



POSSESSIVE DOCTOR

AMAZON BESTSELLING AUTHOR
LENA LITTLE

POSSESSIVE DOCTOR

A POSSESSIVE MAN: BOOK 31

LENA LITTLE

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Also by Lena Little

PREVIEW

I was the physician on call when Amy arrived at the hospital that night.

The police officer informed me that her parents were killed in the accident and there was no next of kin to notify about her condition. As I examined her battered, little body, something just came over me.

Even in this condition, I can see that she's too beautiful, too young, and innocent to be all alone in the world. She needs someone to care for her, look after her, protect her, and make sure she's always safe. She needs someone to be here for her.

She needs someone like me.

ONLY me.

I spend the next two weeks by her bedside, just waiting for her to regain consciousness.

When she wakes up, the first thing she asks is if I'm her husband.

How do I tell her no? I can't. She has nowhere to go and no one to look after her. For now, I'll let her think whatever she wants as long as I can take her home with me. As long as I get to show her how a real man is supposed to treat his girl.

My body goes haywire when she's around, and I have to have her. I want to know what it's like to be with her, fill her with my seed, and bind her to me.

But that will have to wait until she remembers who she is. By then, I'll have convinced her that she should be with me. She's already mine anyway.

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ANDREW

A *my, you will fucking wake up.*

You'll wake up and I'll spend every single day showing you just how a real man treats his girl.

Jesus. I almost howl in frustration. The need and desperation to touch her while she's awake is already getting too much. The strain is getting to me.

Every day is the same. I come into her room and stare at her, thinking how fragile she is and doesn't deserve to be so alone.

I was the attending physician on the night that Amy arrived at the hospital. There was a huge pile up on the interstate, and she was just one of a dozen survivors. I attended to several patients, but she was the only one that captured my attention. Even with a thin film of blood and debris on her face and all over her body, there was no denying the fact that she was beautiful.

Most beautiful girl I've ever seen. She was the one on the stretcher, with lacerations and bruises on her arms and legs, but I stood in the emergency room with my pulse pounding in my temple and my breath almost knocked out of me. My training kicked in, and I did whatever I could for her.

But I went home that day feeling an unfamiliar hunger and dark possessive feelings curling in my gut. Down to the marrow of my bone, I knew she wasn't just any other patient. She was mine.

She sustained multiple injuries, but the worst was the skull fracture. Good thing it didn't require surgery. Trauma to her brain has left her in a comatose state for weeks. Her parents were killed in the crash, and she had no known next of kin.

Putting myself in charge of her medical decisions was a no-brainer. There was no way I would leave her in the care of someone else, maybe except the other specialists involved in her case. I inserted myself so far into her life that I can no longer imagine my life without her. I don't know her past, but fuck if I care. Her future is with me.

I move to the bed and gently stroke her hair, just as I do every day...but today is different. The monitor beeps and I look over to see that her brain activity has spiked.

"Amy? Amy, can you hear me?" my heart slams into my ribcage as I wait for a response.

First, her hand twitches, and then she moves her head.

"Amy. Amy, wake up now. It's time to open your eyes."

Her eyelids twitch then slowly lift, exposing the bluest eyes I've ever seen. I suck in a sharp breath as she turns to me. She winces when the light hits her retinas, and I grab a vial of saline, administering a few drops to each eye.

Her hands reach for the nasal cannula, and I quickly remove it. I watch her for a few seconds, trying to assess if she's having breathing difficulties and if I need to put it back on. I'm relieved to see none.

But...

She's trying to talk to me. What does she want to say?

She coughs and takes her first deep breath.

"Amy? It's nice to see you. Welcome back," I smile down at her.

"A-Amy? Is that me?" she asks, voice still hoarse. She swallows and clears her throat. "W-who are you? I know your voice. W-wait. Are...are you my husband?"

Well, fuck.

My lips begin to form the word, but I can't bring myself to say it. I know I should tell her that I'm just her doctor, but it just doesn't feel that way to me. I'm more than that.

I'm the man who fell for her while she's asleep. And I'm the man she will go home with when she leaves this place. I'm the only one she has left.

"You don't know your name? Do you remember what brought you here? Can you remember anything?"

She stares out the window for a second then shakes her head, "No." Tears begin to fall from her eyes, and I take her hand, still weak and shaking, and bring it to my cheek.

"It's alright. Don't be scared. Everything will come back to you in time."

The curtain opens and the ward nurse cries. "Doctor Adams, she's awake?"

"Get out," I mutter.

"What? But...but we have to—" he argues.

I turn on my heels and bark, "You know how much I hate repeating myself. I said, 'Get out!'"

The color drains from his face, and he turns tail exiting the room. Like everyone else on the staff, he knows I don't respond well to backtalk. My word is final. Anyone who questions me? Well... Let's just say it never ends well for them.

Amy stares at me, wide-eyed and confused.

"It's alright. I'm sorry. I just wanted some time alone with you before we check you over."

"So, you are my husband. I thought so. I feel like you've been here with me the whole time."

"That's because I have, sweet girl. I've been here with you every day."

At least, that's no lie.

I close the curtain and lean over her bed, flashing my penlight in her eyes. Normal. Placing the earpieces of my stethoscope in my ears, I open her gown just a bit, warm the cold metal on my palm, and place it on her soft skin.

I've done this dozens of times, but it's different this time. Her nearness turns my whole body on fire. Blood rushes to my crotch, and I have to move a bit to fight the discomfort. Thank fuck I have a white coat on.

But listening to her heartbeat only amplifies whatever I feel for her. Shit. I've got it bad. So fucking bad.

I sit down on the edge of the bed and ask her, "Do you know why you're here?"

"No. I don't even know where here is." She tries to shake her head but stops and winces.

"Easy. Here is Mercy Hospital. You were in a very bad accident. The nurses are going to come in. They'll draw some blood and run some tests. If everything comes back the way I expect, we'll refer you to your other doctors for clearance."

"And then what? What happens next? I don't know who I am or where I belong. I don't know what I do. Am I in school? Do I have a job? You told me that my name is Amy, but who's Amy?"

"Don't worry about that now. Like I said, it will all come back. Once you're cleared, there's no reason to keep you here, but you'll still need to work on your recovery at home."

Her parents are dead, and her house has been vacant for weeks. She can't be alone right now. Hell, she can't even drive to get groceries. So when I say home, it's with me. End of discussion.

"Okay. I'll try to be patient..." She looks at me as if she's certain she's known me forever. Yeah, there's no way I'm letting her out of my sight.

"Andrew. Call me Andrew."

I step out to the nurse's station. The three duty nurses, who are busy cackling like hens, see me and stop talking.

“The patient is currently suffering from amnesia, so I’ll order a scan. I suspect it’s only temporary. Understand that this aspect of her condition is not your concern. Now, go do your jobs and call her other doctors to let them know.”

They say nothing but two of them scurry away toward Amy’s room while the third contacts the other doctors. I go to the coffee station and pour myself a cup, telling myself that I’m doing the right thing.

If her memory does return, she’ll understand. She’ll thank me for being the one who took care of her when she had no one else in the world. She’ll probably be happy I took it upon myself to go beyond my duties as a physician.

Who am I kidding? She’s not leaving my side. It’s where she belongs. I knew it from the moment I first saw her. She’ll learn that too...eventually.

Once she’s prepped and on her way to the radiology department, I take down the home address on her insurance information and slip the set of house keys out of her bag of personal effects.

What will she think if she comes home with me and finds no indication that she lives there? Before I can take her home with me, I need to move in some of her belongings. But I won’t deny that stepping into her house gives me some kind of sick satisfaction.

But...a very small part of me wonders why the hell I’m doing this.

Why not just confess now? Why not tell her that I’m nothing more than a doctor who has become completely infatuated with her while she was asleep?

There’s only one reason. I need to let her believe this lie so she doesn’t slip through my fingers. I can’t explain the way I’m feeling or the sleepless nights I’ve spent staring up at the ceiling, wishing she was there beside me.

Most of my waking hours are consumed by thoughts of her—how her voice sounds, what she likes and doesn’t like, what she does in her free time, if she tastes as sweet as she looks.

No, she needs to come home with me so she can see that we belong together. Of course, it goes without saying that I'm the one most equipped to help her with her recovery. Then, when her memory returns, she won't care that I brought her there under false pretenses. She'll know that she's meant to be mine. Always has been.

There's no doubt about it. She will become my wife. She will have my babies. And she might have lost her parents, but I will be her family.

Doctor Andrew Adams is the most handsome man I've ever seen.

He's tall with silken black hair and deep, soulful eyes. He lifts me out of the hospital bed and into the wheelchair as though I weigh no more than a sack of groceries. He's older than me, I'd say in his late thirties, and as wide as a house.

He towers above everyone else in the hospital. I would say he's at least six-foot-five. And dear Lord, he puts those sexy television doctors to shame.

All things considered, I have to ask myself—how did I land a gorgeous, successful doctor? I may not have any memories, but I don't feel like a brain surgeon or a supermodel. What do I have going for me that could attract a man like this? More importantly, where have I been spending my time? How did I even find him?

So many questions but thinking hard only hurts my head.

It's been three days since I woke up, and Andrew hasn't left my side. Several tests and check-ups later, I've been given the all-clear to leave the hospital. Except for my memory loss, my healing is going well. Besides, my doctors became more confident in sending me home when they found out Andrew would be my personal caregiver.

"Hello?" a male voice calls out from behind the curtain.

Andrew draws the curtain back, exposing a tall, blonde man who looks...maybe twenty-four?

“Amy, my God. Are you alright?” the young man asks.

“Um, I’m okay. D-do I know you?” I ask him, instinctively pulling on Andrew’s sleeves.

He smiles and starts to speak, but Andrew places his hand on his chest and walks him backward into the hallway.

“Who are you?” I hear Andrew hiss.

“A friend of Amy’s. I read about her waking up in the paper and came by to see if I can help her regain her memory.”

“She doesn’t need your help. She doesn’t know you, and I don’t know you. That means I can’t trust you, so you need to leave,” Andrew says and I roll myself closer to the door so I can see what’s taking place. Andrew’s voice has an edge that isn’t there when he’s talking to me.

“Who are you to tell me…” the younger man raises his voice and Andrew shoves him hard. He stumbles over his feet and crashes into the wall behind him.

“I’m the guy who told you to fuck off. Now, fuck off or you’ll be needing a room of your own,” Andrew growls.

“I don’t know what your problem is, but you can’t treat me this way. I’m going to complain to the hospital,” the young man, short of breath, pants.

“Do it. Just get the fuck out of here,” Andrew says and the younger man walks away.

Andrew takes a deep breath and returns to me. He sees me watching the altercation and shakes his head at me.

“You should have stayed where I put you. You aren’t strong enough to be rolling around on your own.”

“Who was that? Do I know him? Do you know him?” I ask.

“No. This happens sometimes. Some loud-mouth nurse fed the media your story, and they put it on the news. Every time this happens, the crackpots come out of the woodwork. He doesn’t know you. He’s messed up in the head.”

“That’s scary. I’m glad you were here.”

“Where else would I be, princess? Now, let’s go home.”

As he wheels me to the elevator, I notice the glares from the nurses we pass. Maybe they’re stunned by the altercation in the hallway. Why else would they be acting this way?

Andrew helps me into the car, and I watch out the window as the scenery flashes by. It’s funny. I seem to remember being here before, but I can’t remember who I was at that time. Oh god. The empty feeling that brings me is almost unbearable.

I know Andrew told me to be patient and not to try to force myself to remember, but I don’t think he understands what this feels like. That man at the hospital could have told me he was my brother and I would have had no choice but to believe him. Does anyone understand how vulnerable this makes me feel? Can anyone understand if they haven’t experienced it for themselves?

We arrive at a beautiful slate building with smoked glass entry doors. I look up and count thirteen floors of wrought-iron balconies. Wow.

“We live here?” I ask him.

“We do. We own the tenth floor.”

“Wow, that’s weird,” I whisper.

“What is, baby girl?”

“I feel like more of a suburban girl.”

“Well, you did grow up in the suburbs.”

“Maybe that’s it then.”

Andrew unloads the wheelchair he borrowed for me from the trunk and helps me out of the car. The doorman holds the door for us, and we enter the expansive marble foyer that leads to the glass elevator.

He rolls me in and places his key in the lock next to button #10. The bell dings and the doors open up to what I can only assume is our living room. It’s wide open and contemporary with sharp-edged furniture and white walls. Huh. It doesn’t feel like me at all.

“Was this your place before you and I got together?” I ask him.

“You could say that, yes,” he replies.

That explains it, I suppose. I haven’t even asked how long we’ve been married. I must not have had time to add a woman’s touch to the place.

“Would you like to lie on the sofa or the bed?” he asks.

The long, thin sofa doesn’t look like it’s made for resting on so I answer, “The bed, please.”

He rolls me down the hall and into the bedroom. The king-size bed is covered with black, satin linens and also feels very masculine. He opens the closet door and points to the women’s clothing hanging inside.

“If you want to change, your clothes are in here.”

“Okay, thank you. I think I’m alright for now,” I reply so he lifts me out of the chair and places me down on the bed with my head propped up on the pillows.

Watching him makes tears well in my eyes. He’s so sweet and caring. He always wants to make sure I’m okay and safe. I may not remember everything, but I know not all husbands are like this.

“Thank you for being patient with me. I’m sure that it’s frustrating for you, too,” I tell him.

He sits down on the edge of the bed and holds my hand, “No, it’s alright. I just want you to get better.” He leans in and, after a moment of hesitation, kisses my forehead, “I’m going to make you something for lunch.”

As he leaves the room, I wonder why he hasn’t kissed me on the lips. Why hasn’t he held me like a husband would? I see the way he looks at me and notice that flare of hunger in his eyes, so what is it that’s holding him back? Did we have a fight before the accident? Were we on the verge of divorce? Or does he think I’m way too fragile right now?

I don’t want to think like this, but I’m completely in the dark about my own life. Andrew is all I have in the world, and I

hope he isn't taking care of me out of some sense of obligation. I may not remember falling in love with him the first time, but I feel myself falling all over again—like my whole body feels warm whenever he touches me or the fluttering in my stomach when he's near.

I don't want to lose him, and I don't want to be alone. Besides, I feel so safe with him around, like nothing and no one can harm me as long as he's there.

He returns carrying a salad, a sandwich, and a glass of water. He sets the tray down on my lap and turns to leave.

“Wait, don't go. I want to talk.” My tone surprises me. I seem to be pleading with him.

He notices too and stops in his tracks. “Did I do something wrong? Is your food okay?”

“No, it's not that. There's nothing wrong. I just... I just don't want to be alone. I was hoping you would sit with me for a while, maybe tell me something about myself or something about us.”

“Like what?” He folds his arms, eyes darting to the windows.

“Like how we met or where we got married. Heck, how long have we been together?”

“I would love to sit down with you and go over all of those things, but I need to get back to the hospital. I'm sorry. I don't want to leave, but duty calls. Besides, we were told not to try to rush things as far as your memory is concerned, remember? Don't you think you'd be better off resting and allowing these things to come back to you when you're ready?”

“So, you're leaving? Were you just going to go without saying goodbye?” I feel myself getting upset. It's a bit overkill, but I feel like he's abandoning me. I bite my lower lip and look away.

He walks toward me and tucks a loose strand of hair behind my ear. This simple touch makes me clench my thighs. “No, princess. I was going to clean up the kitchen. I was coming back to say goodbye, I promise. Now, eat. I'll be back for that

tray in ten minutes. You better be done.” His tone is gruff, but his smile tells me he isn’t angry.

He leaves the room, and I take a bite of the chicken sandwich he made. If I liked it before the accident, my tastes have definitely changed because it tastes terrible now. The salad is good, though, so I gobble it down.

“Something wrong with the sandwich?” he asks as he comes back as promised.

“Are you sure that I like chicken salad?” I ask him.

“Hmm, come to think of it, you might not. You may have told me that. I’m sorry. Do you want something else?”

“No, that’s okay. The salad was enough for me. Thank you.”

“Alright, then. I should be off in time to make you dinner. Do you need anything before I go?”

“Yes,” I feel my cheeks begin to burn.

“Well? What is it?”

“A kiss. A-a real kiss on t-the lips,” I stammer.

I don’t know where I got the nerve to ask that from him, but I need some sort of ‘proof’ that we’re really married. I know I have feelings for him and I know he’s attracted to me, so I guess I just want to see if we have that spark.

He hesitates for so long that I think he might actually tell me no, but then, he moves across the room and leans down over me. He stops and hovers with his lips just inches from mine. I feel his warm breath on my face, and I close my eyes, my entire being filled with excitement and anticipation.

He presses his lips to mine and draws my lower lip between his. Oh god. It’s a light kiss, but my heart races, and fireworks pop off inside my head. I slide my arm around his neck and hold him there.

I don’t want him to leave. I don’t want him to stop kissing me. With a grunt, he slips his tongue inside my mouth and the heat I felt on my face moves down between my legs.

It's a long, lingering, romantic kiss that should lead to something more, but he stops and pulls away. We're both breathless, but he snaps his eyes shut and pinches the bridge of his nose, a muscle ticking in his jaw.

"Get some rest. I'll see you in a few hours," he tells me and walks away.

I hear the front door close and suck in a steadying breath. At least I know I married an excellent kisser. That's something, anyway.

ANDREW

Amy testing my wafer-thin control is something I never would have predicted.

I should have known she'd be confused and hurt if I didn't show her any affection. Sure, I could tell her that sex is out of the question because she's still in recovery, but kissing, touching? Of course, she would expect that. I just don't want to feel like I'm taking advantage of her.

How will she feel if she gets her memory back and realizes that I've been lying to her? I don't know but if that kiss is any indication of the way she'll make me feel when I put my hands on her, then I'm in big trouble. It took every bit of willpower I have to keep from whipping out my cock and going to town on her right there.

Self-control has never been an issue for me...until her.

I tell myself that I'll just confess eventually. She's clearly into me, and if I tell her why I lied to her, she'll understand. Right? She damn well better because there's no way I'm letting her go.

She's got a hold on me like nothing I've ever felt before. It's physical, sure, but that's not the half of it. From the first second I laid my eyes on her, I knew that she was for me. Visions of her in our home, with our child. Seeing her now, awake and so frail, I know just how much she needs me.

When I told her I'd protect her, I meant it. So the guy who showed up? Unless she remembers him or he has solid

evidence that he's related to her, I'm not gonna let him within thirty feet of her. Maybe twenty-five if I'm being generous.

The nurses are still side-eyeing me when I return to the ward. I make my way to my office and see that someone is seated there waiting for me. It's the hospital administrator, Director Daniels.

"Good afternoon, Sir. Can I help you with something?" I ask as I enter the room.

"Oh, good. You're back. I was beginning to wonder if you decided to take the rest of the day off."

"No, I'm here. Again, what can I do for you?"

"It's been brought to my attention that you may have taken a patient into your home. A young accident victim with brain trauma and no memory. Is this true?"

"Why is that any of your business? If I took someone home, they were discharged and are no longer a patient. Is the hospital in the habit of spying on everyone that gets discharged?"

"No, but if the girl was taken from the hospital under false pretenses, that could come back on us."

"Well, then let me assure you that I didn't kidnap her. Her parents died in that accident, and she had nowhere to go. She's still recovering, can barely stand or walk on her own. She couldn't just check into a hotel and fend for herself, could she? I'll be helping her out until she recovers. That's all."

"I don't know you well, but you've never struck me as the charitable type. In fact, the word around the water cooler is that you're a bit of an asshole. That being said, why would you go out of your way to help a virtual stranger?"

"Since I'm a well-known asshole, it shouldn't come as a surprise when I tell you it's none of your business, should it?"

He gets out of the chair, sighs, and crosses his arms. "Okay, play it that way. Just know that if this comes back to bite this hospital in the ass, I'll not only fire you, but I'll get your license to practice revoked."

“I’d like to see you try.” I clench my fists and take a deep breath.

I’ve never wanted to pound the shit out of someone more in my life, but I have to keep my head. I grit my teeth, wait for him to leave, and slam my fist down on my desk.

If those nurses thought I was an asshole before, they’re about to see a whole new level of asshole going forward. They can talk shit about me, but for them to compromise this setup with Amy? Well, then.

I march out to the hall to begin my evening rounds, hoping to just get it over with so I can get back home. There are only four patients on the ward, and they’re all pretty stable, so I should be able to knock this out in an hour or two.

I’m still jacked up from the administrator’s threats when I see the guy who tried to get into Amy’s room standing at the nurse’s station. He’s deep in conversation with the duty nurse as I slip up behind him.

“Did you have some business here?” I ask and he nearly leaps out of his skin.

“I didn’t come here to deal with you again. I just need to know where Amy went when she left. She has no family and I want to make sure she’s somewhere safe.”

I want to pick him up by the throat and carry him out the doors...but, who knows? Maybe he’ll be useful. “How do you know Amy?”

“Why? What do you care?” He tries to sound tough but he can’t maintain eye contact and his fingers are tapping on his thigh.

“Just answer the question. If I don’t feel comfortable with you, I won’t tell you where she is.”

“She’s, well, I guess she was my neighbor. We went to school together. We’re very close. I didn’t understand why she didn’t know me, but then, the nurses told me she has amnesia. Now, can you tell me where she is?”

I shake my head, “No, sorry. I’m still not comfortable with that, but I’ll tell you what, how about you give me your name and phone number? I’ll pass it on to her. If she wants to talk to you, she’ll call. How’s that?”

“I’d rather see her so I can talk to her face to face,” he argues.

“Well, that’s not happening. Either give me your name and number or you’re out of luck.”

“Alright,” he mutters as the nurse who has been listening slides a pen and paper in his direction. He jots down his information and holds it out to me. “You’re going to give it to her, right?”

“It was my idea, remember?”

“Yeah, okay. Well, let her know I’m very worried about her. Please tell her to call.”

“I’ll pass it on.”

He leaves and I crumble the paper and slip it in my pocket. I tend to my rounds and go back to my office to hang up my coat. I take the boy’s number out of my pocket and toss it in the trash can before turning off the lights and locking the door. Something’s off about him.

If he thinks he can get to Amy that easily, then he’s a lot more stupid than I thought.

The drive-through is going to have to provide us with dinner tonight. I don’t keep much in my fridge and have spent most of my free time these days staring at a comatose girl in a hospital bed. Shopping has been the last thing on my mind.

After my lunch screw-up with the chicken sandwich, I’m not even sure what she eats, so I call home to ask her what she’s in the mood for. The phone rings six times, but the machine gets it. I try again, thinking she might be having trouble getting to it in time. Again, she doesn’t answer.

Immediately, the worst-case scenario hits me. Maybe she tried moving around, fell, and hit her head? Or... What if her memory came back and she realized she was somewhere she didn’t belong? Maybe she called the little menace that’s been

sulking around the hospital and asked him to come save her from me.

I forget all about dinner and step on the gas. I have to get home. I have to make sure she's safe and still there.

I pace back and forth, waiting for the elevator to reach my floor. Blood roars in my ears and a single bead of sweat slides down my spine.

"Come on, come on," I shout and punch the steel door. Finally, the bell dings, and the doors open. The condo is dark and I shake my head. "Damn it," I say, pounding my fist on the breakfast bar.

"Andrew? Andrew, is that you? I need help," I hear a tiny voice coming from somewhere in the master suite.

Relief rushes through me at the same time I feel barbed wires coil in my belly. I spring to action, already berating myself. How badly is she hurt? She doesn't sound like it but...

"It's me. Where are you?" I rush toward the bedroom, flicking on lights along the way. I enter the bedroom and stop dead in my tracks when she answers, "In the bathtub."

"Are you hurt?"

"What? No."

Fuck me. She's in there, possibly naked. I've already crossed a line by claiming her mouth. But this...this is different.

"Are you coming? The water is cold now, and I'm freezing. I was so stupid. I thought I could take a bath, but once I got in here, I couldn't get out."

Scrubbing a hand across my face, I mentally prepare myself for what I'm about to see. Just thinking of her without a scrap of clothing already gets me hard, what more if I actually see her in all her naked glory?

"You're still too weak to soak in water alone," I call back as I slowly walk toward her, my whole body taut with tension.

"Then maybe, you should get in here and help me before I do any more damage to myself!"

I step into the bathroom and see her lying on her back. Her wet, soapy tits bounce on the top of the water. Straining my neck to peer in further, I follow the curve of her hips to the little mound between her thighs. She's absolutely perfect and my dick jumps to attention. I don't just want this girl, I have to have her. I'll go ballistic if I don't.

"I know it's been a while since you've seen me like this, but how long are you going to stare? I need some help here, remember?"

I blow out a breath, now too hard to the point of pain. "I'm sorry, baby. It's just that you're so fucking beautiful. You're the kind of beautiful that makes men lose their minds. Mine included."

I toss a towel over my shoulder and walk to the edge of the tub. Bending down, I wrap her arm around my neck and lift her to her feet. She wobbles a bit so I place my other arm around her waist, pulling her cold, wet body against me.

It takes herculean effort not to slide my hands and tongue along her creamy skin. I am too old to be acting like a lovesick schoolboy, but here we are.

She shivers, and that's my cue to wrap the towel around her and carry her to the bed. Fucking lucky towel, touching places I cannot.

"I feel like an idiot," she says as I lay her down.

"You can't be doing things like this. No showers when you're home alone and absolutely no baths. Now, I'm going to roll you over and take a look at your injuries from the accident. I remember you still have some bandages."

I roll her on her stomach and open the towel. What a sweet, juicy ass she has. How nice would it be to slap and squeeze it as I sink myself inside her? In my mind, I easily convince myself that touching it is okay, and I slide my hands up her plump cheeks to the small of her back. She sighs when I put my hands on her and my cock jerks in my pants.

"Well? Did I mess something up back there?"

“Bandages are soaked, but the wounds are dry, so I’ll remove them now. Everything back here looks excellent, baby,” I reply.

“Are you talking about the stitches or my butt?” she giggles and wiggles her ass in the air.

“Both. The stitches are fine, and the ass is fine. Everything is exactly as it should be.”

“I fell on my butt pretty hard. Is it bruised?”

I reach down to adjust my pants as I examine her ass, “No, no bruises.”

“Could you rub it for me? It kind of hurts.”

Why is she doing this to me? Does she have any idea how hard it is for me to control myself around her?

But...I will always give whatever she asks.

Sucking my bottom lip between my teeth, I reach out and run my hands along her plump bottom. There’s nothing I want more in this moment than to sink my tongue inside her and taste her sweet juices.

She sighs and says, “That feels so good. I must have landed pretty hard.”

“You don’t know hard, little girl,” I say through gritted teeth.

“What was that?”

“Nothing. Just relax and enjoy,” I tell her, but as she continues to moan and sigh, I decide to push things a little further and test my limits.

I slip my finger between her cheeks and slide them down to her little pussy. I almost groan when I find her slit already soaked. She gasps as I part her lips and rub her clit with my thumb. She arches her back and I scold her, “You can’t do that. You need to stay still or you’ll hurt yourself.”

“I don’t think I can,” she argues.

I flip her over gently and kneel between her bent knees, running my hands along the insides of her thighs. Imagine

coming home to this every night.

“Now, don’t move,” I repeat, dropping my head and kissing the inside of her thigh. I want so badly to taste her but not before I get my hands and lips on those gorgeous tits.

Hovering above her, I lean down, kiss her lips, and work my way down her neck to her chest. Her pretty pink nipples perk up when I take them in my mouth. If I keep this up, I just might come in my pants but I can’t stop. I don’t want to stop.

I want to taste every inch of her, so I lick my way down her stomach and between her legs. She bows off the bed when I flatten my tongue on her sensitive nub, but I hold her waist. I suckle her clit until she cries out, her hands yanking my hair.

I drop my head and slide my tongue deep inside her. She tastes like honey, and I don’t want to miss a drop.

Her legs thrash and I know she’s on the cusp of orgasm. I can’t let her hurt herself so make sure my hands keep her in place as I use my tongue to get her off. She cries out and fights to move, but I won’t allow her. My scalp stings as she keeps on pulling my hair.

“Do you want me to stop?” I ask her as I lift my head.

She’s biting her bottom lip, but when she looks down at me, her eyes are glassy. She shakes her head and glares. “Don’t you dare stop.”

Smirking, I keep her in position as her body trembles, and I lick up every sweet droplet of her creamy release.

Still waiting for my pulse to slow, I lie down beside her, and she wraps her arm around my neck. “That was unexpected. Amazing but unexpected. Maybe it’s the memory thing but it felt so new, like something I’ve never felt before.”

“Yeah, maybe it’s the memory thing,” I respond, having no clue what sexual experience she may or may not have. “Are you hungry? I can order something.”

“No, I’m tired. Can you just lie here with me?”

“Anything you want, sweet girl. I’ll stay right here.”

The doctors told me that sometimes memories come back like the leaves falling in autumn.

One or two will float down and provide a small burst of color. Then, a gust of wind brings a deluge in a disorganized frenzy that leaves you breathless and in a panic. This morning, one small leaf floated down on me.

“When they cleared the wreckage, did they find anything? My purse or my cell phone maybe?” I ask Andrew. He has his back to me and stops stirring the scrambled eggs. His body stiffens, and he puts the spatula down on the counter.

“I don’t think so. The police never brought anything to the hospital.”

“Isn’t that kind of odd? I mean, it’s not like the car caught fire, right? Shouldn’t my things have been there?”

“Amy, listen. Nobody was concerned about your driver’s license or cell phone. We were concerned about you. Is that so strange?”

“Where were we going?”

“What?”

“I was in the car with my parents. You weren’t with us. You must have known where we were going, and I’d like to know why my parents and I were in a car together during the last moments of their lives.”

“I don’t know. I don’t remember. Why is this important right now? I’m trying to feed you before I’m late for work.”

“I had a memory this morning. It was just a flash, and it ended as quickly as it started, but I saw myself getting dressed to go out to dinner with my parents. I think it was that night, but I wasn’t here getting ready. I was in a teenager’s bedroom. I’m sure I was living at home with my parents. Did you and I have a fight? Did I move out and go back home?”

“No, we absolutely didn’t have a fight. I can promise you that. Do you think if we did fight, I would let you walk out that door? That’s not me, little girl. I would never stand for that. I don’t know what this memory means. Was there a calendar on the wall? Did you see the date and time on your phone? These things probably won’t make sense to you at first, but that’s not the point. The good news is that you’re starting to remember things.”

“You’re right. It’s just hard for me.”

“I’m sure it is.” He walks over, sets my breakfast in front of me, and kisses my forehead. “Maybe I should take the day off and stay with you.”

“No, don’t do that. I’m okay, really. I won’t do anything stupid again, I promise.”

“You’re sure?” He strokes my hair but eyes me intensely.

“Yes, go to work. I’ll be fine.”

He leaves reluctantly, and as I finish my breakfast, I think how odd it would be for my personal effects to just disappear from the scene of an accident. I mean, didn’t the police or the first responders need my ID to find out who I was so they could contact Andrew?

No, I might not know exactly who I am, but that doesn’t mean I should just leave my identity up for grabs on the black market. Maybe someone already used my cards or something.

With a sigh, I call the hospital.

“Hello, my name is Amy Andrews. I was discharged yesterday, and I was wondering if any of my personal effects

were left in the room—in a drawer, maybe?”

“I’m sorry. I don’t see you listed as a patient here,” the woman on the other line replies.

“No? Well, what about Amy Rogers? Maybe I was listed under my maiden name.”

“Your maiden name? Ah, okay. There you are. Let me transfer you up to the ward nurse to see if she can help you.”

The hold music seems to play for an eternity before the ward nurse answers.

“Miss Rogers, thank you for holding. I was on duty when you were discharged. All of your personal effects were picked up by Doctor Andrews.”

“Are you sure? Do you know what items he picked up?”

“I believe it was a jacket, shoes, a purse, and a cell phone.”

“Oh, okay. Thank you.”

“Is everything alright, Miss Rogers? Do you need help?”

“Help? What kind of help?”

“Never mind. Is there anything else I can do for you?”

“No, thanks again.” I end the call with more questions than answers. She must be mistaken. Why would Andrew stand here and lie to me about my things? The way she worded things was a bit odd, her tone too. Miss Rogers, Doctor Andrews. She has to know we’re married, right?

I don’t want to doubt Andrew. Yet, I find myself poking around the apartment looking for my purse and phone. I check the kitchen cabinets, the hall closet, the dresser drawers, and the bedroom closet but find nothing.

Still worried about my missing items but pleased that my husband wasn’t keeping them from me, I sit down on the bed and consider taking a long nap. I’m about to close my eyes when I glance into the bathroom and see the one cabinet I haven’t checked.

“Don’t do it. That’s silly. Why would he stash your purse in the bathroom pantry?” I tell myself but lift myself off the bed anyway.

I open the closet door and push the bath towels to the side. There, beneath them, I find a drawstring plastic bag with the name of the hospital on the side. I open it and pull out a tan leather purse.

Inside, I find a wallet and a cell phone with a dead battery. They don’t look at all familiar, but I know that they’re mine. The wallet is filled with credit cards, a social security card, a driver’s license, and a student ID for the local college. They all have my name, Amy Rogers, on them.

My stomach churns as I consider the unthinkable. Is it possible that Andrew Adams and I aren’t married? Has he been lying to me? I scan the bedroom for a cell phone charger and find one plugged in behind the night table on Andrew’s side of the bed. My hand is shaking as I plug in my phone. The truth is in there. I know it is.

Considering my options but there aren’t many. I don’t have the strength to pack up and leave. I can’t even get in and out of the shower by myself. No, there has to be some simple explanation for all of this.

Maybe I never got around to having my name changed. Andrew, knowing that I might worry he was lying about being my husband, planned to keep my things from me until I regained my memory. That makes sense, right? But then, why is there a trace of me in this apartment? Why does it look like he just grabbed my clothes out of some other closet somewhere and stuffed them into his?

The phone is in rough condition. The screen is shattered, and it’s taking forever to charge. At this point, I’m afraid it might be a lost cause. I pick it up and press the power button just as I hear Andrew come off the elevator.

My heart races, and I begin to panic but not because of what he did. As crazy as it seems, I’m worried about how he’ll react to me questioning his intentions and integrity. I should be

furious with him, but all I want in the whole world is for him to not be angry with me.

It's crazy, I know, but ever since I woke up, he's done nothing but take care of me. That has to count for something.

He doesn't even force himself on me, only ever touched me when it was necessary. It's me who's putting myself on a silver platter just for him. I'm the one who asked for a kiss. I'm the one who waved my ass in front of his face and asked him to touch me.

I swallow hard as I listen to his footsteps approaching the bedroom door. I have to be strong. He still owes me answers, and if having to give them upsets him, then he isn't the man that I think he is. Still, I'd probably want to be with him either way.

ANDREW

“I came home a bit early. I realized I hadn’t prepared you anything for lunch. You must be starving,” I call out to Amy who I assume is in the bedroom. I wait, but she doesn’t answer. I creep into the room, expecting to find her fast asleep.

If only she was fast asleep. Instead, she’s seated on the bed. Beside her is the tan leather purse the police officer retrieved from the crash site.

Shit.

“Amy? What’s going on? What are you doing?” I ask her.

“I suppose I could ask you the same thing.”

“What do you mean? I just told you. I’m here to feed you late lunch or an early dinner. However, you look at it.”

“I’m talking about this,” she points to the bag. She pinches her lips and draws a deep breath before saying, “You told me this morning that this didn’t exist, but I found it hidden under the towels in the bathroom. Why?”

“Did finding it make you feel any better about what happened? Did it jog your memory?”

At this, she closes her eyes and runs her hand through her hair. “No, but that doesn’t answer my question. Why would you keep this from me?”

“I did answer your question. I didn’t think having the purse you carried or the jacket you wore on the night your parents

died would make things any better for you. I didn't want to stress you out more. You'd only push yourself to remember."

She looks down at her feet and begins to cry.

Fuck. My throat closes up and my insides are in shreds. The last thing I want is for her to get hurt because of something I did.

Slowly, I sit down beside her and take her hand in mine. I drape one arm around her shoulders and pull her close to me. God, she smells good, like lavender. I half-expect her to push me away, but she buries her face in my chest.

"What about your cell phone?" I ask, seeing the phone plugged into my charger. "Did you learn anything from that?"

"The screen is broken. It doesn't light up anymore," she whimpers.

"Listen to me closely, little girl. I need to ask you something important."

She looks up at me with those doe eyes, and my brain refuses to even consider what would happen if she walks away. If I tell her the truth, she may want to leave and I can't let her go. I won't. She means far too much to me.

And she's too innocent for all the dangers out there. I'm going to end up stalking her, following her everywhere she goes. No. This is where she belongs. This is where she will stay.

But...I'm fucking sick and tired of the lies and false pretenses. I want her with me forever, and this is not the way to go.

"Have I harmed you in any way?"

"No, of course not. You've been wonderful to me."

"Even last night when you would have let me do anything to your body, did I take advantage of you?"

"No, but...I don't understand. Why are you asking me these things?"

"Because it's clear that you don't trust me. If you did, you wouldn't have gone searching for your things. Maybe, even though you don't have your memory, your subconscious mind

is telling you that something isn't right. That's my fault, I think, because I haven't been completely honest with you."

"What are you saying? Tell me."

"It's important for you to remember that I never said I was your husband. I just didn't correct you when you assumed that I was."

This time, she pulls away but whips her head toward me, eyes wide as saucers. Her voice trembles when she says, "So, we're not married? Oh my god."

"No, we're not married but there has to be a reason why you made that assumption. I mean, come on, Amy. You woke up from a coma, looked at a man wearing a white coat in a hospital, and didn't ask if I was your doctor. You asked if I was your husband.

"Now, maybe that's because you felt me in your room every night after my shift. Maybe you heard my voice when I spoke to you and told you that everything was going to be alright. You felt connected to me the same way I felt connected to you that night you arrived in the ER."

"But you brought me here knowing that I thought we were married. I was naked in front of you."

"Husband or not, you wouldn't have gotten out of the tub without my help."

"But, last night..."

"What about last night? You wanted something and I wanted to give it to you. Would a ring and a marriage license have made it more enjoyable for you? Do you regret any of it?"

"No, but that's not the point."

"So, what's the point?"

"You lied to me."

"About your purse, yes. Not about being your husband. Not once. That was all you. I just didn't want to frighten you or make you panic that you had no one anymore. You've been through so much already. I didn't want you to feel like you

were alone. Because you're not. You have me. I'm here for you. Doesn't matter if we're actually married or not."

"What happens now?" she whimpers.

"I don't want anything to change. You need help with your recovery, and I want to give you that help."

"Do I have a home?"

I sigh and cross my arms over my chest. "That's complicated. Yes, your parent's house is there waiting for you, but the power has been disconnected and it needs a good cleaning. The trash wasn't taken out, and with no air conditioning, there's quite a stench."

"You've been there?"

"Yes. I went to get your clothes. Listen, even if I paid to turn on the utilities and sent someone in to clean it up for you, your bedroom and the bathroom are on the second floor. You can't climb the stairs. You can't cook or drive or shop. You don't have insurance to pay for a live-in nurse. What would you do by yourself?"

"What if I have a boyfriend out there somewhere? Some poor guy who has no idea where I am or what happened to me. That would be terrible, wouldn't it?"

She has no clue how infuriating that thought is to me. Should I feel sorry for some chump who lost her to me? No, because if it was me in his shoes, I would have moved mountains to find out where she was and sat by her side until the moment she opened her eyes. You know, just the way that I, a total stranger, did.

No, I don't care if there's some guy out there eating his heart out over her. In fact, if he exists, I hope shows his face so I can beat the answers out of him. She was in the news. Unless he's blind or could not read, he would have already known.

"If you had a boyfriend out there, why didn't he come looking for you? Your accident made front page news. Why didn't he call the hospital looking for you? If this guy does exist and he didn't even bother to try and find you, he doesn't deserve you. I would have traveled to the ends of the earth to find you. I

would have never stopped looking. Is this what all of this is about? Are you hoping there's some guy waiting for you out there?"

"No! I just thought that maybe I should go to my house just to see if anything jogs my memory. What do you think? Do you think it might help?"

I think about it and realize that if she wanted to leave, she could've left already. But she's still here. She's still talking to me, not carving her name on my face, and even asking my opinion on something important. Relief wracks me in waves. "If you think you're up to it, I'll take you. We can go tomorrow if you want to. Or...are you angry with me and planning to go alone?"

A tiny smile appears on her lips. "I should be angry. I should feel like an absolute fool...but, right now, you're the only person I know. You're the only one who can help me. If you're still willing to take care of me even though I'm a complete stranger, well, I think—for now at least—I need you."

"That's all I want to do, princess. I want to help you. I can sleep on the couch if it makes you more comfortable. If you recall, that was my plan from the beginning."

"How about we eat in the living room and you tell me all about yourself? I'd like to get to know you better."

"Anything you want. Can I help you to the sofa?"

She nods, and I sweep her in my arms. She's so light, so delicate. There's no way I'm sending her off to fend for herself. No, now that the truth has come out, I can work on proving what I knew all along—she's mine. No one else's. If I have to spend the rest of my life convincing her, then that's what I'll do.

I set her down on the sofa and return to the kitchen to get the take-out I brought home for us.

"I hope you're not a vegetarian because I brought steak."

"If I was, I don't remember, so I guess I'm not anymore," she laughs and I breathe a sigh of relief. My coming clean could have gone so much worse. At least, she's still smiling.

“So, tell me about yourself, Doctor Andrew Adams.”

“There isn’t much to tell, I suppose. I work a lot. I go to the gym. On the off chance that I get a weekend to myself, I like to go hiking. I suppose you could say that I’m married to my job,” I shrug. I mean, at least that’s what I did before her.

“How old are you?” she asks and looks back down at her food.

“I’m thirty-nine. Do you even know how old you are?”

“Yes, even if I didn’t before, my birthday was on my driver’s license. I’m twenty-one.”

“I knew that, little girl. It was in your file.”

“What about girlfriends? Did you kick some hot nurse out of bed so you could give me a place to recover?”

“I did not. There’s no one. There has never been.”

“Why not?” she asks.

“I told you, I’m married to my job and I don’t cheat,” I wink at her.

“What about family? Where did you grow up?”

“Whoa, slow down there. This isn’t very fair. I can’t ask you anything.”

“Come on, family? Hometown?”

“I grew up in the mountains upstate. I have a sister and a mother. My father died last year.”

“I’m sorry.”

I take her hands and force her to look into my eyes, “I’m sorry, too. I’m so sorry for your loss.”

Her smile disappears, and she bursts into tears, burying her face in my chest. I hold her while she mourns her parents for the first time. The parents she doesn’t even remember.

It takes a few minutes before her tears subside and I look into her bright blue eyes. Her gaze drops down to my mouth, and she licks her lips. I cradle her face, and she leans into my touch. My thumb grazes her bottom lip. She darts out her

tongue to lick it before taking it in her mouth and sucking lightly.

Jesus, this girl.

I take out my thumb and replace it with my mouth. The kiss starts slowly at first. But she clutches my collar and pulls me closer to her. With a groan, I ram my tongue into her warm mouth, earning me a moan and whimper. I'm firing on all synapses, and I have to physically lock my muscles down to stop myself from going further.

An alarm sounds on my phone, and I know it's time for her medication. We break apart, trying to catch our breaths. I get her pain medicine and bring it to her with a glass of water.

"So much for our conversation. This stuff makes me pass right out," she pouts.

"That's alright. It's early. You can take a nap and we'll finish later."

After eating, I throw the containers in the trash and carry her back to bed. It's almost imperceptible at first, but her eyelids begin to droop, and she yawns. I turn to leave, but she calls out to me.

"I know you aren't ready for bed yet, Andrew, but when you are, you can sleep in here with me."

"Are you sure?"

"Yes, I don't like sleeping alone."

"Alright. Now, get some rest." I lean over and plant a kiss on her forehead before I turn off the light and leave the room.

I spend the next few hours sitting on the sofa and staring up at the ceiling. Today could have gone a whole lot worse. She could have called the hospital and reported me for taking her personal things. She could have searched the little dipshit I saw earlier and asked for his help. She could have pushed herself physically and went to her old house.

I let the relief sink in. She has given me a chance to prove myself, and I'm not going to take this for granted.

Now that she knows the truth, winning her trust is more important than ever. So even if her memory returns, it won't matter anymore because her life is with me. Just the way it's always been.

It's around one o'clock in the morning when I feel Andrew's weight on the bed.

I try my best not to move or make a sound. My mind has been racing with thoughts about him—how he brought me here under false pretenses and what his motive for it all might be. I've thought about myself as well. I may not have my memory, but I don't think I'm an impulsive person.

I can't see myself as someone who jumps right into sexual situations, either. Yet, feeling the weight of his body beside me makes me yearn for his touch. If he knows I'm awake, he'll want to talk to me and I simply don't know what to say. I'm a jumble of messed-up emotions with no idea what the future holds for me. I wonder if I've ever felt this vulnerable before.

Andrew lies on his side, and I can feel him looking at me. I keep my eyes closed tightly and wait breathlessly to see if he's going to touch me. He doesn't. He rolls onto his other side and turns off the bedside lamp.

I try to ignore my frustration because...why? I have no idea where this desire comes from. It's only been a few days, and we've already fallen into a rhythm too easily. Now that I know the truth, him being my husband actually makes more sense. Him being a total stranger doesn't.

Maybe it's the sense of safety I feel when he's next to me, but something quiets my mind. I press my body against his back and drape my arm over his shoulder. He stiffens at first but he eventually takes my hand in his, and I fall asleep.

Am I dreaming? I must be dreaming.

Andrew told me we aren't married, yet here I am in a billowy, white dress standing on the beach beside him. He's in a black suit, with his thick, black hair slicked back. His tanned skin glows under the summer sun, but that smile... God, I can stare at his smile forever. And that's all for me.

A preacher pronounces us husband and wife, and Andrew kisses me. It's long and demanding, I almost...

"Amy, wake up. It's time for your medication," Andrew gently nudges me.

I snap my eyes open and smile when I see his face.

"What's that smile for? You must have had a very good dream," he says as he hands me my pills and a glass of water.

I sit up and stretch, noting how his face darkens when my shirt rides up my belly.

"It was a good dream," I say, popping the pills onto my tongue.

"Was it a memory?"

"No. Not a real one, anyway,"

"Still, I'm glad you woke up with a smile. I called the hospital and canceled my day. When you're ready, I'll help you to the bathroom so you can prepare."

"Ready?"

"You still want to visit the house, right?"

"Oh, right. Yes." I've almost forgotten about it. My heart pounds as I consider what secrets I might uncover about myself today. As badly as I want to remember, I'm concerned about what I'd find and how it might alter my relationship with Andrew.

I pick out some clothes, and he helps me to the bathroom. He has the shower running for me and leaves a towel where I can easily reach it should I need him to come help me out of the tub. I step out of my shorts and panties and try to lift my shirt over my head, but a sharp, searing pain in my back stops me.

How am I supposed to shower when I can't even undress myself? I try again, but this time, I can barely raise my arms over my head. I close my eyes and take slow, deep breaths.

There's only one solution to this problem, so I wrap the towel around my bare bottom half and call out, "Andrew, I need you."

He steps slowly through the door and asks, "Sure. What do you need?"

"I hate to ask, but can you help me get out of this shirt? I tried but I can't do it. My back hurts."

His forehead furrows, face full of concern. "Okay, we don't want you to pull a stitch or set back your recovery. Turn around."

I turn my back to him and hold my arms up as high as I can without feeling pain. He grabs the hem of my shirt and slides the fabric up my torso. I feel the weight of his hands on my ribs and the sides of my breasts.

He lifts the shirt over my head and drops it onto the floor. His breath coasts on the back of my neck, and I almost drop the towel on the floor. The towel! Why am I not pulling it up to cover my chest?

I look across the room and see my reflection in the mirror. Andrew is still standing behind me. He's looking in the mirror, too, eyes blazing with heat.

My breath hitches, and I tell myself that I should cover up. I should scold him for gawking at my exposed breasts. I should do those things but I don't. I just stand here and watch his reflection. I like that he enjoys watching me. Even with evidence of the accident clear on my body, his gaze is hazy with lust, and it's doing things to me.

The air between us is thick and charged, and if I reach down, I know I'm already soaking wet. He's not even doing anything yet, but I'm already so turned on.

He runs his hand along my back and belly before cupping one breast. I gasp and snap my eyes shut. It feels so good when he

touches me like this. He squeezes it and runs a thumb along the taut bud, making me bite my lower lip.

His soft lips rest on the sensitive spot in my neck, and I squirm, needing to feel some kind of friction between my thighs. When he licks my neck, I step back, hitting his hard chest, and whimper when I feel his length on my ass.

“I want to taste them,” he rasps and spins me on my heels.

He drops his head and takes my left nipple between his lips. He sucks and licks it and then moves his mouth to the other one. My heart pounds in my ears as I wonder just how far he’s planning to take this. Far enough, I hope.

I’m completely under his spell.

I run my fingers through his hair as he continues to kiss and lick my nipples, neck, face, and lips. He pulls me close and I feel his erection through his shorts. It’s big, just like the rest of him, and I’m scared that he’d split me in half with it.

My mind drifts to a lustful, wicked place where he bends me over and mounts me from behind, but as quickly as the thought reaches my mind, he stops.

No, no, no.

I look at him, bewildered by how suddenly he’s hit the brakes.

“Do you need help getting into the shower?” he asks me.

“Um, no. I think I can...”

“Okay, call me if you need help getting back out,” he says and leaves, closing the door behind him.

My legs are shaking as I step under the warm water. A cold shower may have been more fitting. What just happened? Is this his way of punishing me for doubting him? He has to know by now that I’m not going to say no to his advances because I want it just as badly too.

After I finish my shower, I grab my towel and dry off.

I begin to dress myself, and I can’t help but chuckle. I picked a button-down shirt to wear for the day. What a shame. Now I don’t have an excuse to call Andrew back in here.

As I dress, my mind drifts back to just what it is that I'm getting ready for. In an hour or so, I might just remember who I am. As exciting as that is, I worry that what I find might tell me I don't belong with Andrew. That maybe, we belong to different worlds.

Maybe that's why he stopped. Maybe he's worried about that, too. For the first time, I realize what a difficult position I'd put him in, and I hate that it took this long for me to see it.

He really cares for me even if, at any moment, I could just turn into someone else and he'll become a stranger. A heaviness settles on my chest as I consider that sobering thought.

No, I don't want that to happen. It can't happen.

I want to stay with Andrew. Just because I want to remember my past doesn't mean he has no place in my present and, more importantly, our future together.

I can barely sit still as I watch the miles on Andrew's GPS tick down.

Ten miles, four miles, one mile.

He pulls into a quaint neighborhood with streets lined with flowering trees. Children playing on the narrow street wait until the last second to move out of our way. I peer out at them, hoping to recognize their faces. Maybe I babysat for these kids while I was in high school or something. No, they look like every other random kid.

"We're here," Andrew tells me as he makes a left into the driveway beside a white two-story house.

He kills the engine and turns to look at me, "Anything?"

"Nope," I say, straining my neck to take in the full picture. This is my house? Just a couple of weeks ago, I knew that I lived here. Now, I wouldn't have a clue.

Andrew gets out of the car and walks to my side, opening my door for me. He takes my arm and helps me to my feet. He's always careful when he touches me, like he's scared I might break any time.

"Are you ready for this?" he asks me.

"I don't know. I guess I have to be, right?"

"No. If you aren't ready, we can turn around and go back home."

"I thought this was my home," I whisper.

“I have your keys. I borrowed them to get your clothes,” he tells me as he unlocks the front door. We step inside and the stench of old trash assaults my sinus. Oh god, he wasn’t kidding.

“I’ll take that trash out,” Andrew says, rushing to the kitchen.

“You don’t have to. That’s not your job,” I argue but he insists. I’m learning this one about him. If he wants to do it, no force on earth can stop him. Is it weird that I find it a turn-on?

I walk into the living room and gaze at the photographs on the fireplace mantel. There’s one of me—probably around four years old—wearing a green velvet dress and seated on Santa’s lap. I smile at the image but have no memory of the event.

There’s a picture of me in a pink gown standing in front of an arch made of white roses. “Must be prom,” I mumble. “No date? Hmm.”

I pick up the gold-framed photo to the left of the prom picture. “Mom and Dad,” I whisper and run my finger across their faces. They’re gone and I can’t even remember them to mourn them properly. The thought devastates me and I begin to cry.

Andrew, returning from outside, sees me and asks, “Amy, do you remember?”

He walks to me and I fall onto his chest, loving the way his arms wrap around my small body. “No, that’s the problem. I look at them, and they look like strangers.”

“It’s okay. You’re alright and I’m sure that if they were here, they would understand. They would just want you to get better. We all do.”

He holds me, stroking my hair as I weep. He’s so patient with me that I think he would stand here like this forever, but he notices the prom photo on the mantel and picks it up.

“Is this prom? Where’s your date? Was he camera-shy?”

“I don’t think I had a date. Why else would I be alone in the picture?”

“No date? You? I don’t believe that for a second...unless every boy in your high school is a wimp.”

“Can you help me upstairs? I think I’d like to see my room.”

“Sure thing,” he answers and lifts me into his arms.

“I think I could have walked with you supporting me.”

“Best not to take any chances. I don’t want you to hurt yourself,” he answers and carries me up the stairs, not even breaking a sweat.

It’s fortunate that he knows where to go because I don’t have a clue which room is mine. He pushes the door open and sets me on my feet inside. It’s a teenager’s room, with roses on the wallpaper and pink carpet underfoot.

I can imagine myself picking the bedspread and curtains, but I don’t have a clear memory of doing it. I sit down on the bed and close my eyes. As I breathe in, I catch a familiar scent. I pick up the pillow and bring it up to my nose.

It smells like vanilla. Yes, I always wore vanilla perfume, and I would spray some on my pillowcase when my mother brought it back from the laundry.

“I like vanilla perfume,” I tell Andrew. A look of understanding passes between us, and it feels like we’re sharing this small win.

“Me too,” he smiles. “Anything else?” he plucks the bottle of perfume off the dresser and slips it into his jacket pocket.

“Nothing yet,” I shake my head, frustration already building.

“Maybe I should leave you alone for a bit. I can go downstairs.”

“No, please stay here with me,” I beg him. I don’t know why I’m so frightened of being alone in my own space. I don’t feel this way in Andrew’s home, which is weird. This should be the safest place for me.

“Okay, I’m here,” he assures me and sits in my study chair. He’s so massive that I fear for one moment the chair will break, but luckily, it holds up.

I nod and close my eyes again. As I sit back and clear my head, I hear the faint sound of music in my mind. I open my

eyes and look directly at the CD player on the dresser.

My friends laughed at me for using it when I could listen to anything and everything on my phone, but my father gave it to me and I didn't have the heart to toss it out. My father was a music buff and I cherished his old CD collection.

Something unveils inside my head. Vivid pictures. Beautiful memories.

He played the guitar. My father played the guitar. My mother was a teacher. She taught the fourth grade at my elementary school, and my father was an engineer. I remember. I remember my parents. Oh god, finally!

I open my eyes and look at Andrew, emotions already crashing into me. "I remember my parents. I remember my father used to sit with me and listen to music."

"That's great. Anything else?"

"Not yet," I sigh. "Who am I? What do I do?" The answers simply won't come, and my head begins to throb. I reach up to rub my temples, and of course, he notices.

He stands up and kneels in front of me, brows drawn together as he touches my arm.

"What's wrong? Is it too much?"

My stomach begins to churn, and I start to feel nauseous. "I don't feel so well."

"Maybe it's too much, too soon. We should go. We can come back in a day or two and try again."

"I think you're right. I think it's time to go. Can you take me home now?" I say without thinking.

Home? You mean his home, don't you? I feel my face flush, but I don't think he even noticed my little slip of the tongue.

He carries me down the stairs and out the front door, setting me on the stoop while he locks up. I turn to look around at my unfamiliar neighborhood and spot a guy on the porch at the house next door.

He looks to be about my age or maybe a little older. He seems familiar, but I can't explain why. I can't place him, but I know I know him. I've seen him somewhere.

Then, it comes back to me.

He's the guy who came into the hospital. I remember Andrew was angry, and he pushed him out into the hall.

"Are you ready, princess?" Andrew asks and I turn to look at him.

"Hey, who's that guy across the street?" I ask him. He looks over my shoulder and then back at me.

"There's nobody there. What guy?"

I look back and see he's gone. Huh. That's weird. A few days ago, he insisted on talking to me. Now, he's not even going to say hi? I thought he knew me?

"He was the one who came to my hospital room, remember? He claimed he knew me, but you took him out into the hall."

"Yeah, he's nobody. He's just a neighbor. He read about you in the paper."

"Why did you send him away?"

"Amy, you had just regained consciousness. We needed to get you checked out."

"Oh, well, then. I don't remember him at all, so I guess we weren't really close friends."

"Did he wave just now? Did he rush across the street to say hello? No? I think that pretty much confirms you weren't close friends, right?"

"Yeah, you're right."

We drive back into the city in silence. I don't know what I thought would happen today. Was I expecting all of my memories to hit me like a bolt of lightning? I did remember some things, and I'm so glad they were good memories of my parents.

I do wish the man across the street would have come back. Maybe he could tell me more about my life before the accident. He's the only person that's tried to reach out. He must have some information. I guess I'll look for him the next time we go by.

"Hey, can you do me a favor?" I ask Andrew.

"Anything, baby girl. What's up?"

"Can you get me a replacement cell phone? I might have missed calls or messages from people who could help me remember."

He hesitates, then sighs and says, "Sure, but if you were on your parent's account, your line might already be disconnected. We'll see what we can find out tomorrow. Okay?"

"Okay, thank you. I would like to try anyway."

We return to the apartment where I take a seat on the sofa and try my best to connect the fragmented memories I've had into some sort of mental timeline. Maybe then it will be easier to fill in some of the blanks. Andrew makes me some tea and brings it to me with my afternoon dose of medication.

"Let me take a look at your wounds, please. This is the most active you've been since your discharge. I want to make sure everything is still where it's supposed to be," he tells me.

I turn sideways and hold my arms out while he lifts my shirt and examines me. I jump a bit as he runs his finger down my back alongside the area where one of my biggest wounds is.

"What was that for? Why are you so jumpy?" he asks me.

"I just wasn't expecting it, that's all."

He leans in close and whispers in my ear, "But you do like it when I touch you, right? You seemed to like it this morning in the bathroom."

"I do like it when you touch me. I just don't understand."

"Understand what?"

“Why do you do things to make me feel good but act like you don’t want anything in return?” I practically choke on the words. I can’t believe I’m actually saying them.

“Oh, I want something in return. You have no idea how hard it is to control myself around you. I just think it’s better to wait until you’ve recovered to take what I want. I can be pretty rough, little girl. I don’t want to hurt you. But, I still want to touch you, smell you, and taste you. Is that okay?”

“Yes,” an airy affirmation slips from my lips as I try to catch my breath.

I may not have much of a memory but I’m pretty sure that nobody has ever spoken to me this way before. Or, at least, not the right person. Why else would my body be reacting this way? Why else would every nerve ending be tingling? Why would my panties get so wet?

I want to tell him to screw waiting for me to get better. Just take me right here, right now, but he’s right. I’m in no condition to have him toss me around. Besides, what if the unthinkable happens? What if I get my memory back and find out there’s someone else? Do I want to face them and tell them I’m a cheater?

No. Andrew always thinks clearly. And yes, I’ve been under his care for days, but he’s never taken advantage of me. On the contrary, it’s me who’s been taking advantage of him.

ANDREW

Amy insists on coming with me to the phone store. As much as I'd rather not take her, I can't exactly say no. If I do, she may think that I have no intention of trying to get her line back up for her.

"Do you know the number that's attached to this handset?" the boy in the polo shirt asks her.

"No, but shouldn't you be able to find it? I can give you my ID to use to look up the account."

"Listen," I step between them and look him in the eye. "She's been in a terrible accident. As you can see, she's still in recovery. Now, I know this sounds like something out of a movie but the girl lost her parents and her memory in that wreck. Now, she's hoping..." I stop mid-sentence and look at her. "We're hoping that if she gets this phone line restored, some family member or friend might reach out. You know, someone who can fill in some of the gaps in her memory for her? What do you say? Are you gonna help us? If not, we can always go somewhere else. "

He looks down at his computer screen and begins typing. Seconds later, he looks back at me and says, "I found the account, and based on the dates when the lines were added, I have a good idea which number was hers but the account is closed."

"Don't you have to wait some period of time before you put numbers back in your pool or something so people don't get overwhelmed with calls for the wrong person?"

“Well, yes.”

“So, that number has to be available, right?”

“Well, yes. But like I said, the account is closed and I can’t reopen it. The account holder is deceased.”

“No, but you can add a line to my account, set her up with a new phone, and attach her old number to it. If it costs more to do that, I’ll pay for that, too.”

“I think I can help you. Let me just get my manager to release the number so I can use it,” he scurries off to talk to his manager and I wink at Amy.

“See? Soon, you’ll be all set.”

“Thank you for everything you’re doing. I’ll pay you back for all of it. I promise.”

“No, you won’t. I won’t allow it.”

As I wait for the boy to return, I wonder if giving her what she wants is in my best interest. The neighbor kid wouldn’t dare say anything to her while I was standing with her yesterday, but what if he has her number?

There’s no telling what he’ll say to her over the phone. I don’t want her talking to any men, but that guy is especially worrisome. I can’t put my finger on it but there’s something about him that I just don’t trust.

The boy returns with a smile and nods at us. Amy just needs to pick out her new phone.

“I have no idea...” she says.

“Give her the newest model with all the bells and whistles,” I tell him.

“Right, sir. No problem at all.”

“I don’t need anything that extravagant. It’s just a phone,” Amy whispers.

“The kid just did us a favor and he works on commission. Let’s make sure he gets a big check,” I grin.

She looks like a kid on Christmas morning when the boy hands her the phone. It's the first time I've seen her excited, and as I see the expression on her face, I tell myself that it's worth any repercussions that may come from giving her this access to her old life.

She's going to remember it sometime. I just need to speed things up—make her trust me and fall for me completely. That way, it won't matter if her memories are back. She'll still be mine.

She fiddles with the phone in the car and puts it back in the box.

“What's the problem?” I ask her.

“Dead battery. I'll have to wait for it to charge at home.”

“Sorry, I know you're anxious.”

She reaches across the seat and puts her hand in mine and says, “Sometimes, I wonder if it's even worth knowing what my life was like before this. I mean, I can't imagine it could have been any better.”

“That's sweet, baby girl.”

I hold her hand for the rest of the drive. It feels so natural and just so right. This is what she needs to understand. This is why letting her go is not an option.

We get home, and I plug the phone in for her.

“You look tired. Do you need to take a nap?”

Her eyelashes flutter over her heavy eyes and she answers, “I feel like an old woman. I can't even run an errand without being exhausted.”

“Your body is focused on healing. It needs rest,” I lift her into my arms and carry her into the bedroom. As I'm about to set her on the bed, she kisses my lips.

I raise a brow at her. “What was that for, princess?”

“For being so good to me.”

“Get some sleep. I’ll come to check on you in a couple of hours.”

I sit down on the sofa and stare at the little rectangle on the charger and wonder what secrets are hiding inside there. All of her data was saved to the SIM card so it will be there when she turns it on, but she doesn’t know what’s in there. I wrestle for a long time with this moral dilemma I’ve created for myself.

If I turn it on and look through it, she’ll never know and I can prepare myself for anything that might cause problems. I could also delete things that would raise concerns about us being together. I take a long, deep breath and let it out. I’ll wait until the thing is fully charged to decide.

She’s still sleeping soundly as I press the power button on the phone. It boots up and the message indicator chimes three times. I tell myself that I’m doing this for her own good. I won’t delete anything. I just need to be prepared to support her if there’s something here that will trigger any bad memories.

She has a saved voicemail so I check it. It’s from her mother telling her to be ready to go to dinner by seven. It was the day of the accident, and she ended the message by saying, “I love you.” This one’s going to hurt but she should hear it.

I scroll through her text messages. They’re mostly from friends at school, reminders from the art club about upcoming events, nothing from a boyfriend or prospective suitor. Then, I flip open her photo gallery.

Apparently, Amy is into nature photography. There are tons of photos of trees, flowers, insects, animals, starry nights, and sunny skies. Scattered amongst the outdoor photography are random pictures of her with girlfriends at dinner, at the amusement park, and on the beach.

This invasion of her privacy has told me one thing for certain. She’s exactly who I believed she would be—innocent, thoughtful, and pure.

I turn the phone back off and place it on the charger. As I turn to walk away, I hear a ringing and realize it’s the house phone. Must be the people at work.

“Hello? Adams here,” I answer.

“Dr. Adams, I’m sorry to bother you, but you have a patient—a Mr. Robinson. He went into cardiac arrest fifteen minutes ago.”

“Alright, yes, I’m on my way. Thank you.”

I don’t want to wake Amy, so I jot down a note and leave it on the counter beside her phone. This shouldn’t take long. I just need to ensure he’s stable and alter his treatment plan.

She may still be sleeping when I get back. Maybe I’ll stop and pick up something special for dinner and a little gift to cheer her up after she hears her mother’s voicemail.

“**A**ndrew? Andrew, are you here?” I call out into the silence and get no answer.

I slowly lift myself out of bed and walk to the living room, my joints and muscles still aching. I wasn't kidding when I said I felt like an old woman.

The apartment is empty. My new phone is sitting on the charger, and I pick it up and turn it on. Part of me feels excited, but a bigger part is scared of what I might find.

There's a note from Andrew sitting beside it, telling me he had to run to the hospital and would be back later with dinner. The phone boots up to the home screen, and I carry it over to the sofa, my heart already racing. I stare at it as if it's a bomb ready to go off in my hand. It's me in there. It's all of the things I can't remember about myself.

My hands shake as I touch the screen, but my investigation of its contents is cut short when it rings. I see the number across the screen. Naturally, I don't recognize it.

“Hello?”

“Amy? Amy, is that you? Oh, thank God! Finally. I didn't know if I would ever hear your voice again.”

“I'm sorry, who is this?”

“I guess you still don't have your memory. This is Michael. God, I miss you.”

“Michael? I'm sorry, how do I know you?”

“Oh, Amy. I was so worried when I found out that the doctor was taking you out of the hospital. I didn’t know what he was planning to do with you. Then seeing you with him at your house yesterday made me even more concerned about his intentions. You don’t belong there, Amy. You should be with me so I can help you to remember.”

My mouth drops and I repeat his name silently in my head. Why can’t I remember him? He seems to believe he has some special connection with me. The sense of urgency in his tone is also a little alarming, like he’s trying to push this fact on me—something Andrew never did.

“I’m sorry, Michael, but I don’t know you. Andrew has been helping me with my recovery. Whoever you are, you don’t need to worry about me. He’s treating me well.”

“Amy, that’s why you have to leave there. As long as you’re in an unfamiliar place with unfamiliar people, you might never get your memory back. Let me come and get you. I can show you pictures and take you places that will help you remember. If by the end of the day, you haven’t remembered and want to go back there, I’ll take you back. What do you have to lose?”

This makes me pause. What if...what if it works? What if this can do a better job of jogging my memory than going back to my house? “I-I don’t know. I think I should talk to Andrew about it first.”

“I don’t think you understand, Amy. I don’t think he wants you to remember. That’s why he kicked me out of your hospital room. I know that you think I’m a stranger but I’m not. I know it’s hard but you have to trust me.”

I don’t believe Andrew has anything but good intentions toward me, but he did bring me here under false pretenses and hid my purse from me. Shouldn’t that be enough for me to question him even just a little bit? What will spending the day with this Michael person hurt? If Andrew cares about me, he should understand my desire to be a whole person again.

“Okay. I can’t get around very well yet, but if you can meet me outside, I’m willing to give this a try. Let me give you the address...”

I give him the address, and he tells me he'll be here in ten minutes. Thankfully, I'm still dressed from the trip to the phone store this morning, so I fix my hair, put on my shoes, and take the elevator down to the lobby.

Several cars pass by as I make my way slowly to the door. By the time I step out, a red car is parked at the curb waiting for me. Michael gets out and walks over to help me to the car. I've seen him three times now, and I still don't recall anything about him.

"You got here fast. Why were you so close? Do you work near here?" I ask him.

"No, I was just in the city for some personal business," he replies.

"It's crazy how you decided to call so soon after I got my phone situation fixed."

"Lucky break, I guess."

"So, where are we going?"

"I thought I'd take you back to my place. I have high school yearbooks and other things there that might help you to remember."

"You never really answered me on the phone. How are you and I connected?"

He looks at me and sighs, "I'd like to think that I'm your boyfriend. I mean, we hadn't made it official yet, but we definitely headed in that direction before the accident."

"I'm sorry, I don't remember," I turn and face out the window. There's a sinking feeling in my stomach that I try to ignore. I'm still hoping to get home before Andrew.

We arrive on the street where I lived with my parents and pull into Michael's driveway on the other side of the street.

"What are the chances?" I mumble.

"What's that? Chances of what?"

"That we grew up across the street from each other and did not start dating until after high school. That's weird, right?"

“No, it isn’t weird. We were friends and I was a little shy, but I think we always liked each other. I mean, why else would you have gone to the prom with me?”

“I did? I thought I went alone since the picture on my parents’ mantel doesn’t have you or anyone in it with me.”

“Oh, no. I was late and the photographer was set up right at the door, so you took the picture before I got there.”

“You were late to the prom? How does that happen? Why didn’t we go together?”

“I’m not sure why you’re fixated on this little detail. Do you think I’m lying?” His expression changes, and I see the impatience in his eyes. Interesting. Andrew has never lost his patience with me, not even when I’m bombarding him with questions.

“I’m sorry. I’m just trying to find something that might jog my memory.”

“That’s alright. Let’s get inside. I’m sure that once you’re inside, things will start coming back to you.”

He pulls his car into the garage, closes the door, and helps me out of the car. He unlocks the door that leads into his kitchen and helps me up the concrete steps where I’m confronted with a musty odor and the feeling that the house hasn’t been cleaned in a very long time.

“Are your parents here?” I ask him.

“No. They’ve been on holiday in Italy for the past two months.”

I guess that explains it. A young man living alone in a big house probably doesn’t even think about cleaning.

“The basement is where I keep all of my stuff from school. We need to go down there,” he tells me.

“I don’t know if I can climb all of those steps...”

“I’ll help you. It’s fine,” he insists. He takes me by the arm and leads me across the kitchen to the basement door. The

staircase is steep and narrow. I don't know how the two of us will get down it together.

"I'm not sure about this. Couldn't you just bring the things up here?"

"I said it's fine," he says and holds his arms out, indicating that I should go first.

I take the first step and hold the railing tightly. As I lift my feet to take the second step, Michael shoves my shoulders, and I topple over and bounce down the rest of the stairs. The pain from my spine sends shock waves to the back of my head. I try to crawl to the stairs but each movement causes more pain.

"Stay where you are. I'll come down and help you get comfortable soon," he says. He slams the basement door and locks it from the outside.

The room goes dark as I slowly lose consciousness. Why did I do this? What was I thinking? I should have never left Andrew's side. Oh god. I feel so stupid. I didn't even leave him a note or anything about where I was going.

Is this it? Is this where it ends?

Flashes, photographs flip across the inside of my eyelids. I'm four years old. It's my birthday. Next, I'm in a blue dress and my mother is taking me to my first day of school. Birthday parties, Christmas trees, school choir, horseback riding, the death of my grandmother, my friends from high school, the prom I went to without a date, and then, the crash.

I remember being thrown from the backseat through the windshield. I remember seeing my parents' bodies covered with white sheets on stretchers.

Michael. What do I know about Michael? Boom, like a bolt of lightning, memories of my neighbor, Michael, crash inside my skull.

Memories of him peeping through my bedroom window at night, Mrs. Wilde next door accusing him of hurting her cat, and him pinning me down on the ground and trying to kiss me. I remember how we fought and I scratched his face so he punched me.

I open my eyes and find that I'm still alone in the basement. I crawl to the old, rust-colored couch that's pushed against the wall and climb onto it. As my eyes begin to focus, I see pictures of me scattered across the dusty table beside the couch.

He took them all without my knowledge. There are some of me sitting in class, some of me driving by in my parent's car, and, worse, photos of me getting undressed in my room. I shuffle through the pile and find a picture of me sleeping. From the angle of the bed, he didn't take this through the window. He was in my room!

I jam my hands into my underarms and try to stop myself from shaking so badly.

Michael is my crazy stalker. He's been obsessed with me since we were five and six years old. His parents had him in and out of therapy and even sent him to an institution when we were in tenth grade.

What did he think he was going to do? Was he planning to rewrite my story to meet his fantasy? More importantly, what is he planning to do now?

He comes down the stairs and says, "I see you woke up. How's your head?"

"It's bad. It hurts. I think I need to go to the hospital," I groan.

"No, we can't go anywhere right now. I have some painkillers I can give you."

"W-what happened?" I ask, pretending not to know he pushed me.

He looks me up and down, no doubt contemplating his answer.

"You tripped and fell down the stairs. Don't you remember?"

"No, it's all a blur. One second, we were talking, and the next, I was waking up on the floor."

"Do you remember anything? Like anything from the past?"

"No, sorry. I still don't remember anything."

“Well, then. I’ll go get you those pills, and we can start walking down memory lane.”

I try to swallow the fear, even though my breaths are bursting in and out and beads of sweat gather on my forehead, back, and chest.

When he leaves, I remember my cell phone in my purse. It’s across the room by the stairs, and I don’t know if I can get there and back before he returns, but I have to try. The room spins when I stand, everything around me blurring while a heavy weight settles in the pit of my stomach.

Acrid bitterness rises in my throat, but I swallow it.

I take a moment to steady myself and move as quickly as I can to the stairs. I bite down on my hand to keep from crying out as I bend down to get the phone from my open purse.

Andrew. I need Andrew. He wrote his number on the note that he left me this afternoon. I shoved it in my purse before I left to meet Michael. I reach back into the purse and grab the note. I can hear footsteps moving back and forth across the kitchen, water running in the sink.

He’ll be back down here any minute. I have to hurry.

I type Andrew’s number into the phone and send him a message.

“I need help. My neighbor has me. His house.”

I turn the volume off so Michael isn’t alerted if Andrew tries to call, and then shove it back inside the purse along with the note. I’ve just made it back to the couch when I hear Michael on the stairs.

My breathing is labored, and my hands are sweaty. I close my eyes and try to slow my heart rate. I don’t want to give him any indication that I’ve moved from this spot. But dear god, everything hurts.

He sits down beside me and says, “Open your mouth.”

I hold out my hand, hoping that he’ll drop the pills into it, but he repeats, “Open your mouth.”

He places two white pills on my tongue and hands me a glass of water. I drink and swallow, not knowing what poison he may be feeding me.

“Now, let’s talk. Since you don’t remember the past, it’s probably best to start with the future. Now that we’re together again, I’m not letting you out of my sight. Your new life starts right now and you’re going to make me a very happy man.”

He grabs my shoulders roughly, and I cry out from the pain. He lets go and says, “Sorry, I forgot you’re still a little broken. It’s okay. I can wait,” he smiles, a devilish glint in his eyes.

If I could, I would vomit on him right now, but it’s getting hard to see again. My head is spinning again. He drugged me. I try so hard to keep my senses about me. Who knows what he plans to do to me when I lose consciousness? God, I don’t even want to think about it.

“Lie back and rest. Everything will be better when you wake up,” he says softly as everything fades into black.

ANDREW

Finally finished with my patient, I head back to my office to collect my things. Getting home to a nice dinner with Amy is the only thing running through my mind when I see the message light flashing on my phone.

She may need something, so I check the message. I read the message twice, anger curling hot and unstoppable in my gut. I ball my fingers into a fist, and I drive it against the wall.

That motherfucker.

I grab my jacket and run out the door, not stopping long enough to pull it closed behind me.

“I’m gonna kill this son of a bitch,” I growl and pound my fist against the elevator door. Seconds feel like hours as I wait for the doors to open, and I give up and run for the stairs.

How did he get to her? There’s no way he could have gotten to the tenth floor of the building without an elevator key. She must have gone willingly. Why would she do that? What lies did this fucker tell her to make her go?

The thoughts whirl through my head, serving only to make the blood in my veins boil harder and faster. If he lays a hand on her, I’m going to break it off.

The trip from the hospital to the tree-lined street is a blur. I don’t know how I managed to drive here. Traffic lights, stop signs, other cars? Did they even exist? The destination was the only thing in my sight.

I slow my car to a crawl and pull up to the curb about a block away from his house. I'll walk the rest of the way so he doesn't see me coming.

I arrive at the house and slip behind a tree, peering out to see if I can make out any movement through the bay window. Seeing no one, I crouch down and make my way to the front porch. I turn the doorknob but find that the door is locked, so I slip back down the steps and go to the side door of the garage.

It's open and I make my way through it. There's a car inside, and I touch the hood. The engine is still a bit warm. He must have driven her here.

I work my way around the car to the door that enters the house. I try the knob and find that this door is also locked. I have to get inside.

I can't just go knock on the door. He'll never answer. I survey the garage as I try to come up with a way to get into the house.

My fingers make contact with a hammer on the work table I'm leaning against, and I have my answer. I take the hammer and smash the window on the passenger side of the car. The sound of the breaking glass rouses someone in the house. I hear them running around. I take my place behind the door and wait as I watch the knob turn.

He opens the door and peers into the garage. Seeing the glass on the floor he steps out onto the concrete step. That's when I make my move. I slam the door into his body and he flies off the step. I pounce like a tiger and begin slamming his head into the floor.

"Where is she? What did you do with her?" I shout.

"Who? Are you crazy? Why are you in my garage?"

I punch him in the jaw and watch his face contort as I make contact.

"Where's Amy, you piece of shit? I won't ask again. I'll just kill you and go find her myself."

The crazy asshole laughs at me and I see red. I get off him and lift him off the floor by his hair.

“We’re going inside,” I grunt as I drag him into the house.

We walk through the kitchen and I slam his head into the wall. “She’s not in here,” I snarl and move him to the living room. “Not here, either.” His face leaves a bloody print on that wall, too. “Are you seeing the pattern here? If we don’t find her soon, your skull is going to cave in.”

“She’s not here, you crazy fuck,” he gurgles.

“Andrew!” It’s faint, muffled, but it’s Amy.

I follow the sound to a door on the far end of the kitchen that’s locked with a deadbolt.

“Where’s the key?” I grit out.

“That’s for me to know...” I slam his face into the wall and he falls to the floor where I proceed to kick relentlessly at his ribs.

“Okay, okay. Fuck, stop. It’s in my pocket,” he tells me, pointing to the left front pocket of his jeans.

I stick my hand in his pocket and pull out the key. As I unlock the door, he scampers to his feet and tries to run away, but I grab him by the collar and pull him back. I open the door and throw him down the flight of stairs. His head bounces off the floor where he lands.

“Andrew?” I hear Amy call out again.

“It’s me,” I answer and take the stairs two at a time to get to her.

She’s lying on an old couch, half-conscious with tears in her eyes, and wearing nothing but her bra and panties. I’m filled with conflicting emotions. I’m so relieved to see her, but seeing her in her underwear like this enrages me again.

I pick the little prick up again and beat him until my fists are covered with his blood and his limp body dangles in my grasp.

“Andrew, stop. Just call the police. He’s had enough,” Amy tells me.

“What did he do to you?” I shout.

“I don’t think he did anything except drug me and take my clothes off. I think you got here before he could do anything else.”

“Are you sure?”

“Yes, I swear. I don’t want to see you kill someone. Not for me. You’re a doctor. You save people.”

She’s so innocent, so sweet, and I can’t have her watch me brutally murder this man. I don’t give a fuck about other people’s opinions, but I care about hers. I have to calm the beast inside me. I have to do it for her.

Flinging his body to the ground, I rush to her and take her in my arms.

“I remember,” she whispers.

“What, baby girl? You remember what?”

“Everything. I know who I am. My memory is back.”

I look into her eyes. I don’t know what she discovered, but nothing’s gonna keep me away from her.

“And? Is there a husband or fiancé I have to contend with?”

“No, there’s nobody. Nobody but you.”

I press my lips against her and kiss her deeply. The thought of almost losing her is more than I can bear. I can’t ever let her out of my sight again. She’s mine and I need to have her beside me.

Needing to put this behind us, I call the police and wait for their arrival. Amy and I give our statements as the ambulance removes Michael, who will be charged with kidnapping.

I drive Amy home, clamping my jaw shut and biting my tongue most of the way. She’s got me all wound up. While I’m thrilled to have her back, now that she’s safe, I can’t help but ask myself why the hell she left in the first place.

What was she thinking? The first time I leave her alone, she slips out the door. She’s not toying with me, is she? Is she using me for a bed and a hot meal until she finds someone from her past to take care of her? No, I’m thinking crazy

because of the way she's gotten under my skin. This has never happened before, and it rattles me to my core.

We exit the elevator into my apartment, and before she can say a word, I force her against the wall and lean against her.

"I can't believe you would put yourself and me through this. What was going through your head? I told you that neighbor of yours wasn't someone you should be around, but you didn't listen. You broke my trust, little girl."

"I'm sorry. I told you I just wanted to get my memory back."

"And what? Find some other life that would be better than being with me? Let me tell you something, there's nothing better than me. This is exactly where you belong. Right here. With me and only me."

"I know that. I knew that the whole time."

"But you still left," I say and squeeze her ass with both hands. She gasps, then begins to purr like a kitten when I give her a light smack.

"Ouch," she gasps.

"Where does it hurt?" I groan.

"My butt. Where do you think?"

"What you did was inexcusable. If you ever do anything that reckless again..." I palm her ass and squeeze it, grinding my rock-hard cock into her. Fuck these layers of clothing separating us.

"I won't. I swear I won't. I didn't think..."

"That's right. You didn't think. You didn't know how crazy I would be if I lost you. You didn't understand that you belong with me."

"It would make you crazy?" she whispers, biting her lip and eyes at half-mast.

"Crazy."

"You're making me crazy," she sighs.

I slam my mouth to hers before I drop my head and nibble on her tits through her blouse.

“I fucking need you. I need to be inside you. I need to make you mine.”

“I need that, too,” she pants and I slide my tongue inside her mouth.

“I’m gonna fuck you like you’ve never been fucked before,” I growl.

“I’ve never been fucked before.”

That stops me and makes my loins tighten. Jesus. Am I really that lucky? Is it possible?

“What are you saying, baby girl? Are you telling me you’re a virgin?”

“I just got my memory back, and I promise you, the things you’ve done to me with your hands and...your mouth...are the only things I’ve ever done. I-is that okay? Does it turn you off?”

“It’s even better. Once I take you, I own you. Nobody else is ever gonna taste this pussy. It’s all mine. You’re all mine—heart, body, and soul. You understand?”

“I never wanted anyone else. I won’t ever want anyone else,” she sighs.

I lift her off her feet and carry her to the bedroom. I start to undress her slowly, hoping to savor the moment, but the beast in me is impatient and I end up tearing her clothes off in a wild frenzy. I step back and gaze at her naked body and rasp, “This is all mine. Mine to protect. Mine to fuck. Mine to please.”

I toss off my shirt and pull her hands to my waist, urging her to unzip my pants. They drop to the floor, and I wrap her tiny hand around my shaft. Fuck. I almost come from how good this feels.

Grasping her hand in mine, I use it to stroke my cock while I bury my face in her bouncy tits. She’s got me flying so high that If I don’t stop, I’ll shoot my load in her hand. With a hiss, I take her by the arms and lay her down on the bed.

I slide my hand between her legs and rub the wetness from her tiny, virgin hole between my fingers. I suck two fingers before sliding it back inside her. Fuck me. She's so tight, I can feel her walls pulsing.

She cries out as I pump my fingers in and out of her. She's ready and I can't wait another second, so I raise her hips and wedge my tip inside her. Her little hole resists me, but I rub her clit with my finger, causing her to rock against me and letting me slide right in.

She's so tight that I can feel every twitch of her muscles against my member. I want to pound her like an animal, but between her weak state and lack of experience, I fight to hold myself back. I can wait until she's better. For now, I have to be content with going slow.

I look down at her angelic face and marvel at the contrast between it and her delicious curves. She's the perfect combination of innocence and sexuality. How can anyone resist?

She takes about half my length easily, so I hold back and only give her that much.

"Does it feel good, princess? Do you like my cock?"

"Yes, it feels good," her voice trembles. "Do you like it?"

"Oh, baby. Your tight, little pussy feels like heaven. I want to fuck you every single day."

She wraps her arms around my neck and holds on tightly. I'm holding back to prevent hurting her, but that doesn't make it any easier to hold back the orgasm. I've waited for weeks to drive myself home inside her. And fuck, it's perfect. She's perfect.

"You're gonna make me come, baby girl. Are you ready?"

"Yes, yes." she pants, still wrapped securely around my neck.

I reach between us and rub circles around her clit. Her tight walls are suctioning up around me, and I don't stop until she's a writhing mess.

I plunge deeply inside her and listen to her cry out as the head hits the right spot. The sound of her cries causes my muscles to tense and my cock to jerk as I spill my seed inside her.

As the weeks pass, I become physically stronger and more of my memories come back to me every day.

I've had a couple of follow-up check-ups and all my doctors have given me a clean bill of health. With the all-clear in place, Andrew and I start working out together in the gym and the bedroom. He definitely wasn't joking when he said he'd fuck me every day.

Not that I'm complaining.

"I don't think I've ever sweat this much in my life," I tell Andrew as we come home from our workout.

"You weren't an athlete in school?"

"I was a couch potato and still would be if you'd buy me a box of donuts and a bag of chips."

"I don't believe you."

"Oh, but it's true. I promise you."

We toss our gym bags on the bed, and Andrew starts the water in the shower.

"We have to shower together, baby girl. Your appointment with the attorney is in two hours."

"So, that's your excuse?"

"I don't need an excuse. What I say goes, remember?" With a smirk, he grabs me by the waist and lifts my shirt over my head. I spin around and playfully cover my breasts with my

hands. He pries them away and replaces them with his own while I slide his shorts down to his feet.

His thick girth never fails to amaze me.

I watch as the warm water cascades through his hair and down his chest before splashing against his now-erect penis. I look down at it and consider how far we've come. I'm no longer uncomfortable with him seeing my body, and I love that we've been experimenting with different sexual positions now that I'm healed.

But there's one thing I still haven't tried. It's time for me to know what it's all about so I place my hands on his hips and ease my way down onto my knees. He looks down at me with a gleam in his eyes and a little smirk on his lips.

"What are you doing down there, princess?" he asks me, voice husky with desire.

I maintain eye contact with him as I take the tip of his cock between my lips and hold it there. He reaches down and places his hand on the back of my head.

"Relax your jaw. If you're gonna do it, you're gonna learn how to do it right."

I unclench my jaw, and he uses his hand to push my head forward, making my lips glide further down his shaft. I feel the tip at the back of my throat and fight back the urge to choke as tears begin to form in my eyes.

He fills my mouth and holds steady until my gagging reflex subsides then begins slowly retracting and thrusting himself in and out of my mouth. His length and girth are stretching my mouth to the limit, but the way his face changes has me dripping. I do this to him.

"Look at me," he scolds me, "and relax."

I look up at him and see the expression of pure ecstasy on his face. He's loving this, and I'm loving the fact that I can make him feel this way. I tilt my head, allowing him to go deeper with his thrusts.

He's gentle with me at first, but as his passions rise, he digs his fingers into my skull and rams his hips forward with quick, deep thrusts. I feel wild and naughty letting him use me this way. So wild and naughty that my pussy pulses with need.

He lifts me to my feet and shoves me against the shower wall. He slaps my slippery ass hard and says, "Bend over."

I do as I'm told and am swiftly rewarded with the sensation of his cock inside me. He takes me in hard, determined thrusts that push me to the edge quickly. My cries send him reeling, and he digs his fingers into my asscheeks, burying himself deep inside me for his final release.

Still inside me, he presses his body against mine and says, "That was nice, princess. We'll have to do that again later."

"I'VE NEVER BEEN to a lawyer's office before. How am I supposed to dress for this?" I ask Andrew as I survey my wardrobe choices.

"It doesn't really matter. You aren't going to court or anything. This is just a meeting so you can settle your parent's estate. It's the first step to moving on with your life. I guess you should dress more for that experience than to impress the lawyer."

"Well, then, I'm picking something light, airy, and happy because that's how I want my life to be."

"Sounds perfect to me, baby girl."

I put on a blue sundress and cover my shoulders with a light sweater before slipping into a pair of matching sandals.

"You look beautiful as always," Andrew tells me as he collects the car keys and escorts me to the elevator.

He's always saying it, but those aren't empty words. I see the way he looks at me, and I always melt into a puddle on the floor. I'm still not sure what he sees in me, but I definitely feel like a princess with the way he treats me.

The drive to the lawyer's office is quick this time of the day when traffic is light, and we roll into the covered parking garage within minutes.

"Am I supposed to be this nervous about this?" I ask as Andrew helps me out of the car.

"There's nothing to be nervous about," he replies as he takes my hand and brushes his lips along my knuckles.

"I guess when this is over, I should consider going back to school and maybe finding a job."

"You'll have plenty of money to go back to school. You don't need a job."

"But you can't keep taking care of me. If I'm going to sell my parent's house and stay with you, then I should be contributing to the household."

He scoffs at me and says, "Nonsense. Financing the household is my job. Taking care of you is also my job. If you have to work to help pay our bills, then I'm not doing it right. Keep your money and do whatever you want with it. Buy dresses or whatever."

"But should it be? These are modern times, and I don't want to be a burden."

"Did you just call me old-fashioned?"

"You know what I mean. Men don't take care of women like they used to. Most couples are two-income couples."

"I don't care about most couples. I care about us. You're not a burden and you're not going to put any of your money into our household expenses and necessities. I take care of you. End of story. Clear?"

The elevator stops on the third floor, and we walk to the Office of Thomas Spencer, Attorney at Law.

I take a deep breath and close my eyes. I know that this has to be done, but it feels like I'm bringing an end to a life I've only just now remembered. I'm happy with Andrew, but still, there's a sense of nostalgic sadness in selling my parent's

house. I might not have even considered it if it weren't for what happened with Michael.

The two times that I visited, all I could think about was his house across the street and what he tried to do to me there.

The woman in the lawyer's office lobby leads us straight to a conference room and closes the door behind us. Moments later, a tall, handsome man in a gray suit arrives to greet us. He's about the same age as Andrew and equally as tall. He isn't built like Andrew, though. He's a bit on the slim side.

He shakes my hand and holds it in both of his as he offers his condolences on the loss of my parents. I glance over at Andrew and see that he isn't pleased with this. I pry my hand free and push in my chair. Heat rises in my cheeks as I notice Andrew glaring at the other guy.

"I've taken the liberty of pulling your parent's will from probate. That, in addition to their life insurance, should set you up very well while you wait for a buyer for the house."

"Okay, that's good," I answer.

"Good? I'd say that's great. A pretty, young girl like you with enough money that, if you invest it wisely, could put you through college and still pay you residuals for the rest of your life," the attorney's smile is short-lived as Andrew speaks up.

"What does the fact that she's pretty have to do with this?" he asks.

"Oh. Nothing, I was just..."

"Just what? Would you be less excited to tell an ugly girl that she's going to be set for life?"

"Sir, I'm afraid I'm missing your point."

"Just get on with it. Aren't there papers she needs to sign?"

"Yes, there are," the lawyer slides a manila envelope across the table and begins pulling packets of papers from inside.

He shuffles through them and slides the top packet toward me. He gets up from his seat and stands behind me, with his hand on the back of my chair. He leans over my shoulder and points

to the places on the paper where he wants me to sign. I turn my head to ask a question and find myself face-to-face with him. He looks into my eyes and smiles.

The sound of Andrew's chair sliding across the floor is like nails on a chalkboard, and I spin around in my seat just in time for him to shove the lawyer and grab me from my chair.

"What's the problem here? We aren't finished," the lawyer proclaims.

Andrew gently pushes me out of the way, gets nose to nose with him, and says, "Yeah, you're finished. My attorney will call your office so you can forward the paperwork there. We're finished with you."

"I don't understand. What's the issue?"

"We're leaving. I recommend that you stop talking now," Andrew takes my arm and rushes me out the door. He doesn't say a word, but I see his muscles tense, a vein bulging on his forehead. He's so full of steam that his head may just pop at any moment.

"Are you okay?" I ask, stunned by his spontaneous act of aggression.

"No, but we have to leave. I don't trust myself not to go back there and rearrange his face," he warns.

His nostrils are flaring. God, what did I do? I don't want him to be angry with me ever, but the tone of his voice tells me that anything I try to say will only make the situation worse.

My knuckles are white from wrenching my hands as we pull into the parking garage. Andrew gets out of the car and opens my door for me, still not saying a word. With his hand on my elbow, he leads me toward the elevator, moving at a giant's pace, and I have to run-walk to keep up with him.

The elevator doors open, and we step inside. I keep my head down and avoid looking at him. I have no idea what he has in store for me when we reach the tenth floor. I know he won't hurt me. I've never felt anything but safe around him, but I hate seeing him like this.

We exit the elevator into the apartment, and Andrew walks directly into the bedroom. I hesitate in the living room, wondering if I should follow him or not. Stepping closer to the bedroom door, I peek through to see Andrew collecting something from his dresser drawer.

I want to know what he's doing, but I don't want him to see me watching. Too late. He lifts his head and looks me straight in the eyes.

"Get in here," he says, pointing to the bed.

I slip over the threshold and stand at the foot of the bed.

"Take your clothes off. All of them."

Should I feel scared? Because I don't. This demanding, dominating side of him somehow makes sparks zip through my belly. With a shaky breath, I remove my sweater and dress, then my bra and panties. I step out of my sandals and stand, waiting for whatever he wants to do to me.

I hope I won't have to wait for long.

"I need you to listen to me, Amy," he starts, stalking toward me like a predator. He's more than a foot taller than me, and I feel so tiny compared to him. As he nears me, my pulse picks up and my breath quickens, heat pooling at the apex of my thighs.

He told me before he liked it rough. Is that how it's going to be today?

"This is not so I can hurt or humiliate you. I'm just gonna show you what it means to be mine. Now, I need you to lie down on the bed."

"Why?"

"So I can tie you up. That's why."

"Tie me up?"

"Yes, baby girl. Get on the bed, now."

My heart drums against my ribs as my thighs cinch together. Fire plunges down my body, and I can already feel something wet and sticky gushing out of me.

Why is this so hot? Why is he so hot?

I climb onto the bed and lie flat on my back, trying my best not to rub my thighs together. Andrew takes a black sleeping mask and slips it over my eyes. Then, he raises my arms above my head and binds my wrists with a strap of cold leather. He also takes each of my ankles to bind them. I can't see and move, and I'm completely at his mercy.

Just the thought of giving him full control almost makes me come.

The room is silent for a moment, and I hear him rustling about beside the bed. I surmise that he's undressing, and I wait for what he has planned for me next as I'm practically vibrating with excitement.

The mattress dips and I almost fly off the bed when his five o'clock shadow brushes against my already-throbbing clit. He flattens his tongue, and just when I think he'll start licking me, he stops.

"I don't like it when other men take pleasure in your company. It makes me very angry," he growls.

"But, I didn't do anything. I can't help what he might have done or what you might think," I whine.

"I'm not blaming you. This isn't a punishment. This is me showing you that you're mine—all of you. Do you understand?"

Every word has me getting wetter with arousal, and I can only nod.

He slides his tongue inside me, and I moan loudly. When I'm about to explode, he stops and chuckles darkly. "I can't hear you. Do you understand?"

"Y-yes."

"Yes, what?"

I can barely form coherent thoughts, the need to have him inside of me overriding everything else. "Yes. I-I'm yours. All of me."

“Good girl.”

He slides a finger down my slit. I want to thrash but I’m bound to the bed, so I can only whimper in frustration.

“You’re all wet, baby girl. You like being tied up, don’t you?”

“I like it when you take control,” I pant.

He brings his finger to my lips. “I want you to taste yourself. See how sweet you are.”

I suck his finger as he uses his other hand to squeeze my tits and pinch my hard nipples. He lets go of me, digs his fingers in my hips, and alternates between sucking my hard nub and sliding his tongue inside me.

Bound and blindfolded with his head between my legs sends me screaming into the wildest orgasm of my life, spots of every color dancing behind my eyes. As my body quakes, he slams his cock inside me to ride my orgasmic wave.

He drives into me so hard and deep that I lose my breath. With a deep growl, he takes off the mask and claims my mouth in a hard, toe-curling kiss. He squeezes my ass as I feel him getting thicker inside me.

“Fuck, baby. I’m coming,” he snarls.

After he delivers his spend inside me, he rests his forehead on mine, both of us breathing hard.

“I’m yours,” I whisper.

“Damn right, you are.”

ANDREW

It's been two months since this sweet, little beauty entered my life and I think it's about time that we celebrate.

We had to make a stop at the District Attorney's Office regarding the upcoming trial of Amy's abductor, and then it's off to a moonlight dinner cruise on the river.

"It sounds like the DA is going to shoot for the maximum sentence in this case. That's got to make you feel good, no?" I tell her, squeezing her knee.

"It does but what's really going to make me feel good is knowing it's all over."

"I couldn't agree more, and until then, I'm going to do everything I can to keep your mind off it."

We arrive at the dock, and I park the car. Amy peers out the window at the big ship. She beams, "I've always wanted to go on one of these cruises. When you suggested it, I was so excited."

"If you like it, we can make it a regular thing."

I help her out of the car, and we walk hand in hand along the pier. The setting sun casts a golden shadow across the river and the seagulls break the beams of light as they bob for fish on the surface.

"It's always so peaceful here. It's like stepping into another world, or maybe back in time," she says, looking like a kid in a candy shop.

“If you think this is something, you should try the ocean.”

“I went to Florida with my family and swam in the ocean, but that was a long time ago.”

“I was thinking more Caribbean.”

“Really? You want to take me to the Caribbean?”

“Sure. White sands, blue water, the freshest fruit on the planet. Why wouldn’t we go?”

“I’d love that.”

“You know what I’d love more?” I lower my voice and pull her closer to me.

“What?”

“Making you scream my name as I pound into you.”

“That sounds amazing, too.”

We arrive at the ship and take our place on the deck to wait for the launch. Amy hangs on my arm and breathes in the cool night air. She can’t stop smiling and seeing her like this makes something throb in the center of my chest.

She should always be this happy. I’ll make it my personal mission to do something every day to make her feel this way. I hope after tonight, she’ll know just how serious I am about that. I’m going to bind her to me... forever.

A waiter approaches with a tray of champagne glasses and I take two. I hand one to Amy who takes a sip and laughs when the bubbles tickle her nose.

“I must look like an idiot,” she shakes her head. “This is my first ever glass of champagne.”

“You’re still beautiful, though.”

“So, tell me more about the Caribbean. Did you go with a former lover?” she raises a brow and grins.

“You know you’re the only one, baby girl. You see, I’ve been to the Caribbean many times. So many times that I bought some property in Belize a few years ago. I thought it might be a good place for a single doctor to retire.”

“I had no idea you could buy property in the islands.”

“You can do whatever you want as long as you have the means, sweet girl.”

“Will you take me to your island property one day?”

“Of course. You don’t even need to ask. Anyway, that’s not just my property anymore. It’s ours.”

“And you weren’t going to tell me?”

“Oh, come on, princess. I know how much you like surprises.”

“Like this? I never expected this. Thank you for planning this dinner cruise for us.”

“Anything for you.”

We take our seats in the dining room and enjoy course after course of delicious dishes. After making a few faces, Amy even agrees to try one of the oysters with me.

“That’s not for me,” she gasps as she swallows it down.

The sounds of the live band fill the room, and I ask Amy to dance. This is something I’ve never done, but for her, I’ll do anything.

“I’m not a very good dancer,” she whispers.

“So am I, but what is there to dancing? You put your arms around me and sway to the music.”

I hold my hand out to her and lead her to the dance floor. She lays her head on my shoulder and sighs.

“What is it?”

“Everything with you is always so perfect. I can’t help but wonder what I’ve done to deserve a man like you.”

“Well, first, you were born,” I tease her. “That was a crucial step. Then, you grew into the most amazing girl in the world. That was the clincher for me.”

“That’s funny,” she grins.

“Only the being born part. I added that for dramatic effect. The rest, though, is one hundred percent fact. You are the most

amazing woman in the world. The most beautiful. Most perfect.”

“I haven’t even done anything with my life, yet. I’m almost a full year behind starting college.”

“What’s a year? It’s nothing, baby girl. It’s completely irrelevant. Are you excited? The semester is only two weeks away.”

“I am excited and a little scared. I don’t think I’ve left the apartment by myself in the past month. It’s going to be strange driving off without you. Speaking of that, did I say thank you for the car?”

“Only about a thousand times.”

“You know I could have bought my own car now that the house has sold.”

“I know but you should hold on to your money.”

“Why? You aren’t planning on dumping me, are you?”

“Well, now that you mention it, let’s go up on deck so that we can talk.”

“About dumping me?” she gasps.

“No, baby girl. I’m not dumping you,” I tell her and lead her out to the deck.

She leans against the side rail and looks up at the sky.

“It’s so beautiful,” she says, voice barely above a whisper.

Instead of looking up, I stare at her and swallow hard. “Damn right, it’s beautiful.”

She whips her head to me, wraps her arms around my neck, and kisses me. I think it’s supposed to be just a light kiss, but I grab her face, suck her bottom lip, and tangle my tongue with hers until she’s moaning in my mouth. I hold her close for a moment as I repeat the words silently in my head.

“Andrew, are you alright? Your heart is racing.”

“I’m fine. Amy, I want to ask you something.”

“Alright, what is it?” She searches my eyes and licks her lips. I almost forget what I’m going to say.

But this is important. It’s the next phase of our lives. Without a warning, I sink to one knee and watch as her hand flies to her mouth.

“The moment I saw you, I knew you were it. I didn’t know who you were or your past. But it didn’t matter because your future was always with me. I can’t imagine spending a single day of my life without you, and I want to spend the rest of my life making you happy. Amy, will you marry me?”

Her eyes grow wide and she holds her breath until she looks like she might explode.

“Yes, yes! I’ll marry you,” she cries.

I reach into my pocket and pull out the ring I’ve been hiding for the last week. I take her hand and slide it on her finger.

“It’s so beautiful,” she says, tears welling in her eyes.

“Still not as beautiful as you. Our plane leaves at noon tomorrow, baby girl.”

“Plane? Where are we going?”

“Belize. You’re okay with getting married on the beach, aren’t you?”

She throws her arms around me and buries her face in my neck. “I love you more than anything!”

“I love you, too, baby girl. More than anything.”

EPILOGUE

It may have taken an extra two years but I've finally reached the end of my college career.

It seems almost silly to me that I kept going, but Andrew insisted that if we finish what we start, we never have any regrets later. And that's what I did. I continued through two pregnancies and our move out of the city to our new home in the country.

Now, with our lives taking shape and our family growing, I realize that he was right. I'm proud of myself for getting my degree, and I would have felt like a failure if I had quit.

Of course, having a rich doctor husband who sprang for a nanny when I needed to attend classes and study made things quite a bit easier for me. And whenever he could, even if he just came off duty, he'd look after the kids. When he wasn't at work, he spent every single minute with us.

"Are you sure about this? I mean, I feel a little silly," I shout to Andrew as he steps out of the shower.

"What are you talking about?"

"I can just get my degree in the mail. Why are we going to this graduation?"

"Because I want to see my beautiful wife getting called to the stage. Because I want to take pictures to put up on my mantel, and because I'm not giving you your gift until you officially graduate."

“That’s not fair. All the work is already done. This is just the fluffy part.”

“It’s a memory. You more than anyone should know how important those can be.”

He’s right. After living with amnesia, I should cherish every memory.

“Alright, but do I look like a cow in this gown?” I ask, spinning in a circle in my cap and gown.

“A cow? Only if cows have suddenly morphed into sex symbols.”

“That’s sweet but I still have some extra baby weight to lose.”

“Baby, stop. You’re so damn beautiful, I still get a perpetual boner when you’re around. And what about your weight? I like your curves. I like how I can get so much rougher with you without fearing you’ll break.”

“Tomorrow, you need to make an appointment with the eye doctor,” I laugh but knowing that he still finds me attractive means everything to me.

“Just wait until tonight. I’ve been having a lot of fun screwing around with a college girl, but tonight, I get to fuck a girl with a degree.” He takes me in his arms and kisses me. Just like every time our mouths touch, my core clenches and I want nothing more than for him to take me to bed—doesn’t matter if we have an important event to attend.

“Is that my present?” I joke.

“No, baby girl, that’s my present.”

The babysitter is settled down on the sofa in front of the television. Alex is seated on his play mat on the floor playing with blocks, and Amanda is asleep in her bassinet.

“You look great! Congratulations,” Sara, the sitter, tells me.

“Thank you. Are you sure you’ll be alright if we go to dinner after the ceremony?”

“She’s going to be fine. Stop worrying,” Andrew says and bites my earlobe playfully.

He kisses Alex on the forehead and tells him, “Be a good boy for Mommy and Daddy.”

Alex just smiles and nods. We have two of the happiest babies I’ve ever seen, and I couldn’t be happier with motherhood.

Andrew is an amazing father. He’s so full of energy and loves spending time with me and the children. He’s always planning weekend outings to the park and the zoo.

In many ways, he’s the father I wish I had when I was a girl. My dad struggled to make ends meet and didn’t have a lot of time to spend with us. Sure, he took us on a vacation every year, but as my mother and I shopped and swam on the beach, he spent most of his time in the hotel room catching up on the rest he didn’t get at home.

THE AUDITORIUM IS STANDING room only when we arrive. One final kiss and I rush off to join my class in the front two rows. With a name like Adams, I’m one of the first to receive my diploma.

I shake hands with the Dean and turn to find Andrew in the crowd. Our eyes meet and he raises his hand and waves. That’s it. A simple stroll across the stage and another milestone has been completed.

We all cheer and toss our caps in the air once the final student has left the stage. I can’t wait another minute to leap into Andrew’s arms. He lifts my feet off the floor and spins me around.

“Congratulations, baby girl. I’m proud of you,” he tells me.

“Where are we going for dinner?” I ask him.

“Where do you think? We’re taking the dinner cruise.”

I smile and put my head on his shoulder. “I was wondering when we would have a chance to do that again.”

“Yeah, I know it’s been harder with the kids, but a promise is a promise. I told you the first time that we’d make it a regular

thing.”

“You did, and you lived up to that promise. You always live up to your promises.”

“Speaking of promises. I promised to give you your gift after you walked across that stage, didn’t I?”

The excitement bubbles up inside me, and I feel like a little girl.

“You did. So? What did you get for me?” I chirp.

He reaches into his pocket and retrieves a slender, velvet box. He places it in my hand and says, “I hope you like it, baby girl.”

I open the box and gasp as I look down at the diamond tennis bracelet inside.

“Oh god. It’s so pretty, Andrew.”

He removes it from the box and opens the clasp.

“Before you put it on, flip it over and read the engraving.”

I turn the bracelet over and read aloud, “Amy, wife, mother, love of my life, Andrew.”

“You’ll never lose your way again. You’ll always know who you are.”

Tears prick my eyes as I reach up and touch his five o’clock shadow. “I don’t think I could ever forget. No matter what. You mean too much to me. You’re my life.”

“I love you, baby girl.”

“I love you, too.”

He snaps the bracelet on my wrist, and I can’t stop smiling at how lovely it looks.

We return home after dinner to find that Sara has put the children to bed. Andrew pays her and sends her on her way while I peek in at them. They look like little angels sleeping soundly in their cribs. Andrew comes up behind me and looks in on them as well.

“How about a little time in the hot tub?” he whispers.

“That sounds amazing.”

I undress and wrap myself up in a towel while he collects the baby monitor and a bottle of wine. We step out into the crisp, night air and climb into the hot, bubbling water. Andrew leans back against the edge of the tub and pulls me onto his lap, and I lay my head back on his chest and look up at the stars.

“This has been a perfect day. Thank you,” I tell him.

“Anything for you, baby girl,” he says as he licks the shell of my ear. I bite my lip and close my eyes.

We sip our wine and relax for a bit before Andrew runs a hand along my cheek. “It’s time for me to collect my present, princess.”

He spins me around so I can straddle his waist. He gives me a long, deep kiss, roughly cupping me, groping and massaging. When I start squirming, he lifts me and lowers me to his stiff erection. I tilt my head back, loving how his massive girth touches every inch of my inner walls.

I grip the side of the tub and rock my hips with him inside me. The water splashes against my breasts as I ride my handsome husband’s eager cock. My desire for him remains as strong as the first time he touched me.

I’ve never wanted any other man and I never will. I belong to Andrew. Only him.

EXTENDED EPILOGUE

ANDREW

Amy darts from the kitchen to the patio and back several times as I pack up the car for our trip.

It seems Alex has decided he needs to spend a bit more quality time with the jungle gym before leaving it for a week. This is going to be our first real road trip with the kids since Arianna was born three years ago, and Amy is a nervous wreck.

It isn't just the trip that has her reeling, it's also the destination. After almost ten years of marriage, we're going to the mountains where I was born so we can connect with some of my more distant relatives.

"This was your idea, you know. When the invitation for the family reunion arrived, I was more than willing to toss it in the trash. You were the one who said the kids should know their relatives. You said it would be good to pass my family history down to the next generation of Adams," I smirk at her.

"I know it was my idea. It just seems so strange to be meeting these people after all this time. I mean, you know them but they know nothing about me and the kids."

"Are you worried they won't like you? They'll love you. Everyone loves you, baby girl. I'm the one that's difficult to get along with, not you."

"No, you're very charming when you want to be."

"Emphasis on when I want to be."

"I do want to go, and it's too late to back out now. I want to see where you were born, where you went to high school, all

of it. Just do me one favor, please?”

“Anything for you.”

“Get Alex out of the backyard.”

I round up our boy by promising that I’ll take him fishing in the river when we get there, and Amy puts the girls in the car. It’s a four-hour drive, but we’ve planned on two stops for changing diapers and feeding the herd so it’ll take more like five.

“So, do you think we’ll run into any of your high school friends while we’re in town?”

“It’s a tiny place. If any of them stayed around, we might run into them.”

“What about girlfriends?” Amy purses her lips at me.

“I didn’t have any. Even back then, I was focused on my studies and on becoming a doctor. Besides, I only have eyes for you, princess.”

“That’s such a great answer.”

We set out on our journey, and the closer we get, the more familiar the landscape becomes. It’s funny but until this moment, I had all but forgotten I had a life before Amy. She’s become the center of my universe now and not much else seems to matter to me anymore.

“Is the hotel close to your aunt’s house?”

“It’s a one-horse town, baby. Everything is close to everything.”

“It’s hard to imagine places like that exist anymore.”

“I know, but this one does. The place can’t grow because there isn’t any industry there. People graduate and move away to find work.”

“But you could go back, right? I mean everywhere needs a doctor, right?”

“Yes, everywhere needs a doctor, but not this doctor.”

“Why do you say that? You wouldn’t want our kids to grow up in a small town like you?”

“We already live in the country. Why would we want to move any farther away from the city?”

“I don’t know. I’m just making conversation. I grew up without siblings or cousins to play with. I just wondered what it would be like if our kids had cousin friends.”

“It’s not all that it’s cracked up to be, trust me. Besides, you haven’t even met these people yet. You might hate them all.”

“I don’t think I could hate them. They’re a part of you.”

We make our first stop at a rest area where the landscape has changed from flat and green to the rocky, pine-covered hillside. Amy steps out of the SUV and stretches before climbing into the back to change and feed the girls. I unbuckle Alex’s seatbelt and walk hand in hand with him to the men’s room inside the café.

We return with bags of takeout for lunch and a giant lollipop Alex picked for later. We eat in the car and begin driving again.

All three children have dozed off by the time we reach our second stop.

“I don’t want to wake them. Why don’t we just gas up and keep moving?” Amy suggests.

“Sounds good to me.”

Four and a half hours into the trip, we pull up to our hotel.

“The reunion dinner starts in an hour. That gives us time to check in and get cleaned up.”

“Really? An hour?”

“I told you, princess. Everything is close to everything.”

We unload the kids only to change their clothes, wash their faces, and load them back into the car again. Alex is beside himself. He isn’t one to sit still for long.

“When we get there, you can run in the backyard. I bet there will be fireflies for you to catch,” I tell him.

“Really, Daddy? The fireflies came with us?”

Amy looks at me, and we both laugh.

“No, Alex. These will be different fireflies,” I tell him.

Aunt Rita’s driveway is filled with cars lined two by two, so I make a U-turn and park against the curb. I remember being here as a kid and thinking she had the biggest house in town. Looking at it now, it seems like just an ordinary two-story Victorian.

“This is beautiful,” Amy breathes.

“Yeah. Aunt Rita is very proud of this place.”

We pack the kids onto the porch, and I ring the bell. My cousin James answers and looks bewildered to see me.

“Andrew, is that you?” he asks, furrowing his eyebrows.

“It’s me, James. It’s good to see you.”

My cousin shakes my hand with vigor and turns his attention to Amy.

“This must be your wife, then. I’m James.”

“Amy. Nice to meet you, James.”

“Come on in. There are a lot of people waiting to finally meet you.”

Amy squeezes my arm and smiles. Alex spies a group of small children assembled in the parlor and tugs on my arm. “May I?” he asks me.

“Sure, go and play,” I tell him and he skips off to meet his cousins.

Amy and I, a child in each of our arms, follow James into the dining room where my Aunt Rita sees us and rushes over to greet us.

“Amy, I know you’re the one who convinced Andrew to come. He’s turned down every invitation until now,” Rita tells her and kisses her on the cheek.

“I’m glad we made it. I’m looking forward to meeting everyone,” Amy beams.

Aunt Rita hugs me and whispers, “She’s a beauty. I’m so happy for you.”

“Everyone, look! Andrew and his family are here,” she shouts and my relatives line up to offer handshakes and hugs. Soon, the girls are scooped up by my cousins, and Amy and I are free to mingle. As much as I dreaded coming, my wife was right again. It is nice to see my children getting to know my family.

The kids rush out the back door, and Amy and I follow so we can get a breath of fresh air and a moment to ourselves.

“So, what do you think?” I ask Amy.

“Everyone is very nice, and this place is just amazing. I’m a little envious. I would have loved to grow up in the mountain air.”

“We’re not moving here,” I joke.

“No, but now that we’ve made contact, we can come back and visit. Maybe your Aunt can come and see us, too.”

“Alright, I’ll take that compromise.”

We sit down on the wooden rockers and listen to the sound of laughter coming from the children in the yard below. I reach out and take Amy’s hand in mine and ask myself how I ever got so lucky.

This girl is the mother of my children and the love of my life. As the years pass, I only fall harder for her. And fuck, I did it all—claim her, marry her, and bind her to me forever with not one but three kids. In truth, if she told me she wanted to move here tomorrow, I’d start looking for a house. What Amy wants, Amy gets. Period.

“Tomorrow, after you take Alex fishing, we should go for a ride around town. I want to see your high school and all the places where you snuck off to get drunk in the woods with your friends,” Amy tells me.

“We can do that. The pizzeria where I hung out and played video games is still here. We can stop there for lunch. There’s no better pizza around.”

“That sounds like fun. If they still have video games, I’ll challenge you.”

“You can’t beat me, baby girl. There wasn’t much to do here as a kid so I became a master at all of the classic games.”

“Ah, yes, but you’ve never seen me play,” she laughs and her face lights up with that childlike exuberance I love so much.

“Alright, I’ll let you win a round or two if it’ll help me get in your pants.”

She swats my arm and chuckles. “Between the car ride and all this excitement, these kids are going to be out cold tonight so you may just get your wish.” She looks away and bites her lip, heat rising to her cheeks.

Well, damn. I guess that alone makes this trip worth it.

“I love it when you do that,” I tell her, lowering my voice and grazing her jaw with my finger.

“Do what?”

“After all this time, three kids later, you still blush when you talk dirty to me.”

“Four.”

“What? Four what?”

She clasps her hands behind her back and moves her body from side to side. “We’re on number four, now. Four kids.”

It takes a second for her words to truly connect in my head.

“Are you telling me that you’re pregnant?” I ask her.

“That’s why I was running around like a chicken with my head cut off this morning. I’d just taken the test. Yes, it looks like baby number four is on the way.”

“Why didn’t you tell me this morning?”

“I didn’t want you to change your mind about the trip. This was important for all of us but especially for the kids. I want

them to have what I didn't. I want them to know that they won't ever have to be alone. Not everyone is lucky enough to find someone like you. Like I did."

"You won't ever have to worry about anything like that again. The kids won't need to worry about that, either. You belong to me and I'm not going anywhere ever."

She launches herself to me, and I bury my face in her hair.

"I love you more than anything, Andrew. You make me the happiest girl in the world."

I pull back a little to plant a kiss on her soft lips.

"Are you happy about the baby?" she asks me, eyes searching my face.

"Are you kidding? I couldn't be happier. Everything's perfect."

We return to the party and spend the evening catching up with the family, but I can't keep my eyes off my beautiful girl.

My mission to spend my days protecting her and the kids, making them happy, continues. Because for me, it's family first. Always.

The End. Thanks for reading!

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