubt that she wants me to kiss her too.

But I have to have *some* restraint at least. Kasey has suffered enough embarrassment tonight. If I kiss her and someone walks out here, seeing her making out with her ex's father, it will just be one more terrible thing for her. I personally don't give a fuck, especially since I'm paying for everything these people are taking advantage of, but I need to think about Kasey and how she'd feel.

So instead, I slowly pull back. There's a hurt cast to her features until I take her hand, holding it lightly as I look into her eyes. "Be ready for me to pick you up tomorrow morning at 8. We're going to have breakfast together."

She looks at me, confused, so I explain. "I'm going to get you a new room, Kasey. You can't stay with Devin now."

Her eyes widen in surprise, and I can see the questions in her mind. But before she can ask them, I continue. "Don't worry about it. I'll take care of everything. Let's go get you a new room key."

After nibbling her bottom lip in thought, a move that threatens to make me hard right here on the spot, she nods. "Okay. If you really want to."

I know I'm attracted to her, but I also know I need to be careful. I don't want to rush things and scare her off. This isn't a one-time thing. She needs to understand that first. Once she's in, she's in...forever.

I walk with her to the front desk and speak with the receptionist, asking for the key to the King Suite. As expected, Kasey looks at me with surprise and excitement, clearly aware of the prestige of the room. I hand the receptionist my credit card, and she processes the payment as I take the key and lead Kasey toward the elevator.

"For real? The King suite?" she gushes as we walk away. "It's too much, Kenneth, you don't have to do all that for me."

“For real,” I confirm, smirking.

It’s the first time I’ve heard my name on her lips and my member immediately stands at attention. Calm the fuck down.

“Consider it a gift from me,” I say, pretending I don’t have a rock-hard erection and thinking about anything but my face between her thighs. “You deserve nothing but the best, Kasey. Always remember that.”

The elevator doors open, and we step out into the hallway. We approach the door to the suite and I slide the keycard in the slot. The door clicks open, and I hold it for her, watching her as she walks in, hand covering her mouth in amazement.

The suite is a spacious room with a king-sized bed in the center and a panoramic view of the ocean. The décor is elegant, and the room is filled with all the amenities one could ask for in a luxury resort, including a flat-screen TV, a minibar, and a hot tub. The bathroom is equally impressive, with marble flooring, a shower, and a bathtub.

I watch as Kasey takes it all in, her eyes wide with wonder. “It’s beautiful,” she finally manages to say.

“As I said, baby girl, you deserve nothing but the best,” I repeat, closing the door behind me. “And I intend to give it to you.”

Kasey spins around and smiles. “Thank you so much, Kenneth. You have no idea how much this means to me.” Vulnerability crosses over her features. “I never expected to take a trip like this in my entire life, and when Devin told me it was over, I was sure it was going to get cut short. You’re... you’re so different.”

“I’m just happy to help,” I say. “And I hope you’ll join me for breakfast tomorrow.”

Kasey nods, her smile widening. “I’d love to.”

“Great,” I tell her. “I’ll pick you up at 8 am. Get some rest, Kasey, and have a good night.”

“Wait,” she breathes as my hand hovers above the door handle. To my shock, her arms come around me as she rests her head

on my back, the sweet warmth of her body coursing through me. My blood rushes south and I clench my jaw.

“I just don’t know how to express what this all means to me,” she sighs.

Fuck it. We’ve come this far. I’ve got her in a room alone, and she’s obviously feeling affectionate towards me. I extract myself from her embrace and turn until I can pull her into one of my own, tilting her chin up with my finger when she gasps at the sudden movement.

“I have an idea of one way,” I rumble, moving the finger at her chin to her plump lips, tracing the bottom one. “Do you want me to show you?”

Kasey swallows and nods. She barely has time to breathe before my mouth is on hers, and I’m showing her just how much I *want* to give her the world and more. The words my son had so cruelly thrown at her about her virginity float through my mind, but I brush them away. We aren’t going that far, not tonight.

Soon though, I think. Very, very soon.

The kiss starts out light, with just a ghosting of my mouth over hers, but when she melts against me, I cup her jaw, turn her head just slightly and deepen the kiss. Kasey makes a soft noise of surprise when I sweep my tongue past her lips, not even asking any sort of permission, and glide it over her own until she’s breathing heavily.

Fuck. She tastes so good.

Kasey grabs the lapels of my suit jacket, not to pull me closer, but just to hang on while I kiss her without restraint. The noises she makes tell me she’s loving it, that she’s never experienced anything like the way I claim her mouth, and I can’t stop myself from grinding against her.

Now she gasps and freezes, and I wonder if I’ve pushed too much, but then she lifts onto her tip toes and kisses me herself, tentative but wanting. I growl deep in my chest and pull her firmly to me, grinding again and again against her softness until she’s all but panting into my mouth.

I lose track of how I'm supposed to restrain myself, and I lift her with two hands on the round globes of her ass so she can wrap her legs around me and rock against me. I ravish her mouth, giving her all the friction she needs as she rubs against my cock, making it strain against the zipper of my pants almost painfully.

It's effortless to back her up against the door of the room, and even more so to skate my hand up her bare leg until I reach the apex of her thighs and the indecently small slip of her silk panties. Her *damp* silk panties.

"Fuck," I groan, breaking the kiss for only a second. "You're wet for me, baby girl."

The only answer I get from her is an honest-to-God moan.

I press my thumb against her seam, just the silk separating her skin from me, and work it in circles until I can feel the hard button of her clit. Kasey's spine goes rigid, and she cries out from the unexpected pleasure of it. Emboldened, I keep at it, my mouth drifting from hers, across her jawline, and back again as I do so.

Kasey is writhing against me as I use just the right amount of pressure on her clit to bring her closer and closer to the edge.

"Don't stop," she breathes. "Oh, please don't stop, Kenneth."

I have no fucking plans to do anything close to stopping, especially when I feel the slightest quiver in her legs where they are wrapped around me. In a haze, I pull her panties aside and find her bare clit now, her wetness covering my fingers as I repeat the motions over and over again, skin to skin.

"I'm—" she pants. "I'm going to—"

Then, like the universe is doing everything in its power to fuck me over, there's a knock on the door that I have Kasey pressed up against. The loud, forceful sound snaps us both out of the fog of lust that we had found ourselves in. While Kasey looks up at me with a mix of desire and humiliated fright over what she's just done, all I can do is grin and internally curse our ill-timed visitor.

The knock sounds again and I sit Kasey on her feet before asking, “What?!”

“Oh, um,” a small voice comes from the other side of the door. “I have the luggage for Ms. Mulligan from her old room like you requested.”

I laugh bitterly, resting my forehead against the door as Kasey scurries out from underneath me. Of fucking course I did this to myself. I accidentally cock-blocked myself. Dammit.

“Give us five minutes and you can bring it in,” I tell the person on the other side of the door, turning on my heel to find Kasey sitting on her new bed with her legs crossed and color high in her cheeks.

Her pupils are round and dark, and there’s an unmistakable air of need surrounding her, but I know she isn’t going to let what just went down happen again. At least not so soon.

“I guess this is goodnight, baby girl,” I tell her, giving her a wink. I turn to leave, but before I do, I look back at her. “And Kasey,” I say, my voice low and serious. “Remember, as long as you’re here with me, it’s only going to be the best for you. Don’t ever settle for anything less. And...” I let my gaze drift down her body, pausing at the spot where her dress hides her pussy from my sight. “I don’t leave jobs unfinished.”

With that, I exit the suite and make my way back to my own room, knowing Kasey will get to spend the rest of the night in luxury, even if she is painfully unsatisfied. After giving a nod to the employee in the hall, waiting with Kasey’s luggage, I head to the elevator. As I adjust myself in my pants once the elevator doors close, I sigh. She isn’t going to be the only one left wanting.

KASEY

I wake up to the sound of waves crashing against the shore and the smell of salt in the air. I'm in my new suite at the Hawaiian resort, a luxurious oasis with views of the ocean and the pale, sandy beach where those who have woken up earlier than me are already walking the length of it.

It's funny because I'm usually an early riser myself, but this morning, I overslept more than I ever do back home, and I don't think I can blame it on jetlag. I think, instead, my brain is trying to avoid having to face what happened last night. And, well...what I did.

My mind wanders back to last night's gala, the breakup with Devin, and the stranger who swept me off my feet.

Kenneth.

Can I really even consider the father of my ex a stranger? He might as well be since he's nothing, and I mean *nothing*, like Devin. I'm grateful to Kenneth for rescuing me from the embarrassment and humiliation of Devin's breakup. I can't believe that little prick had the audacity to end our relationship at the gala he invited me to—in front of everyone. The nerve of that guy!

But Kenneth did a lot more to me than just rescuing me from his son's nonsense. A *lot* more, and I was ready and willing to accept all of it and more.

Sitting up in bed, I clutch my pillow to myself, pulling my knees to my chest and screaming into the pillow. What the heck is wrong with me? Who even am I anymore? Certainly, I

can't be Kasey Mulligan because she would never let Devin's dad finger her pressed up against her hotel door.

My face goes hot at the thought, as well as other parts of me that I'm trying oh-so-hard to ignore. What happened can't happen again...can it? We're both adults, even if he is quite a bit older than me, and technically I'm single, so logically, there's nothing wrong with it. Morally is a different story, but isn't Devin the one responsible for starting this mess?

We'd only been dating for six months, but like me, he had been an up-and-comer at his job, and I thought we were both focused on the same things in life. Until it became more and more clear that his real focus was actually getting into my pants, not having something real with me.

I just wish he had the class to dump me before flying me all the way out to freaking Hawaii, but I guess he must have imagined the romantic aura of the place would have loosened my legs up for him. Ugh. What a pig.

I thought I would be heartbroken, but instead, I'm furious. How could he do this to me? I thought he was different, that he was the one. I wanted to believe in our future together, but he shattered my dreams in one fell swoop. And to make matters worse, I had accidentally broken a piece of the resort's art in my emotional distress. I couldn't believe how foolish I had been, and I was mortified at the thought of how it must have looked.

If it hadn't been for Kenneth, I'd probably be pulling money out of my savings to fly home right about now. Instead, my vacation is now going to be even more relaxing and luxurious, and if Kenneth has his way, it won't be lonely either.

That's right, I think. You have a breakfast date. Time to get up and stop pouting.

And then, there was the moment when he led me outside to the patio, away from the prying eyes of the other guests.

"Take a deep breath, Kasey," he had said to me, his deep baritone voice more calming than any mere breath could ever dream of being.

I was embarrassed by my tears but also relieved to have someone there to comfort me. And then, he had taken my hand and we danced. The music was slow and romantic, and I remember feeling a spark between us like I had never felt before.

A shiver ran down my spine as he leaned in closer to me. Our faces were only inches apart, and I could feel his warm breath on my skin. It was then that I knew I was in trouble. The way his eyes bore into mine, as if he could see straight into my soul...the way his touch ignited something within me... Kenneth inspired a feeling of connection that I've never felt before. And when we danced, it was like the rest of the world faded away. It was just me and him, lost in the music and the moment.

That memory makes me smile.

Still clutching the pillow to my chest, the previous night's events replay in my mind, and I can't help but feel a mixture of fear and giddiness. Then, as my stroll down memory lane gets to the point in the previous night where he kissed me, his lips both soft and commanding at the same time, a need unlike any other I've ever felt eclipses all other feelings that I may be having.

I felt a connection with him as soon as we locked eyes across the gala before I even knew who he was. It felt like fate, like a live wire was joining us together from that moment forward. The entire night, I had a hard time paying attention to Devin and ignoring how much I wanted to be with the tall, mysterious stranger across the room.

As soon as Devin introduced us, I knew I was in trouble, but I lied to myself over and over again that it was just a silly little crush. Maybe even a little bit of jet lag. But no, dancing with Kenneth, kissing him, feeling his own desire for me in return when he pressed up against me...there's no denying that something is going on.

Feeling the rough pads of his fingers between my legs, finding my clit with expert precision, and making me feel more pleasure than I thought possible seems so unbelievable in the

light of day that I can almost write it off as a fantasy, or at worst, a mistake that I can sweep under the rug and run away from, but... I don't want to. I want more, and I don't want to second guess anything either.

What if I mess this up? I wonder to myself. What if he doesn't feel the same way about me?

I shake my head, trying to dispel the negative thoughts. But as I recall Kenneth's intense gaze and the way his hand felt on my waist, it sets off a bunch of butterflies in my stomach. It doesn't help matters that he is absolutely gorgeous to look at. Well, gorgeous doesn't seem like the right word...more like dangerously and ruggedly handsome.

At 6'5" with broad shoulders and a commanding presence, he has at least a foot on me, and he towered over everyone else at the gala. His suit was black on black, making him stand out even more among the more tropical colors that most people had chosen to wear, and it was tailored to fit him so perfectly that it's almost obscene.

Kenneth's salt-and-pepper hair is cropped short, bringing attention to his chiseled jawline, which is frankly, the stuff of dreams. I can't deny that I'm physically attracted to him, but it's more than that.

It's the way he makes me feel when I'm around him. Safe. Comfortable. Like I can be myself. I take a deep breath, just like he told me to do last night, and remind myself that I have nothing to lose. I've already lost Devin—good riddance, honestly—and maybe this is my chance at something real and true.

But now, sitting here in my plush bed, nerves start to creep in. I'm meeting Kenneth for breakfast in just an hour, and I don't know what to expect. Will the connection we felt last night still be there? Or was it just a fleeting moment?

I shake my head, trying to clear my thoughts. I need to focus on getting ready, so I slip out of bed. Making my way to the bathroom, I almost laugh when I see the way my cheeks are still flushed, remembering the naughty things that had gone on last night.

Kenneth had me right there, on the verge of something incredible, before room service interrupted. Frustration from being denied had dulled into relief that things hadn't gone further so soon, but now I can't help but imagine what it would have felt like to come for him, my face buried in his neck. God, I need to get myself under control or I'm not even going to make it to breakfast.

When I step out of the shower, I hear someone knocking on my door, with a feminine voice calling, "Delivery!"

I open it, and one of the hotel employees, wearing a huge smile, hands me a bouquet of gorgeous yellow and orange flowers with a little note perched inside that reads, "Sorry I can't be there to escort you to breakfast, Kasey. Had some business to attend to. Hopefully, these will make up for it, and I will be downstairs waiting on you right on time, promise. See you soon, baby girl. I'll be at Island Bites, table 202. – Kenneth"

The first line had made my heart drop, making me think that he was calling off the breakfast date, but knowing that Kenneth is so thoughtful to reassure me with something like a beautiful bouquet of fresh flowers instead of just a lame text makes me feel all bubbly inside.

I finish getting ready, slipping into a summery sundress and sandals before I grab my purse and make my way down to the restaurant, pulse racing with anticipation.

Kenneth is already seated at a table on the outdoor patio, looking every bit the CEO of a major investment firm with his crisp white shirt and tailored pants. He stands up as I approach, and I get these fuzzy feelings in my chest as he greets me with a warm smile. My eyes have gone wide at the sight of him. He's even more handsome in the daylight, with his piercing blue eyes and that confident smile.

"Good morning, Kasey," he says, pulling out my chair for me. Having him this close makes it hard to concentrate, his warm, spicy scent making everything else fade into the background. "You look beautiful today."

“Good morning, Kenneth,” I reply, feeling a blush creep up my cheeks. “And, uh, thank you.”

The setting is beautiful. The sun is shining, and the ocean is visible in the distance. The restaurant is filled with lush greenery, and the tables are set with colorful tropical flowers. This is one breakfast date I won't ever forget.

“How did you sleep?” he asks after he takes his own seat once more, waving one of the servers over and ordering us a pitcher of mimosas.

I dreamt of you all night and woke up uncomfortably wet, I think but keep my uncharacteristically risqué thoughts to myself. Instead, I tell him, “Wonderfully. The bed is unbelievably soft. How did you sleep?”

“I've had better rest,” he admits, picking up the paper menu. “There was a lot on my mind, but the distraction was so pleasant that I really didn't mind.”

There's a clear subtext in his words—he's letting me know he thought about me all night long, and I love the idea of it. As we look over the menu, conversation flows easily, and I notice how easy it is to talk to Kenneth. He's genuinely interested in my life and my career, and I find myself opening up to him in a way that I never did with Devin.

This man doesn't just hear me. He actually listens.

“I actually met Devin through work,” I explain quickly. I want to get everything about his son out of the way as fast as possible because it makes me so uncomfortable to talk about with his dad of all people. Devin is a harsh reminder of how strange it is that Kenneth and I are spending this time together...and how most people would consider it inappropriate. “He was having computer problems, and I helped him fix them. We started dating soon after. Eventually, I left the company to work for a competitor.”

“I can't believe you worked at my company right under my nose and I never realized,” Kenneth jokes, reaching across the table to take my hand. “I never would have let you leave if I had known.”

I smile, thinking how I might not have left either had I known how much I'd be drawn to the deliciously intimidating CEO. "I just traded internship for internship since I'm still in school. I don't really have time for a full-time job just yet. Everyone needs IT help, so it wasn't a problem. I would have never left a position I considered a serious career for a boyfriend." My face falls a little, and I really want to be done talking about Devin Klein. "Well, ex-boyfriend now. He made that very clear at the gala last night."

Kenneth's eyes flash. "I'm sorry that my idiot son did that to you—"

"I'm actually glad it happened," I confess quickly, interrupting him. "I didn't realize how unhappy I was until he was gone."

Flipping my hand over, Kenneth traces the lines of my palm with his fingers and it makes me shiver. "If you would have let me finish, baby girl, I was going to say that I'm sorry he was so cruel to you, but I'm *not* sorry that you're now free to spend time with me. I wanted to be near you from the second I saw you, so this ultimately makes things much less messy because I don't think anything could have kept me away from you."

"Oh," I breathe, taken aback by his words and how they mirror the exact thoughts I had been having earlier this morning. "I..."

He lifts my hand to his lips and brushes his lips across my open palm, causing goosebumps to bloom all over me as I suck in a breath. "You don't have to say anything, Kasey. I just wanted you to know."

As we continue our conversation, my attraction to Kenneth only grows stronger. He's so confident and self-assured, yet also kind and attentive. And the way he looks at me with those piercing blue eyes makes me feel a ridiculous range of emotions, all of them stemming from the base feeling of need that he creates in me.

We order our food, and I opt for the tropical fruit platter while Kenneth chooses a classic Eggs Benedict. We eat and continue to talk, laughing and sharing stories like we've known each

other for years. Is this what a real relationship...a real connection...feels like?

When we finish our meal, I feel a sense of disappointment that our time together is coming to an end. My mind flails, trying to find an excuse to spend more time with this man that makes me feel like I'm walking on air. But as Kenneth stands up to leave, he surprises me by leaning in for a kiss on the cheek.

“Thank you for a wonderful breakfast, Kasey. I know we just met, but I can't deny the way I feel when I'm around you. I know you feel it, too. I can see it in the way you look at me and the way you respond to my touch. So... How about spending the afternoon with me?”

His words throw me through a loop, and I can't say yes fast enough. “Yes, Kenneth, I would love that.”

At my agreement, he flashes me that devastating smile and offers me his hand to help me stand. I can't believe how much I'm falling for him in such a short amount of time, but there's some instinct telling me that I'm exactly where I'm meant to be.

Don't overthink it! Don't you dare overthink this!

KENNETH TAKES me to walk the beach with him where I take my sandals off to walk through the shallowest part of the surf, making him laugh. I'm afraid that people are going to be looking at us, somehow knowing how odd our situation really is—that Kenneth is the much-older father of a guy I was dating *just last night*—but I'm pleasantly surprised that no one even gives us a second glance.

Kenneth even cuffs his pants up a few times and joins me in walking in the water, taking my hand when I almost lose my balance and not letting go for the rest of the excursion.

I get another taste of the type of commanding man Kenneth is when a younger, shirtless man approaches us to offer surfing

lessons, and Kenneth dismisses him with a growl and a curl of his lip that makes the other guy go pale.

My next example is when I step on a shell that is turned just the wrong way and hiss as it nicks the bottom of my bare foot.

“Ouch!” I hiss, lifting my leg to see if I’m bleeding. Before I know it, Kenneth is sweeping me up in his arms and carrying me up the beach. It takes a few seconds for me to process the quick change of pace, and when I do, I don’t know whether to laugh or throw my arms around his neck and kiss him.

“It’s just a little cut,” I protest, not really meaning it. “I don’t want to get sand all over you.”

“Hush,” he says. “I’m going to carry you back to my suite to make sure you don’t need to have that looked at, and I don’t want to hear you complain.”

That shuts me up, and I hide my grin of satisfaction by laying my head on his shoulder and just enjoying the ride. Now people really are looking at us, but what does it even matter? Kenneth is so warm, his grip on me so solid and comforting, that nothing in the world could make me embarrassed right now.

It does get a little awkward in the small elevator, but he still won’t put me down no matter how much I insist I’m fine. I end up letting him carry me around until we’re finally inside his suite and he’s lowering me to sit on the edge of his king-sized bed. I keep my eyes locked on Kenneth’s face, afraid of the sort of thoughts that will overwhelm me if I think too hard about the bed I’m sitting on and all the possibilities it entails.

“Give me your foot,” he rumbles, sinking to his knees in front of me. I lift my leg to let him take my sandy foot in his hand, and he brushes away the particles to get a better look. My heart is pounding having him on the floor basically between my legs, and I pray that he can’t tell how much his positioning is affecting me.

I don’t know if he’s consciously running one hand up my leg while the other cradles my foot, but once his wandering hand

is past my knee, it's impossible not to let out a shaky breath that has his eyes flying to meet mine.

"Just a scratch, no blood," he assures me, slowly releasing my leg with his hand grazing my skin with equal slowness on the way down. "You should be okay unless you think you need to lie down for a minute?"

Yes! My heart screams, *With you!* But instead, I jump to my feet with a nervous laugh. "Uh, nope! I'm good! How about... a tour of your suite?"

I'm just scrambling for any reason to get some distance between us and his large, inviting bed, but Kenneth seems more than happy to show me around. "Of course. Come with me."

The suite is enormous, with a luxurious living room and a stunning rooftop terrace that must be a perfect place to watch the sunset from. But what really catches my eye is the private pool that is also on the roof. And here I thought my suite was the epitome of expensiveness! I can't help but feel a little intimidated by all of this luxury, but Kenneth's presence puts me at ease.

"It's a beautiful view," I say, looking out at the rolling waves on the ocean while I lean on the rooftop railing.

"It's even more beautiful with you here," he replies, coming up behind me and bracketing his arms on either side of me. I suck in a sharp breath, blush rising on my cheeks.

"You're sweet," I say, and Kenneth laughs. His chest is against my back now, and I feel the laughter vibrating inside him.

"I've been called a lot of things, but sweet is not one of them."

Slowly, I turn in the cage of his arms until I'm facing him. "Oh yeah, like what?"

His lids are lowered as he tucks a strand of hair behind my ear. "Uncompromising. Domineering..." When his hand pulls away from my ear, his thumb grazes my bottom lip. "Rough, even."

“You can be all those things and sweet, too,” I point out, feeling that same sort of sway toward him that I felt last night.

“Maybe,” Kenneth says. “For you, I can try to be, but if our kiss last night told me anything, it’s that you are indeed quite sweet yourself.”

Any other thoughts in my mind flee when he lowers his mouth to mine. This is exactly what makes it so good to be with Kenneth. The way he drives away any insecurities or apprehensions makes it impossible to not feel like I’m meant to be near him, like everything has guided me to this moment where he’s kissing me on a rooftop in paradise.

I arch my body into his, our kiss less rushed and frantic this time. There’s still combustive chemistry between us, but there’s also control, which makes me more comfortable to deepen the kiss on my own.

Kenneth growls when I slip my tongue between his lips to do battle with his own, one of his hands cupping the back of my head and the other gripping my hip to hold me in place.

Before I can lose myself completely in the moment, Kenneth pulls back enough to rest his forehead on mine.

“Kasey, there’s something I want to tell you. I’ve been thinking about you nonstop since last night,” he says, his voice low and intense.

I lift my head, my eyes meeting his. “Really?” I whisper.

“Yes, really,” Kenneth confirms. “I consider myself good at reading people, and I highly doubt that you’re anything but the sweet girl I see in front of me right now, but I just have to know that you aren’t spending time with me just as revenge against Devin.”

My chest tightens knowing that he’s been holding this question the whole time. “Not at all. Never,” I insist. “I know it sounds kind of silly but as soon as I saw you, before I even knew who you were, I felt drawn to you, like I wanted—”

And then, his lips are on mine. It’s soft and gentle at first, but then it becomes more urgent and demanding. My hands find their way to his back, feeling his muscles shift beneath my

palms as he moves to hold me. I can feel the heat between us, and it's like nothing I've ever experienced before.

When we finally pull away, I'm left feeling a little dizzy. I can hardly believe what's happening, but I also know with every fiber of my being that it's meant to be. Maybe this is what I've been waiting for all along.

"Wow," I say, breathless.

"Yes. Wow," he replies, his smile wicked and full of all sorts of promises. "Do you have anywhere you need to be today, Kasey? Because I want you to stay here with me."

I hesitate for a moment when Kenneth plucks at the visible strap of my bikini top under my sundress. But his smile and the glint in his eyes are so charming that pleasure sings through my nerves.

"Do you want to swim?" he asks when I fail to answer the first, nodding towards the rooftop pool behind us.

I glance at the water, then back at him, and find myself giving a small smile of agreement before I can even think. He takes my hand and leads me toward the pool. We both remove our clothes, and I notice that he's wearing swim shorts underneath, but they are tight and fitted enough that nothing is left to the imagination.

Oh, God. Yes.

I get one good long look at him before he slips into the water, but it's enough to make my mouth go dry. There is...a lot of him, to say the least. Like, A LOT a lot.

My body flashes hot, but I have no time to feel self-conscious in my bright yellow bikini, not when he's looking at me like he's a wolf and I'm a little sheep he's desperate to devour.

The water is warm and inviting, and as we wade into the pool, freedom and relaxation wash over me. It's just the two of us here, and it feels like we're the only ones in the world. No strangers to judge us.

Kenneth's body is unreal, every inch of him packed with muscle, and when he wraps me in his arms as we float, I can

feel his strength. He holds me so gently, but I have no doubt that if need be, he could use that strength to protect me, too. I never even realized that kind of safety is something I crave until just now.

“If your foot is still bothering you, you can wrap your legs around me,” he whispers right into the shell of my ear, and my core clenches.

It’s just a suggestion, but I get the idea that when Kenneth talks, people listen, and I’m no different. With only a speck of hesitation, I wrap my legs around his waist and lock at the ankles, the water moving with me, and he hums in approval.

“Like this?” I ask as I look at him and see the flash of desire in his eyes. Before I can even process what’s happening, he’s pulling me flush against him and we’re kissing passionately, our bodies entwined in the water. It feels like I’m on fire, my body alive with all these unnamed emotions as we kiss under the sun. His hands are on my back, pulling me closer to him, and I know that I want this. I want him. ALL of him. The way I’ve never wanted anyone before.

When we pull away, we’re both breathless, my nerve endings crackling with sparks. Where I’m still reeling, though, Kenneth moves with certainty as he grabs me by the hips, hands sliding beneath me until they’re cupping my ass, and *grinds* me against him, the positioning and lack of clothing making it so much more intense than the night before.

His hard length puts pressure right where I need it the most, and the sensation ricochets through me and leaves me wanting more. Kenneth repeats the motion, and I arch my back, a moan falling from my lips and eyes fluttering closed from how good it feels.

That noise seems to make something snap in Kenneth, and he’s moving me through the water to sit me on the edge of the pool in one smooth movement. Immediately, I’m mourning the hard, hot feeling of his body against every inch of me, but all of that disappears when he grabs my knees and spreads my legs wide.

I gasp, instinctually trying to close them, but I can't move within his grip. And when he starts to kiss my leg, starting at the hollow of my knee and moving upwards, I lose any inclination to close them anyway.

My heart rate kicks into high gear as what he's planning on doing becomes clear to me. I know my bikini bottoms leave almost nothing hidden, and when I look down between my legs, I can see the wet fabric outlining my pussy.

He can see all of me without even trying.

"Relax, baby girl," I hear Kenneth say with his lips still against the skin of my thigh now. "Let me make you feel good."

I thought it would be a harder decision to take this step with someone, but Kenneth makes everything feel effortless. All I have to do is turn myself over to him, and he leads me exactly where I want to go. I swallow, bracing myself with my hands on the ground behind me and chest pressed forward, and give him a single tight nod. The smile he replies with is full of all sorts of dark promises.

Then he's kissing my leg again, mere inches from my apex, and I have a brief thought that I'm glad I'm soaked from pool water because otherwise, he'd be able to see how wet I am already. Wet for him.

My breaths are coming so swiftly as he moves closer and closer that they are almost whines, and when his lips press against my still-covered pussy finally, the whines break down into a desperate noise.

I think that he'll pull the ties at the side of my bottoms as soon as possible, but instead, Kenneth plants slow, thorough, open-mouthed kisses on my covered pussy. The teasing is almost unbearable, but I'm afraid that if I try to rush him, then this dream bubble we're in will burst and I'll discover this whole thing is some sort of fantasy I'm having. So I let him take his time, even as I bite my bottom lip to keep the anxious, frustrated sounds inside.

When he pulls the fabric aside, I almost sob in relief. I've never felt anything like the slick, hot feeling of him parting my folds and kissing me a final time, right over my swollen, aching clit, before the kiss morphs into a gentle sucking that has my eyes rolling into the back of my head.

"That feels so good," I breathe. "So, so good."

I hear him make a satisfied sound against my sensitive flesh before his tongue comes out and licks my pussy in one long swipe, dipping into my channel before swirling back out and over my clit again. When I dare to look down at his dark head between my legs, the sight of it makes my stomach tighten, and I can't stop myself from burying my fingers in his short hair with one hand while the other is still holding me up.

"Kenneth," I whimper, all other words failing me. "Oh, Kenneth..."

"You taste so good, baby girl," he tells me huskily between devastating licks while his hands undo the ties on the sides of my bikini. "I can't wait to taste you coming for me."

He licks and sucks in abandon when the bottoms fall away, and I'm completely bared to him, His eyes zero in on my face, trying to figure out which ones make me react the most and sticking to them when my legs start to shake. He alternates quick sucks of my clit with swirls of his tongue over the sensitive bud, the pleasure from it all collecting in my core in a ball that just grows brighter and brighter.

I try to hold still, try to just let him work, but my body has other ideas. My hips thrust in time to his tongue, something inside me knowing exactly how to move as I get closer and closer to exploding.

When I'm sure that I can't take anymore, that I'm too full of pleasure to survive another minute, I feel my inner walls start to flutter and the bright ball of need inside me begins to burst. It's so powerful it short-circuits my thoughts and I become nothing but a trembling mess.

Moans fall from my lips without any sort of filter now, and Kenneth growls, reaching up to tug the cups of my top aside to

pinch and flick my nipples as my orgasm starts to hit me. The extra sensation is all I need, and now I'm detonating, consumed by the fire he's built in me.

I grab his head with both hands now, working my hips as he continues eating me out while I come. When it hits in full, I can barely control myself as it wracks my body, all of my nerve endings firing in brilliant pleasure, all stemming from the point of his mouth on my pussy.

Finally, as it begins to ebb and I feel my body wanting to collapse bonelessly to the ground, Kenneth pulls me oh-so-gently back into the water with him so he can hold all my weight as I shiver through the aftershocks. He leans me back enough to suck my nipples between his teeth a few times as I come back to earth, ending the entire encounter with just as much good feelings as it began.

Wrapping my arms around his neck, I can't even find it in me to feel any sort of shame or embarrassment about what just happened. The warm, refreshing water, the feeling of my nipples and still-bare pussy flush with Kenneth's skin, and the way he holds me all combine to make me feel loose and relaxed. And ridiculously satisfied.

KENNETH

She stayed with me all night, and it's that fact alone that allows me to let her go in the morning so I can settle my work obligations.

I wake up to Kasey sliding out from under the covers and watch her try to silently get her clothes on. We spent the rest of the day and night in my suite after she let me taste her to my heart's content in the pool, and hour after hour, she became more comfortable with me. I didn't press her anymore sexually besides a soak in the sunken tub in the en suite bathroom to clean the chlorine from our skin where I took the opportunity to bring her to her peak again with my fingers, so why is it that she's trying to flee now?

She tries to pull her shoes on but still doesn't realize I'm already awake. Does she think she's going to leave without saying a single word to me? I know I'm not going to get to see her at all today and my hunger for her is insatiable, the least she can do is acknowledge what we both know is building between us.

I sit up slowly, back against the headboard. "Leaving so soon?"

Kasey freezes and then laughs nervously, only one shoe on at this point. "Yeah...I was just going to go back to my suite to unwind and then maybe book a volcano tour or something since you said you were busy all day today."

I like the idea of her enjoying the island on my dime, but I'm stuck on the first part of her sentence. "Unwind? What do you

mean by that exactly?”

Now that she's caught, she sits on the edge of the bed to fasten her sandal, but she doesn't look at me when she speaks. “Well, you have to admit...this is a lot, what is happening here with us, and I can't help but feel a little guilty because of...” Kasey pauses like it's hard for her to say the rest. “Because of Devin. I wish I could have met you first...”

Hearing my son's name on her lips fills me with anger at first, but at the core of it, my feelings are complicated on the issue. It's not as if I set out to hurt Devin or steal his girlfriend, but he's the one that made the choices to set this entire chain of events into action. Kasey is a person, not a prize, but at the same time, I'm claiming her as my own, so....

If my son didn't want a man to take care of the woman that he took for granted, then he shouldn't have acted like a little boy in the first place. It just so happens that in teaching him this lesson, I also get the added benefit of having Kasey and getting to explore more of THIS.

“Don't worry about him. He's not going to give you any trouble.”

Kasey doesn't seem convinced. She sighs and her shoulders slump. “There is no way this isn't going to cause issues between you two.”

“Let my son be my concern, Kasey. He has nothing to do with you anymore.” I'm getting more annoyed by the second with the topic of conversation and the fact that she planned to leave when I was still sleeping, so I lean forward and grab her thin wrist in my hand, tracing circles on her skin. “Can I see you tonight?”

She almost immediately agrees but stops herself, even if she keeps darting her eyes to where I'm touching her. “Should we...I don't know...give this some room to breathe?”

I tug her towards me until she's in my arms, her back to my chest, reaching around her to cup her chin in my hand so I can speak directly into her ear. “I need no room, Kasey. No time apart. Are we on the same page?”

Kasey shivers. “Y-yes.”

“So I’ll see you tonight, then?” She nods, and I nip at the shell of her ear. “Good girl. Go take your tour, visit the spa, whatever you need to do. But you’re mine tonight, and I don’t want to hear any argument.”

“Okay, Kenneth,” she sighs, her body softening in my embrace. “I understand.”

I STEP into the bustling conference room, feeling like a predator among a sea of prey. I can sense their apprehension, their eagerness to please me, and like always, it gives me a sense of satisfaction. There’s a reason my company flourished where others floundered. I am a natural leader, and things always go much easier when the people around me accept this and fall in line.

As I take my seat at the head of the table, I catch sight of Devin, and my eyes narrow. I told him that he better attend every work function he’s scheduled to during the retreat, but even though it’s my own command that has brought him here, I still hate that I have to see my son so soon. I refuse to be ashamed of Kasey, but his temper is surely going to be too hot this soon after their breakup, which will make his behavior unpredictable. I make a point of staring him down, daring him to challenge me.

I’ve got a schedule full of work obligations, and throughout the day, I catch glimpses of Devin, always lurking just beyond the edge of my vision. He tries to engage me in conversation a few times, but I brush him off with a curt nod or a dismissive gesture. I’m not interested in playing nice with him, not after what he’s done to Kasey. I’ll tell him that she’s mine soon enough, but there’s no reason to have him losing his cool in front of all these other professionals.

If I’m being honest with myself, there’s the chance I might lose it, too, but I’ve got the benefit of years of controlling myself that he still lacks.

Devin tries to wedge his way in between me and a potential investor at one networking event, and I grab his shoulder in a firm grip. “Careful, boy.”

He jerks out of my grip and gives me a sneer. “Enough, Dad. I know why you’re pissed at me. Multiple people have told me you were walking with Kasey on the beach yesterday.”

The investor, wanting to stay out of the confrontation, disappears. Meanwhile, I feel a surge of adrenaline. He knows, and I’ve missed out on my chance to break the news to him myself. Nothing to be done now, though. “And? It’s none of your business. You broke up with her, remember?”

Devin barks a laugh. “Whatever, Dad. Good luck with all of that.”

He walks away before I can say anything else, and I let him go, wanting to keep the disturbance of the other guests to a minimum. My anger and frustration build. There’s no way this is the end of our conversation about Kasey. Not by a long shot. Devin is going to have to know that he’s not going to get in my way when it comes to her, family or not.

Devin is still my son, but he will have to tread carefully around me if there is any hope of reconciling. I feel disappointed in the young man that I once considered my protege, the obvious choice to take over the company. Devin isn’t just my own flesh and blood, he’s someone I trusted, someone I believed in. But when I saw him treating Kasey with such disregard, I couldn’t help but feel disgusted. Maybe in time, we can get back to the way things were as long as he can swallow the bitter pill that Kasey is mine and mine alone.

Not yet, though. I once saw him as a potential leader in my company, but now I see that his arrogance has gotten the best of him. He thinks he’s entitled to anything he wants, including the women who work for him, if the way he was pawing all over this secretary at the gala is any indication. His issues don’t start and end with his ex. They’re deep inside of him, and he’s going to have to be willing to fix them himself.

I spend the rest of the work event lost in melancholy about the issue of my son. Part of me is angry that my seduction of

Kasey has to be interrupted by thoughts of Devin, but she's worth whatever trouble my son brings with him. Still...if I can find a way to have her, while also setting Devin on the path to being the man I know he can be—a better version of himself—then I will do whatever it takes to have both. But if I have to let Devin struggle, I will, even if it hurts us both.

The day is almost over, and I'm almost free, when things go off the rails. I overhear Devin talking to another coworker about Kasey, and the sound of her name in his mouth makes me see red immediately. He tells the man he's talking to that he didn't get what he wanted from Kasey, but he's done with her anyway. Then, he adds that he didn't expect Kasey to try to get back at him by getting romantic with his father for revenge.

I clench my jaw, stalking Devin without hesitation. If he was anyone else besides my son, I'd destroy him for *daring* to say such a thing. Only the love I have for him keeps me from knocking him to the ground.

Before he can say more, I interrupt Devin, "That's not true, and you know it." My tone is low and menacing, and I'm aware that I'm attracting the attention of other people around us. Devin looks up at me with an annoyed frown and my irritation surges. No one talks about Kasey and me like this. No one, including my son.

"What are you talking about?" he asks, raising an eyebrow.

"Don't play stupid with me, Devin. I'm talking about Kasey," I say, my voice rising. "She's not using me for revenge, and if I hear you say that again, you'll regret it. I promise you."

Devin scoffs. "Sure, old man. Keep telling yourself that."

I take a step forward, my fists clenched at my sides. I want to punch Devin, to wipe that smirk off his face, but I know I can't. I'm not just the CEO and owner of the company, I'm also his father, and my reputation will burn to the ground if I can't keep my cool in public. I force myself to take a deep breath and step back.

“Just stay away from Kasey,” I say through gritted teeth. “We’ll talk when we’re back home.”

Devin, the poor fool, takes my attempting to keep the peace as an opportunity to get one more snide remark in. “Maybe we can commiserate about how Kasey wouldn’t put out for either of us.”

I snap, grabbing him by the collar of his shirt and dragging him to me. I speak quietly, but my voice is acidic. “Listen to me right now, boy. If you know what’s good for you, you won’t ever speak her name again. Like it or not, she wants me, and I aim to have her, so you’re going to have to set your fragile little ego aside if you want to ever have a future at this company, or ever inherit a dime from me. She’s mine, and it’s none of your goddamn business. Do you understand?”

Devin’s smirk fades, and he looks afraid, almost terrified. He nods curtly, and I drop him to his feet. He opens his mouth like he wants to say something, fear in his eyes, but thinks better of it and hurries away, fixing his collar as he does. I’m left standing there with the entire room looking at me, seething and burning with rage.

To hell with all of them. Devin is my son, and if I have to put him in his place, I will.

ONCE I’M able to escape the networking event, I head for the beach, desperate to get some air and some space from the crush of people that seem to always be around me. The shore is quiet, and the sound of the waves shushes across the sand. The stars are out in full force, and the moon is high in the sky. It’s a beautiful night, but I can’t appreciate it fully with all the chaos in my head.

Devin. Kasey.

They both spin through my mind like a hurricane. I told her I wanted to see her tonight, but now I have no idea what will happen if I do. All of my self-control is long spent on controlling myself around my son, and with how much I desire

Kasey, there's no doubt in my mind that I would be all over her.

I'd much rather be cooling my frustration by filling her up with my cock over and over again, but I have to keep reminding myself that she's a virgin. If I'm going to take her innocence, I want to do it in a careful, planned way. I want it to be perfect for her.

So, that's why I'm pacing across the sand restlessly instead of appearing at the door to her suite and kissing her senseless as an appetizer for what I really want to do to her. Fuck her. Claim her. Make her mine in every way.

I drag my hand down my face, inhaling slowly to try and cool my blood. It's ridiculous what this woman does to me, how she frays my nerves to nothing, tempting me with nothing but her mere existence.

As I continue to walk, I hear a familiar voice calling out my name from far behind me. "Kenneth, wait up!"

It's Kasey, I'd know her voice anywhere. I turn around, and there she is, jogging towards me. My heart slams in my ribcage as I take in her beauty. Her hair is pulled back in a ponytail, and she's wearing a matching dusky rose yoga set that outlines the dips and curves of her body perfectly.

Fuck me. This little temptress is going to be the death of me.

"Hey," she says, a little out of breath as she reaches me, a smile on her face. "I've been looking for you."

I clear my throat and manage to say, "What are you doing out here so late?"

"I couldn't sleep," she replies. "I needed some fresh air. Plus, I thought you wanted to see me tonight..." Kasey trails off, and I immediately regret not at least letting her know that I needed some time to calm down.

"I needed to clear my head," I say, not wanting to go into the details of my argument with Devin. "I didn't want to come to you in the state of mind I was in earlier. It's been...let's just say, a rough day."

“Oh. Well...should I leave?”

I can't answer her, not with how badly I want to pull her to me and crush my lips against hers. I refuse to tell her about the way Devin forced me to manhandle him, but she deserves some sort of explanation. We stand there in silence for a moment, and I can feel the tension between us.

She must sense my inner turmoil because she takes a step closer to me and says softly, “Kenneth, I heard there was some commotion at the networking dinner tonight. I'm sorry if I've caused any trouble between you and Devin. I didn't mean for any of this to happen.”

“It's not your fault,” I reply, shaking my head. “Devin is just jealous. He can't stand the fact that I have feelings for you.”

Kasey's eyes widened in surprise, and I realize my mistake. I hadn't meant to reveal my feelings for her like this, but now the cat's out of the bag. I brace myself for her reaction.

To my surprise, Kasey smiles, and she takes my hand. “I have feelings for you too, Kenneth,” Her voice is full of affection. “I've been trying to fight it, but I can't anymore. I want to be with you.”

Fierce hunger ripples through me, and I pull her into my arms, holding her tightly. I feel like I'm on top of the world, and for once, all the chaos in my head fades away. In this moment, it's just me and Kasey, and nothing else matters.

We stand there on the beach, wrapped in each other's arms, and I know that my life will never be the same again. Kasey has taken my heart, and I'm powerless to resist her. I have bent the world to my will for so long, conquering challenge after challenge in my rise to the top, but this little woman has undone me.

I take a deep breath and steel myself for what's to come. If we're going to be honest with each other, I know I need to tell Kasey what I heard Devin telling others, even though I don't want to hurt her. But it's better that she knows the truth, and I'll be there to protect her from Devin's lies and manipulation.

“Kasey,” I cup her precious face in my hands, brushing my thumbs over her cheekbones before releasing her. “We need to talk.”

Her face falls, and there’s fear and worry in her eyes. “What is it?” she asks, her voice barely above a whisper.

I take the time to choose my words carefully. “It’s about Devin. As much as I don’t want to talk about my son, I overheard him talking to someone earlier. He said some things about you.”

Her eyes widen and hurt and confusion pass across her face. “What did he say?” she asks, her voice trembling.

“That he knows we’ve been spending time together, and he believes you’re only using me as revenge to get back at him.” I have to rein in my fury and keep it far out of my tone so she doesn’t see how much his words bothered me.

Kasey’s face crumples, and she looks like she’s about to cry. “I would never do that.”

There really was no doubt in me, but her words still settle my soul as I pull her into my embrace. “I know. I believe you.”

She sniffs and wipes away her tears. “I can’t believe he would say something like that. I know he’s a jerk, but that’s a new low, even for him.”

“He’s a liar and a manipulator,” I say, my voice low and menacing. “I won’t let him hurt you, Kasey. I’ll always be here to protect you.”

She looks up at me with gratitude and admiration in her eyes. “Thank you, Kenneth. I know this must be so hard for you, but I’m...well, I’m really glad I met you.”

I lean in and kiss her, my lips meeting hers in a tender, moonlit embrace. It feels like the world around us fades away, and it’s just the two of us in that moment. When we separate, I touch my forehead to hers, whispering, “Stay the night with me. I want to show you just how much you affect me, sweet Kasey.”

Her green eyes go wide. “Do you mean...?”

The energy between us changes from affection to heated in the space of a single second, and when I touch her this time, gripping her hips, there is nothing sweet about it. “Yes. I’m going to make you mine.”

THE WALK back to the resort and the elevator ride up to my suite are taut with sexual tension. Kasey is almost vibrating from what I’m sure is a combination of nervousness and need, and I’m already hard as steel before we even make it back to the room.

I give her no time to be afraid now, sweeping her into my embrace and kissing her hard as soon as the door shuts behind us. She jumps in surprise but melts into my arms almost instantly, her tongue meeting mine in a dance that is becoming more and more familiar between the two of us.

My hands roam her curves while my mouth leaves hers and kisses a heated line from her jaw down her neck, sucking at her pulse point and feeling how quickly her heartbeat is racing under my lips.

Pacing myself is difficult, more so than I imagined, and I have to change things up before I push her too fast. Wordlessly, I pick her up, loving how heavy she’s breathing, and she wraps her arms around my neck.

Placing her on the edge of my bed, I take a single step back and start to undo the buttons of my shirt. “Touch me,” I demand. “Explore my body, Kasey. I want you to know me well by the time I’m inside you.”

Her eyes go wide, but she’s a brave girl, and after licking her lips and nibbling the bottom one a bit in thought, she slips two fingers under my belt loops and pulls me forward so I’m within easy reach. Kasey undoes my belt, then the buttons and the zipper while I finish removing my shirt. She’s seen me like this before, but it’s what’s under my briefs that is going to be brand new to her.

There's the slightest tremor in her hands as she pushes my pants to the ground. I step out of them, and now she's confronted with the length of my hard member, only separated by a single layer of fabric.

"Can I...?" she starts, and I pinch her chin between my thumb and forefinger, making her look at me.

"Anything you want, baby girl. Anything."

She gulps and nods, fingers going beneath the waistband and slowly, so slowly, pulling my briefs down until my cock jumps out. I immediately grab it, stroking my length while she finishes undressing me until I'm totally bare for her.

Kasey finally looks at my cock, and with one hand, wraps her fingers around it. I'm so much taller than her, so she stands, one hand moving over the length of me while her other one traces the lines of my chest and stomach with an awed expression.

"Like this," I murmur, putting my hand over hers and helping her stroke me. "It feels so fucking good when you touch me, Kasey."

And it really does. Seeing how unfamiliar this all is for her, but how she faces it so bravely because she wants me just as much as I want her, is a heady thing. No visual can compare to the feel of her silky skin on me, gripping me firmly while I guide her stroke after stroke.

"It's hotter than I thought it would be," she confesses with a nervous laugh.

"Just imagine how it will feel deep inside you," I reply, and Kasey sucks in a breath.

She takes her time getting to know my body, and while it does give me time to breathe, her touch has me so inflamed that I'm positive I'm not going to be able to hold back much longer. Slowly, I start to undress her in kind, happily discovering that her yoga top has a bra built in. As soon as I pull it over her head and raised arms, her breasts are right there waiting for me, her rosy nipples already hard.

With two fingers on her chest, I push her back down to a sitting position. Before she can complain at not being able to touch me anymore, I kneel in front of her, and her words fail her. I bracket her ribs with my hands, high enough so my thumbs can flick her nipples enough to make her gasp, and slowly lower my mouth to one.

Using my hands to plump her tits while I suck on them has Kasey making high-pitched, needy sounds, squirming on the bed as I use my teeth and tongue in quick succession on one nipple, and then the other, wanting her to be as wet and ready for me as possible when the time comes. I learn quickly just what she likes—a little nip followed by a soothing swirl of my tongue, and I give it to her until her hands are cupping my head and her nails scraping against my scalp.

Releasing her, I start to work her pants down her legs. The soft material rolls down easily and takes her panties with them, but not before I can see how damp they are. My rock-hard tool jerks, desperate to drive home within her, but she's not yet ready. As if on instinct, her legs fall open for me, and I'm gifted the sight of her sweet pussy, shining with her wetness and already swollen with arousal.

"It gets me so fucking hot to see how turned on you are, Kasey," I grit out, the desire to have her thrumming through me almost painfully. "I'm going to taste you again, but you're not going to come for me until you're coming on my cock. Do you understand?"

Pupils blown wide with lust, Kasey nods. Grabbing her knees, I spread them even wider and kiss a path down her stomach to her mound until I can finally swipe my tongue over her entire pussy before sucking her clit between my lips.

Her reaction is instant and powerful, her muscles tensing as if electrified. She's the most beautiful thing I've ever seen, and even more so with her taste coating my tongue while I lash her clit with it.

Now that pleasure is coursing through her, I start with one finger, sinking it into her channel slowly, vision going white

with how tight she is. God, I can't even imagine how good she's going to feel.

"Oh," Kasey whimpers, and when I'm two knuckles in, I pull out and add a second finger. It's difficult to even get inside her, but her inner walls pull my fingers in, bit by bit. Kasey has her head thrown back, loving the combination of my mouth and fingers, but now I've reached that thin membrane that is blocking my way.

I don't warn her, knowing it will just make her tense up, instead just scissoring my fingers and pressing forward, opening her fully to me even as she hisses in pain and shock. I suck her clit once more, swirling my tongue around it at the same time I crook my fingers inside her, banishing the split second of hurt with as much good sensation as possible.

"Such a brave girl," I praise her when she rides it out without pushing me off her. "You're doing so good."

Kasey gives me a tight nod. Little by little, she relaxes again, and when she starts unconsciously working her hips to meet my mouth and fingers, I know that she's finally ready for me.

She makes a sound of disappointment as I kiss up her body, but it ceases when I suck her nipples between my teeth again and nibble until she's keening.

When I reach her mouth, I kiss her slowly and deeply, hitching one of her legs over my shoulder as I do so. She's lost in the kiss until she feels the head of my cock grazing her pussy, and her eyes shoot open.

"I don't know if it will fit," she babbles, a thread of fear in her voice. "What if--"

I silence her with my mouth on hers before saying, "Shhh. Kasey, the pain is done. I promise I'm going to make you feel good, baby girl, just trust me. Can you do that?"

"O-okay," she whispers, looping her arms around my neck. "I'm ready, then. I trust you."

Her sweet words, her utter faith in me, fills my chest with warmth and...and with love. Fuck, I love this innocent, fearless little girl even if we've only just met.

Gripping my cock, I guide it to her entrance, pushing the head forward until it's past her lips and just starting to push inside. Kasey tenses, and I soothe her with soft kisses down her neck, all the while pushing further and further inside of her tightness, fitting myself in her inch by inch.

Her heart is hammering in her chest, and she's breathing in quick, gasping little breaths, but Kasey lets me fill her, and the sensation of her walls clenching around me and pulling me in is almost too much to bear.

Her pussy is so tight that I think for a second she might be right, I might not fit, but as the minutes pass, I get more and more inside her until finally, she's stretched out around me and my entire cock is deep, deep inside of her.

"That's it, baby girl," I groan. "I'm inside you, Kasey. All the way."

"Oh my God," she breathes. "Kenneth. Kenneth."

I rock myself against her, letting her adjust to the invasion before pulling out slowly and filling her up again. Kasey loves this, her spine arching and her mouth falling open as I do so, over and over, picking up speed as I go.

When I'm finally fucking her in earnest, I brace myself with one hand on the bed beside her head while the other travels across her body, flicking and pinching her nipples before sliding down to where we are joined and pressing my thumb to her swollen clit.

Kasey nearly screams at this, her hands tightening on my arms and legs beginning to shake as I make patient, deliberate circles over her clit with my thumb. Her channel is clenching me so tightly, the feeling of it is unreal, soaking wet and so hot.

My balls tighten up to my body, and I know I don't have long before I'm spilling in her. Thankfully, she's close too, and I know without a doubt that her orgasm is going to pull me right over the edge with her.

Pistoning into her pussy again and again, I continue caressing her clit, moving my body forward until she's bent at just the

right angle that the head of my cock slams into her g-spot with each thrust. Kasey grips me hard enough that her nails are like marks in my skin, and her legs are shaking to the point I'm afraid she'll come apart at the seams.

I'm going to fucking come inside her. Fuck. *Fuck*, she feels so good.

"Kenneth, I'm going to—ah!"

Kasey can't even finish the thought before I feel her pussy start to clench and spasm, and she's coming so hard that tears roll down her beautiful face. At first, her mouth is open in a silent scream of pleasure, which transforms into a wordless keening, her entire body quivering with the force of it.

It's all I need, and as her orgasm wracks her, I explode, seed covering the inside of her as I continue to fill her with jerky thrusts. I roar my release to the ceiling, the sensation white hot and blinding. It seems to go on forever, more and more come shooting out of me and into her, marking her once and for all as mine.

Kasey is *mine*.

It takes all my strength not to collapse on her as the orgasm begins to ebb. I roll onto my side, taking her with me so we are chest-to-chest. I slowly slide out of her before holding her so tightly to me that I don't know where I end and she begins. Little tremors roll across her every few moments, and the look on her sweet face is pure satisfaction.

"How do you feel?" I ask, dragging my lips across hers in a ghost of a kiss.

"Good. Amazing," Kasey yawns. "Really, really tired."

Chuckling, I stroke her hair and pivot so she can lay her head on my chest. "Sleep, then. We'll shower together later."

Kasey makes a noise of contentment and snuggles into me, her trust in me once again solidifying the depth of my feelings for her. I've made her mine in all ways but one, and if I have my way, I'll complete that last step with a ring on her finger soon enough.

KASEY

The first time I wake up is when Kenneth brushes my hair from my forehead to lay a kiss there, telling me he's going to work out and he'll be back with breakfast before I know it. I'm sore but warm and content, so I mumble an agreement and roll back over, pulling the blanket with me. The sun isn't even up, so there's no way I want to be.

The second time I wake up is to the sound of my phone buzzing on the nightstand. It's still mostly dark outside, the sky painted colors of pink and red, but at least it doesn't feel like the middle of the night anymore.

I groggily reach for the still-vibrating device, expecting it to be something from work. My suspicions are correct, but instead of a useless email that I've been included in along with everyone else in the company, it's a priority email from my boss—the CEO of a company that just so happens to be a direct competitor to Kenneth's. My heart races as I open the email and read the subject line: "Interview for web design position with tuition reimbursement."

I can't believe it. Web design is what I'm in school for, but as of right now, I can only afford to go to school part-time while also working so I can afford my degree.

Tuition reimbursement would change everything for me, and it would change my degree path from six years going part-time to maybe less than three! I thought I'd have to climb the company ladder from my lowly IT intern position at a snail's

pace, but working in my field while also finishing my degree is a fast track I never expected.

I have no idea what prompted the company to offer me such a thing, but I'm not about to look a gift horse in the mouth. The email explains that the job is in Seattle, where the digital portion of the company is located, and they're looking for someone to start as soon as possible. I struggle to a sitting position, kicking the blankets off from where they are tangled around my legs, and read the email over again at least 10 times.

I've never applied for this job, and the contents of the message are cryptic, reading "On the merit of your references, we want to extend the opportunity to interview for a web designer position based out of Seattle, Washington with available tuition reimbursement for full-time work. Please respond asap to set up a time."

What the heck is going on here?

Excitement and fear clash inside me. Seattle is so far from New York and Kenneth. If I take this job, what will happen to us? Will our relationship survive the distance?

On that note, what even is our relationship? There's the possibility that I'm expecting too much, but after the way last night went, tender and intense, I can't imagine that he isn't feeling just as invested as I am. Short time frame and age gap be damned.

Something tells me he will not be thrilled with a long-distance romance either. I know he's busy with work, but I can't imagine not seeing him for weeks at a time. That isn't even considering that I'd be moving to work for a company that is in direct competition with him. There's a big difference between interning for a company and taking on a full-time position that will take me hundreds of miles away from home.

I rake my hands through my tangled hair, staring at the email, trying to figure out what to do. I could decline the interview, but I know I'll regret it. This is my chance to make my dream a reality. But if I go, what about Kenneth? Will he understand? Or will he feel like I'm abandoning or, worse, betraying him?

I take a deep breath, feeling the weight of the decision settle on my shoulders. I know I have to talk to him about it, to see what he thinks. Maybe we can make it work. Or maybe this will be the end of us. Either way, I have to go for it. It's too important to let go.

I'VE AGONIZED, with no exaggeration, all day about the job offer. With Kenneth once again occupied with work, I spent the morning and afternoon enjoying the spa and exploring the grounds of the resort, using the alone time to parse through my thoughts and see if it's possible for me to come up with a conclusion that will let me have both my career and Kenneth.

His text comes in as I'm dozing by the rooftop pool of his suite in one of the plush lounge chairs, letting the evening sun kiss my skin. It reads, "I've got a date scheduled for us tonight. Be ready by 9 pm. See you soon baby girl."

I let out a slow breath, any excitement I might have over a special date somewhat tempered by the news I have to tell Kenneth. He's a logical man, so maybe there's some way that he will understand. For some reason, though, I'm not hopeful.

Kenneth sends a light dinner of salad and buttered bread to the suite around 7 pm, but I don't have much of an appetite. When he finally arrives around 8:30 pm, some of my stress evaporates at being able to wrap my arms around his neck as he kisses me thoroughly.

"Easy, Kasey," he chuckles, slowly moving me back with his hands on my shoulders. "If you keep kissing me like that, we're going to end up back in bed and the date I've got planned will go to waste."

"I just missed you is all," I tell him honestly, and his normally hard eyes soften.

"Hearing that is music to my ears, baby girl, but we've got to get moving if we're going to make it on time." His hands slide down my back to cup my asscheeks through the sundress I've

thrown on. “But if you want to show me how much you miss me later, I won’t complain.”

As tempting as it is to stay in, we’re in paradise, and I don’t want to spend all our time indoors. Kenneth links our hands together and leads me out into the night, and we walk about fifteen minutes along a winding concrete path through the resort until we reach a smaller, more secluded building.

The air is cool and crisp, and I can see the stars shining brightly above us. Kenneth leads me up a staircase bolted onto the side of the building, and when we reach the top, I can see that the rooftop has been transformed into a stargazing oasis, with telescopes set up and blankets spread out.

In the middle of it all is a table with chilled wine and a charcuterie board. It’s beautiful, and when I turn to look at Kenneth, he’s smiling down at me with a look that is full of affection. The idea of stargazing under the clear Hawaiian sky is just too romantic to ignore. I take his hand, feeling grateful that he’s here with me to share this experience.

“This is amazing,” I breathe. “You planned this all yourself?”

“For the most part. The resort was more than happy to help me set it up when I told them that cost was no issue.” He smirks.

Next to the multiple telescopes, an astronomer greets us with a warm smile and guides us through how to use the machines. He shows us various constellations and tells us the fascinating myths and stories behind each one.

I’m captivated by the knowledge he’s sharing, and I find myself looking at Kenneth with wonder as we learn together. Never in my life would I think a man would be creative enough to come up with something like this just to make me happy.

After a while, the astronomer departs, leaving us to stargaze on our own. Kenneth seems to take more pleasure in having me look through the telescope myself while he stands behind me, hands drifting from my shoulders, down my back, and up once more. It’s like he’s drinking in my enjoyment, and it’s more satisfying to him than participating himself.

While the stars continue to wheel above us, we lie down on one of the blankets and snuggle up close to each other, sipping wine as we gaze up at the stars. There are cushions beneath the blankets, for which I'm thankful because I could spend all night out here if given the chance. The night sky is so bright and clear, and I feel like I'm in a dream, the outline of the Milky Way stretching across the sky. I feel so small and insignificant in the grand scheme of things.

As we talk and soak in the comfort of each other's touch, my inner turmoil about the job interview fades away. Kenneth has a way of making me forget about all my worries, and I'm so grateful for his presence in my life. We talk about our hopes and dreams, sharing our deepest desires with each other. It's a beautiful and intimate moment, and I feel so lucky to be experiencing it with him.

Eventually, we fall silent, just enjoying the peaceful setting and each other's company. The stars twinkle above us, and my heart overflows with love and gratitude. *Love?* I think quickly, surprised by the thought of being in love already, but it just feels so natural. So real.

"I'll never forget this moment, Kenneth," I sigh, moving closer until we're connected at almost every available point.

"Neither will I," he agrees, kissing my temple. "We'll reminisce on it when we're old and gray."

His words cause a lump to form in my throat, and for a second, I consider just letting everything remain as is for the night and breaking the news to him about the job interview tomorrow... but that's not fair. After all the effort he's put in, Kenneth deserves to know.

"Kasey, are you okay?" Kenneth's voice breaks through my thoughts, and I realize that I've been quiet for too long.

I take a deep breath, trying to steady myself. "Yeah, I'm fine. This is just...amazing. Thank you for this."

He smiles at me, and I feel a sense of warmth and, once more, love, radiating through my entire being. In this moment, I

can't imagine leaving him, but I know I need to consider all my options.

As we lie there, gazing up at the stars, I feel conflicted. On one hand, I'm swept up in the romance of the night and the love I feel for Kenneth, despite all the things that should make our connection impossible. But on the other hand, the job interview looms over me, a reminder that I need to consider my career and my future.

I know I need to talk to Kenneth about it eventually, but for now, I want to focus on this beautiful moment we're sharing together.

He raises himself on his elbow, hovering over me, his handsome face lit only by starlight and moonlight. Our lips touch softly, and the kiss starts to deepen, but suddenly, I break away, my heart racing.

"Kenneth, I have to tell you something," I say, my voice shaking.

"What is it?" he asks, looking at me curiously.

"I got an email today from the CEO of the company I'm interning with. They want me to interview for a web design position... in Seattle," I swallow hard once I get the words out, biting my lip nervously.

His gaze shutters, but he doesn't look bothered yet. "Turn it down."

My mouth falls open in surprise. "Huh? Why would I do that? Tuition reimbursement is included in the job and I'm really considering taking it! It's a great opportunity, and I could come back to New York—"

"So all this time you've been looking for jobs in other states?" Kenneth's voice rises in anger. "Why didn't you tell me before?"

"It just came out of nowhere. I didn't know what to do," I say, trying to explain. "I didn't apply on my own! My resume must have been in the system and matched the criteria they were looking for or something." I reach for him, and he pulls away.

“Kenneth, please, I’ve been really enjoying this time we’ve spent together...”

“Is that why you’re with me?” he asks, his voice laced with bitterness. “So you can use me until you find something better?”

“No, of course not!” I protest, but he’s already standing up, his face twisted.

“I can’t believe you’d do this to me, Kasey,” he says, shaking his head in disbelief. “I thought we had something real here. I guess I’m worth about as much to you as my son, right?”

I’m on my feet as soon as he is, begging him to let me explain myself more, heart pounding so hard I can hear its echo in my own ears. This is spiraling out of control so fast that I don’t know what the hell to do. I never expected that this would be his response, and I’m panicking!

I watch in silence as he storms off, leaving the remnants of our date still set up on the blanket. Tears prick at my eyes, and I’m rocked by a sense of overwhelming sadness. He must think I’m a terrible person, or that Devin was right all along about me just using him for revenge...

Without anything else to do and feeling numb, I sink back down to the blanket and nurse my glass of champagne, hoping beyond hope that once Kenneth cools off, he will come back to me.

I sit there for what feels like hours, staring up at the stars like I’ve done all night, lost in my thoughts. The night that was once so romantic now feels like a complete disaster. How could things have gone so wrong? I thought we were connecting so well, but now I feel like everything is ruined. I don’t know what to do now. Sure, it’s wild to be falling for a man after so short of a time, but what I feel for him is *real*.

I take a deep breath, trying to calm myself down. Maybe I should have told Kenneth about the job offer this morning, but it all happened so fast. I didn’t have a chance to process it myself before I was telling him, too. Any hope I had of

Kenneth helping me decide what to do about the interview is now dashed. I made the wrong call somewhere along the line.

Maybe...maybe this is for the best...

But no, that's not what I want. I want Kenneth, I want this relationship to work. But how can it when he doesn't trust me? How can I make him see that this job offer is unexpected, that I didn't plan for this to happen?

Ugh! Finishing the glass of champagne, I sit it aside and wrap my arms around myself, letting the wind pick up the strands of my hair and making it dance around my face. I hate how vulnerable I feel right now. But I know that I need to talk to Kenneth, to try and make things right between us. I stand up, brush off my dress, and head back to my own room, hoping he'll be there waiting for me.

The walk back to the main part of the resort is long, but it gives me time to clear my head and get my emotions under control. I know I have to make Kenneth understand that I'm not leading him on and that there is a path forward for us somewhere if he can just work with me. As I reach the door, I hesitate. What if he is inside but he's still angry with me? What if he doesn't want to talk? I take a deep breath and push the door open.

Inside, the suite is empty, except for my luggage and my things scattered about right where I left them. With a lump in my throat, I exhale slowly and begin to pick my things up, packing them back into my suitcase. Each small thing I grab feels like another piece of my broken heart.

KENNETH

Tuning out the presentation about the correlation between increased growth and employee satisfaction, I pull out my slim laptop and power it up. No one else at the long table gives it a second thought, but they don't know that the last thing I'm doing is taking notes.

In truth, I can't stop thinking about Kasey's interview. It's like a worm burrowing into my brain, gnawing away at my concentration. I've thrown myself into work to try and forget about it, but every time I glance at my phone and don't see her name there, I feel this sickening mix of anger and anxiety.

I can't believe she would even consider leaving me for some other job. Wasn't she happy with me? Wasn't I enough? And who the hell who offered her the interview?

My own company is what I should be concentrating on, but it's impossible. It takes less than a minute to figure out that Kasey is interning at a rival firm—Bradshaw Investments—and I clench my jaw at the knowledge. Mark Bradshaw isn't as successful as I am, but his company does well enough. That being said, he's an asshole, and I've disliked him more and more each time we've had the unfortunate chance to be in the same room together.

Still, we aren't actively antagonistic towards each other, so I swallow my pride and send him an email that, under any other circumstances, I would never stoop to doing. The lie rolls off my fingers and onto the keyboard effortlessly, and when I hit

send, I can only hope he doesn't fact-check anything I've just said.

Mark, the email reads. A friend of the family, Kasey Mulligan, has told me that she received an interview offer for a significant jump in position at your company—from intern to web designer. She said that tuition reimbursement is being offered, but that it would require a move, which naturally makes her nervous. I was wondering if you could send me a sample of the employment contract she would need to sign so I can have my legal team look it over for her? I'm sure everything is above board, but just to make her more comfortable. I'm sure you understand. The girl is more than capable, but she seems flustered because she doesn't remember even applying for the position, but feels positively about it nonetheless. I'm sure you understand.

Kenneth

It doesn't take him long to get back to me, and the presentation I'm still sitting at is wrapping up as I read his response, my confusion only growing with each line that I take in.

Kenneth,

No problem. The contract is attached. Yes, she's a bit young, and we normally only offer tuition reimbursement for employees pursuing their masters, but she attached numerous letters of recommendation and her cover letter that came with her resume was so compelling that I figured we'd give her a shot. Let me know if I can do anything else for you.

Mark

So she did apply on her own, which means she lied right to my face. I close the laptop, forcing myself not to slam it shut, and pull out my phone, typing out what I plan to be the final message I will ever send to Kasey. I may care for her deeply and be so attracted to her that it short-circuits my brain, but I can't abide a liar.

Even if, lying there under the stars with her, I had been ready to tell her that I loved her.

Fuck. I will never, *never* get involved with anyone again. In no small part because no one will ever compare to her, liar or not.

Talk to Mark, I type, He says you sent him your resume, complete with cover letter and letters of recommendation. Not sure why you felt the need to lie to me, but here we are. Enjoy the rest of your stay in the suite. Don't try to contact me again. I hope it was worth it.

Shoving the phone back into my pocket, I close my eyes, feeling my blood pressure pounding in my skull. Kasey responds immediately, but I ignore her calls and texts, not even bothering to look at the screen. I just *can't*, even if I can feel the vibration of my phone in my pocket, the constant reminder of her presence.

I'll get through the rest of the week, and then I'll go back to New York and be the successful, immovable man that I've always been. Now, there is no other choice for me.

I HEAD to the resort bar after work, hoping to lose myself in a sea of strangers and booze. Maybe I'll be able to stop thinking about Kasey by instead thinking about the bottom of a glass. But even as I order my first drink, I know it's a lost cause. I can't stop thinking about her. The way she looked last night under the stars. The way her eyes lit up when she talked about the constellations. The way she felt in my arms.

How she sobbed my name when she came for me. The way she tastes.

The way her face had fallen when I rebuffed her once she told me about the interview. How she looked shattered, broken, like she had trusted me and I'm still letting her down. Could I be wrong?

No, I can't think like that. I shake my head, trying to clear my thoughts. The only thing I regret about last night is the last biting insult I had to get in about her using me, just like Devin said, but looking back on it, I know it was a bridge too far.

Kasey wouldn't do that. She's not like that. But then, why did she have to go and apply for that job? Why did she have to leave me wondering if she was going to abandon me for a better opportunity?

I down my drink in one gulp and order another. Maybe I'll just drink until I forget about her. But deep down, I know that's not going to happen. Kasey is too deeply ingrained in my heart now. I can't just forget about her, no matter how much I want to.

It's not a crowded bar, for which I'm thankful. Everyone is out at the poolside bar, drinking and celebrating. If it wasn't for that fucking interview, I could be out there with Kasey, too. Showing her off, letting everyone know that she's mine. These thoughts swirl in my mind, making me angrier and more frustrated by the second.

Suddenly, I hear someone sit down next to me. I turn to see Devin, and I frown. Seeing my son brings my temper right to the surface, and I open my mouth to tell him to get the fuck away from me if he wants to avoid trouble. But before I can even say a word, he holds up his hands, a peace offering.

"I don't want to fight anymore, Dad," Devin says, his voice calm and steady. "Will you hear me out?"

I wave to the bartender to bring me another glass and, despite my better judgment, add on a second for Devin. "I'll give you five minutes, Dev, and if I don't like what I'm hearing, I have no problem hauling you out of here. Do you hear me?"

His eyes widen but he nods. "Yeah, I hear you. Look, Dad, I..." He sighs, pinching the bridge of his nose. "I know I messed up here, over and over again. First by bringing a girl here and then dumping her first thing, publicly, at an event you set up for the company. Then, for being angry that she found a connection with someone else, even if that someone is my dad. I guess...I guess it's really none of my business what you and Kasey do. It just pissed me off, you know?"

I narrow my eyes, searching his face for any sign that he's lying, but from what I can see, he's being genuine. It surprises me. "I'm not mad because you weren't happy about Kasey

spending time with me. I know it's uncomfortable for you. What I'm mad about is how you treated her like she's disposable, and then continued to tear her down to other people. I can work with uncomfortable. I can't work with disrespectful. And that's what you're being."

"I know," he sighs. "I know. Listen, I don't want to lose my job, okay? And I want the chance to earn your respect back. I'll deal with...whatever you and Kasey have going on."

I can tell the last few words leave a sour taste in his mouth, which makes the fact that he said them even more meaningful. This is the Devin I envisioned taking over the company. The truth is, I've already lost Kasey, but if it shakes out that Devin learns to be a good man by losing her too, then there is at least some silver lining. I'm not ready to tell him that we're not speaking, though. Let him squirm and deal with the idea of his Dad dating his ex for a while longer.

"Fine," I tell him finally. "You prove it to me, and I'll keep you around. But you have no strikes left, boy, and as I've proven to you, I have no problem reprimanding you in public if need be."

Devin rubs his neck, remembering how I had held him by his collar, and smiles sheepishly. "Yeah, you've made that perfectly clear, Dad."

We start talking, recalling old times and reminiscing about our successes together. I wanted to be drinking alone, but having my son with me, especially now that he's repentant, isn't so bad. For a moment, I forget about Kasey and the way she's betrayed me...betrayed the new-found love that I have for her.

But then, three drinks in, Devin lets something slip that makes me freeze. It becomes immediately clear to me that he's much more drunk than I thought, and while he slurs his words, I'm able to hear enough of them that my hackles go up instantly. "You're a good man, Pops. To hell with that job interview. Kasey should be giving you her full attention."

I feel my blood boil, my fury rising like a tidal wave. "What job interview?" I demand, my voice low and dangerous.

Devin looks taken aback like he didn't mean to say that out loud. "Uh, nothing, forget I said anything."

But I won't let it go. "No, you said something about a job interview. How did you know about that, Devin?"

Devin looks uncomfortable, but then he admits it. "I might have applied for that job for her...her account is still logged in on my laptop from when she used it a few weeks ago. I, um... thought it would be a good opportunity for her...?"

"When, Devin?"

He swallows, eyes flickering around nervously like he doesn't want to look at me. "Oh, I don't know—"

I slam both my hands down on the marble bartop, standing. Rage burns off any lingering effects of what I've drunk, and my mind is crystal clear. "*When, Devin?*"

Devin's gaze is fixed firmly on the wall of liquor over my shoulder. "Right after someone told me they saw you two having breakfast together."

My vision goes red, every muscle in my body tensing, but I have to see this through. I have to know the truth, and I can't very well beat it out of him. "And what exactly did you expect to gain by doing that?"

He shrugs, and I can see that he's shaking. Good. "I figured if she was in Seattle, she couldn't come between us. It's just too weird, Dad, she's my—"

"She's NOTHING to you!" I roar, sweeping my arm across the bar and knocking both our glasses to the ground. They shatter into a million pieces, and the silence left in the wake of the crash is deafening. "She never was and she never will be! Whatever twisted bit of fate that brought her into your life was just so she could get to ME! Kasey is MINE, Devin."

"But, but—" he sputters, standing unsteadily and backing away. "You're my Dad. You're supposed to put me first."

"You're a grown fucking man, Devin. I'd die for you, you know that. I'd *kill* for you. I love you. But you're a grown man, just like I am, and now is the time in your life when

you're supposed to be building yourself up to be the best man you can possibly be. Not acting like a child, not being coddled by your father, and certainly not being a manipulative little shit when you see someone else getting what you want."

I step forward, clenching my fists. "Kasey makes me happy, did you ever stop to think about that? I've given you everything, and you'd deny me this bit of happiness because you're selfish." I shake my head, fury and heartbreak warring with one another. "Get out of here, Devin. I never want to see your face again."

He sucks in a breath, his face going pale. Devin looks hurt and confused, and I swear I see a sheen of tears in his guilt-filled eyes. He's crossed a line, and I won't forgive him for it. At least not anytime soon. "Dad..." he pleads quietly, but I shake my head and point at the exit, stone-faced and stone-hearted.

As he walks away, I sit back down at the bar, my mind racing. She didn't lie. She didn't lie and now Kasey, my beautiful sweet Kasey, is slipping through my fingers. All because I didn't trust her or even listen to what she had to say.

I have to make this right or I will regret it for the rest of my life.

I pull my wallet out, cringing at the sight of the broken glass on the bar and floor, knowing that I let my rage get the best of me. The bartender is standing in the corner, washing dishes with a cloth and looking frightened, probably waiting for me to leave. I pull out five \$100 bills and slap them onto the bartop. There. Hopefully, that will make up for the scene I just caused with my son.

Heading to the resort's main building, my mind is racing with thoughts of Kasey. I'm consumed by them. What have I done? How could I be so stupid? I can't believe I let my ego get in the way of our relationship like this. I should have trusted her. I should have been there for her, supporting her. Convincing her that I can provide everything she needs, that I will pay for any degree under the sun that she wishes to gain, as long as she stays with me.

Instead, I pushed her away, and now she's more than likely leaving.

I don't even bother texting or calling her. This is important enough that I need to say it face to face, and there is no time to waste. As I approach Kasey's suite, adrenaline is coursing through me like liquid fire. I'm hoping against hope she'll forgive me and stay. I know I messed up, but I'm still confident we can make this work.

There has never been anything on this Earth I haven't been able to accomplish when I put my everything into it.

I knock on the door, waiting for her to answer. When she does, my eyes can't drink her in fast enough. Her sparkling emerald eyes are ringed with red as if she's been crying, her pale gold hair piled on top of her head in a messy bun. Nothing in the world has ever been as beautiful.

Kasey looks cautious, half her body still behind the door as if she doesn't trust me. Frustration flares at the thought. I won't have that. "What do you want?" she asks hollowly.

"Kasey," I say, my voice shaking a little. "I'm sorry. I was an idiot. I swear I'm going to make it up to you."

She hesitates and I grab the door, push it open, and enter the suite before she can even think of denying me. I close it behind me, standing in front of the door but not pushing Kasey any further. I'm not going to let her run away, but I won't crowd her either.

She snuffles, looking down at the ground, fingers twisting at the oversized t-shirt she's wearing. "I've tried to call you all day..."

"I know. Kasey, it was my idiot son that set this all up, but it shouldn't have taken finding that out to make me hear you out. I should have trusted you, but I can't go back in time and change that. All I can do is make it up to you now. Will you let me do that?"

Kasey looks at me for a long moment, and blood roars in my ears. Will she forgive me? Or is it too late?

“Kenneth, I...” She inhales slowly and blows her breath out. “I gave you so much of me. I trusted you with my body and my heart and now I feel lost. It’s hard to just let that hesitation go now.”

I school my features to be neutral, not wanting her to see that her answer is frustrating me so much. It’s like she wants some sort of display from me, some demonstration of how I will take care of her the right way from here on out. All I can see is her, the rest of the room stays faded in the background, and then suddenly an idea comes to me.

Oh, and it’s a fun idea, too.

Kasey’s mouth turns down at the corners as she sees the look coming over my face, and her eyes go wide.

“I can help you let go,” I tell her, stalking forward until her calves bump into the edge of the bed and she has to stop. “I can help you let go of everything Kasey. Take those tight little shorts off and the panties too. Let me show you what I have in mind.”

Her mouth falls open in an ‘O’ of surprise, and there’s a quick flash of indignation in her eyes. I like when she’s fiery. “You’re not going to just come back in here and expect me to—”

Closer and closer, I get to Kasey with each step until it’s just inches between us. “Take them off, I said. Now.”

She clamps her mouth shut, eyebrows drawing together, but she doesn’t tell me no. Kasey tilts her chin up stubbornly, but I could roar from triumph as she hooks her thumbs into the waistband of her bike shorts and tugs them down her long, tanned legs. A pink pair of panties follow, and all the blood that has been pounding in my head rushes to my cock.

Her shirt is long enough that I can’t see her pussy, but I know she’s bare for me, and that’s more than enough to get me hard.

“Step out of them and turn around,” I command. Like the good girl that she is, she listens. As much as I want to pull her shirt up right away, I instead undo my belt, but I don’t remove my

pants once it's off. Instead, I lean over her, rumbling into her ear, "Hands out in front of you, and hold them together."

Kasey turns her head around to look at me, her breathing fast. "What? Why?"

"So I can help you let go, baby girl. Give yourself over to me, completely. Hands together."

Again, Kasey obeys. I know she must be able to feel my hard cock against her ass as I fix the belt around her wrists, but little does she know that isn't what I plan on giving her right now. Later, yes, but we have a business to attend to first.

"Kasey, I need you to do something for me, okay? I need you to just breathe. It will make this a lot easier."

She stiffens as I grab a handful of her shirt and pull it up, finally revealing her shapely ass and the lips of her pussy peeking out from between her legs. Damn, she's so beautiful, and it takes real self-control not to fuck her right here and now.

"Easier?" She chirps nervously. Instead of an answer, I give her the first of many smacks on her ass cheek, and she yelps. "Kenneth!"

"Shhh," I caress where my hand struck her with just enough force to sting, but nothing more. Her outrage is from surprise more than anything else. "Just let go."

I spank her again, and then once more, and Kasey squirms on the bed, hissing with each spank. I rub soothing circles on her flesh until her sounds of shock melt into sighs of pleasure. As soon as she relaxes, I spank her again, moving closer to her pussy each time, so when I rub the pain away, I'm getting closer and closer to touching her where she clearly needs it most.

"See? It feels good, doesn't it?" *Smack, smack.* All Kasey can do is moan in agreement, moving her bottom half so my wandering hands get closer to her core. Her pussy lips are swollen with need, and lucky for her, I'm about to give her exactly what she wants.

I lose track of the number of times I spank her, and her ass cheeks are a bright, rosy shade of pink by the time my fingers

slide down between her ass cheeks and finally over the mound of her pussy. I keep the touches here brief, until the soft sounds she's making take on an edge of frustration.

“Tell me what you need, baby girl, and I'll give it to you.”

Kasey pants, licks her lips, and finally gives in. “I need to come!”

I chuckle darkly, my fingers parting her lips and finding her engorged clit in seconds. “I think we can make that happen.”

Her entire frame jerks as I circle that bundle of nerves with one set of fingers, while I dip two into her channel with my other hand, expertly finding the secret spot inside her that, with a crook of my two fingers, has her almost sobbing in pleasure.

Kasey is already close, her body having gone from resisting the spanking to enjoying it immensely, so my touch finds her soaking wet and close to the edge already. She says my name like a prayer, her legs shaking as I put pressure on her g-spot while swirling around her clit over and over.

She shatters for me in minutes, her inner walls squeezing my fingers hard, her bound hands scrambling at the blanket while she cries out. Kasey arches her back, pushing into my hands and rolling her hips to get as much contact with me as she can while she soaks my fingers.

I stay with her, touching her just how she needs, until she starts to come down from her high and her body relaxes bit by bit.

I reach over her and undo the belt, flipping her over with a little coaxing and pulling her up to sit so I can kneel in front of her and massage her wrists. “Feel better?”

Her eyes heavy, Kasey nods. “Actually, yes.”

“Good. Get comfortable because I'm not done with you quite yet, but I'm going to get us both some water first.”

Kasey gives me a tired smile, and I kiss her gently before standing, planning to go to the mini-fridge and get us both some chilled bottles. Now, though, I see what is piled by the

door that I missed before, being so focused on Kasey and nothing else.

It's her luggage. All of it, packed and ready to go, already on the cart to be taken downstairs. I feel my chest get tight, and a headache starts to build at the back of my neck. "Kasey..." I start, not even bothering to turn and look at her. "What is this?"

She hesitates. "I hadn't heard from you all day, except that mean text you sent me, and..."

I close my eyes, nostrils flaring and muscles growing tense. "You were giving up after less than a *day*?"

"That's not fair," she whispers. "This is all so new, and—"

I turn, cutting my hand through the air to make her stop. Seeing her sitting there, cheeks still flushed from pleasure, in nothing but a shirt waiting on me is both the best and worst thing I've ever seen in my life. We were almost okay. Almost. "And what, Kasey? So new and not worth the fight?" I search her gaze, but she looks away. "Do you still want to leave?"

She exhales shakily. "I just...need some time to think, okay? You didn't even give me time to explain myself, to tell you that I need to go home and get some space before you had me half-naked! I wasn't trying to deceive you, Kenneth, things just happened so fast..."

"Yes or no, Kasey. Do you still want to leave?"

"Yes. But I still want to see you when we get back. I really wasn't trying to hurt you more—"

All the hope I had, all the happiness I had allowed myself to feel once more, all becomes numb. I sigh. "I know it was a mistake coming here to see you. I won't make it again."

"Kenneth, wait!" Kasey cries, but my longer legs have me at her door in two strides, and I'm shutting it behind me as I reach the hall before she has a chance to stop me.

It feels like my insides are turning to stone, my heart included, and I fucking welcome it. I can hear her rushing to get dressed,

so I skip the elevator and take the stairs, knowing I'll be long gone before she's finished.

If she wants to leave, fine. But as far as seeing me in New York? Not if I still am made of stone by then, a statue of a man. If that's the case, then I hope to stay hardened like this for the rest of my life. Better that than to let her in again.

"Goodbye, Kasey," I breathe to no one but myself as I reach the bottom of the stairs, looking back up to where I know she's looking for me. "Goodbye, baby girl."

KASEY

As soon as my feet touch the ground back in New York, I know I've made a terrible mistake by leaving Kenneth behind in Hawaii. My entire being feels heavy with the weight of missing him, and there's an ache in my chest that won't go away.

I try to push him out of my mind, telling myself that I barely know him, that I am being foolish, but it's no use. I can't stop thinking about him.

Telling myself these lies isn't helping. I know him, of course, I do. I know Kenneth deep in my heart, in my soul, and I might have lost him forever.

Hawaii has taught me one simple thing, and it might be the most important lesson I'll ever learn—love does not follow any rules, it makes its own. It seems crazy to be so in love after such a short time, but I'm more than sure that truly I love Kenneth like he's a part of me. I have never felt this way before—this longing, this deep connection to another person. It's a feeling I can't shake no matter how much I try.

As I walk back into my little eclectic efficiency apartment, memories of Kenneth flood my mind. The way he looks at me, the sound of his laugh, the feel of his hand in mine, and especially how it felt to have him inside me for the first time, marking both my body and my heart as his and his only.

Even the way he kissed me so softly after our last encounter, my nerve endings still firing from the mind-blowing orgasm

he had given me...even that little kiss haunts me. It's all so fresh in my mind, and I know I can't let him go.

Staring out at the city, dropping my luggage at my feet, I make a decision. Kenneth came to rectify things when he learned the truth about the job interview, and now I have to be the one to reach out and make things right.

I'm determined to turn this all around, to make Kenneth know what he means to me. I don't know how exactly, but I'm willing to do whatever it takes. I begin to think about all the things that went wrong and what I can do to make it right. I can't believe that I let a job interview I didn't even apply for ruin things with the man I love. I feel like an absolute moron.

One thing is clear—I need to talk to Kenneth and explain everything. Most importantly, apologize for leaving like I did. I need to show him that I'm committed to our relationship, no matter how new it is. But how? I don't even know where to start.

So I do what I always do when I'm faced with a problem—I make a list. Sitting on my bed, I dig through my bedside table until I find a notebook and pen and set to work. The first draft is long and winding, full of all the things I adore about Kenneth—from his tall, sculpted body and his intense blue eyes to the way he's hard and commanding to the world around him, but sweet to me alone.

Cutting things down, I manage to make a plan of action, and if I can manage to get it all finished before Kenneth gets back to New York, then maybe I can be in his arms again before the end of the week. God, I hope so.

Step one will be completing the interview but declining the job unless it can be done remotely so I don't have to move. Step two will be writing to Kenneth to tell him exactly how I feel and promise him that I'm doing everything in my power to make sure we can try again once he gets home. And three, the only step that I'm dreading, will be to call Devin and settle things once and for all.

The interview is the easiest of the three by far. I open the email I received in Hawaii and schedule a time slot for as soon as

possible. So, the same night I get home, I find myself fixing my hair and makeup in the mirror as I wait for the Zoom call to connect.

Mark Bradshaw, CEO of Bradshaw Investments, has that sharp, grating personality that some men businessmen have, and my dislike for it makes it easier for me to make my case with him. Mark laughs when I tell him that whether I get the job or not, I'll be leaving as an intern, but sobers up when he realizes I'm serious.

I tell him that I plan on going freelance so I have more time to finish school, but if he still wants me to come on board as a junior web designer, I'm thrilled to take the opportunity as long as it can be remote. Mark examines me through the screen, but eventually, he tells me they will be in contact for a second interview and ends the call.

One down, two to go.

Running off the adrenaline of completing the job interview and actually sticking up for myself, I sit down to write the email to Kenneth. I have too much to say for a mere text, and the words just keep coming and coming—from my mind to my fingers to the keyboard.

I pour my heart out on the screen. I tell him about the job offer and my thoughts on going remote versus going freelance. I confess how much I care for him and how I'm ready to set all my hesitations aside so we can be together. I almost tell him that I love him but erase the line at the last second. That is important enough that only a face-to-face confession will do.

My heart is in my throat as I hit send. Will he still feel the same way even though I flew home, basically running away scared? Will he want to be with me as much as I want to be with him? I try to push the doubts aside and remind myself to have faith in our connection. It's real. I know it is.

ONCE THE MESSAGE IS SENT, I sit back in my computer chair and think about the amazing days we spent together in Hawaii.

The long walks on the beach, the romantic dinners, the passionate nights we shared...God, I miss him so much!

I can still feel his touch on my skin, his breath on my neck, and the warmth of his body next to mine. Except none of it is real now, only a dream.

Just as I suspected, calling Devin is the hardest part of all. He answers with a hesitant "Hello?"

"I still think you're an asshole," I start without a preamble, loving the sound of indignation he makes. "But we need to talk. I hope you're sitting down."

We talk for over an hour. Devin hangs up on me twice in the beginning, unwilling to hear that I love his father and that I plan to be with him no matter what Devin's opinion is. I let him vent about how weird it makes him feel, about how it makes him feel emasculated in front of his coworkers, but stop him when he tries to delve into why our relationship failed.

"Because it wasn't real," I tell him. "We were just passing the time, Devin. There was nothing between us, and we both know it."

He reluctantly agrees, and after some time, his anger begins to fade. He tells me he still doesn't approve of "Whatever the hell is going on between you and my Dad" but that Kenneth told him, verbatim, that I make him happy. And that he thinks the first step in fixing his own relationship with his Dad will be backing off and letting whatever happens happen.

When we hang up, I allow myself a nice long cry, ordering a huge order of Chinese food and eating it in bed with Netflix on my laptop in front of me. None of my tears are for Devi but instead, for Kenneth.

He's been betrayed by his own son, and instead of staying to comfort him, I fled and left him all alone. I miss him. I want him here so much. I just hope I've done enough to clear space for him and me to move forward together.

I WAKE up to the sound of a faint knock on the door, and as I rub the sleep from my eyes, I check the clock. It's just past 7 am. I wonder who could be knocking at this hour. Still in my pajamas, I make my way to the front door and pull it open, my eyes still bleary from sleep.

There, sitting on my doorstep is a large package addressed to me. My curiosity is piqued and I pick it up, bringing the heavy thing inside. I deposit it on my bed and put my hands on my hips, considering the box in front of me. It isn't until I read my name on the front a few times that I recognize the handwriting as the same that was on the flower card my first morning in Hawaii.

Kenneth.

With trembling hands, I rip open the box, and my eyes widen as I see what's inside. It's a brand new, top-of-the-line Macbook. I can't believe it. This thing must have cost a fortune. My mind races with questions. Why would he send me such an extravagant gift with no explanation?

But then, as if the universe is answering my queries, I notice that there's already a document open on the computer when I slowly open it, and my eyes are drawn to the words on the screen. It reads, *This is my way of telling you what I should have all along: Congratulations on your interview.* And below that, an address and a time—7:30 pm.

My heart skips a beat as I realize what this means. Kenneth wants to see me again, and that mere fact makes a smile spread across my face in a rush. It's been two days since I heard from him, and I was beginning to think that maybe he had made up his mind to never speak to me again. But this gift and the note make it clear he hasn't forgotten about me after all.

I spend the rest of the day in a daze, my mind spinning with possibilities. This is the opportunity for a new start between us, with none of the baggage that came before. I can't help but feel a mix of emotions—excitement, anxiety, and hope. I wonder what Kenneth has in mind for us, and I can't wait to find out.

As the hours tick by, I find myself checking the clock every few minutes, counting down the time until 7:30 pm. It's impossible to relax as I prepare for what could be the beginning of a new chapter in my life.

AT 6:45 PM, there's another knock at my door. To my surprise, it's a private driver in a tuxedo sent here by Kenneth to bring me to him. Grabbing my things, I follow the driver downstairs and climb into the backseat of the black luxury sedan, adjusting my dress as I go. I went with a gold slip dress for tonight, one that I know sets off my hair and flatters the new tan I came back from the retreat with.

I arrive at the towering high-rise, dizzy with anticipation. Smoothing my dress down again, I check my makeup in my phone camera one final time, hoping to make a good impression on Kenneth. Maybe he will be so struck by my beauty that he'll forgive me without any words being exchanged. A girl can dream, right?

The doorman greets me and escorts me inside, leading me to the elevator. My stomach is a mess of nerves as I ride up to the penthouse level, wondering what lies ahead.

When the elevator doors open, I'm met with a dimly lit hallway that seems to stretch on forever. The doorman leaves me at Kenneth's door, and I take a deep breath before reaching out to knock. As soon as I swing the door open, my breath catches in my throat.

The penthouse is dark except for the soft glow of dozens of candles arranged on the floor in a winding path. Red rose petals are scattered everywhere, and the sweet scent of their perfume fills the air. I'm in awe of the sight before me.

I follow the path that is laid out for me in fire and petals, until finally, I see Kenneth standing on the terrace, overlooking the city. He turns to face me, and my heart races at the sight of him. He's dressed in a sleek suit, looking more handsome than ever.

There's a shadow of a beard on his jaw, telling me he hasn't shaved in a day or two, but his salt-and-pepper hair is perfectly styled and he looks every bit the business tycoon that he is.

God, I've missed him so much. Just being in his presence is a balm to my soul.

Kenneth looks me over with aching slowness until he reaches my face. We say nothing as he crooks his finger, telling me to come to him, and I do, exiting out the open glass door and onto his opulent terrace with the most stunning view of the city I've ever seen.

It's like he's cast a spell over me, and before I can blink, I'm close enough to him that I can smell the spiciness of his cologne and feel the warmth radiating from him.

Gently cupping my face, Kenneth runs his thumbs over my cheekbones, looking down at me with an emotion so deep I'm afraid to call it by its name. "Devin told me that you called him," he rumbles. "You still want me. I thought that you needed space."

"It turns out all the space I needed was the length of the plane ride, and by the time I got home, I knew I'd made a mistake." I swallow hard, putting my hands over his where they are still on my face. "I still want you and more. I need you."

"You have to be sure, Kasey. I can't take losing you a second time."

Now, I tell him everything I've done, so he knows just how sure I really am. I explain that I took the interview and made it clear I can't take the job unless it was remote. Then, how I only called his son to make sure the jerk wouldn't stand in our way anymore and to let him know in no uncertain terms that I'm laying claim to his father no matter what he thinks.

"I read your email after I spoke to Devin," Kenneth admits when I finish. "I couldn't bring myself to do it at first because I was sure it was your way of cutting things off permanently without having to face me in person. Once I talked to my son, I read it. And then read it again at least a dozen times."

He licks his lips, making me want to kiss them more than anything. “Kasey...you’ve went above and beyond with the work you’ve put in. No one has ever done anything like that for me.”

I feel a surge of pride at his words, knowing that everything I did was worth it if it means we can be together. “I wanted to do whatever it takes to be with you,” I whisper. “Even if it meant swallowing my pride and making nice with Devin.”

Kenneth takes my hand in his, his touch sending shivers down my spine. “I can’t believe how lucky I am to have you,” he says, his eyes locked onto mine. “You’re the most incredible woman I’ve ever met.”

I feel myself blush at his words, feeling both embarrassed and flattered at the same time. “Kenneth, I just did what I had to do,” I shrug, trying to downplay my actions.

But he shakes his head. “No, Kasey. What you did was selfless and amazing. It just confirms what I already know—what I’ve known since the first moment I saw you. That I want to spend the rest of my life with you.”

Suddenly, my heart feels like it’s about to burst. I can’t believe what I’m hearing. Could this really be happening? Is Kenneth about to propose to me?

And then, just as I’m lost in my thoughts, he drops down on one knee, taking my hand in his. “Kasey, will you marry me?”

The world drops out from under my feet, static buzzing in my ears as shock rolls over me like a wave. All the hours I spent agonizing over whether he would forgive, and here he is, on his knees, ready to make me his wife. It makes me realize that Kenneth forgave me the second he left my suite that night because he loves me and he wants me. All of me, flaws and uncertainties and all.

Tears start to form as I look down at Kenneth and into his ocean-deep eyes, feeling overwhelmed with emotion. “Yes,” I say, barely able to get the word out. “Yes, I’ll marry you.”

The ring is perfect, a single solitaire diamond, huge and sparkling on a gold band. Just like how Kenneth fits into my

life, the ring fits onto my finger perfectly. Like it has always been meant to be there.

I take his hands and tug him to his feet, standing on my tiptoes to clear the differences in our height and crushing my mouth to his. Kissing him feels like coming home, and now the tears flow freely.

“I love you,” I gasp, and he wraps his arms around me like I’ve been aching for.

“I love you too, Kasey. I know you’re going to cause me a lifetime of trouble.” I huff but he laughs, continuing, “But I’d go through that and more to have you.”

Now he kisses me again, and even though I can’t speak, I tell him over and over again in my mind, *I love you, I love you, I love you.*

EPILOGUE

KENNETH

Two Years Later

Sometimes, I'm still shocked at how good life can be. I'm lying by the pool on our private cruise in the Caribbean with my beautiful wife Kasey by my side. She's cradling our sleeping daughter, her tiny round head covered with a ridiculous baby-size sun hat to match Kasey's, and I can't help but smile at the sight.

Everything feels perfect—the sun shining, the ocean glistening, and I have everything I've ever wanted right here beside me.

It's good to be me.

Kasey reaches into her bag to grab something, but she struggles to get it out one-handed with the baby on her chest. I offer to help, and she hands me the bag. "I've got a surprise for you and I can't wait any longer," she chirps excitedly, keeping her voice down so she doesn't wake Kaia.

Taking a second to admire her long, oiled-up legs, I smirk. "Kasey, we can't have those types of surprises with the baby here."

She rolls her eyes. "Oh, just hush and open it already!"

Inside her cavernous purse, I find a small box, and Kasey tells me three times in the space of a second to open it. Laughing at her anxiousness, I do. I can hardly believe my eyes. Inside the polished wooden box is a pair of cufflinks made from abalone.

Even before she tells me what makes them special, I already sense the importance radiating from the gift.

“They’re made from abalone that comes from the beach of the resort where we first met,” Kasey says, her eyes bright. “Happy early anniversary. I couldn’t wait, sorry.”

I look up from the gift Kasey, feeling overwhelmed with love and gratitude. She knows me so well, and she always knows just how to make me feel special. Money is no object to me, which is why it’s so perfect that my wife is so thoughtful and deliberate with the gifts she chooses.

What she doesn’t know, though, is that she is the most precious gift in the world to me. Her and sweet little Kaia. I lean over and kiss both her and our daughter on the top of their heads, feeling like the luckiest man in the world.

“It’s perfect,” I tell her, my voice thick with uncharacteristic emotion. Only Kasey will ever see me like this. “Perfect like you. Thank you, baby girl.”

Looking thrilled at my reaction, Kasey settles back into her lounge and closes her eyes, patting Kaia’s back in an unconscious motion as she does so. “You’re welcome.”

As I sit here, watching my family, I think back on all the ups and downs we’ve been through together. From our tumultuous past to our blissful present, we’ve come so far. But what excites me most is the future that lies ahead. I know that whatever comes our way, we’ll face it together, with love and strength.

Gazing out at the sparkling blue water, watching the waves dance in the sunshine, I reflect on how much has changed over the past year.

Kasey’s decision to go freelance and start her own office after fast-tracking her associate’s degree had been a bold move, but it had paid off. She had worked tirelessly to build a thriving business and had even hired someone to manage it while she took time off to focus on our daughter.

As I expected, it took her no time at all to get pregnant, which is why we married so quickly in a small but lavish ceremony.

With the way we still spend entire nights wrapped up in each other's bodies, I'm sure Kaia won't be an only child for long either.

Meanwhile, I had begun training Devin to take over as CEO of my company. It had been a difficult decision to trust him after he had caused so much trouble in the past, but he had truly turned his life around. Thanks to Kasey's forgiveness and my guidance, he was now a better man. Just like I am.

Last Christmas, he shocked us all by bringing a young woman named Hanna to the celebrations. We all agreed, in hushed words and glances, to never tell Hanna the *full* truth of how Kasey and I met. It just works better that way.

Hearing Kasey's breaths slow as she dozes off into an afternoon nap in the sun with Kaia, I realize that I couldn't be happier with the way things have turned out. I have the love of my life, a beautiful daughter, and a son that will take the reins soon enough while I travel the world with my sweet Kasey and Kaia.

I stand, gazing down at the cuff link before kissing Kasey gently on the lips so she doesn't wake. My heart is full, and I wouldn't trade this moment for anything in the world.

I take a deep breath, feeling grateful for this moment and for all the moments that have led us here. As the ocean breeze blows over us, I know I'm exactly where I am meant to be—right beside my wife and daughter.

EXTENDED EPILOGUE

Ten Years Later

The first day of school is always chaos, and while I would never leave Kenneth behind, his unhappiness is palpable as he stands at my side. If he had it his way, we'd home school and the kids would never leave the house, but I fought for them to be able to attend school with other kids and make friends like any other child would.

I take my husband's hand as we watch as our youngest child, Kyle, runs into the school, his tiny hands being held by his older siblings, Kaia and Kent, each on one side of him. Kenneth growls unhappily, but I laugh at his overprotective behavior, still just as present after all these years. He still sees them as his little babies even though they're growing up so fast.

"Kenneth, he'll be fine," I reassure him, but he can't seem to help himself. He's always been the stalwart guardian of our children, and I know it's just his way of showing how much he loves them.

As we walk towards the school gates, Kenneth's grip tightens around my hand. Something's radiating off him, and I know what he's thinking. He hates leaving the kids out of his sight, even if it's just for a few hours a day.

"I don't trust anyone else to take care of the kids except us," he tells me.

I turn to face him, placing a reassuring hand on his arm. "We pay for the safest and most prestigious private school in the

area. Our kids are in good hands.”

Kenneth nods, but I can tell he’s still not convinced. I understand his fears, but sometimes I wish he would relax a little. We can’t keep our kids under lock and key forever.

I tug his hand to move him forward. “Come on. We can walk to the door with them if you want.”

As we approach the school entrance, a mom I vaguely recognize greets us and starts making small talk. She’s blond and incredibly fit, and it’s impossible not to feel a twinge of envy as she talks about her morning run.

“Kasey, you should come for a run with me sometime,” she says, flashing a bright smile.

I make a polite excuse, but I can’t help but feel sad. I used to be that fit, that active. But after three kids, my body just isn’t the same. I feel thick and sluggish, and it’s hard not to compare myself to this mom who seems to have it all together.

“What’s wrong?” Kenneth asks, noticing my change in mood.

“I just wish I was still that fit,” I admit, feeling vulnerable. “I feel like I’m not as attractive as I used to be.”

Kenneth’s expression softens, and he grabs my chin to make me look at him and no one else, uncaring that we’re out in public at our children’s school. “Kasey, you are more beautiful to me now than ever before,” he says firmly. “Your body has carried and birthed three children. You are amazing, and I love you just the way you are.”

I feel tears pricking at the corners of my eyes, touched by his words. It’s easy to forget that he still finds me attractive after all these years and all the changes my body has gone through. It should be obvious by the way he worships me night after night, making me cry with pleasure at his touch. But hearing him say it so plainly and with such conviction makes my heart swell.

Kenneth lowers his face to mine and gives me a quick kiss that I know would be much more thorough if we were alone. “I’ll show you just how attractive I find you when we get home,” he adds, his voice low and suggestive.

My face feels warm as we say goodbye to the kids and head back to the car. Kenneth, distracted by what he's promised to do once we're home alone, is able to walk away from the school without much trepidation.

He climbs into the driver's seat of our Land Rover, giving me that knowing smile that promises all sorts of thrills in the near future, and I laugh. I'm filled with a sense of contentment. Changing body or not, I have a loving husband and three amazing children. And that's all I need.

The End. Thanks for reading!

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Book 6: Christmas Eve With Dad's Best Friend

Book 7: Dad's Jealous Friend

Book 8: Dad's Russian Friend

Book 9: [Dad's Navy SEAL Friend](#)

Book 10: [Dad's Cop Friend](#)

Book 11: [Halloween With Dad's Ex-Best Friend](#)

Book 12: [Baby For Dad's Best Friend](#)

Book 13: [Dad's Mafia Secret](#)

Her Bad Boy

Book 1: [Opposites Attract](#)

Jealous Psycho

Book 1: [Jealous Cop](#)

Book 2: [Jealous Fighter](#)

Book 3: [Jealous Firefighter](#)

Book 4: [Jealous Protector](#)

Book 5: [Jealous Boss](#)

Book 6: [Jealous Lawyer](#)

Book 7: [Jealous Italian](#)

Book 8: [Jealous Detective](#)

Book 9: [Jealous Savage](#)

Book 10: [Jealous Serial Killer](#)

Book 11: [Jealous Stepbrother](#)

Claimed

Book 1: [Claimed](#)

Book 2: [Her Protector](#)

Book 3: [Protective Cop](#)

Book 4: [Security](#)

Book 5: [Protective Artist](#)

Book 6: [Hot Cop](#)

Book 7: [Claimed By My Stalker](#)

Book 8: [Claimed By The Convict](#)

Book 9: [Claimed By The Devil](#)

Her Mafia Man

Book 1: [Baby For The Mafia](#)

Book 2: [Paying Dad's Italian Debt](#)

A MMF Ménage Romance

Book 1: [Her Two Doctors](#)

My Boyfriend's Dad

Book 1: My Boyfriend's Bossy Daddy