



LOVE
IN
LOCKDOWN
CHRONICLES

Unforeseen
LOVE

L . S . P U L L E N

UNFORESEEN LOVE

L.S. PULLEN

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Unforeseen Love

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Author's Note

Due to adult content all my books are recommended for readers 18 years and over.

For detailed CW/TW please visit my [Website](#)

Thank you, and happy reading!

Chapter One

Sienna

There's a reason I work with dead people. They don't talk back. Also, I'm no stranger to death or grief. But what I do know is my day has barely begun, and it's already ruined. Standing in the kitchen doorway, with an arrogant smile and his annoying as hell sunny disposition, is no other than Theodore fucking Wainwright.

My worst nightmare and arch-nemesis.

It's been a few years since I saw him last, but the disdain I feel towards him is still as fresh as a spring day in March. He hasn't changed much, with all his lean, six-foot-two glory, and those honey brown, take me to bed eyes. His hair is a bit darker now and worn longer in a perfectly imperfect style instead of the short all over look as before. He was always freshly shaven, but now his chiselled jaw highlights a fresh light dusting of facial hair, which no doubt makes the women fall all over themselves for his attention—the poor loves.

“Damn, if it isn't Morticia Addams,” he says, his eyes flickering to mine with something akin to surprise but quickly being replaced with amusement.

“What the fuck?” I say under my breath. Is he really going straight in with the nickname he gave me at Uni? What a delinquent.

He enters the room like he owns the place, closely followed by my boss, Ewan—or should I say soon to be ex-

boss.

“Sienna, good you’re here. This is my nephew, Teddy. But he’s more like a son.”

I hold back a snort. *Teddy?*

Theo groans, causing Ewan to roll his eyes and shake his head. “Sorry, old habits. This is Theodore, or Theo. He’ll be taking over for me. This is Sienna, our embalmer.”

I choke down my coffee and splutter as I try to catch my breath. The harder I try to control it, the harder it is to breathe. Shit, death by caffeine and the arrogant smirk of Theodore Wainwright, who springs forward and starts patting my back. I try to shrug off his touch, but it’s no use.

“Shit, I know it’s been a while, but damn, Morticia,” he says, not even hiding his amusement.

Like, what the actual fuck? Does he have no filter? People have been known to choke to death. What is wrong with this imbecile?

“Theodore,” reprimands Ewan as he hands me a glass of water once I’m able to catch my breath again. I take it from him gratefully, my hand shaking, and then I sip it slowly. My throat feels raw from the coughing.

I’m still trying to process the past couple of minutes. This would not have been on my radar of all the things that could have happened today. The same guy who made a point of making my life hell at any given opportunity is now my new boss. I find myself grinding my back teeth, a bad habit of mine when I’m anxious. Why does it have to be him? Because this man might as well be Lucifer himself.

I’ve barely been in his presence for a few minutes, and I already want to wring his neck.

“This is your nephew?” I finally manage to squeak out, grabbing some paper towels to wipe my tear-stricken face, hoping my mascara hasn’t left track marks over my cheeks.

“Indeed,” says Ewan.

I find myself frowning as the cogs start turning. “But you don’t have the same surname.”

Theo puts his hands in his pockets, and even his demeanour is relaxed, like he doesn’t have a care in the world.

“My aunt married Uncle Ewan,” Theo replies.

My cheeks heat as he holds my gaze with his chestnut orbs. “Oh.”

I have to force myself to look away, trying not to fidget under his scrutiny.

“You two know each other?” Ewan asks, pointing between us.

I nod and clear my throat. “We were at the same university.” But what I don’t say is how ‘Teddy’ was an absolute knob head. How any chance he and his friends had to wind me up, they did. How he always manages to make me feel inferior to him. Everything was a joke, even back then, and the worst part was everything always seemed to come so easily to him. He excelled in our classes, whereas I had to work twice as hard to keep from drowning.

“Well, you make sure you look after our Sienna here,” Ewan says, as he begins making himself a cup of tea. “She’s pretty much part of the family now.” His words flood me with warmth. Because ever since I started working here, that’s exactly how I have felt.

“Well, you do love strays.” Theo’s smirk is devilish and one I want to wipe off his rugged face. *Arsehole*.

How he always manages to make me feel like shit is beyond me, but my new boss or not, I don’t have to sit here and take it, least of all when I’m not even officially on the clock yet.

“Theodore,” Ewan says, unimpressed with his analogy.

“Oh, come on, I didn’t mean it like that.” Theo tries to placate him, holding his hands up in the air.

I give him a look that I hope conveys I don’t believe him and push to my feet.

“If you’ll excuse me, I have some admin to take care of before my shift starts.” Leaving my coffee, I make a hasty getaway to my office, desperately needing a moment to myself, wishing I could already have a do-over.

How did I not know he was Ewan’s nephew? And most importantly, why does he always get so much pleasure out of making me feel small? Is it because he’s good looking? Looks will only get someone so far when their soul is ugly. Honestly, I take my career choice seriously. I never could understand why someone like him would want to do this job. And now it makes a little more sense if it’s in the family, but still, he’d be much better equipped as a jester.

See? He’s already turning me into a bitter bitch.

There’s a knock at my door, and I take a deep breath.

“Come in,” I call out and move to sit behind my desk.

Ewan walks in with my mug and places it down on the coaster I have on my desk.

“Thought you could do with a fresh one,” he says and takes a seat opposite.

“Thank you,” I say, sincerely touched. He’s always been so welcoming and kind to me. It breaks my heart that he’ll be leaving, but I understand why—he’s not been well, and he wants to take this time to spend with his wife.

“Listen...” He leans forward. “I gather from your reaction that there’s some ill-feeling between you and my nephew. But what he said, he didn’t mean it like that. I can guarantee you your job is safe, as well as your living arrangements. This is still your home. You have absolutely nothing to worry about in that department.”

I love that he’s trying to console me. Theo is a wanker, and people don’t change. Whether I can endure him as my boss, only time will tell, I guess.

“That means a lot, thank you.”

“Honestly, Sienna, I’ll talk to him. He might be taking over from me and the business side of things, but if you have any

problems, you come to me—I still get the final say.”

I nod and reach for my coffee and take a sip. That might be the case, but he’s not the one who’ll be left working with him. For the first time since working here, I can’t wait for my working day to end.

Chapter Two

Theo

Fucking hell... Sienna Morgan. Her hair is tied up in a tight bun on top of her head, and I wonder if she were to free it, if she'd let loose a little.

Call me a bastard, but even after all this time, I still get off on riling her up. I always did get a sadistic kick out of ruffling her highly strung feathers, especially seeing as she still appears to have that huge stick stuck up her arse. It would appear some things never change.

I mean, of course, she's fucking gorgeous, with long wavy matte black hair and fair skin, which only makes her greenish-blue eyes pop even more against her long lashes. She's about average height for a woman, and curvy. And not to mention her naturally plump lips, but I swear I don't ever think I saw her smile the entire time we were at Uni together.

Okay, maybe I was partly to blame whenever I did see her. I liked to goad her. It was simply to get some sort of reaction from her, and it's not like she didn't give as good as she got anyway.

Now, as luck would have it, I'm about to become her new boss—and just when I thought things were going to be boring.

My uncle was quick to reprimand me before stalking off to placate her with a cup of coffee, not that it matters. She's got thick skin, and she'll give back just as good as she gets, I have

no doubt. She'll need to get over the fact I'm going to be her boss. Which, I might add, gives me a twisted kind of pleasure.

Sienna has always had a way of drawing out the worst in me. Honestly, it was never my intention to wind her up, but she has always made it so easy. Even after not seeing her for a few years, I find it difficult to rein it in. Besides, I might as well have my fun with her—the past year has been hell, and she's actually given me a reason to smile. Not the forced smiles I've been putting on for the sake of my friends or Aunt and Uncle.

Honestly, I'm just glad to be away from Ireland and back home, not that I didn't love it there, of course, I did, but it's all the reminders and everything it represents. It's all still too raw. It's why I came home, to start fresh, but moving on is fucking hard—I never expected my girlfriend and my best friend to cheat on me.

I walk around the flat, the place I moved into when I moved out of home, and honestly, as shit as my reasons are for returning, it's good to be back.

It was always my intention to take over the family business—granted, it's sooner than I anticipated with his health issues. According to my aunt, Uncle Ewan has been becoming a little clumsy and has been having muscle cramps and twitching.

After making him finally go to his GP, he was referred. They ran tests and diagnosed him with Motor neurone disease. He's in his late forties and has always been active and healthy, which is why this was a shock to everyone.

Now more than ever, it's important I make this work. I want to make him proud, to prove it wasn't a mistake to take a step back. I owe him and my aunt so much.

Of course, I want to put my stamp on things and make some changes—don't get me wrong, there's nothing wrong with how things are, but I just feel there's room for improvement. No doubt Sienna will challenge my authority, but it just makes it all the more entertaining.

After I've poked around some, I wait for my uncle back in his office—or should I say *my* office. He has a couple of empty boxes stacked up by the wall, ready to fill—no doubt with his books and odds and sods.

I sit at the desk and lean back in the leather chair, which creaks underneath me.

“Wow, talk about jumping in my grave,” says my uncle as he enters.

“Check you out with the bants.” My tone is light but I'd be lying if I said his words didn't strike a chord.

He tilts his head as I get out of his chair, moving to the one in front of the desk instead—officially, he is still the boss after all.

“So, what's all the tension between you and our Sienna?” he questions, sweeping his hand through his hair.

I spread my legs and sit back. She obviously means a lot to him, the way he refers to her, and honestly, I feel a twinge of jealousy, which is stupid.

“Nothing, she's just uptight.” I shrug, waving off his fatherly concern, but then I sit forward, elbows on my thighs. “But better still, how come you've never mentioned her before?”

He shakes his head. “I mention her all the time.”

I frown. “No, you mentioned someone called Cece.” Then it clicks. “Cece instead of Sienna,” I say, just like how he calls me Teddy, no matter how many times I ask him to call me Theo.

“Well, if you'd been back sooner, you would have known. Two years is a long time to stay away from home.” Uncle Ewan looks away, not wanting me to see his vulnerability, but I don't miss the hurt in his voice.

Staring down at my feet, a wave of guilt assaults me. “Sorry, Uncle Ewan, it wasn't intentional.” And it wasn't. A few months turned into a year and a year turned into two. All

because I was so caught up in myself and the things that were no good for anyone.

“It’s okay, I understand. You have your own life. It’s just we missed you.”

He’s talking about my aunt and him. They were never able to have their own children. My dad was in and out of prison while I was growing up, and my mum had an addiction, so they became my guardians after I was taken away from my mum for the third time. She goes through stints where she’s clean, but sadly, she has an addictive personality. She’ll swap one vice for another, whether drinking, smoking or even men. Now I’m older, I realise that it’s a disease, but I still hold resentment towards the way she treated me before I moved in with my aunt and uncle. As an adult, we have a better relationship. As awful as it sounds, I know she’s okay when I don’t hear from her. No news is good news in her case.

“I promise to be a better nephew, and I am sorry,” I say with sincerity, because they’re like parents to me. I know if it weren’t for Ewan’s diagnosis, he’d be working alongside me, but this will be good for him and my aunt, taking this time to spend together.

Chapter Three

Sienna

I couldn't wait to see the back of today and drown my sorrows. It's days like this, I'm grateful I live where I work. Unlocking the door, I push it open and kick off my shoes as I go, but before I can stop myself, I trip and fall arse over tit, all the while attempting to save the bottle of wine I have clutched in my hand.

"What the actual fuck?" I curse, looking at the cause of my fall. A crash helmet—which, I might add, is not mine—is beside a large suitcase.

"You okay down there?"

I let out a cross between a gasp and a scream.

"You." I gape at Theo, pushing myself to my feet. "What the hell?"

He lets out a laugh. "I'm your new housemate," he says nonchalantly.

I stare at him in utter disbelief as I try to process his words. *Housemate*. He reaches out with his index finger and lifts my chin to close my gapping pith, and I instinctively step away from his touch.

"Come again," I say, my voice high pitched.

His top lip curves into a smile before he answers. "We. Are. House. Mates. I just moved in." This guy is such an arse wipe. Does he always have to be such a condescending prick?

“This day just keeps getting better and better,” I say through gritted teeth and squeeze past him and head straight for the kitchen, unscrewing the bottle cap as I go.

“Oh, come on, roomie, don’t be like that.”

Shaking my head, I grit my jaw and retrieve a glass and pour myself a generous amount of wine.

“What? None for me?” he says from behind me.

If he is trying to get a rise out of me, it’s working.

“Listen.” I turn to face him and lean back against the kitchen counter. “You might be my new boss, and I may not have any say as to the shared living arrangements, but let’s get one thing straight... Move your lid and suitcase out of the only entrance and exit to the flat, and if you want wine, there’s an off-licence less than a mile away,” I say, waving my hand out to the side. “And as far as food goes, you’ll be buying your own.”

He just lets out a gruff laugh. “You always did have a stick up your arse,” he says quietly, but loud enough for me to hear.

I huff, push off the counter, and step around him—my sanctuary is quickly becoming a living hell.

“Oh, fuck off,” I say over my shoulder.

If he can insult me, I’ll be sure to treat him with the same contempt.

“That’s no way to speak to your new boss, is it?”

Before I do something stupid like waste this delicious wine by throwing it in his face, I keep walking and slam my bedroom door behind me. I lean back, my head bumping the wood with a soft thud.

“Please, for the love of God, let this be a dream—a terrible dream.”

I tip back the contents in my glass and shudder as it hits the back of my throat.

He raps his knuckles on my door. “Come on, if we’re going to live together, we should at least learn to get along.”

Reluctantly, I swing my door open and storm past him, going back to grab my bottle of wine. Something tells me I'm going to need it.

He's still standing outside my bedroom, and I shoo him away, but he just laughs.

"I think you're overreacting." He looks down at his—no doubt—perfectly manicured fingernails.

"Overreacting?" I point to myself with the hand holding the bottle of wine and then hug it to my chest. "You have got to be shitting me. How would you feel if the guy who made a point of being an absolute knob to you not only became your boss but also your housemate in less than ten hours?"

I let out an exasperated sigh. Why am I even bothering? He knows just how much his presence gets under my skin. No doubt he'll use it to his advantage.

"I think you might be slightly exaggerating." His stupid mouth tips up at the corner and I can feel my blood pressure rise along with it. *If he smirks at me one more time, I swear to God...*

"Hardly. You and your cronies were arseholes to me, and you know it."

He shrugs like it's no big deal. "Oh, come on, what's a little banter between friends?"

I swing out my hand, holding the wine. "Friends, we are not." And with that, I retreat into my room and slam the door *again*.

"Oh, Morticia, you wound me."

There is no way I am going to keep letting him bait me. I scope my room until I find my noise-cancelling headphones and then pull up my favourite playlist on my phone before pulling them over my ears. Hopefully, this will block him out, at least for a while.

As much as I'm tempted to drink the entire bottle of wine, I'll only have one more glass. I have a spinning class in the

morning, and I'll be damned if I allow him to ruin tomorrow before it's already begun.

Taking a deep breath, I open my text thread with my best-friend Quinn and decide to send her a message. She's the only person who could possibly understand what I'm going through.

Me: You are not going to believe this!

Before she can even type a reply, I'm already sending another message.

Me: Theodore fucking Wainwright is my new boss. And not only is he my new boss, that arrogant asshole is also my housemate!!

Her typing suddenly ceases, and my phone starts ringing.

I look over to my bedroom door as I answer. Grabbing my glass of wine, I get up and go into my ensuite and close the door.

"Hello."

Sitting down on the closed toilet seat, I let out a huge sigh.

"Are you serious?" she asks.

I nod, even though she can't see me. "Deadly."

"Oh my God. Can he even do that? And why are you whispering?"

I take a small sip of my wine before answering. "Because I'm hiding in my bathroom. I wouldn't put it past him to have his ear up against my bedroom door."

She lets out a snort. "Someone's paranoid."

"Yeah, well, he's an asshole, who I now have to live with."

I stick my middle finger up as if Theo can see me flipping him off. *Wow, real mature, Sienna.*

"And he can do that? Just move in?"

I drop my forehead into my free hand and, let out a groan. "Well, it sure looks like it. He's my new boss, and Ewan is the

one subletting it to me at a steal and is also Theo's uncle, I might add."

She lets out a low whistle. "Holy shit. Ewan is Theo's uncle? That's crazy. But is he really that bad? I mean, didn't you once have a crush on him?"

I scrunch my nose up in disgust. "Eww, don't remind me. And that ended the moment he started giving me trouble."

"Oh, come on, maybe he's a changed man?"

I take a moment to sip my wine before responding. "I very much doubt that. He called me Morticia, for crying out loud."

The sound of her shuffling around piques my interest. "Anyway, enough about him. What are you doing?"

"Packing. I'm driving up to that cottage tomorrow."

I stand up and stare at my reflection in the mirror. "I wish I was going with you," I admit.

"Me too. You can always come up for a weekend. I'm there for a month."

Now that sounds like a plan. "I'd like that. And in case I haven't told you enough already, I'm so proud of you for leaving that place. I still can't believe how they treated you after you gave them eight years of dedication. Oh, what I wouldn't give to dish out the same to those girls and what they did to you."

They were bullies, through and through—you'd think that shit ended in school, but it would appear it followed some into employment.

Quinn lets out a heavy sigh. "I feel the same, but evidently, my prior complaints of what they were doing weren't enough to have them reprimanded. But it's all good. I feel so much relief from leaving there. And it's given me the push I needed to make a change in my life for the better."

I can hear the truth in her words, and it makes my heart a little lighter knowing she's away from there once and for all.

"I'm glad. You deserve to be happy."

She's a little breathless, and I hear the straining sound of a zip before she answers. I know she's probably overpacking. "Thank you. I think this time away is just what the doctor ordered. Anyway, you can't hide out in your bathroom forever. Don't let him get to you."

I cock an eyebrow at my reflection in the mirror. "Yeah, well, it's kind of too late for that," I say, bringing my glass to my lips. I down the rest of my wine.

"Well, take back control. Isn't that what you're always telling me?"

Trust her to throw back my own advice. Not many people have a way of riling me the way he does, and I hate that he knows it.

Chapter Four

Theo

“What the actual fuck?” I grumble into my pillow as the sound of roaring meets my ears.

I throw off my duvet and pad out in search of the curdling noise to find Sienna at the kitchen counter, her back to me as she fiddles with a contraption in front of her, and for a moment, I’m distracted by her tight yoga pants and—from what I can make out—the back of a sports bra.

The rumbling of the machine brings me back to why I’ve been dragged out of bed at this ungodly hour. I look up at the clock as, honestly, I have no idea what time it is.

But I wasn’t far off; it’s barely six a.m.

Approaching her, I reach over her shoulder and pull out the plug.

“What the fuck?” she says shocked, as she spins to face me, tilting her head back so she’s looking up at my face.

“What do you think you’re doing?” She lunges for the plug, but I hold it out of her reach. She stumbles into my chest, but then quickly leans back against the counter when she’s met with my morning wood.

I cock an eyebrow at her, noting the flush of her cheeks.

Grumbling, she pushes at my chest, and this time, I take a step back.

“Do you mind?” she says, crossing her arms over her chest, my eyes drawn to the action as I get the perfect view of her cleavage.

“Not when I’m woken by the electrical screaming of this torture device, no,” I reply, throwing the plug on the counter.

“Well, I was here first,” she says, exasperated.

I throw my head back and laugh; the sound deep from just waking up.

“Oh, Morticia, how old are you? Like, five?”

Her eyes turn to slits as she grinds her jaw, and I take another step back to avoid a knee to my crotch.

“Fuck off.”

She turns her back to me and plugs in the blender to finish off whatever green concoction she has going on in there.

When she’s done, she removes the jug and turns to find me still staring.

“Want some?” She angles the jug in my direction before pouring it into a to-go cup and screwing on the lid.

My stomach revolts, and I shake my head. “Hell to the no.” I’m all for keeping fit, don’t get me wrong, I can drink a protein shake, but those smoothie concoctions are not for me. The last time I had one, I swear it repeated on me all bloody day.

I flick on the kettle and rummage in the cupboard for some coffee. It’s not like I’m going to be sleeping now, is it?

“Why the hell are you even up at this time?” I ask.

She sashays past me, and it annoys me the way her arse moves in those yoga pants. I have to adjust myself in my boxers.

“Not that it’s any of your business, but I have spinning class,” she replies over her shoulder. “And do you think you could maybe put some clothes on? This isn’t a damn bachelor pad.”

I wiggle my eyebrows as her eyes roam over my bare chest.

“Why? Do you like what you see?” I tease.

She chokes back her disgust. “Not even a little bit,” she replies, and I can’t help but laugh again.

Huffing, she makes her way over to her holdall and stops.

“Oh, and another thing, make sure you do a grocery shop today. That’s my coffee.”

I don’t get a chance to reply before she’s down the hallway and slamming the front door in her wake.

Rubbing my hand over my face, I let out a yawn. The last time I was up this early was either for a flight or because I was yet to go to bed.

The kettle clicks, and I finish making my coffee, taking it with me as I walk into the living room and sit on the sofa. Her scent immediately engulfs me. I pick up a throw pillow, and sure enough, it smells just like Sienna.

It annoys me that I even know what she smells like, but it’s hard to ignore. It’s like a fresh blossom. No matter what the season, I swear the woman smells like spring.

Grunting, I bring my drink to my mouth; the rich aroma assails my senses before taking a sip, the flavour rich and bold. I have to give her credit, she knows her coffee, but I sure as hell won’t be telling her as much.

Moving to my feet, I walk around and take in the decor. Apart from a few added touches here and there, it’s the same as before I moved out. Unable to resist, I push her bedroom door open and roll my eyes at the freshly made bed, of course.

Stepping inside the threshold, my eyes roam over her dressing table and the other furnishings that clearly belong to her.

I’m a little surprised by the pastel colours. I would have expected little Miss Addams to have darker tastes. Who knew?

Walking over, I pick up a photograph on her bedside table. There's a young girl with two older women, and they're all smiling, sitting on a picnic blanket. The young girl is her, but it's her smile that catches my attention, so vibrantly full of life. I never saw her smile in all the time I knew her at Uni. A twinge of something akin to guilt washes over me at the way I used to tease her, but I push it away. I place the photo back where I found it, but can't help myself as I move a couple of her trinkets and makeup brushes on her dressing table.

As I'm walking out, I spy a couple of books on top of a solid wooden trunk at the end of her bed. Unable to resist, I take a closer peek. What are they? Books on embalming? But they're not, and I'm surprised by what I find.

"Saucy minx," I say to myself as I read the blurb, a reverse harem about shapeshifters. I perch on the edge of the trunk and place my coffee down, opening the first page, and before I even realise it, I've read an entire chapter. I look for her bookmark, and the evil bastard that I am, I move it to another page before laying it back on the small stack.

Chapter Five

Sienna

My spinning class didn't quite go as planned. Everyone was worrying over the announcement due from the Prime Minister later tonight, and there's speculation about what will happen regarding this breakout virus—none of it good, I might add.

I almost forget about my unwanted housemate until I'm back indoors, and he greets me with a smile that says he's been up to something. Without saying a word, I head straight for my room. I need to shower and change. I swear, the moment I close my door behind me, I get the sense that something is off as I drop my holdall in front of my trunk. My eyes land on my book, which I know for a fact was facing up, not down.

“What the actual fuck?”

I tiptoe over towards my dressing table, which is ridiculous, this is my room, for crying out loud, and sure enough, some of my things have been moved.

All of those happy endorphins I just sweated my arse off to get are gradually dwindling.

Storming out of my room, I find him drinking yet another cup of *my* coffee. I haven't been gone very long, so I doubt very much he's been grocery shopping.

“Stay out of my room,” I grit out, clenching my fists at my sides.

He gives me a quizzical look, like he has no idea what I'm talking about, but I know better. This is Theodore fucking Wainwright, the imbecile who loves to make my life miserable.

"Someone's grumpy," he muses, which only pisses me off more.

Before I can stop myself, I reach for the cup in his hand, and surprisingly, he lets go.

"Not. Your. Coffee." I bring the cup to my lips, taking a gulp just to spite him and then spin on my heels, slamming my door once again. I need to stop doing that. It's not the door's fault.

I bring the coffee to my lips again and take another sip, a little surprised that he takes his coffee the same way as I do, and then I scrunch up my nose at the fact I'm drinking from the same mug.

Rushing into my bathroom, I slosh the remaining contents down the sink, leaving it on the side. Turning on the shower, I strip and get my hair caught as I try to free myself from my sports bar, and when I finally do, my knuckles smash against the wall from the force. Fucking hell, what kind of elastic do they use for those things?

Stepping under the spray, I try to ignore the swarm of emotions attacking me from all sides and decide to promise myself a ride on my motorbike later. I'm intrigued to see what bike he rides after nearly killing myself tripping over his crash helmet, something he didn't even apologise for.

I wash my hair with more vigour than necessary, annoyed at how easily that man has a way of knocking me off my equilibrium.

I rough dry my hair before tying it in a low bun and adding a little makeup to help cover the bags under my eyes. It's not like I slept much last night. Sharing your space with someone out of the blue will do that to you.

Ewan never mentioned him staying here either, which is unlike him, but to be honest, he has more important things to

worry about than my living arrangements.

As soon as I step out into the hallway, Theo appears like a damn apparition, and I cover my pounding heart with my hand.

“Can you not do that,” I say, annoyed that my voice comes out squeaky.

His lips curling into a smirk makes me want to kick him in the shin, but knowing my luck, I’ll end up with a broken toe for my trouble.

“So, want to walk to work together?” he asks.

I shake my head. “Not particularly. But something tells me you’re used to getting your own way.”

“You know, Morticia, you shouldn’t make assumptions about people. It’s not very nice.” He taps my nose with the tip of his index finger.

I recoil and back up against the wall.

“And you shouldn’t touch people without their consent,” I reply, hating how breathless I sound. What the actual hell?

He holds his palms up in mock surrender, but he lets his eyes roam down the length of my body and then back to my face.

“Wouldn’t want you to complain to HR.” His tone is dry, but a mischievous glint lights up his eyes.

I step around him and head towards the front door, the sound of his heavy footfalls letting me know he’s right behind me.

I stop suddenly, causing Theo to walk into me, shunting me forward. His hands go to my shoulders—whether it’s to steady himself or me, I’m not sure, but he quickly lets me go, and I spin around. I open my mouth to give him one except shirt he has on completely catches me off guard.

“You aren’t seriously going to work wearing that, are you?” I ask, pointing to his T-shirt.

The one which reads, 'Eat, sleep, do creepy mortician stuff, repeat'.

He looks down at himself and picks off some lint.

"It happens to be one of my favourites." The defensiveness in his tone almost makes me feel bad for saying something, almost.

Raising my eyebrows, I put a hand on my hip. "Don't tell me you have more?" I ask, but I'm not in the least bit surprised.

"Of course, as well as other things," he says, leaning by my ear. "But those are for me to know and you to find out."

I lean back. "Yeah, that's a no from me. But seriously, you can't wear that."

"Chill, Morticia, I officially don't start work until tomorrow. I'm just helping Ewan move his stuff, and then I'll be sorting out my office most of the day."

'Inhale, exhale,' It's a constant mantra I have to maintain when I'm around him. "Fine, whatever. Can you stop calling me bloody Morticia Addams? It wasn't funny at Uni, and it's even less funny now."

He cocks his head to the side, as if contemplating my words. "Depends. Are you going to let me drink your coffee?"

Is he for real? "You already *have* been drinking my coffee."

Theo laughs at my response, which only irks me even more.

"I'll think about it," he replies, as though it's up for negotiation before reaching over my shoulder to open the front door, giving me no choice but to step closer to him to turn around. Does he have no boundaries whatsoever?

Chapter Six

Theo

It's fun to wind her up. I can't seem to stop myself, whether it's getting in her space or just being facetious. And yes, I'm all for a mortician joke, but did she seriously think I'd wear a shirt that reads, 'Eat, sleep, do creepy mortician stuff, repeat'? Okay, granted, I probably don't do myself any favours by the way I act at times, and no doubt Uncle Ewan will admonish me too.

Sienna stomps her way down the stairs before we exit and make our way around to the back entrance. She already has her keys in hand and unlocks the door.

"Have a nice day, Morticia," I say, unable to stop myself.

She glances at her wrist before her eyes connect with mine, right before she flips me off and turns on her heels.

"Now that's no way to treat your new boss," I say to her retreating back.

Without missing a beat, she looks over her shoulder as she continues walking.

"Technically, you're not officially my boss until tomorrow, and I don't start until eight-thirty."

And then she disappears into her office.

"Touché," I mutter under my breath as her door softly clicks closed behind her.

As expected, I find Uncle Ewan in his office with one box filled to the brim. I tap on the door as I enter.

He peers over the rim of his glasses and smiles. “You don’t need to knock.” His eyes scan my T-shirt, and he raises his eyebrows.

“I know, and before you say anything, Miss Addams already gave me shit.”

Standing up to his full height, he tilts his head to the side.

“If you’re referring to Sienna, I’d prefer you didn’t. We brought you up better than that.”

Of course, he’s right, and I immediately feel contrite.

“I already feel bad enough about your last-minute decision to move in with her before I even had a chance to give her fair warning.”

He sits down at his desk and removes his glasses, rubbing between his eyes before staring at me again. “Why you didn’t just come to stay at ours is beyond me,” he says.

I shrug and stuff my hands in my pockets. “Well, technically, I do own it, and it’s closer to work. Besides, I know you—if I’m living with you, you’ll never ease off about the business, and the whole point is for you to give over the reins.”

“Hmm, as long as that’s all it is.”

I plonk down in the chair in front of his desk.

“I have no idea what you mean.”

He studies me for a beat. “Okay, well, I’ll take your word for it, but if I find out you’re giving that poor girl any grief, you’ll have me to deal with.”

I want to ask him why he’s so protective of Sienna Morgan, but I bite my tongue. What, did she think she had a way in with my uncle and that suddenly he’d leave the business in her hands? I internally shake my head. Granted, I don’t know her well enough to assume that, and my uncle is right, he and my aunt did raise me better than this.

“Come on, let me help you finish packing up your stuff and get your car loaded. I have some of my stuff arriving a little later.”

He pushes to his feet, and I notice how he stiffens, and I’m immediately at his side.

“I’m good, son. Come on, times a ticking.”

I know he’s trying to play it off, but Aunt Meredith spoke to me in confidence and told me how his symptoms have progressively been getting worse. I spent hours researching and looking into the disease, wanting to understand better what’s to come. The thought of him not being here isn’t one I want to consider, he’s one of the good ones, and I want to be a better man. I want to make him proud.

“I only want to take a few of the books. The rest are yours, unless you’d rather donate them or offer any to Sienna.”

I let out a snort. “I’m not sure this is her preferred genre,” I say under my breath, thinking about the book I found in her bedroom. To be fair, I’m kind of interested to see how it pans out. Maybe I’ll sneak in a chapter here or there when she’s not about.

“What was that, son?”

Shaking my head, I clear my throat. “Nothing, I’ll be sure to let her know.”

After taking the boxes to his car and loading the boot, he tells me he’s having lunch with Sienna and asks me if I want to join, but I turn him down. I still have a few bits I need to move into the flat.

“We’ll see you on Sunday for dinner?” he asks before we part ways.

I nod. “Of course.”

Back in the flat, I sort out my laundry, put a wash on, and make a mental note to go to Costco and buy some bits in bulk. As fun as it is to wind her up, I’m not a complete prick—well, not most of the time anyway. What can I say? She brings out the worst in me.

I walk back past her room, notice her door cracked open, and see her book on her trunk. Reaching for it, I think fuck it and sit down on the perfectly made bed, resting against the headboard... one chapter won't hurt.

It's only when the sound of my phone ringing in the distance wakes me, I realise I'd fallen asleep while reading. What the fuck? It's not my fault her bed is beyond comfy, it's this memory foam or some posh shit. I dog-ear the last page I remember reading, determined to sneak it when she's not about, and then I replace the book and quickly try to straighten out her duvet, not sure if I've disturbed the cushions she has. Oh well, it's too late now. In search of my phone, I find it was from the delivery company, saying they're due within the hour. I check the time to see it's almost three p.m. I have no idea what time I fell asleep, but I've lost over two hours of the day.

Before I head back to the office, I pull my washing out and swap it into the tumble dryer, but not before I come across a mixture of sexy lace thongs. Morticia is a dark horse. I chuckle, folding them neatly in half and leaving them smack bang in the middle of the dinner table where she'll find them. Then I transfer my own, checking the heat setting is on low. I learnt my lesson the last time I didn't and ended up with boxer briefs that wouldn't even fit a GI Joe action figure.

Chapter Seven

Sienna

Apart from this morning, I've had an otherwise lovely day. Ewan and I went for lunch, and I gave him his gift. But what shocked me was how he had one for me too. I'm not used to it, and I found myself feeling awkward. The only thing that alleviated it was while he looked at his, I was looking at mine.

I'd given him a personalised glasses case. He was constantly losing his glasses, which surprised me, seeing as he can't read without them. So, when I saw the beautiful chrome case and found out they also did the engraving, it was a given.

But it was what he gave me which had me holding back the lump in my throat—a pen. A Montblanc pen. I tried to tell him it was too much, but he quickly shut me down. It's beautiful—black with a snake curling around the lid, the tip red and white, clearly a limited edition, and without a doubt cost a small fortune.

I couldn't help crying, and most men would be uncomfortable, but not Ewan. He stood, walked around, and pulled me into a cuddle. I'm not one for public displays of affection, and apart from my grandfather—who passed away when I was five—I've not had a male presence in my life. My mum and nan raised me until they passed away, leaving me an orphan at sixteen.

I'm sure I have family somewhere on my father's side, but I was an accident, and when his family found out, they didn't want anything to do with my mum or me.

When I entered the flat, for a brief moment, I almost forgot about my new flatmate—almost. His boots in the hallway cause me almost to take another stumble, but I manage to keep myself upright this time.

“Really?” I say, unable to hide my annoyance.

Grabbing his boots, I stuff them into the cupboard where I keep mine. I swear, does he not understand the term health and safety?

Walking into the kitchen, I find him leaning against the counter with a mug to his lips, no doubt hiding his smug smile.

“Shoes and boots go in the cupboard.”

He cocks an eyebrow.

“Good evening to you too.”

Dropping my bag onto the table, my eyes immediately zone in on my neatly folded thongs. I glance back to him, and even if I didn’t feel the heat on my skin like my flesh was on fire, there is no way I could pretend not to be embarrassed.

“I would have put them away, but I didn’t think you’d appreciate me rifling through your drawers.”

My mouth gapes open. And this, coming from the same man who was sneaking around in my room without invitation.

“As if that would stop you,” I say under my breath.

“Coffee?” he asks, ignoring my retort.

I look to his mug, which reads, ‘People are dying to work with me’, and I have to stifle my amusement—even I have to admit that’s a good one.

“Before you start giving me attitude, I did a Costco run and filled up the cupboards,” he says.

Opening the one beside me, I take a look, and sure enough, it’s almost full. To be honest, I can’t remember the last time I did a big shop.

“Oh, and I filled up the fridge and freezer. Probably a good thing with the way everyone is panicking over social media.”

I am momentarily at a loss for words. He almost seems, dare I say, nice.

“However, I didn’t get you anything for the time of the month. I wasn’t sure about your flow.”

And just like that, the illusion he just created is broken.

Snatching up my thongs and bag, I retreat to my room and immediately throw myself face-first onto my bed, letting out a muffled scream. When I push myself up, I sniff. Why the hell does my duvet smell like Theodore bloody Wainwright? See? He’s even infiltrated my mind, making me smell things that aren’t even there.

Once I’m showered, I feel a bit better and change into my loungewear. I’m sure as hell not going to hide out in my room again like I did yesterday.

When I walk into the living room, he’s sprawled out on the sofa, typing away on his phone. He looks up when I sit in the armchair, and I reach for the remote.

“Hey, I was watching that,” he says when I turn it over to the news.

Ignoring him, I turn up the volume, waiting for the government’s announcement regarding the Coronavirus.

Watching in my peripheral vision, he scoots forward, his attention now drawn away from his phone.

“Now is the time for everyone to stop non-essential contact and travel.”

Theo scoffs at that. “I’d say getting laid is essential.”

This time, I turn my full attention on him, raising my eyebrows. “Seriously? It’s a pandemic, for crying out loud.”

“Chill your beans, Morticia.”

Pushing to my feet, I toss the remote in his direction, annoyed when he catches it swiftly.

“Stop calling me that,” I grit out. I hate that I’m showing him how much he’s getting under my skin. It’s not even been forty-eight hours, and I want to throttle him.

I'm heavy-handed as I start to look in the cupboards. I don't even notice him come up behind me until he speaks in my ear, causing me to startle and butt my head against the handle of the cupboard.

"I put a pasta bake in. There's enough for you too."

Turning to face him, I take a step to the side. "What's the catch?" I cross my arms over my chest.

He runs his hand through his hair and lets out a sigh. "There is no catch, but now that you mention it..." He wiggles his eyebrows.

My mouth falls open, and I look at him incredulously. He just laughs and shakes his head. "Maybe all that smut you read has gone to your head." I'm ready to rip him a new one, but he continues. "You can wash up." I wait, expecting him to come out with some sort of sexist comment about a woman's place being in the kitchen, but he doesn't, so I just nod, still wary of him.

I set the table, and he eyes me as I straighten the placemats. When the timer goes off on the oven, I linger in the kitchen, watching as he dishes up the pasta bake. I still wouldn't put it past him not to put something in my food out of spite.

I pour us both a glass of coke as he slides my plate to me and then starts digging in like it's his last meal.

After poking around for anything suspicious, I raise my fork and smell it before taking a bite. Once the flavour hits my taste buds, I unintentionally let out a hum of satisfaction.

For once, Theo keeps his mouth shut, but I don't miss his smirk as he continues stuffing his face. At least he chews with his mouth closed.

Chapter Eight

Theo

I was up early today, wanting to do a walkthrough and just get my bearings. Nothing much has changed, but I do want to make some minor changes for the better, at some point. A few things could do with fixing up too.

Entering the embalming theatre, I want to take a stock check of autopsy equipment. There are two stainless steel embalming tables with a sink and spray hose, and they look impeccably clean, as I would expect. Uncle Ewan said that they were new purchases, and it's clear he opted for the premium stainless steel with the built-in drainage system.

It's sterile to a fault in here. When I was younger, I had this preconceived notion that it would smell like dead people, but in fact, the embalming fluid is a sharp chemical smell if emollients are used in the fluid to avoid dehydration of a body—it has a slight sweet smell.

But any good funeral home will not smell. It's why a good ventilation system is so important.

“Can I help you?”

I turn to see Sienna, standing with her arms crossed.

“Nope, just doing inventory,” I say, turning back towards the table and looking at my tablet, swiping up with the stylus.

Sienna moves around until she's in front of me, and I look up from my tablet.

“I have a spreadsheet. Everything is in order.” Her words are clipped. Is it bad that I find amusement in her unhappiness with me?

I move past her and open the cupboard on the wall, take a look at the contents, and tick them off my list before moving on to the next one.

She huffs from beside me. “You’re seriously going to check all my supplies?” she says incredulously.

I nod. “Yep. Just crossing the T’s and dotting the I’s.”

From my peripheral, I see her shake her head. “I’ve been doing this job for two years, and I can assure you everything is exactly as it should be.”

Placing the tablet down, I turn to face her and lean back against the counter, crossing my arms, matching her stance.

“I appreciate that, but with the current situation, let’s just say, I’m being precautionous. I want to give everything a once over, a fresh pair of eyes. It’s my responsibility to make sure no stone is left unturned.”

Pushing off the counter, I reach out and pull one of the lower cupboard doors open and wave my hand in its direction. “I do not doubt your ability or your capabilities to do your job. But it’s not solely on you to make sure we’re prepared.”

She glances at me and then to the open cupboard. “Oh.” This is her only response.

“Besides, no one is perfect,” I say, closing the door. “Not even you, Morticia.”

Her eyes spring to mine, turning into slits.

I’m fully aware my last remark was a little crass, but whatever. Uncle Ewan might think the sun shines out of her arse, but I was top of our class, and she’ll do well to remember that.

“I never said I was perfect,” she retorts, grinding her jaw.

No, she didn’t, but she didn’t have to because she sure as hell acts like it.

I cock an eyebrow and reach for the tablet, but my eyes remain on her, refusing to look away first. I watch as her nostrils flare, and I have to stifle a laugh because it's kind of fun pissing her off. After the shit show my life was in Ireland, winding her up might just be exactly what the doctor ordered.

“Well, I have an embalming to carry out in an hour.”

A luminous haze of perfume envelopes me when she storms past me on her way to the door. “Just make sure you're done by then.” And with that, she's gone, leaving the vibrant scent of flowers followed by a cocoon of soft musk. It's almost a contradiction to her stick up her arse manner. It's almost happy.

Once I'm satisfied everything is as it should be, I leave and make my way back to Uncle Ewan's office—shit, no, *my* office. That will take some getting used to, for sure.

I pass Sienna's office, her door is open, and she's typing away on her keyboard with way more vigour than is necessary. And I realise that's probably my fault.

Something akin to guilt gnaws at my subconscious, aware I could have probably handled the situation earlier somewhat better. But she just brings out the worst in me. What can I say?

As if she can feel my presence, her eyes rise to meet mine as I stand in the doorway, and I swear she scowls.

“What time are you free this afternoon?” I keep my features neutral, deciding it best to ignore her scowl.

She looks momentarily frazzled and glances to her computer screen and then back to me.

“Any time after four.”

I nod. “I'll see you in my office at four-thirty.”

Without waiting for her to reply, I turn and walk away, but not before I hear her mumble under her breath, “Yes, sir.” And out of nowhere, my dick stirs to life, and I bite the inside of my cheek. *What the fuck?*

Back in my office, I notice I have some missed calls. Of course, three of them are from Orla. I moved back to England

to get away from her, and you'd think that me ignoring her texts and calls would be a deterrent, but evidently not.

Picking up the receiver, I dial her number—one I have stored to memory.

“Hello?” she answers in that nasal voice of hers. It's funny how it never bothered me until we broke up, but now it's as annoying as fingernails being dragged down a chalkboard.

“Orla,” I reply.

“Hunnybunch, I've been trying to reach you.”

I lean my head back in my chair and close my eyes. “Don't call me that. You know I hate it,” I grit out.

She stifles a laugh, and I already wish I hadn't called her back, but she doesn't seem to be getting the message.

“You don't mean that.”

I pinch the bridge of my nose. I swear she gives me a headache, and it's only been seconds.

“Yes, I do, and you need to stop. Not just the pet names but the calling me, take me not answering as a sign.”

She huffs down the phone, and I can imagine her stomping her foot. She always was a spoilt brat.

“Listen, we can work this out. The time apart is just what we need. When the restrictions are eased, we'll get together. And I can remind you just how good of a couple we are.”

Honestly, she's delusional, but I don't have the energy to handle her theatrics. The more I say no, the more she'll say yes, and the toxic cycle continues to repeat itself.

“Yeah, whatever. If you say so.”

She's the reason I didn't come home for two years, a narcissist through and through. I'm pissed off with myself that it took me as long as it did to see her for who she really is. She's oblivious to anyone but herself. At first, I was drawn to how confident and self-assured she came across, but take away her makeup and those caterpillar eyelashes she can't be without, and she's someone else entirely. The truth is, I liked

her with or without all the fluff—appearance-wise. It was her personality I found to be ugly. But damn if she didn't hide it well.

You don't claim to love someone and then do the cliché thing and jump in the sack with your boyfriend's best mate. Ricky was the one who persuaded me to go to Ireland with him in the first place. He was the one who spotted Orla, but it was clear I was the one she was interested in—well, until she wasn't.

I'm stuck between the angry and hurt stage, but not heartbroken. I cared for her, of course, but it wasn't love. Maybe that's what drove her into his arms? Who knows? And truthfully, who the fuck cares?

Chapter Nine

Sienna

He infuriates me to no end. He hasn't even been here five minutes, and he's throwing his weight around like he owns the place. Okay, granted, he kind of does, but that's beside the point.

And where has he been until now, while Ewan has been struggling with his health?

Ewan looked at him with pride. He'd mentioned Theo from time to time, of course, in conversation, but since he always referred to him as Teddy, I never really gave him much thought. Besides, if someone wants to talk about someone or something, they will. I'm not a big sharer. It's why I always got on well with Ewan. He never pried, but he was always there for me, and he was always genuine.

Pulling out my mobile from my desk drawer, I type out a quick text to Quinn.

Me: He's a grade-A arsehole!

I wiggle my mouse, so my computer comes out of sleep mode, and I type in my password.

Checking my emails, I have order confirmation of the extra hand sanitisers I requested. I've always been a bit of a germaphobe, so I've been using hand sanitiser for years, and yes, I've been on the receiving end of jokes for years because of it. I just like the idea that if I can't wash my hands, I'm not caught short. 'Be prepared'— I was a girl guide, and the motto

always stuck with me. I used to love going every Wednesday, and camping in the summer holidays was my favourite, but I quit going after my mum died. It just didn't seem important anymore, and the joy I'd get from showing her my newest badge, before meticulously sewing it onto my sash, used to make all the hard work worth it. It didn't even matter what the badge was for—you'd think I'd found the cure for the common cold with the way she'd act as though it was the most fantastic achievement.

I struggled with school after she passed. I felt insecure and unsafe. There wasn't much in the way of bereavement support, and grief doesn't come with an expiration date.

There are days when I feel fine and my thoughts are of happy memories when I think of both my mum and nan. But there are other times when I'm filled with so much despair. A physical ache will come out of nowhere and suck the very air from my lungs. Sometimes, I wonder if my nan died of a broken heart after losing my mum, the sorrow too overwhelming—she was never the same. It was only a few years after my mum passed when I lost my nan too. Her heart just gave out.

I stayed with my nan's cousin until I was eighteen, and then the little that was left over from the sale of the house and her savings were inherited by me.

It was enough to pay for Uni without student loans, but I still got a part-time job. Most of the money I was left is still in my savings account. Eventually, I'd like to get a mortgage, and while I'm living here and the rent is so cheap, it works out an easier way to keep adding to my house fund.

It's what ultimately sent me on my career path, and as morbid as it sounds, death is the only guarantee in life. No one lives forever. I figured the world would never be in short supply when it comes to funeral directors and embalmers. After cleaning and preparing the body, there is something uniquely significant about preparing the deceased in those final stages. The hair and make-up help replicate the person's likeness and essence for their final journey.

Not every case is the same, and embalming isn't always necessary for natural deaths, but I find it does help firm up the skin before make-up application. But majority of the time, it comes down to the wishes of both the family and the deceased.

I find comfort when families visit their loved ones in the chapel of rest and comment how they look like them. It's always so important to get the parting of their hair right or the shade of lipstick. I've even had a few family members who have wanted to help do the make-up of their loved ones. There is still a lot of stigma associated with social norms where funeral practices are concerned, and it's one of the things I loved so much about Ewan. He was open to new funeral practices. The hardest part is the cost. We still have overhead expenses to consider, and I know for so many, the financial burden is onerous on the ones left behind, even when so many make preparations for the inevitable.

My phone vibrates, bringing me back to the present.

Quinn: But didn't you say he was a good-looking asshole?

I throw my head back and peer at the ceiling. Of course, that's what she'd remember from the rant of messages I've sent her since his arrival.

Me: Totally missing the point.

I'm intermittently bombarded with GIFs of half-naked men, and I can't help the blush that coats my cheeks.

My alarm beeps from my computer, and I glance up. It's my ten-minute warning for the impromptu meeting with Theo.

Me: Not helping. I've got to go. I have a meeting with him in ten.

Her reply is instant.

Quinn: Oh, is it just the two of you? *winky face, aubergine*

I actually laugh at that. Trust her to try and turn it into something it's not.

Me: Ha, ha, very funny x

Plugging my phone on charge, I grab my laptop and my mug. There is no way I'm going in there without armour, and this girl needs coffee.

When I enter the kitchen, he's already in there, finishing off making himself a drink. He turns to see me and lifts his mug to his lips, his eyes peering at me over the rim, no doubt waiting for my reaction over the words printed on it—'This is what an awesome funeral director looks like.'

Honestly, I have no words. How many of those does he have? I try to ignore him as I make my coffee.

Once I'm done, he holds out his hand for me to exit the door first. I roll my eyes, laptop under my arm, but just as I pass him, my feet fail me. I tense, ready to fall to my demise, and I know I'll either have to drop my coffee or my laptop.

Before I need to consider the outcome, a strong-arm wraps around my stomach from behind, pulling me against a hard chest.

Coffee spills over the rim of my mug, but thankfully, not the entire contents, and my laptop survives to see another day.

My heart is thumping a mile a minute from my near miss, but then when I feel something hard poking in my lower back, I gasp, the sound like a megaphone.

Is that his?

Oh my God.

I lurch forward out of his hold, but more coffee spills over the rim of my mug and hand.

Without a word, Theo reaches over my shoulder, and I'm surrounded by a woodsy aromatic and slightly citrus scent as he takes the mug from my hand. Grabbing some kitchen towels, he passes some for me and cleans up the spill on the cup.

"Hmm, thanks," I say, still trying to process the feel of his erection pressing against my spine. I clear my throat, knowing my face is probably giving away my embarrassment and is the colour of crimson.

I hold out my hand for my coffee, but instead of handing it back, he shakes his head, cocking his eyebrow in challenge. I turn around and head to his office with a resigned huff, and thankfully, this time without incident.

Chapter Ten

Theo

Fuck me, of all the times my dick had to betray me, it had to go there while I was trying to help her from falling arse over tit. I should have just let her fall.

I'm glad when we're in my office, and I'm sitting behind my desk.

No sooner is Sienna opening her laptop, my mobile starts ringing, and before I even look at the screen, I'm ninety-nine percent certain it's Orla. I send her to voicemail, but within seconds, it's ringing again.

I have three options: send her to voicemail again, switch off my phone, or answer and hope it appeases her enough not to start calling my work phone.

"Do you need to get that?" Sienna asks.

Sighing, I nod, and she goes to get up, but I shake my head as I bring the phone to my ear.

"I'm at work," I say without any preamble.

"Oh, well, I just wanted you to know your direct debit for the electric bill never went through."

I actually laugh at that. "Well, yeah, I don't live there anymore. It's not my problem."

Orla huffs before answering. "Yeah, well, seeing as it's in your name and not mine, I think you'll find it is your

problem.”

And right there is the issue with so many of the bills being solely in my name. I thought I changed them all, but clearly not, and the last thing I need is bad credit.

“I’ll call you later. You need to have it put in your name.”

Sienna is tapping away on her laptop, trying to act uninterested, but I can tell she’s curious about my conversation.

“Okay, make sure you do, Hunnybunch.”

I cringe at her fucking pet name and grunt out, “I will,” and disconnect the call.

Muttering to myself, I hold my finger down on the side of the phone and swipe to turn it off.

“Everything okay?” Sienna asks, reminding me I’m not alone.

“Peachy,” I reply, and then pull up the report on my computer.

We spend the next hour and a half going through the stock and distributors we think might possibly become an issue, but we’ll need to deal with those on a case-by-case basis.

I’m grateful Uncle Ewan has always been one to stock up on supplies—he always said, just in case.

Sienna’s stomach grumbles loudly enough for her cheeks to heat.

“You hungry, Morticia?”

She flicks her eyes to mine, and glowers at me. For some reason, that makes me smile—such a fucking spitfire.

“I missed lunch,” she says as she closes her laptop. “Not that it’s any of your business.”

Well, technically, it is, she is my employee after all.

Sienna shakes her head and gets to her feet.

“If that’s all, I still have some admin to take care of before I can clock off,” she says, already moving towards the door.

I nod. “That’s all. You’re dismissed.”

I don’t miss the way her entire body tenses. She mumbles something under her breath, slamming my office door behind her—something it appears she does pretty frequently, at least around me anyway. Like I said, a spitfire.

I spent the next hour or so going over the handover from Uncle Ewan, as well as reaching out to the clientele, wanting to introduce myself so they’re aware that even though he won’t be taking care of their arrangements, they have nothing to worry about and are still in good hands.

After retrieving my phone, I switch it back on, and message alerts immediately start to come through. But it’s not the couple from Orla or the ones in my group chat that catch my attention, it’s the one from Ricky.

I haven’t spoken to him since I punched him in the face, enough to knock out one of his teeth. And, man, did that son of a bitch hurt. I’ve been in a scuffle or two but never physically hit someone out of pure rage and anger.

His betrayal hurt me more than anything Orla could have done to me, especially seeing as he was the one who warned me against getting in a relationship with her and moving in with her in the first place.

I’d just put it down to him being worried about no longer having a wingman, but now I think there was a lot more to it than that. What’s worse is how many of our mutual friends knew they were fucking like bunnies behind my back.

It’s like I’m grieving his friendship. I scoff at that. Friends my arse.

I read his text, pretty much the same as what he’s been sending sporadically. How he’s sorry, she was manipulative, yadda, yadda, yadda. But his dick didn’t magically find its way to her pussy, and it wasn’t a one-off either. It turns out they’d be going at it for near on a year.

Regardless, I don’t trust him now. Even if I did forgive him, I can’t forget.

I also have a missed call from Aunt Meredith, and I hit dial.

“Teddy,” she says, answering on the second ring. No matter how many times I ask her to call me Theo, she just can’t seem to break the habit.

“Hi. How are you?” I ask when she answers, closing out of the applications, ready to shut down my computer.

“You know, trying not to panic, it’s all so unnerving.” I can hear the worry in her voice, and I know a lot of that is down to Uncle Ewan’s health issues too.

“Try not to worry. You good for food and shopping?” I ask. I’ll run to Costco and grab them some shopping if need be.

“We’re good, but I think we might need to reschedule our dinner plans for Sunday.”

I nod before answering. “I think that’s a good idea for the time being, or at least until we know more.” Shutting down my computer, I push to my feet. “I think that sounds like a plan.”

Aunt Meredith tells me about some TV show she’s hooked on and tells me I need to watch it. To be honest, it doesn’t sound like my thing, but if I don’t at least pretend to appease her, she’ll never ease up.

But when she starts giving me an earful about Orla and all the things she’s done to me and how, given the chance, she’d tell her exactly what she thinks of her, I feel lighter than I have all day. There isn’t a bad bone in her body, and yet, when her momma bear instincts kick in, she goes full-on grizzly.

Chapter Eleven

Sienna

Theodore fucking Wainwright is everywhere I go, his presence increasing with each day that passes. And I am not sure how I will cope with going into lockdown. Working with him will be a test of my resolve, that's for sure.

I swear, if I have to walk out to find him wearing only his boxers one more time, I'll kick him in the junk. What is it with him and his lack of attire? I've even found myself looking for men's dressing gowns.

No one should look so good after just rolling out of bed, and those tight boxers leave nothing to the imagination. As much as I hate to admit it, it's hard not to let my eyes wander. Even I can appreciate a ripped body when I see it. He must secretly work out in his room or when I'm not around. I refuse to believe anyone looks that good unaided—it's sacrilege.

The worst part is he knows it too. If there was an image in the dictionary next to vanity, I am pretty sure it would be his mug shot right beside it. And he eats like he has hollow legs and is not fucking human—devil incarnate.

Walking out of my room, I have my face buried in my book, and it's getting to the good part where the most unruly of the four is finally going to give in to temptation and take what he wants—about time.

“Woah, easy there, Morticia,” Theo says, his hands gripping my shoulders to prevent me from stumbling smack

bang into his exposed torso.

See? Half-naked, *again*.

Is he doing it on purpose?

“Do you always stalk about in the hallway?”

He just laughs and shakes his head. “Such a spitfire,” he replies, and the urge to kick him in the crotch suddenly comes to mind. I almost laugh at myself for such a fantastic idea. That would sure as hell shut him up.

“Fuck off, *Teddy*.”

I don’t know why I use the name Ewan and Meredith call him, but I guess I was hoping it would hit him like a barb, but if anything, it does the opposite, and his features soften. His beard is perfectly trimmed as he smiles at me. The fucker smiles.

If my hands weren’t clinging onto my damn book in a lifelike grip, I’d throw them in the air in exasperation. Instead, I do the only other mature thing I can muster, and I poke out my tongue.

I instantly regret my decision. His eyes grow darker as his pupils dilate.

Suddenly, the hallway starts closing in and becomes almost suffocating. I move to go around him, just as Theo moves to go around me, and my body connects with his again. I let out a groan, but to my mortification, it sounds more like one of pleasure rather than one of frustration. He steps aside, hands in the air. Thankfully, other than that condescending chuckle that escapes him, he keeps his mouth shut.

But just as I reach the kitchen, I should have known it would be too good to be true when he calls after me...

“Love the PJs, by the way,” he says, and then the bathroom door clicks shut. It’s moments like this I’m grateful for my shower ensuite. I only have to share the main bathroom if I want a bath. I glance down at what I’m wearing—a short set covered in Dachshunds. I always wanted a sausage dog

growing up, and besides, these PJs are super comfortable. Even if there's a hole...

"Fuck."

My hand goes to the seam at the back of the shorts to the huge hole from where I cut out the label. I'd been meaning to sew it up.

I grumble as I make myself a bowl of shredded wheat and add a little sugar before pouring on some milk.

It's not my fault clothing manufacturers have the most ridiculous label placement. And I clearly have sensory issues. The only things I leave labels on are my towels, and that's because I don't want to wipe my face with the same end I've wiped my arse with. And yes, I wash my towels. I can't help it if I'm a little set in my ways. Fine, I'm a lot set in my ways.

I never expected him to come and invade my workplace and personal space too. What annoys me the most is I love living here. Granted, it was never going to be permanent, but now I feel as though there's more of a rush for me to start maybe looking at moving.

Hopping up on the kitchen counter, I rest my book in my lap and try to read as I eat my cereal. I'm trying to restrict myself to one chapter a day. Quinn and I are meant to be buddy reading it, but she's slower than she usually is, and I hope it's because she's found her muse and is finally writing this novel she's been toying with for years.

And I can't think of a better place than a cottage in the countryside to help provide inspiration. Much better than the toxic work environment she finally walked away from, that's for sure.

It makes me angry even thinking about it. She's one of the nicest people I know. She doesn't deserve to be treated like a pariah.

It's something I've always been grateful for with my line of work. I don't have to worry about office shit... well, until Theo, that is, but still, I'd choose him over a group of women. I use that term lightly as real women don't drag other women

down for their own means or gain. They fix each other's crowns and put you forward for opportunities. Granted, my circle isn't the largest, but the friends I do have, I trust, and I'd always choose quality over quantity.

I sigh when I realise I've tried reading the same sentence three times now. It would seem my little rendezvous with Theo has left me somewhat discombobulated. I might try some meditation before bed to clear my mind. Finishing off my cereal, I wash up my bowl and spoon. On my way back to my room, I pause at the bathroom and listen to the sound of the shower running, and if I'm not mistaken... is Theo singing Harry Styles? I smother my laugh and lock myself in my room to give Quinn a call. Besides, I'm sure she'll get a kick out of it when I regale her with my wardrobe faux pas.

Chapter Twelve

Theo

It's almost eight, and I saw something about Clap for Carers on the old bird app, and to be fair, it has me intrigued.

Walking out into the living room, I glance over and pick up the remote, but just as I'm about to turn on the TV, something catches my attention. Sienna has fallen asleep on the couch while reading her smut. She's not only in a really odd angle, but her mouth is open as a soft snore escapes her. Unable to help myself, I pull my phone out of my jeans, snap a quick photo, and send it to my group chat with laughing emojis. Immediately, it vibrates as my friends start to reply.

Jake: Wait, who the fuck is that?

Me: I told you, it's Morticia *eye roll emoji*

Matt: Damn, she's hot, especially with her mouth ready and waiting.

Phil: Hold up, did she always look so good?

I scoff at that and glance back over to her. When she's asleep, there is definitely something a little more appealing about her.

Me: Shut up, I wouldn't trust her not to bite me. She only looks hot when she's asleep because she doesn't have a resting bitch face.

And man, does she own that look. She could easily win an award.

Matt: Dude, give her my number.

I raise an eyebrow. Yeah, I don't think so.

Me: As if she'd want it, you were worse than I was at Uni.

To be fair, we were all arseholes. I can't blame her for her lack of empathy towards me.

Phil: Not as bad as Ricky.

There it is, the stark reminder that even after years of friendship, my best mate screwed me over.

Jake: Phil, FFS, really?

Phil: Shit, sorry, man.

I don't know if they were privy to what he did behind my back. I doubt it. But I know for certain the circle of friends we had in Ireland must have known, and that's the fucking real kicker.

Me: Whatever. Anyway, you heard about this clap for carers?

I walk over and look out the window—anything to avoid looking at Morticia sleeping over there.

Jake: Absolutely, my mum's a key worker.

Oh yeah, I forgot she's a nurse for ICU.

Matt: Damn, your mum is a MILF.

Laughing, I shake my head. Jake will kick his arse next time he sees him. The idiot is asking for trouble.

Jake: STFU, Matthew.

I crack open the window.

Phil: I do like a woman in a nurse's uniform.

Shaking my head, I type out a quick reply.

Me: Mate, we don't need to be privy to your fantasies.

Jake: *Image of a saucepan and wooden spoon*

Frowning, I start typing a response, but one of the guys beats me to it.

Matt: ??

Phil: Master Chef?

Jake: It's for clap for carers, got to big it up for my mum.

Any other time, I'm pretty sure we'd give him some shit for being a mumma's boy. I'm actually a little shocked Matt hasn't replied with anything.

The sound of a soft thud has me turning my attention back to the sofa. Sienna's book has fallen out of her hand, but she's still out for the count.

I'm suddenly hit with a wicked idea, and I go over to the kitchen cupboard and quietly pull out what I'm looking for, trying not to giggle like a schoolboy as I make my way back into the living room.

I hit record and set up my phone on the coffee table, and then I wait. I know the moment eight o'clock strikes when the echoes of clapping, whistling, and cheering come through the open window.

Smiling to myself, I raise the stainless-steel ladle and pull my arm back, then I start hitting it against the underside of the frying pan. The sound cracks in the air, and to my utter amusement, it has the desired effect as Sienna jolts and then proceeds to fall off the sofa in a huge heap, hitting the floor with a loud thump.

"Shit," she curses, and her head pops up as she swipes her hair out of her face as she gathers her bearings.

Her eyes quickly find me over by the window, rapping away against the pan in quick succession.

She pushes herself to her feet, albeit unsteadily. "What the fuck?"

"Clap for Carers," I say, unable to keep my smile at bay.

She opens her mouth to reply but just ends up looking like a fish gasping for air.

“What? You not clapping?” I ask.

If it were any other circumstance, I am pretty sure she’d tell me to fuck off.

But instead, she starts clapping until the cheers and echoes of everyone locally dies down.

Pulling the window shut, I retrieve my phone and then put the saucepan and ladle back in the kitchen, which is followed by the sound of her bedroom door slamming.

I bring up the recording of her waking up and falling off the sofa, and the more I watch it, the more I’m laughing. After trimming it, I upload it to my TikTok account and immediately share it to my group chat.

Matt: Damn, that’s cold, mate, but also fucking hilarious.

Whatever, it’s not like he wouldn’t have done the same thing if the opportunity arose. Besides, it’s not like it will go viral or anything.

Phil: Mate, she’s going to kill you.

I shake my head.

Me: Only if she finds out.

There are millions of people on the app, so it’s doubtful.

Feeling smug, I pull out some leftover pasta from the fridge and stick it in the microwave, just as ‘like’ notifications and comments of my TikTok begin hitting my phone.

Just then, it rings, and the good mood I was in quickly dissipates—fucking Orla. I hold my finger down and then swipe my phone off this time.

One good thing is she doesn’t have the landline number for the flat, thank fuck, but I do need to pull out my tablet and make sure no more bills are under my name. Seriously, who in their right mind would still expect their ex-boyfriend to pay

the bills of the house they are no longer living in after they were caught cheating?

Chapter Thirteen

Sienna

“Bloody arsehole,” I mutter as I re-arrange my scatter cushions on my bed.

He did it on purpose. I knew I should have read in my room, but I refuse to be a prisoner in my own home. Pulling out my mat from underneath my bed, I roll it out. Maybe a little light yoga will help after being so rudely awakened.

“I can do this. I just need to get through the next couple of weeks until lockdown is eased.”

Then if the worst comes to the worst, I’ll look for my own place. Of course I’ll do it grudgingly.

After forty-five minutes of breathing and yoga exercises, I feel somewhat better.

Grabbing my anti-bacterial wipes, I wipe over my mat before rolling it up and storing it back underneath my bed.

I finish my water and head into the kitchen to refill my bottle when I pass the calendar on the fridge.

“Bins. Shit.” Knew there was something I forgot.

Pulling the bin liner out of the general waste, I tie it in a knot and then do the same with the recycling, before grabbing the handle of small food recycling bin.

Once I’m at the front door, I slip on my flip-flops and put the door on the latch, and then when I have a good grip, I take

the rubbish down to the main bins and walk them up the path.

Walking back, a noise catches my attention, but I carry on, and then when I hear the faintest mewling sound, I pause and strain, listening for the noise again. Sure enough, I'm met with mewling and rustling. Slowly, I move towards the source. The outside light gives off just enough for me to see a box with a flap open. A patch of fur pokes out and then disappears back inside.

Crouching down, I hold my breath as I pull the flaps open, and I startle when sets of glowing eyes stare back at me.

Clutching my chest, I let out a small shriek, my heart starts racing, but then the figures move and meow—kittens.

Wrapping my hands around the box, I pull it towards me and lift it, putting a hand underneath the box that looks like it's seen better days—and the whiff coming from the box tells me that so have the kittens.

Back indoors, I place the box down and lock the door before heading into the main bathroom and switching on the light.

Inside the box are four kittens, all pawing and meowing. They can't be more than a few weeks old.

Reaching in, I pull one out and have a look. It's clear they've been dumped, and the thought irks me to no end. I can see it's covered in fleas.

“Oh my God,” I say. “Poor little loves.”

I put it back inside the box and then survey the others, all in the same condition.

“What the fuck?” I fall back onto my arse at the sudden intrusion and have to tilt my head back to see Theo taking up the entire doorway. “Why do you have animals in that box?”

I push to my feet and push at his chest. “Don't scare them, you brute. They've already been through enough.” I'm trying in vain to force him out of the door, but of course, he doesn't even budge.

“Morticia, you know we’re here to look after the dead, not the living, right?” he says, in both a facetious and condescending tone.

“I wish you were the dead thing, you’re such a cold bastard,” I say, scowling at him.

He steps towards me, and I take a step back, until I’m met with a cold tiled wall.

“Oh, if you’re into that kind of kinky shit, I can assure you, my words are the only cold thing about me,” he says, waving his hand towards his torso. “But my body is like stone... everywhere. You know, if you want to act out some kind of dead fantasy fetish.”

I stumble over my words. “Eww, you’re disgusting. So not happening.” I squeeze my eyes shut, hating how my pulse begins to race and my stomach flutters.

Meowing brings me back to the subject at hand.

“I need to get them cleaned up, they’re covered in fleas.” I scoot around him in an attempt to put distance between us, but it proves difficult when he commands a room without even trying.

“You can’t keep them here,” he replies incredulously.

I raise my eyebrows. “Yes, I can, and besides, I’m not about to throw them back out onto the street. They’ll die.”

Kneeling down, I put my hand over the box in a protective move.

He studies me and I’m ready for him to argue, but instead, he lets out a resigned sigh.

“Don’t put words into my mouth. I’m not a heartless bastard, regardless of what you might think.”

He crouches down, his hand brushing over my exposed skin, which prickles in goosebumps as he reaches inside the box. I go to stop him, expecting him to pick it up by the scruff, but he’s actually gentle as he picks one of them up.

Bringing it to his chest, his thumb strokes over its tiny head. “Look, this one has raven colour hair like you,” he says, turning it to face me. “I say we name it Morticia.”

I scowl and poke out my tongue.

His eyes grow a shade darker. “Unless you want to put it to work, I suggest you put your tongue back in your mouth.”

I quickly do as he says, closing my mouth.

“We should get them cleaned up then.” He places the kitten back in the box and rises to his feet. He turns on the tap, putting in the plug as water begins to fill the sink.

We?

Too stunned to speak, I hunt in the cupboard for the ‘free-from’ shampoo, which should be fine for them, and then go to the airing cupboard to pull out some old towels and an empty laundry basket. No way are they going back in that nasty box. In my room, I rummage through my toiletry bag full of odds and sods, thankful when I find a comb. When I return, he has the black one in his arms. It looks so tiny, like he could crush it with his thumb and finger.

“Do you want to wash or dry?” he asks.

I’m taken back that he’s actually giving me a choice. “I’ll wash, I want to comb out the fleas but don’t want them getting too cold. I’ll try to be quick.”

He just nods and hands it over. I work, washing its fur and then comb out the fleas—it’s hard because of the colour of its fur. It meows the entire time, and when I’m pretty sure I have them all, Theo reaches out with his big hands and wraps it in a towel and begins drying it off. We do this with the other three, and I note he names them one by one as he dries them off, once they’re all clean and placed in the laundry basket on a dry towel.

“Now what?” he asks while patting the tiny head of the one he named Tiger.

I shrug, having no idea. “Let me google it.” I go in search of my phone. I have a missed call from Quinn, but I’ll text her

later.

“They need kitten milk,” I say after scrolling through about ten different sites.

He glances to his wrist. “Okay, the big supermarket is still open, they should have some in the pet aisle, right?”

Again, I have no idea, but I bloody hope so.

“I’ll go,” I say, turning on my heel.

He grabs my arm to stop me, and heat rushes through me from his touch.

“No, I’ll go, you can stay and look after them, seeing as you rescued them,” he says, dropping his hand and moving past me.

“Fine, but let me give you some money.”

I go to my room and grab my purse, but as I return, he’s already walking out of the door, and I stare after him.

Meowing brings me back to my senses and I pick up the laundry basket and take the kittens into the front room with me, while I search google and rescue centres—which is a moot point due to the bloody restrictions, and most places aren’t able to do anything to help at the moment.

Chapter Fourteen

Theo

With my arms full of bags, I managed to get in the front door before losing my grip, and the bag of litter drops from under my armpit to the floor.

Sienna comes rushing around the corner and down the hallway, taking some of them from my hands.

“What the hell did you buy?” she asks, peering inside one of the bags.

I nudge her forward and kick the front door behind me. “Any chance you can be nosey in the kitchen?”

She huffs but does as I ask, and I follow her. I managed to get pretty much everything you’d need for kittens, including the milk formula. One of the girls in the supermarket took pity on me and helped me, all while socially distancing—it’s so bloody weird.

“What’s this?” She pulls out a multipack of cat toys, bells, a mouse, and a stringy thing. She stares at me like I’ve grown two heads.

I shrug. “I don’t want them tearing up the place.”

She lets out an amused sound. Hold on... did she almost laugh?

“I don’t think you need to worry about that, they’re kittens, not wild cats.”

I scowl at her. “Ha fucking ha.”

We pull out everything else I bought—a cat litter tray and a cat bed that I thought they could share, as well as food and water dishes. Okay, so maybe I got a little overzealous, they might not be here long, but whatever.

“So, I googled, and apparently, they’ll probably need to be fed every couple of hours and helped to go to the toilet.”

I raise an eyebrow. “And you’re telling me this why?”

“You’re right. How much do I owe you?” she asks, waving her hand in the direction of the counter.

Just as I’m about to answer, her phone starts vibrating. She looks a little confused by whoever the caller is, but answers.

“Hello, everything okay?”

She glances to me and then steps away as she talks to whoever is on the other end of the phone and I wonder if it’s her boyfriend... does she even have a boyfriend? I realise I don’t really know much about her.

In the fridge, I find the carton of juice and pour myself a glass of orange and gulp it down.

“But I’m not on TikTok,” she says, exasperated, and my ears perk up.

“Fine, just send it over.”

I watch as she hangs up to whoever she was speaking to and holds her phone, and then her fingers are flying across the screen. And then I hear music and I know straight away what she’s watching.

Her eyes seek me out before going to whatever she’s watching, and I know before she opens her mouth what it is.

She storms over to me and turns her phone to face me. “What the fuck?” Her neck and cheeks are on fire. “You’re such an asshole. This is an invasion of my privacy,” she grits out.

I can’t help but laugh at the image of her falling off the couch, along with the sound I used—priceless.

“It’s gone viral. You’re such a jerk.”

Her eyes begin to brim with tears. Well, shit.

But instead of apologising or offering to remove it, which is what I probably should do, I say, “Well. in that case, you should be thanking me.”

She crosses her arms over her chest and my eyes have a mind of their own as they follow the action. Her jaw drops open and she shakes her head before stomping her foot and turning her back on me.

Sienna disappears in her room before returning in a long cardigan, keys in her hand as she heads to the front door.

“Wait, where are you going?”

She pulls it open without looking back. “None of your damn business.”

And with that, she’s gone. I stand there at a loss when my phone starts vibrating in my pocket.

Phil: Shit, did you see your TikTok went viral?

I wipe my hand over my face and groan.

“Yes, I’m fucking well aware,” I say to the empty room.

Granted, it wasn’t my best move, and as much as I get a kick out of teasing her, it was wrong of me to post that to my content. I’m contemplating deleting it when the kittens start meowing profusely and I head over to check on them. One starts sucking my finger.

“Are you hungry, Bucky?” I’m not even sure why I named the little fur balls. Funnily enough, they’re all boys, with the exception of the raven black one with the one white paw which I named Morticia—who is a girl. She’s a real spit fire too, go figure.

Whoever dumped them is a real piece of work.

The door opens, and when Sienna reappears, she has a handful of different size pipettes. I didn’t think about how they’d drink the milk.

Without even acknowledging me, she busies herself in the kitchen, and when she returns, she picks up Tiger and starts feeding him.

I move and grab one of the other pipettes, picking up Morticia and copying what Sienna is doing, and then I move onto Bucky, as she then feeds Simba.

Before long, they're fed, and she's helped them all go to the toilet before laying them back in the basket. She's yet to say anything to me and hasn't even looked at me. I fucking hate silent treatment. I'd rather she was mouthing off, telling me what a dick move it was for me to set her up the way I did and then post that video.

Gathering up the empty pipettes and waste, she takes it into the kitchen. I follow her, feeling the need to break the tension, if only for a little while.

"I can sort something out for them in the morning. Give them some space to move around," I say, not sure how long she plans on keeping them, but while they're here, I'd rather they weren't shitting and pissing everywhere. That's what I tell myself anyway. Truth is the little fur balls are kind of cute.

But she continues to act as if I'm not even here.

"Fine, the TikTok was a dick move on my part."

She glances to me from the corner of her eye but still remains silent.

"I'm sorry, okay?" And to my surprise, I actually mean it.

Her jaw drops—clearly, it's a surprise to her too.

With my index finger, I lift her chin until her mouth closes. Her eyes dilate, whether it's from confusion or my proximity, I have no idea. With a smirk and a wink, I drop my hand and leave her standing there, appearing as bemused as I feel.

Chapter Fifteen

Sienna

I wake, stiff, having fallen after the third or fourth feed of the night, I can't even be sure, but it's not my uncomfortable body which roused me but the noise coming from nearby.

Squinting, I blink away sleep until I can make out the source. Theo is sitting on the floor, leaning against the sofa, with Morticia in his lap as he feeds her. I bring my wrist into view and check my watch to see it's just after seven.

Groaning, I move into a sitting position. Theo's head turns in my direction.

"You were out for the count, so I thought I'd take the early shift."

I throw my legs off the couch.

"What, no wakeup call with a saucepan?"

He actually chuckles.

"Touché."

Reaching into the basket, I give the other kittens a quick stroke and then glance over to my right when something catches my eye.

"What's that?" I ask, walking over for closer inspection.

It's a dedicated space for the kittens. The cat bed is in the corner with a section of floor covered in newspaper and the

litter tray in the other and toys scattered. It's a small, enclosed area, so they'll feel safe when they're left alone.

"You did this?" I ask and immediately want to face palm. It's a stupid question, obviously he did.

He comes up behind me and places the sleeping kittens from the laundry basket onto the cat bed. He smells fresh out of the shower and I'm suddenly very aware how I must stink. Not that it should bother me... what he thinks about me is irrelevant, right?

"Thought it might redeem myself in way of an apology."

And that's when I remember that bloody TikTok. I neither confirm nor deny I accept his attempt at an apology.

To be fair, I watched it a few times and found myself laughing, not that I'd admit it to him, of course.

Besides, payback is a bitch, and I'll get my retribution when he least expects it.

By the end of the day, I am exhausted. Between work and rushing back to take care of the kittens, I'm literally sleeping on my feet. And I still have to look after them throughout the night too. I've emailed a local cat rescue centre, hoping they might be able to help, or at least offer some kind of foster home. It's not that I don't already love them, it's just four kittens is too much.

"Did they get back to you?" Theo asks as I'm tucking into my extra-large pot noodle. He eyes the container and I pull it closer to me, I don't need to see his judgement.

I shake my head. "No, not yet." I cover my yawn with the back of my hand.

"I was going to order pizza; did you want anything?"

My eyes glance up to him and back to the noodles already wrapped around the fork. I won't lie, pizza does sound good.

"What toppings do you like?"

Slurping the noodles, I quickly swallow them down to answer. "I don't mind, as long as it has no mushrooms or

chicken.”

He cocks an eyebrow. “What about pineapple?”

I nod. “Pineapple is fine. Just hate mushrooms and I just can’t stand chicken on pizza, it’s suspicious.”

Scrunching up his nose in disgust, he says, “But pineapple isn’t?”

He’s tapping away on his phone.

“Oh, you’re one of them.”

His eyes flick to mine and then back to his phone. “One of what?” he asks, pressing his tongue against his cheek.

I drop my fork in the container and sit back.

“You’re a pizza snob. I bet you even joined the great pineapple on pizza debate.”

He throws his head back and laughs. “I’m hardly a snob just because I think it’s wrong to have pineapple on pizza.”

I cross my arms over my chest. “Okay, so have you ever eaten pineapple and cheese on sticks?”

Rubbing his hand over his chin, he grimaces. “Well, no but—”

I cut him off. “See? You’re a snob.”

Theo places his free hand on top of the table and leans in. “I assure you, I am far from being a snob.”

I raise my eyebrows. “Okay, so you don’t hate pineapple, but you just don’t like it on pizza?”

He clears his throat and stands to his full height. “I’ve never tried it,” he admits.

I can’t stop myself from smiling at that. “How do you know if you don’t like it?” I challenge.

He’s staring at me with a funny look on his face, and I suddenly feel self-conscious, until he finally breaks eye contact and shrugs, typing on his phone again. “It’s just wrong.”

“Order me a Hawaiian pizza and try a slice when it arrives.”

Glancing to me, his lips curve in a smirk. “Okay, but on one condition.”

“Which is?”

This time, I get a full megawatt smile with his perfectly straight teeth. I bet they’re natural too, not like my train tracks I had for almost three years.

“You’ll owe me, and when I come to collect, you can’t forfeit.”

Frowning, I watch him curiously. “Owe you what exactly?”

He taps his nose. “That’s for me to know and you to find out,” he replies with a cocky grin.

I straighten in my chair and immediately shake my head. “What? Hell no.” After uploading a video of me on that damn app, I wouldn’t put anything past him.

“What’s the matter? Is little miss prim and proper Sienna Morgan a chicken?” he goads.

And for some reason, him using my full name has my hackles rising, even more than when he calls me Morticia.

I push to my feet and hold out my hand. “Deal.”

He reaches out and shakes my hand, sending a spark up my arm. “Deal,” he repeats, holding my stare. I quickly let go and rub my now sweaty palm over the hem of my top.

“Ordered,” he says and then goes and shuts himself in the bathroom.

I plonk myself down and wonder what the hell I’ve just agreed to.

When pizza arrives, he’s the one who goes to collect it while I wash my hands, and I hiss through my teeth. Between the sanitiser and constantly washing them, my skin is already cracking. I go to my room, grateful when I find my moisturiser.

Theo is at the sink, washing his hands, and he spots the tube in my hand. “Is that hand cream?”

I nod and he signals for it. I toss it towards him, and he catches it easily, showing off his muscled bicep. Rolling my eyes, I grab some plates, the pizza cutter wheel, and a knife and fork from the cutlery.

He scoffs from behind me as I walk to the table. “And yet, I’m the snob. Who the hell eats pizza with a knife and fork?”

I ignore him and sit down, opening both pizza boxes and slicing up the Hawaiian first, tilting my head for him to take a slice.

He picks it up. “Oh no, I’m using my hands,” he says in his usual mocking tone, and I’m tempted to poke out my tongue, but the memory of his remark the last time prevents me from doing it again.

Sniffing it, he eyes the slice in his hands suspiciously and then brings it to his mouth. For the first time, I notice how full his lips are, and I watch as he eats. There is something powerful in the way he swallows. All too soon, he’s finished, flicking his tongue out to lick his thumb and forefinger.

But it’s the smug look on his face that has me swallowing hard. *Shit.*

Chapter Sixteen

Theo

I couldn't resist last night with the pineapple pizza, and to be fair, it wasn't even all that bad, but I wasn't about to tell her that, not when she's indebted to me and I plan on collecting. Do I know what I have in store? Of course not, but will it be fun holding it over her head when I see fit? Abso-fucking-lutely.

She was up most of the night with those kittens again, and I even ended up helping this morning again too. Something will have to give though, no way can this carry on for much longer. I cannot afford for her to end up too exhausted to work, not now anyway.

Truth is though, those little fuckers sure know how to wrap you around their little paws. Now that I think about it, that actually gives me an idea.

Grabbing my phone off my dresser, I hit dial.

"Teddy? Is everything okay?" My aunt asks.

I glance at the clock. Seven twenty, fuck.

"Yeah, sorry, I didn't realise it was still early."

Sitting up, I rest against the headboard.

"Don't worry, I'm always up with the birds," she says in her sweet, comforting tone.

“I actually rang because we’ve found ourselves in a bit of a dilemma.”

I hear the sound of the patio door opening and know she’s probably going outside to check the bird bath has water.

“Oh, what’s that then?”

“Well, hmm, Sienna was putting the bins out the other night and found a box with some abandoned kittens.”

My aunt lets out a gasp. “Oh no, were they all right?”

I nod but remember she can’t see me. “Yeah, but they were covered in fleas and can only be about four weeks old.”

She tuts, and I can imagine her frowning in disgust.

“Anyway, Sienna and I bathed them, and we got some bits for them, but as you can imagine, they’re proving a handful with the feeding and stuff. And the rescue centre hasn’t gotten back to us.”

“Ewan,” she calls out but must be covering the phone or holding it away from her mouth. “Teddy found some kittens that need looking after,” she says. I hear a muffled reply, but not what he actually said.

“It would only be until we can get them fostered,” I assure her, hoping she’s still listening to me. “It’s just there’s no way we can keep up with the amount of care they need and still handle work,” I say.

“Of course we’ll take them,” she says.

“Yeah, just until we can get something more permanent sorted out.”

I make all the arrangements to drop them to theirs later this evening, already feeling a little better knowing they’ll be in good hands.

Phil: Everyone up for a zoom on Sunday?

Smiling, I quickly reply.

Me: I’ll be there, everyone can bring their own beer.

Laughing to myself, I place my phone on my bedside table and go shower.

When I'm leaving the bathroom, I can hear Sienna talking to the kittens, but her voice is croaky from lack of sleep.

I walk in and find her on the floor, the kittens all in her lap.

"I have some good news," I say, rounding the sofa.

Her face turns towards me and then she's covering her eyes with her hand, her cheeks turning a beautiful shade of red.

"Eww, could you go put some clothes on?" she mumbles.

Instead, I perch on the arm of the sofa but make sure to keep my twigs and berries out of sight—the last thing I need is her passing out.

"Such a prude," I reply, knowing full well it'll get a rise out of her.

Sienna drops her hand immediately, giving me a scathing look as she narrows her eyes on me.

"Is there a particular reason you're out here in only a towel?"

I reach out for the kitten I named Morticia and kiss her little nose.

"I spoke to my aunt. Her and Uncle Ewan said they'll foster the kittens."

Her face drops and she stares at the three nestled in her lap. It's clear she's grown quite attached, epically to the grey one I named Bucky.

"It's only until they no longer need weening, and maybe then you can adopt one. I happen to know the landlord. I'm sure he won't mind you having a cat on a permanent basis."

Her eyes dart to mine. "You think Ewan would be okay with that?"

"What? Looking after the kittens?" I nod. "Yeah, of course."

She reaches out and takes Morticia from my hands. “No, me having one here as a pet.”

I frown now, and then it registers... shit, she thinks this place is Uncle Ewan’s.

Rubbing my palm across my short beard, I tilt my head slightly.

“You know this is actually my place, right?”

Her mouth drops open. Shit, it would appear I have my answer.

“What? But I thought... because of downstairs...”

I stand up and grip the edge of my towel to hold it in place—don’t want to give her another unnecessary surprise.

“No, it’s mine, he’s been sub-letting for me while I was living in Ireland.”

Truth is, it’s the main reason I never got a mortgage with Orla. She started on about moving in together less than two months after we started going out, and when I say going out, we were technically only fucking at that point.

I cringe, thinking back to how we rushed into everything and that she probably would have talked me into going ahead with an engagement too if it weren’t for me finding out about her indiscretions—it probably would have worked too. I’ve never met anyone quite as manipulative, and the fact I didn’t see it until after the fact is what pissed me off the most.

Don’t get me wrong, I’m no saint, but from the moment we became exclusive, I never strayed. One thing I am not is a cheat.

The fact she’s still harassing me as though we’re on a break is ridiculous.

“Oh, I didn’t realise,” she says, drawing my attention back to her.

“Anyway, I can drop the kittens off after work. I just thought under the circumstances it just made sense. I don’t know why I didn’t think to ask them straight away.”

She brings Bucky up to her face and kisses his nose.

“Yeah, you’re right. Thank you.”

I hold my hand up to my chest and gasp loudly.

“Hold up... did you just say thank you?”

Her bottom lip twitches, and I know she’s trying to hold back a smile.

“I did, but don’t push it,” she says, but there is zero conviction in her words.

And as easy as it would be to push it, I don’t. I know when to take the win and walk away.

Chapter Seventeen

Sienna

“Are you ready to say bye?” Theo asks me one last time as he loads the box into the footwell of the passenger seat.

I already gave the kittens extra cuddles upstairs while he was loading all the bits he bought from the supermarket the other night into the car.

He steps back and rounds the car to the driver’s side, while I lean in and give them all another scratch behind the ears. I can feel him watching me and carefully shut the door. Theo raises his hand and then he pulls away as I head back upstairs.

It already feels too quiet without them here, and considering I’m not even a cat person, I’m a little taken back by how much I miss them when they were only here for a few days.

I’d love to adopt Bucky, but now I know this is actually Theo’s place, I don’t know how long I’ll be staying here, especially once the restrictions are eased.

Which brings me back to Theo. Who knew he was actually—dare I say—responsible enough to be a homeowner, as much as I had him pigeonholed—it wasn’t difficult either, not after all the taunts at Uni. I just thought he was an idiot, but he clearly had the brains—other than that, all I saw was a male chauvinist pig.

Maybe when I start looking for somewhere, I can find out if they allow pets, unless I decide to bite the bullet and apply

for my mortgage. I mull it over as I make my way back to my room, grab my book, and flop down on my bed.

And yet again, another page has been dog-eared. He needs to stay out of my room. Landlord or not, he's overstepping, but then I guess he probably feels a bit weird asking to borrow my book. Well, it could be worse, he could crack the spine... the thought makes me shiver. I can just about cope with a dust cover being taken off while reading or an occasional crease in the page when there isn't a bookmark, but cracking a spine... nope, that's sacrilege.

My phone vibrates and I hold it above me, swiping the screen.

Quinn: How is he who shall not be named?

I laugh, loving how she always has my back.

**Me: He's taking the kittens to Ewan and Meredith's
*sad face.**

The sound of a phone ringing catches my attention, but after a few rings, it cuts off. It immediately starts up again, and after the fourth time, I can't bear to hear it again and go in search of it. Theo must have left his mobile here.

It's on charge in the kitchen just as I reach it, and it cuts off again. Maybe whoever it is will get the message... or not, as the offensive tune hits my ears again.

"For fuck's sake."

I pick it up and the caller ID reads Orla.

Swiping the screen, I bring it to my ear. "Theo's phone," I say when I answer.

"Who the hell are ye?" says a nasally Irish accent.

Rude much? "Sienna," I reply. I'd ask who she is, but honestly, I don't really give a shit.

"Why are ye answering my man's phone?"

Rolling my eyes, I could just say he's not here and dignify her question with an answer, but why the hell should I?

“Because he left his phone at home and you’re ringing it off the hook.” What I don’t add is maybe that should be enough of a sign he’s not available.

“Tell him to call me,” she says, and before I can reply, she hangs up.

“Well, damn.”

I place his phone back on the counter and go back to my room.

Quinn: I still can’t get over you looking after kittens, you don’t even like cats.

Well, I don’t hate cats, I just find them less loyal than dogs. But finding that litter dumped by the bins and unable to fend for themselves, it wasn’t a tough decision.

Me: They kind of grew on me. How’s the writing coming along?

I open my book to my last page read and start at the top of the page. Am I the only one who does that? I can’t pick up exactly where I left off, not even if it’s an eBook.

My phone vibrates on my chest and causes me to jump.

Quinn: I’ve had some good writing days. It’s just hard trying not to get caught up in my head, you know? Like, do I really think I can do this?

I frown. Of course she can bloody well do this, she has just as much chance as anyone else.

Me: You need to stop that right now. You can do anything you put your mind to. You left a toxic job, for Christ’s sakes; do you know how much courage that takes? Listen, I know your confidence has been knocked, and for good reason, but you’d be letting yourself down if you didn’t at least try.

It pisses me off how much she doubts herself. But if anyone can make her dreams a reality, it’s Quinn.

Quinn: Thank you, lets FaceTime soon, okay? And don’t even try and get out of it.

I laugh at that. I don't even like talking on the phone let alone on camera, it's just awkward.

Me: Okay, fine, speak soon. Love you, pimp xox

Quinn: Ditto xo

She got me this plaque years ago. "Friendship is like peeing your pants. Everyone can see it, but only you can feel its warmth." And that explains how I feel about our friendship, she's like the piss in my pants—pimp.

I go back to reading my book, but my moment of serenity is soon interrupted by the shrill ringing of his damn phone again. I don't even bother answering it again, I don't need another encounter with Orla.

When I hear the front door, I jump to my feet and rush into the hallway.

"How were they?" I ask before he's even closed it or kicked his shoes off.

He looks up at me and shakes his head. "Damn, Morticia, can't a man get through his front door before he's bombarded?"

Crossing my arms, I roll my eyes, something I've found I do a lot around him, and I seriously need to stop. I swear it's giving me headaches.

I wait as he approaches me, and I tilt my head back once he's practically standing over me.

"They're fine. I put everything on the doorstep, along with the kittens, and waited at the end of the pathway to make sure they all got in safely. The sooner social distancing is over the better. It felt weird not being able to go near them. Anyway, I would've rung them on my way back to see how they were, but I think I left my phone."

I let out a loud huff. "Yeah, you did. Someone called Orla has been ringing your phone off the hook. She is relentless. I had to answer it because she would not stop ringing."

He grinds his jaw and brushes past me to retrieve his phone.

“Who is she anyway? Is she a friend of yours—a girlfriend? Because she sounded pretty pissed off.”

Raising his eyebrows, he shakes his head. “Firstly, you shouldn’t have answered my phone.” He stalks past me towards his room. “And secondly, it’s none of your damn business.” Wow, is he seriously getting agitated with me? I should be the one annoyed with him—after all, it was his phone I had to listen to, ringing off the damn hook.

“Yeah, well, I needed to do something to get her to stop. Maybe if you stopped leading the girl on, she’d get the message.”

I stand in his doorway, and he turns to stare at me, his fists clenched at his side. Clearly, I’ve struck a nerve.

“Whatever. Can you just let me know once you’ve checked in with Meredith and Ewan? I just want to know the kittens have settled.”

Theo tilts his head to the side and looks at me as if I’ve just asked the most ridiculous question, and then without a word, he closes his door right in my face. And I have to physically take a step back, so I don’t end up with a broken nose.

“Such a fucking delight, as always,” I say, my anger rising.

He suddenly pulls the door back open.

“I heard that.”

I turn and walk away, flipping him off in the process. “You were supposed to, asshole.” I can’t be sure, but I think I hear him mutter something about me under his breath, and quite frankly, I don’t give a shit.

Chapter Eighteen

Theo

It felt good to chat shit with the guys over some beers even if it was via zoom and not in person. Somehow, it helped to relieve some of the tension of the past few weeks—well, years even, because the truth is that it wasn't just my aunt and uncle I hadn't seen. Unless the guys came over to Ireland, I had pretty much ghosted them too.

I flop down on my bed, and like it tends to when I'm alone and the faint scent of her perfume ferments the air from her presence, my dick comes to life. It's getting harder to ignore my physical attraction towards her, and honestly, lately, I've seen glimpses of her I'd liked to get to know better. But I seem to keep putting my mouth in it, because when I do speak to her, I always manage to piss her off.

Reaching under my joggers, I shove them down until my rock-hard shaft springs free and I take it in my hand, working it up and down. Closing my eyes, it's Sienna's face that fills my mind. The memory of her when she poked her tongue out, in what I presume was disdain, but actually had the opposite effect. Now I can imagine what it would be like licking me from base to tip, teasing my balls, and sucking my head into her mouth.

I remember her curiosity when she asked about Orla, and if I didn't know better, I'd swear I heard the tinge of jealousy in her questions, and the thought actually has me hardening even more.

I can't help but groan out loud, her name slipping through my lips. A floorboard creaks, alerting me that I am not alone, and before I even open my eyes, I know there is only one other person it can be.

Smirking, I watch as her eyes lower to my hand still working my length, her lips parted.

"You know it's not polite to spy on someone," I say, and her eyes immediately spring to mine.

She's currently frozen to the spot, but I doubt that will last for long.

And then a wicked idea comes to mind. "I'm calling in that favour," I say.

Her eyes go wide, and I almost laugh. I can see her already forming a protest.

"You're disgusting," she says, but her words come out a little breathless and I bet she hates that it's obvious too.

I raise my eyebrows. "You don't even know what it is," I counter.

Sienna shifts from one foot to the other, and I'm not sure what will kick in, her fight or flight instincts.

Squeezing myself at the base, a small grunt escapes my lips. The longer she's before me, the more her skin continues to glow red and seeing those lips of hers, so full and inviting, the harder my dick is becoming.

"I want you to watch as I take care of myself."

She's already shaking her head, her black ponytail whipping back and forth, and now my mind turns to the idea of wrapping it around my fist as I fuck her face.

"What? No... that's... I'm not... no." But her words hold no conviction.

I tilt my head in thought. "Unless you'd rather take care of me instead?"

Crossing her arms, her eyes spark with something akin to a mixture of anger and desire, but she's a stubborn little

temptress and I'm putting this entire situation down to the four beers I had, and the fact I haven't drunk in a while.

"Come on, you were the one already watching me," I say.

Speeding up my movements, she tries her hardest to keep her eyes on my face and not roaming down to watch what I'm doing.

"What's the matter? Worried you'll enjoy it?"

She shakes her head.

And for some reason, I want to see how far I can push her before she breaks.

"Does it make your cunt wet thinking of what it would feel like to have me buried deep inside you?"

Her gasp is like a trigger, and I work myself harder, faster, as I piston my ever-growing length.

I force myself to keep watching her, even though the urge to throw my head back and close my eyes to allow the sensations to take over is painful.

My breathing is becoming choppy the more I fuck myself with my hand. "I bet if you were to touch yourself right now, you'd be dripping."

Now it's her breathing growing deeper, her chest rising and falling with every breath she takes.

My piercing only proves to stimulate me more and I've never been more grateful I took the plunge than I am right now.

"Your nipples are hard. Is this turning you on?" I ask. My voice is heavy now, full of my desire the higher it climbs.

I can see the moment she's about to turn and walk away.

"Stay, keep watching me. When you go back to your room and fuck your own pussy when I'm done, I want to hear it. Do you understand me?"

My tone is harsh even to my ears, but the way her eyes grow darker, the way she licks her lips and swallows tells me

everything her mouth isn't—Morticia is getting off on it, and fuck me, I am too.

“Are you thinking about what I'd taste like, as I fuck that pretty little mouth of yours?”

I'm goading her to the point of no return now, and I know she's just as invested in my impending climax as I am. If she wasn't, she'd be gone already. But she's too stubborn for that. I swear, even though there's at least six feet between her and me, I can smell her arousal from here.

She squeezes her thighs together and bites down on her bottom lip so hard I wouldn't be surprised if she drew blood. I wonder if she likes a little pain, and I think of all the fun I could have finding out.

As my balls tighten, I quickly move my T-shirt off my stomach, sucking in a deep breath. My spine ripples with undiluted shockwaves as tendrils of pleasure shoot right through my core and I come in hot, thick spurts all over my hand and stomach—my orgasm relentless. It takes all my willpower to keep watching Sienna as she eye fucks me. The way her lips part, how she squeezes her thighs together, gripping her middle so hard I wouldn't be surprised if she bruises.

I keep pumping and squeezing until the very last drop of come is released. And then with my clean hand, I reach up and pull my T-shirt over my head in a practiced move. I quickly wipe myself up before getting to my feet and tucking my semi hard dick into my joggers as I stalk towards Sienna.

She's blinking rapidly and, fuck me, if I don't want to devour every crevice of her body. My eyes flick to her boobs, her nipples straining against her lounge top—the fact she's not wearing a bra hasn't helped her cause over the fact she thoroughly enjoyed the show.

She takes a step back as I crowd her in the doorway, and I grip the door in a death grip. It takes every ounce of self-restraint I have not to touch her. If I do, it will be game over. And I quite enjoy a little game of cat and mouse.

Leaning down until my lips graze the shell of her ear, a shiver rolls through her as I whisper, “I can smell how fucking turned on you are. Now, go, fuck that sweet cunt of yours, and I want to hear you when you come.”

The sound of her gasp is all I hear before I take a step back and slam my bedroom door in her face. Resting my forehead against the door, I hold my breath and listen, only letting out a sigh when the floorboard creaks followed by the slamming of her bedroom door.

Chapter Nineteen

Sienna

“What the fuck?” I’m visibly shaking when I shut myself in my room.

Did that seriously just happen? I just watched him as he wanked off and came right in front of me.

The pulse between my legs gives way to my own arousal and I loathe he’s had an effect on me, but I couldn’t walk away. Part of me was screaming to go, the other part was too intrigued and had to stay.

Besides, he called in the ‘favour’, but I hardly see how, when in all honesty, I got some kind of voyeuristic pleasure in watching him.

All I can say is, I’m glad my top stops at my thighs, because if it hadn’t, he would have been able to see just how true his words were. I’m drenched.

I bite my lower lip and push down my leggings, kicking them off at my feet, and then move to my bed.

Shaking my head, I can’t believe I’m actually going to do this, but I’m beyond sexually frustrated right now.

I reach into my drawer for the lubricant and Ronnie—my thrusting rabbit—and believe me when I say it’s the best seventy quid I’ve ever spent. Quinn got one too and named hers Reggie.

Using a generous amount of lube, I make quick work of coating the shaft and ears.

And then I lay back and switch it on. The life like tip and soft ripples of five inches fill me and I try to hold back my groan. But it's not only the shaft, it's the lifelike thrusting motions too. I've barely begun when I switch it to the third setting and the ears vibrating over my already sensitive clit has me arching my back, and a louder moan escapes me.

"Good girl." Theo's voice booming through my closed door has my entire body coiling up tight like a wire. Shit, he can probably hear Ronnie.

My eyes spring to the closed door, and I wonder if I locked it, but as the thrusting continues as well as the vibrations over my clit, I'm too far gone to even give a fuck.

I'm panting now and roll over onto my knees and hold myself up with one hand as my body sinks on to my vibrator, my pleasure increasing with every single thrust.

It's almost too much. My nipples are so hard they brush against the material of my top, sparking tingles of pleasure through the length of my body. I squeeze my eyes closed, my breathing choppy.

"Come now," he commands.

I almost forgot he was even there, too caught up in the moment as my core tightens and slides over the thrusting shaft.

And then I switch it to the fifth and strongest vibrating setting there is, and I detonate.

"Oh. My. God." I curse out as I am hit with the most intense blended orgasm I think I've ever had, to the point I'm actually squirting. My body gyrates as the waves of aftershocks continue to pulse through my core.

"Oh fuck," I say, riding out the orgasm and finally switching off Ronnie, tossing him onto my now damp bedspread. "Shit."

I fall onto my chest and then over onto my back, covering my face with my arm until I feel like I can actually breathe

again and haven't just run a marathon.

I swear I hear the echoes of Theo laughing to himself, but I don't care. Right now, I want to savour this small moment of bliss.

After a few minutes, I sit up and quickly snatch up Ronnie and take him to the bathroom, dropping him in the sink. I then go back and strip my bedding, change the linen and remake my bed before I jump in the shower.

I wash myself vigorously as if it will wipe away what I just did—what I just saw Theo do.

Gah. I wash my hair even though it's not hair wash day and then do a second condition for good measure.



Surprisingly, I fell asleep as soon as my head hit the pillow last night. I guess a mind-blowing orgasm will do that to you. I hurry to get ready, even avoiding making myself a coffee in a desperate attempt to avoid he who shall not be named.

Slipping on my flats, knowing I'll mainly be in the embalming theatre today, I creep out of my room.

“Good morning, Morticia.”

I physically jump, dropping my phone and keys in the process. Scrambling to my knees, I swoop them up and hate how I can feel my skin heat with embarrassment.

“Someone's on edge this morning. Everything okay?” Theo asks.

Unable to stop myself, my eyes roam the length of his body before I'm met with his eyes, which are shining with humour.

Arsehole.

I clear my throat and stand, hating being at a disadvantage. I wish I could say I didn't look at his crotch, but I'd be lying.

“Everything’s fine. I just don’t understand why you’re always stalking about like Uncle fucking Fester,” I retort.

He throws his head back and laughs before his eyes land on mine again.

“Now, you know that’s not true.” His fingers graze my cheek before he tucks the loose hair behind my ear, and it takes me a second too long before I lean out of his touch. “If I were anyone, I think you’ll find I’d be Gomez.”

With that, he winks and turns his back on me. “Have a nice day, love,” he says over his shoulder before disappearing into the kitchen.

I don’t wait for him to come back before I’m hurrying out the front door and down to work, deactivating the main alarm when I enter. Going straight to the kitchen, I fill the kettle and switch it on, desperate for a caffeine fix.

I’d rather he brought up what happened last night, but no, not him. This is all some sick and twisted game—no doubt he’ll use it as a weapon at some point, but then again, what do I care? I’ll just deny it anyway. Besides, who would he tell?

I have an overwhelming urge to check social media, but there’s a flaw in my plan... I’m only on like two social media platforms and I rarely use them anyway, sod it, ignorance is bliss, especially after the TikTok scenario.

Reaching for the coffee canister, I pull off the lid to find it empty.

“This is a joke, right?”

I slam it back on the counter and hunt in the cupboard. As much as I love tea, it has nothing on my morning coffee fix.

“For fuck’s sake.” I come up empty handed. I pinch the bridge of my nose and take a couple of deep breaths, resigning myself to the situation, because the thought of going back up to the flat fills me with unwanted anxiety.

I continue to inhale and exhale until I feel calm enough to make myself a cup of tea instead, when a familiar fragrance of

aromatic aftershave washes over me, closely followed by the very fresh and unmistakable smell of my favourite coffee.

My eyes go to the open door, and sure enough, standing there in all his holy as hell glory, is Theo. And it's not the suit he's wearing or the smug smile on his face, it's my to-go mug he has in his hand, the one he's holding out in my direction.

I eye him suspiciously as he wiggles it gently towards me.

“Here. You were in such a hurry to scarper, I didn't get a chance to tell you I had the last of the coffee on Saturday.”

His laugh rumbles up his throat as he steps closer, reaches for my hand, and places my favourite to-go cup in my palm, his lightest touch giving me goosebumps. I wrap my fingers around the tumbler, and he takes a step back.

“Don't look at me like that, it's not poisoned,” he says, holding up his free hand.

I bite my lip and contemplate his words.

And then, as if to prove his point, he reaches out to take it from me. “Here, have mine instead, if you don't believe me.”

Gripping it tighter, I pull it towards my chest and shake my head. “No, it's okay. I trust you,” I say, surprising myself with my open omission.

Chapter Twenty

Theo

I grunt, sweat dripping down my temples as I hold my weight off the floor. I fucking hate planking, but having no gyms open is really taking its toll on my mental health. Whoever *they* are, they weren't kidding about exercising releasing happy endorphins. Plus, I miss sex. Don't get me wrong, nothing wrong with a little hand action, but it's not the same. Best kind of work out, in my humble opinion.

It's been a couple of days since Sienna caught me wanking off in my room, and as tempting as it was to bring it up, I held my tongue. I'm well aware I crossed a line, but am I sorry? Nope, not even a little bit. I like to see the walls crack in her perfectly put together exterior.

Falling face first onto my work out mat, I roll onto my back and stare at the ceiling. Maybe I'll slip out later and go for a ride, let off some excess energy. As much as I feel mentally exhausted, physically I'm anything but.

It's almost as though the moment you're told you can't do something you want it or crave it more. When I moved back home, I expected to reconnect with some old friends, go out and have a laugh, and spend some quality time with Aunt Meredith and Uncle Ewan. I wanted to redeem myself for my absence—fucking Orla. As much as I want to put it all on her, I still had a say, but we'd argue, and then before I knew what was happening, I was apologising and giving in to her. She always had something more important.

If I thought she was bad before, it has nothing on how she's behaving now. I could block her number—and I've considered it multiple times—but she's a sneaky bitch, and she'd start ringing me at work.

I can't believe it took me so long to see her excessive sense of entitlement, lack of empathy, and thirst for interpersonal exploitation. The toxic web she conjured was no joke, the way people perceived her as being the innocent party in our relationship. She's a conniving sociopath. I even find myself feeling sorry for Ricky, but I also don't—he still had a choice.

I shake away thoughts of her, not letting my day start thinking about her antics.

Pushing myself to a sitting position, I glance at my clock—shower and then breakfast.

When I pass Sienna's room, her door is ajar and I can't help but peek through the gap. She's in the middle of her room, headphones on, and I wonder what it is she's listening to.

But it's not that which has my attention, it's the sight of her doing a downward facing dog yoga pose, and I know this because Orla used to attempt to do yoga. I even did it with her for a while, but the better I became the worse her mood got, so I stopped—it takes away the entire point of yoga. Watching Sienna completely immersed is mesmerising. Of course, that's not all, I can't help but appreciate her curves and how her arse hugs her yoga pants like a second skin. *Fuck.*

Maybe my dry spell is getting to me, like cabin fever or some shit. I mean, it's not like I did myself any favours by having her watch me and then demand she take care of herself. Did I go listen at her door to see if she obeyed? Of course, I fucking did.

And now I find myself watching her like a peeping Tom. Scampering away, I lock myself in the bathroom, sporting a fucking hard-on.

Turning on the shower, I strip out of my joggers and take myself in my hand. Bloody hell, talk about a case of blue balls—that’s all it is of course, nothing to do with Sienna and her gorgeous as sin arse. Nope, nothing to do with her whatsoever.

Dressed, I walk out into the kitchen and find Sienna’s back to me, of course. Would it be too much to ask for five minutes without her presence?

Well, I was the one who moved in with the intention of encroaching on her space. I need to suck it up.

I reach over her shoulder for the coffee, and I feel her body tense as my chest brushes against her upper arm. And that smell, why the fuck does she have to smell like sunshine and happiness?

“Don’t mind me,” she says, ducking out of the way and moving to the side.

From my peripheral vision, I can see she’s wearing a knee-length skirt, black high heels, and a white blouse. Her hair is in a simple ponytail, and she’s wearing her glasses. *Fuck me.*

I open the cupboard and reach for a mug.

“Pardon?”

Shit, did I just say that out loud?

I turn to my side and raise an eyebrow in question.

“Did you just swear at me?” she asks, and my eyes are drawn to her matte red lipstick, and my dick twitches. What the hell is wrong with me?

Closing my eyes, I pinch the bridge of my nose, my head pounding.

“Headache,” I say through clenched teeth.

I hear the sound of movement before I feel her hand touch my bicep. I open my eyes to find her close, too close. I take a small step back and bump the back of my head on the cupboard door.

“Son of a bitch.” Grabbing the back of my head with one hand, I attempt to slam the cupboard door shut, but of course, it’s a soft close cupboard.

When I glance to Sienna, I can see her trying not to laugh, and it’s so rare to see her smile, I’m momentarily hypnotised. Well, damn.

She bends down and pulls out a small plastic container, digs inside, and pulls out a strip of paracetamol before she hands them to me.

“Hmm, thanks.”

Turning her back to me, I get the perfect view of her arse, and even her downward dog doesn’t hold a candle to how amazing her rear end is enveloped in a come-fuck-me pencil skirt.

She’s holding out a glass of water for me, but I’m still caught in a trance, to the point I think I’m blushing—something I haven’t done since secondary school.

Popping two tablets from the foil, I quickly stuff them in my mouth and down the entire glass of water. I’m probably just dehydrated, that’s it. Does that cause you to have thoughts you wouldn’t usually have?

Her hand reaches up to my tie, and she wipes off some lint before she walks away. My eyes follow her until she disappears into the hallway.

Chapter Twenty-One

Sienna

I can't handle him in a suit, it has my lady bits standing to attention. When he bumped his head, I couldn't help but laugh, and even though I tried to hide it, I'm sure I gave myself away.

In my office, I grab my tablet and my face mask, ready for today's service, and when I arrive, Theo is already there, speaking to a member of the family.

It's weird having to socially distance and not being able to even so much as shake hands in a way of condolence or acknowledgement.

He nods when he sees me approach, and I stop a small distance away and say hello to the client. I listen as he explains what will take place, who will enter first, and who will be sitting where. It's a complete contrast to the arrogant cocky jokester he is the rest of the time... well, until recently, he's been more wound up of late. I wondered if he even knew how to be serious, but when I see how professional and compassionate he is, I'm a little awe struck to be honest.

The day drags, and by the time I'm finally back in the flat, I just want to veg out on the sofa, eating comfort food and reading my book with the TV on in the background.

Dressed in an oversized T-shirt, I pull on a pair of bed shorts and find my fluffiest socks. I pour myself a large glass of wine and cut myself a slice of Oreo cheesecake I made

yesterday. I've been dreaming of this all day long. I bring the fork to my mouth and savour the taste. *Delicious.*

Sitting down in the living room, I get comfortable and take another bite when I hear the heavy pad of footsteps.

"It's under control, Uncle Ewan," Theo says.

I turn to peer over the back of the sofa, ready to ask him how the kittens are doing, but the words fall short as I see him walk into the kitchen in just a pair of grey jogging bottoms, hung precariously low. I raise an eyebrow. Got to love an open-plan kitchen and living area.

"Well, I'm just worried about you that's all, son, with all these lockdown measures in place," Ewan replies, and I realise he's on FaceTime.

"I know, but you don't need to, we've got it covered," he replies and gives Ewan a sincere smile.

Theo reaches into the fridge and pulls out the plate with the cheesecake, and I see him contemplating his next move. Last time he ate something of mine without asking, we had a twenty-minute argument over it, so I'm interested to see what he will do next.

He chews on his lower lip and sighs, and for a brief moment, I wonder if he's going to put it back, but he doesn't. Instead, he shrugs.

"Fuck it," he says, and I hear Meredith's voice.

"Language, Teddy."

I tuck my lips between my teeth as to not laugh and I carry on spying on him. I remember the last time I found myself spying on him, only this time, he's completely oblivious to my presence. He hasn't mentioned what happened and neither have I. But I think he's just biding his time, like he does with everything when it comes to embarrassing me.

"Sorry, but you do know I'm an adult and it's not illegal to swear," he says, cutting into the cheesecake and bringing it to his lips. His eyes close when his mouth wraps around the

spoon and I hear him hum. It's hard to be annoyed with him stealing it when he seems to genuinely like how it tastes.

"How is Sienna getting on?" Ewan asks, and my ears perk up at his question.

Theo licks his lips, leaning back on the counter, holding his phone out in front of him.

"Yeah, yeah, Morticia is perfectly fine," he grumbles with a shrug, and I swear he rolls his eyes.

"What's that, Teddy?"

Ewan says something to Meredith about him calling me Morticia and Meredith's laugh fills the speakers.

"Oh, Teddy, you used to have such a crush on Morticia Addams when you were a boy. Don't you remember, Ewan? He even had a poster of her on the back of his bedroom door. Something tells me your naming of that kitten isn't just a coincidence either."

Theo's jaw drops open as he tries to splutter a response, but it's drowned out by Ewan's laughter.

"I can't believe I forgot about that," Ewan says. "That kind of makes more sense now I come to think about it."

Theo scrubs his palm over his short beard and grumbles under his breath.

"And on that note, I'm going."

"Oh, don't go, we're only teasing," Meredith says, but Theo shakes his head.

"Love you, bye," he says, swiping the screen and dropping his phone onto the counter.

I shift in my seat and the fork clatters against the plate, alerting him to my presence. His eyes spring to mine, his lips rising in a smirk.

Embarrassed, I face the other way and reach for the remote and turn on the TV.

The sofa dips next to me, and I say nothing as his annoyingly familiar scent fills my senses.

I flick through the channels until I land on Dexter and place the remote beside me and pick up my plate, trying in vain to ignore Theo.

“You know it’s not nice to eavesdrop,” he says.

I glance to him and raise an eyebrow. “You know it’s not nice to steal,” I reply, nodding to the plate in his hand.

He tries to bite back a smile but fails miserably. “Touché.”

I snigger under my breath and face the TV again.

He hums around a mouthful of cheesecake. “You know, this really is good.”

For some reason unbeknown to me, I find myself preening at the compliment. I don’t know what to make of his aunt’s comment about his boyhood crush, but I can’t help myself when I open my mouth.

“So, Morticia Addams, eh?”

The sofa vibrates when he laughs—it’s deep and sexy.

I both love it and hate it in equal measures. And I’m very aware I shouldn’t be poking the bear, but I never did do easy.

“Yeah, what can I say? I was young and impressionable.”

He smiles when I glance at him, and for the first time since he arrived, I find I don’t want to instinctively punch him in the face. With that thought, I let myself relax and fix my attention back on Dexter, noting how it’s probably wrong I have a crush on a fictional serial killer, but what can you do?

Maybe it’s some kind of trauma response, but who cares, you like what you like, right?

Chapter Twenty-Two

Theo

I swear, it's been mass hysteria for weeks now—everyone panic-buying and just being fucking selfish, if you ask me, but that's the least of my worries. I've already had Aunt Meredith on the phone in an absolute two and eight. I told her she just needs to worry about her and Uncle Ewan and not stress over anything to do with the business. I've got it covered. Ever since the PM announced the UK lockdown, ordering people to stay at home and bringing legal lockdown measures into place, everyone started freaking out.

We have everything we need to do our jobs, and I guess it all comes down to how these restrictions will have a long-term affect. Just need to make the best out of a bad situation.

Straight away, I could tell how anxious this is already making Sienna. She's always been a little uptight, but now, after spending a little time in her presence, I think it's so much more than just that. She clearly needs control and having to share the flat with me is clearly trying her patience.

“Good morning, Morticia,” I say in greeting when she walks into the kitchen, already dressed and ready for the day, whereas I'm still only sporting my boxer briefs.

“Do you need to borrow a dressing gown?” she asks, reaching for what I've now come to realise to be her favourite mug—something I'll store in the memory bank for a later date when I really want to piss her off.

“Why? Are you struggling to keep your eyes off me?”

She cocks one of her eyebrows, but I don't miss the slight blush of her cheeks. *Interesting.*

“As if,” she says with a slight catch to her voice.

Reaching for the coffee, she pulls the tea canister towards her and frowns when she notices I moved them around.

“What the heck?” She slides them back the way they were before I re-arranged them. “Coffee, tea, sugar, that's the order they go in,” she grits out.

I place my mug in the sink and hold up my hands. “Easy, tiger, I'll remember that for next time,” I say with absolutely zero sincerity.

Her shoulders rise and fall when she lets out a breath, no doubt to stop herself from assaulting me.

She shakes her head. “Why do you get off on annoying me? It's bad enough you have no boundaries. You dog-eared my book pages, and don't think I haven't noticed you've been sneaking in my room. Hell, I wouldn't put it past you if you'd been in my underwear drawer.”

I pull my lips between my teeth and try to refrain from laughing.

Her eyes go wide. “I swear to God, if you have—”

I cut her off. “Of course I haven't been in your underwear drawer, for fuck's sake.” Stepping closer, I lower my mouth to her ear. “Why would I need to when I saw your thongs the first day I was here...”

She gasps, the sound making the hairs on the back of my neck rise. I draw back and stare down. Her lips are parted, nostrils flared, and her eyes wide. Damn if it isn't both cute and a turn on. And that's when I feel blood rush to my dick, and it comes to life in my boxers. Turning away, I don't give her a chance to even respond, and within a couple of strides, I'm in the main bathroom.

Looking at my reflection in the mirror, I see my erection straining against my boxers. “Fucking traitor,” I curse under

my breath.

Leaning over the bath to turn on the shower, I strip out of my boxers and check the temperature before stepping under the spray. I grab my shower gel and lather my upper body, my erection still there, none the fucking wiser. Well, waste not want not. Taking myself in my hand, I work up and down my length. My head falls forwards as water cascades over my shoulders and down my back. I let out a soft grunt, pistoning my cock with quick strokes from base to tip, fast and hard. I repeat the action, over and over. Sienna fills my mind, her scent, how I imagine her pussy would feel surrounding my cock—tight, squeezing me for everything I'm worth. It doesn't take long before I feel heat at the base of my spine and the tingle as my balls tighten as my orgasm builds. And then I imagine her on her knees, taking me in her mouth, keeping those cyan eyes on me the entire time... *shit*.

I work my wrist, speeding up when I feel myself tighten, grunting out her name as I erupt over the wall in front of me. Breathing heavily, I rest my forehead against the tiles but still don't feel fully sated.

Grabbing the shower head, I spray the evidence of my orgasm from the wall and can't stop smiling as I watch it swirl around the plug hole. Visions of Sienna swallowing fill my mind, and I frown. Maybe it's the thought of non-essential contact giving me some kind of weird withdrawal—yeah, that must be it. Definitely nothing to do with the hot, feisty housemate and employee.

Reaching for the shower gel, I give myself a stern talking to, a reminder of all the reasons little miss stick-up-her-arse pisses me off, and there are the thoughts of what I'd like to do with her arse, and I'm there, growing hard again.

“Hell to the no.” I turn the shower to cold and hiss through my teeth as the ice-cold spray assaults my flesh. I'm determined not to allow myself to go there again.

Wrapping a towel around my waist, I step out into the hallway and straight into a soft, curvy body.

Her hands grip my biceps to steady herself, and when Sienna stares up at me, she lets go as if I scolded her, and I can't help but laugh as her cheeks burn crimson.

Without a word, she rushes past me, sucking in a breath to avoid physical contact, and is out the front door before I can blink.

I get some satisfaction knowing I clearly have an effect on her.

Walking past her room, I notice her door is closed. Twisting the handle, I open it and walk in to see her book now on her bedside table, face down. I pick it up and flip through the pages, fully aware she's likely straightened out the page I dog-eared but not enough to get rid of the evidence. But what surprises me is the post-it note on said page.

Get out of my room and leave my book alone, you pervert.

Laughing, I look around for a pen and see some kind of pencil on her dressing table. I reach for it and note that its eyeliner—that'll do nicely.

I scribble down a response and then close the book, placing it back the way I found it. Humming to myself the entire time, I get ready for work before joining her for what is likely to be another stressful day.

Chapter Twenty-Three

Sienna

“Oh my God. Oh my God,” I chant as I take my freshly made coffee into my office and close the door behind me.

I swear on everything that is holy, that man is the devil incarnate. No one should be allowed to look like that, it’s a sin on so many levels.

When he made his escape to the bathroom, I found my feet moving to the door, ready to knock and give him a piece of my mind, but I heard him muttering to himself before it was replaced with the sound of running water.

I’m well aware how weird I was being with my ear up against the door, and what’s worse is just as I was about to step away, I heard him grunt, followed by a groan which I could only translate to something akin to pleasure. I covered my mouth, unable to move, and if the door had been open, I know I would have watched him again.

I even found myself squeezing my thighs together to try and curb the ache I felt deep in my core. I haven’t used Ronnie since watching him, and believe me, I’ve wanted to.

I heard my name spill from his lips, and I swear my knees became weak. My free hand moved down to the hem of my trousers before dipping underneath my knickers.

Already wet, it only took a swipe up my length and rubbing over my clit before I convulsed and came on the spot.

The sound of the water shutting off brought me back to reality, and I made a mad dash for my room and cursed myself as I washed my hands like they were on fire. I was in such a rush to get out of there, I ended up running straight into his naked torso and then found my hands had a mind of their own, like fucking leeches, as my fingers wrapped around his biceps.

I let out an involuntary shiver at the thought, take a sip of coffee, and scald my tongue.

I tap my fingers on my desk impatiently as I wait for my computer to load, until I realise I haven't even switched it on.

“Get your head out of the clouds, Sienna, for fuck's sake.”

I open my emails and am quickly assaulted with multiple message notifications.

By the time I've conquered the majority of them, there's a knock at my door. I'm already feeling the onset of a headache.

Theo pokes his head around the door and enters, and I try my hardest to ignore how good he looks, but when his fresh scent clouds the room, I want to scream at him to get out.

“I just wanted to let you know that I managed to order extra PPE. We already have plenty, but just as an added precaution.” He walks over and promptly sits in front of my desk. I almost bite out for him to leave, but then I rein in my attitude. He's being proactive and I'm just being ridiculous.

“I think we'll be fine for the time being, but we can evaluate it as we go. It's without saying, going forward that we continue to treat everyone as if they have covid.”

I'm about to interrupt, but he holds his hand up, so I let him continue.

“And yes, I'm aware you already do, but there are others who are foregoing embalming altogether, which I doubt very much you would be on board with. I checked and am happy our health and safety meets the requirements to continue, but I have sent you an email outlining some new requirements in the embalming theatre.”

I let out a sigh, grateful he hasn't pushed to cease embalming altogether, and if added protection is what is required, then so be it.

"Okay, thank you," I say and wiggle my mouse to bring up his email.

He stands and nods his head before making his way over to the door. "And Sienna..."

I peer up at him over my computer monitor.

"I like it when you're so amenable." He winks before he turns and struts out of my office.

And just like that, the little spark of admiration I might have had towards him suddenly fizzles like a dud sparkler on Guy Fawkes night.

"Arsehole."

Reaching for my coffee, his voice echoes in the hallway.

"I heard that, Morticia."

Of course he fucking did. I grab my stress ball and throw it at the door, which just hits it with a soft thud before dropping to the floor.

Finishing my drink, I go through the list of what to consider when embalming a covid-19 case.

Even with all the extra precautions in place, the hardest part is knowing the deceased's family and friends won't likely get how to make this so they can still mourn them to the best of their wishes.

I had three deceased to take care of today, and it's only after I finished speaking with the family of Mr Freeman and beautifying him that I realise how exhausted I am. I'm looking forward to dinner, bath, and bed at this point.

Feeling lethargic, I make sure everything is closed off for today and head back to my flat. When I enter, I'm immediately hit by the smell of cooking, and my stomach grumbles.

Theo steps into view, wearing my apron, with a spatula in his hand.

“I was about to call your boss and find out where you were,” he says before stepping out of sight.

I kick off my shoes and head down the hallway towards the kitchen, going straight to the fridge and looking to see what I can scrounge up.

“What you looking for?” he asks, his chest pressing against my back, the cool air from the fridge doing nothing to stifle the heat I now suddenly feel.

“Dinner choices,” I reply, not that it’s any of his business.

Gripping the door, he moves me aside and closes it, cutting off my protest when I try to push him away.

“Behave, Morticia,” he says, swatting me like a gnat. “I made enough dinner for you too.”

I’m momentarily stunned and don’t know what to say. “But you might want to take a bath first.” He crinkles his nose as his eyes roam the length of my body.

Crossing my arms, I tap my foot until his eyes find mine.

“What?” He holds his free hand up, like he didn’t just insinuate that I stink. “Why are you staring at me like you’re going to murder me in my sleep?”

I raise an eyebrow and tilt my head. *Now there’s a thought.*

Flicking the tip of my nose with the spatula, he steps back towards the stove, and my stomach grumbles.

“Go. It won’t be ready for another half an hour or so.”

I don’t really know what to say, and because I’m starving and not about to look a gift horse in the mouth, I head to my room and grab a change of clothes. I spy my book has moved—to anyone else they probably wouldn’t notice, but this is me we’re talking about. Everything has its place.

Picking it up, I flick to the page with the post-it note, hoping it would deter him. I already called him out on it earlier, so we shall see.

My jaw drops when I see he’s written a reply.

I'm game if you ever want to watch me again, or better still, if you need a hand, I'm only a room away.

I scrunch up the note and then unscrew it, running my finger over his writing. Is that my fucking eye liner?

Taking a deep breath, I shove my book into my bottom drawer. Maybe next time he'll get the message. I refuse to bait to his response or even acknowledge it, for that matter. Leaving my room, I go to the main bathroom and start my bath, adding an overzealous amount of bubble bath. Might as well make the most of it.

Tying my hair back into a messy bun, I remove my make-up and then hunt in the cupboard for my razor. Might as well have a quick shave.

Water still running, I step into the hot bath and let out a groan as I sink down and lay my head back until the bath is almost full. I shut off the water and close my eyes.

It's only when I'm stirred awake by the sound of Theo singing, I realise I dozed off—that could have ended badly. I sit forward and chuckle. Theo is singing along to Harry Styles, and better still, it would appear he knows all the words.

I shake my head and reach for my razor and lather up my leg before getting to work on shaving. Standing up, I put my foot on the edge of the bath, making quick work of my right leg before swapping to the left. Just as I'm bringing the razor across my skin, my foot slips, the sound of water splashing. I try to regain my balance, but not before the razor in my hand slides across my skin. I let out a curse, and the instant sting followed by the gush of claret lets me know it's deep.

Chapter Twenty-Four

Theo

A break in songs alerts me to Sienna in the bathroom, and what sounds like she might have just slipped. Before I can think better of it, I'm at the door and rapping the wood with my knuckles.

"You okay in there?" I ask.

When she isn't quick enough to reply, I try the handle. When it turns, I push the door open, and my eyes go to Sienna as she flaps around and flops back into the water, hissing through her teeth, but not before flashing me.

Covering her chest with her arm, her eyes go wide.

"What the fuck, Theo? Get out."

I ignore her and step inside, it's not like I haven't seen the female form before. "You sounded like you fell, I was checking you hadn't drowned." My eyes dart to the flannel she dropped on the floor in her panic when I abruptly entered. Is that blood?

Reaching down, I pick it up. "Are you hurt?" I ask and then frown, dropping it like a hot potato. "Or is it the crimson wave?" I blurt out. What the fuck is wrong with me? Even if it was her period, did I really need to be so crude? Aunt Meredith would give me a clip round the earhole for that remark, and I'd deserve it too.

“Oh my God. No, and even if I was, it’s none of your fucking business. If you must know, I sliced myself while shaving.”

My eyes roam over her body hidden by fluffy bubbles, and I kind of hate that they’re hindering my view right now. I shake my head, annoyed where my thoughts just went.

“Where?” I ask, needing to distract my thoughts and wanting to right my word vomit from only moments ago.

“My knee. Now if you don’t mind, can you fuck off,” she grits out.

I shake my head. “Nope, no can do. There was a lot of blood, let me see.” Crossing my arms, I wait as she stares at me as if I’ve grown four heads.

“Oh my God, you’re fucking serious.”

I cock an eyebrow. “Deadly.”

She rolls her eyes. “Fine, pass me that towel and then turn around.”

Reaching for the ice blue towel, I hand it over but just out of arm’s length.

“I swear to God, Theodore, you are seriously asking for trouble.”

Laughing, I move enough for her to take it and then turn around. I listen to her as she steps out of the bath, the water splashing against the side of the tub as she does.

She’s barely securing the towel and I’m already spinning to face her; my eyes go straight to her legs and the one already bleeding.

Crouching down, my hand reaches for her leg and grips the back of her calve to bend her knee, causing her to hiss.

“Damn, Morticia. Were you imagining this was my appendage while you were shaving?”

She scoffs as I stare up and meet her eyes.

“Hardly. I thought a cat was dying, until I realised it was you attempting to sing.”

I bring my hand up to my chest. “You wound me, love.”

Her teeth dig into her bottom lip, trying to hide her smile, and I can’t help but laugh.

“Where’s your first aid kit?” I ask, knowing there’s no way little miss stick up her arse doesn’t have one somewhere.

She points to the bathroom cabinet. Opening the door and reaching to the back, I laugh when I pull out one that would put a doctor to shame.

I shake my head as I unzip it.

“What?” she asks as she perches on the edge of the bath. “I like to be prepared, it’s not a crime.”

Retrieving a wipe and a small gauze, I stifle my laugh. “Of course not,” I say deadpan, ripping open the packet and then dabbing it over her knee. She instantly recoils, hissing through her teeth.

“What the fuck?”

She tries to move away from me, but I hold her calve firmly in my hand.

“Quit being a baby. Had to make sure it’s clean before dressing it.”

She lets out a loud huff. “Talk about taking pleasure in my pain,” she says under her breath.

I reach for some kitchen roll beside me and dry off the excess water around it before quickly dressing it in the gauze. Hopefully that should stem the bleeding—she really did take a layer off her knee cap.

Once it’s secure, I move forward and place a kiss there.

“All better,” I say, and I don’t miss the sound of her gasp.

It takes everything in me to move away and get to my feet.

“Thank you.” A small smile graces her lips, which almost knocks me off my axis. If a timid smile like that has that kind

of power over me, I'm fucking terrified of how a full-blown smile might affect me.

"Dinner is almost ready," I say, clearing my throat and stepping back into the hallway, closing the door behind me.

"This is not fucking good," I grumble under my breath as the sound of the oven timer alerts me to the garlic bread being done.

I open the oven door and am immediately engulfed in heat and have to take a step back. Fucking hell, I nearly lost my eyebrows. I go to reach for the tray and then stop. *Oven glove, you idiot.*

Plating up the food and setting it on the table, I grumble to myself the entire time.

"Everything all right?" asks Sienna, and my head shoots up. I didn't even hear her come over.

I nod and wave my hand to the table for her to take a seat. She's in a pair of fluffy socks and a long off-the-shoulder lounge T-shirt, with the strap of her bra peeking out. I just hope she has shorts under that top or I am fucked.

Turning away, I try to discreetly adjust myself and quickly wash my hands before I retrieve the garlic bread.

Sienna reaches for the bottle of open red wine on the table and pours us both a glass. Holding it towards me, I stare at her for a moment before it registers and then I grab my glass and chink it against hers.

"Cheers," she says.

I take a sip and then wrap my spaghetti around my fork and bring it to my mouth, but not before the sound of Sienna groaning in appreciation as she takes her first bite. I hate that I suddenly have a vivid image of her groaning for another reason.

"This is so good," she says around her mouthful of food, holding her other hand up to cover her mouth as she speaks.

I just give her a tight grin and concentrate on eating mine. Normally, I'd have some sarcastic come back, but honestly,

lately, being around her has my head all over the place. Like me having her watch me wank myself off—not one of my finest moments. But when she went and promptly took care of herself too, it was worth.

When I suggested earlier that she should take a bath, it was because of how tired she looked. She's been working too hard. I noticed how she's been skipping lunch—it's why I made a point to come up to the flat and make dinner, as I knew she'd be finishing late again. In fact, I might have to call rank and tell her she can't keep doing it. If she gets sick, we're pretty much up shit creek without a paddle. Even with me helping with embalming, we're already getting busier, and with the deceased only being allowed up to ten people to attend a funeral, it's having such an effect on mourners. The calls we take are also taking a toll mentally.

Chapter Twenty-Five

Sienna

Sneaking glances at Theo while we eat, I notice him frowning and wonder if he's worried about work. It's become quickly apparent I'm beginning to read him a little better, being forced to work together—and let's face it, live together—has made it impossible to ignore one another. But what quickly surprised me was how much he actually takes what he does seriously. At first, I had my reservations. But I've seen a different side to him, beyond the jokes and the sneaking into my room. Why he doesn't just ask to borrow my book is beyond me... no, instead he insinuates I'm a pervert. Is he for real? I hear it all the time, how romance novels are just lady porn or smut. Or sets unrealistic expectations in women. I strongly disagree with that statement, Chad. They're about so much more—sexual empowerment for women for one. And hell, maybe it would give a lot of men an idea of where a woman's clit actually is. I'm telling you, some romance novels could give a whole new insight into sex education and learning the female anatomy.

“Have you finished?” I ask when he's been staring at his plate for almost five minutes. He doesn't answer, so I reach for it anyway.

“I'll get it,” he says, pushing to his feet, his chair scraping back.

I shake my head, already gripping his plate in my other hand. “You cooked, I'll clear up.”

He looks as though he's going to say something, but to my surprise, he concedes and reaches for his wine, finishing it off in one mouthful and then following me into the kitchen.

Bending down, I look under the sink for the washing-up gloves and get frustrated when I can't find them.

"They're in the drawer next to the cutlery."

He holds up his hands in an apologetic gesture, and rather than snipe at him, I stand up and pull them out. Pulling them on, I squirt the fairy up liquid on the washing up sponge and find myself laughing softly to myself.

"What's so funny?" Theo says, leaning against the counter beside me.

Pointing to the washing up liquid, I say, "In my head I just called that fairy up liquid instead of washing up liquid... it always made my mum laugh," I admit and then get a deep ache in my chest from the hollow emptiness.

"Are you a lot like her?" he asks.

Eying him from my peripheral vision, trying to gauge if he's genuinely interested, I begin scrubbing the plate.

"Yeah, my nan always said I was a mini version of her."

Thinking about both my nan and my mum fills me with longing and a sadness I try to keep at arm's length. The job I do helps in a strange sort of way, it's my kind of therapy. Knowing before someone goes to their final resting place, I can do this one thing to fulfil their and their family's wishes.

"Was?" His eyebrows are nearly to his hairline as his gaze searches my face. It's odd having his sole focus on me in a serious manner but also kind of nice.

I nod and clear the lump in my throat, trying not to get choked up. "She passed away when I was fourteen."

He reaches out and touches my arm. "I'm so sorry," he says sincerely before removing his hand. "So, you're close with your nan then?"

I glance to him and then back to the washing up bowl. “We were until she passed away when I was seventeen.” Why I am so openly sharing parts of myself with him baffles me.

“Shit, I’m sorry. Foot, mouth,” he says, and I notice how he scrubs his palm over his face. In all the time I’ve known him, I don’t think I’ve seen him remorseful.

Shaking off the excess water, I place the plate in the dish strainer. “It’s fine, honestly.”

“My mum’s an addict and I don’t have anything to do with my dad. Aunt Meredith and Uncle Ewan pretty much raised me.”

I stop what I’m doing and turn to my side. “They’re good people, you’re lucky to have them.”

He glances to me, his eyes skim down to my knee then back to my face.

“We need to change that dressing,” he says changing the subject and moves towards me.

Before I even have time to process what he’s doing, his hands grip my waist and a whoosh of air escapes me as he lifts me up onto the kitchen counter. I grab the edge to steady myself.

“It’s fine, I can do it,” I say to his retreating back as I pull off the washing up gloves and shift forward to get down. But he returns with the first aid kit in hand.

“Stay.” His hand lands on my thigh, keeping me still, and I heat from his touch. *What the hell is happening?*

I’m too flabbergasted to reply, not that it would matter, as he’s already undoing the gauze strapped to my knee.

My fingers grip the counter as he pulls it away from the gash and I grit my teeth, expecting it to hurt, but I’m shocked at how gentle he’s being.

“Pass me one of the gauzes,” he says. “One with the bandage.”

I dig inside the first aid kit and pull one out, and make a note in my head to order some to replace them.

He extends his hand for me to pass it to him, but I hold it just out of reach. “What’s the magic word?” I tease him with a smile.

Licking his lips, he swallows hard, his Adam’s apple moving with the action, and for some reason beyond me, my breathing begins to speed up as I’m hit with a dose of adrenaline.

Before I know what’s happening, his palms land on my thighs, spreading my legs as he steps between them, practically touching my core. He leans closer as he whispers in my ear.

“If you want to play, I’m game, but right now, I need to dress your knee.”

I hold my breath as he withdraws and winks.

“Thank you,” he says, smirking as he moves to his knees with the gauze in his hand. I didn’t even notice him take it from my hand.

Shit.

A catch in my throat reminds me I need to breathe, and I let in a gulp of strangled air. I swear I hear him chuckle. I’m not sure what to make of him when he’s behaving like this, it’s hard to keep up, and quite frankly, a little unnerving.

It’s only when he squeezes my thigh and stands that I’m interrupted from my thoughts and brought back to the present.

“All done,” he says, his voice deep.

I tilt my head back slightly, his eyes searching my face, growing a shade darker, and there’s no denying he’s handsome. I don’t think I’ve ever been this close to him before, and even his fragrance is alluring, intoxicating. I swear the air crackles with electricity and the hairs on my arms stand on end in anticipation of something.

Chapter Twenty-Six

Theo

Sienna has bewitched me. Something about the way she's staring has a magnetic pull, drawing me closer. I stand between her legs, my hands moving of their own accord, squeezing her thighs. Her skin is soft like silk, and I wonder if the rest of her feels the same way too.

Leaning closer, my head moves towards hers, and her eyes follow the movement. Her hands go to my chest, and I expect her to push me away—hell, I need her to push me away. But instead, her fingers grip the material of my shirt, tugging me closer.

She exhales, her warm breath coating my lips as I descend closer to her mouth.

The logical part of my brain is screaming for me to stop, to step away before I cross a line—one I can't uncross. But I'm not thinking about anything in this moment other than the deep-rooted need to taste her.

Teasing the seam of her lips with my tongue, she opens up to me, letting me in. And what begins as a slow caress soon becomes charged with a wanton need.

My hand moves to the back of her neck, securing her in place as I devour her mouth, greedy for more, taking anything she's willing to give. She's soft and pliable, and nothing could have prepared me for how sweet and deliciously sinful she tastes.

When my lips stray from her mouth, a small whimper escapes her, and I can't hold back my smirk with a warped sense of pride, my libido on a high.

Moving to the column of her throat, I swipe my tongue over her skin. Her hands move to my shoulders and trail up into my hair, her fingers tugging on the ends with a slight pinch to my scalp.

The realisation that I want her to do that while I fuck her with my tongue drives my trajectory lower as I gather the hem of her T-shirt and push it up and out of my way, greeted by the smallest pair of shorts I've ever seen.

My dick strains painfully in my trousers. My fingers hook the material and shove them to the side, and I let out a low curse when I see she's not wearing knickers.

Dropping to my knees, I lower my face between her legs and inhale the smell of her. Desire courses through me. Unable to hold back, I lick the length of her with my tongue. She arches into me, and I hear the sound of a thud above me, but I'm too consumed with needing to really taste her to pay any attention to anything else than my current task at hand.

Without saying a word, I move back and hook my fingers in the top of her shorts and glance up to see her sea-blue eyes laser focused on me.

"Off." It's the only word I manage to form, and I wonder if at any moment she's going to come back to reality and her senses and push me away, but I sure as hell fucking hope not.

Her hands move to the edge of the counter, and she grips it as she lifts her arse enough for me to pull the shorts down her thighs and off her legs, dropping them to the floor.

The lower half of her body is open and bare to me, her pussy glistening with her arousal. I wrap an arm around her lower back and tug her forward until she's aligned perfectly with my face.

I glance up to her one last time, needing her permission for me to do what I so desperately crave.

We hold eye contact, and I tilt my head, asking a silent question. She bites down on her lower lip and gives a small nod.

With my face between the apex of her thighs, I lean in and spear her with my tongue. She gasps and arches into me as I plunge inside her tight pussy. Using my fingers, I spread her open wide and fuck her with my mouth, sucking and teasing.

I fall back on my haunches, losing contact with her hot folds, and I glance up to find her staring down in annoyance. I can't help but chuckle.

"I'm going to need more," I explain and tug her forward until her feet touch the floor either side of my thighs. Taking hold of one of her legs, I lift it onto my shoulder, and she reaches out and cups the other to steady herself.

Satisfied, I go back to working her with my mouth and love the feel of her weight bearing down on my face, my tongue plunging in and out, my thumb working over her clit.

Her free hand grabs hold of my hair and tugs enough to make my eyes water. With my index and middle fingers, I hook them inside her and make a 'come here' motion.

"Oh fuck," she hisses through her teeth. Her breathing becomes choppy as I continue to fuck her with my fingers and my mouth.

If she carries on making those noises, I might literally come in my boxers just from the erotic sounds leaving her plump lips.

If it wasn't for the fact she'd sliced and diced her knee, I'd be lying down with her pussy smothering my face as I make her come. Pulling my mouth away, I keep my fingers buried inside her as I move to my feet and tug her towards the table.

"I need you laying down."

Removing my fingers, I lift her onto the table and she leans back on her elbows, her chest rising and falling, her eyes glassed over with desire.

I grab a cushion from the sofa, and she goes to protest, but I ignore her and place it under her hips, tilting her pelvis forward and then hooking her legs over my shoulders.

“Much better.” I sigh as my fingers hook back inside, giving me better access to her G-spot. I scissor her open, licking over her vulva before adding a third finger.

“Oh my God. That’s it, please don’t stop,” she says, squeezing her thighs either side of my head like a Venus flytrap.

I love how wet she is for me, her juices leaking down my chin, and the thought of driving my cock deep inside her urges me on until her entire body coils tight, her hands pulling my hair for all its worth. If I don’t end up with bald spots, it’ll be a fucking miracle.

She convulses and her walls pulse and tighten around my fingers. I think of how amazing it would feel with my dick buried deep inside her, milking every single ounce of her orgasm.

When her thighs release their death grip around my head and they fall to the side, I draw back. Her clit is swollen and sensitive, and leaning back in, I kiss over it and flick it with my tongue. She cries out as she’s hit with aftershocks before another orgasm hits and she’s screaming out my name on a long drawn-out sigh.

I kiss up her inner thigh, sucking and nipping until I’m satisfied I’ve done what I had intended. When I pull back and see I’ve left a mark, I can’t help but smile at my handy work.

Her arm is slung over her eyes, her chest heaving from the exertion. I mean, it must have been a workout in itself the way she held me prisoner, not that I’m in any way complaining.

Moving over her, I pull her arm away. Her cheeks have the most beautiful crimson flush. I’m aware I shouldn’t be thinking of her in that way, because not only am I her boss, but she also can’t stand me.

“I could eat your pussy every day and never be sated,” I say, and just like I hoped, her eyes dart open and lock with

mine.

“Oh my God.” She attempts to scramble away but I have her caged in beneath me, my hands either side her head as I hover over her. “I can’t believe I let you do that. I mean, you don’t even like me.”

I can’t hide my chuckle. “I think your pussy and my mouth would have to disagree.”

Her jaw drops open, and before she can say a word, I cover her mouth with mine and kiss any retort right out of her.

Chapter Twenty-Seven

Sienna

Theo plunges his tongue into my mouth, and I can taste myself as he kisses me with the same vigour as he just did while he ate my pussy as if it was his last meal.

When he finally draws back, I turn my head to the side, embarrassment hitting me like a fucking hailstorm.

“Don’t, Sienna. I enjoyed it. You enjoyed it. So whatever you’re thinking, just don’t.”

And just like that, my lower stomach tightens with excitement because the way he talks to me like it’s a fucking command has my baby makers dancing around like goddamn flamingos on speed.

He moves off of me and I miss the heat from his body instantly. I shiver and sit up, trying to pull my T-shirt down to cover myself, not sure what to do now.

Theo shakes his head. “I’m not finished with you yet, but if you want to pretend that this”—he points between us—“isn’t inevitable, I’ll back off and let you ponder over just how good you felt with my tongue fucking you and how much better it’ll be when you come around my cock whilst I’m buried deep inside you to the hilt.”

And with that, he winks—the fucking asshole winked—and walks away, leaving me sitting on the dining table in a pool of my own arousal.

The sound of the bathroom door closing, closely followed by running water, tells me he's gone to either cool off or take care of himself. I should feel bad he got me off and got nothing from me in return, but I don't understand how that even happened in the first place.

I scramble off the table and quickly pull on my shorts and then grab the anti-bacterial spray from the kitchen cupboard and I clean the table and the worktop before I hurry to my room like the wimp I am.

What am I supposed to do with what he said out there? Gah, he's so arrogant. It's one of the qualities that annoys me the most about him. Then I get a glimpse of someone I think I might actually like if given the chance. And that tongue of his, fucking hell is that boy gifted with his tongue.

I stay with my back pressed up against the door and listen until the water shuts off in the main bathroom, followed by his footsteps. He pauses when he reaches my door, and I hold my breath, my heart pounding in my chest, a thumping in my temples. The creek of the floorboards allows me to release my breath as he walks to his room, then there's the soft click of the door. I'm both relieved and disappointed.

Did I want more? Do I want more?

Maybe it's the cabin fever. Between work and this lockdown, it's bound to make anyone go a little stir crazy.

Fuck it, I need out.

I pull on my jeans and a thick jumper, and then, like the coward I am, I creep down the hallway to retrieve my jacket, boots and crash helmet from the cupboard.

Checking I have my keys, bank card, phone and of course a face mask, just in case, I place my hand inside the letterbox and pull it closed as quietly as possible behind me and then pull on my boots once I'm in the safety of the hallway.

It's been too long since I went for a ride. Granted, it's late and technically we're meant to be at home, but I'll just say I needed fuel if I'm pulled over.

Passing Theo's Suzuki GSX-R1000, my fingers trace the beautiful matte black paint. It's not hard to appreciate what a gorgeous bike it is.

Who knew we'd actually have a love of bikes in common?

Grabbing my gloves from inside of my lid, I put them on before pulling on my lid.

I push my Ducati 848 evo out of the garage and along the back alley. It's one of the things I love about this bike, it's so lightweight but still has the power and the sporty feel of a Superbike. And why I was only ever going to get it in Ducati red. I throw my leg over and settle on the seat before starting the engine and sliding down my visor. I worried it would mist up, but it has some kind of anti-fog coating, which I love.

The sound vibrates through my entire body and already I feel as though I can breathe a little lighter. The roads are eerily quiet even for this time of night. I don't have a destination in mind and find myself riding over Chelsea Bridge. I slow down and look over the River Thames and then make my way back towards Battersea.

It's a rare sight to see the city so quiet but still lit up, and it makes me appreciate the beauty that is London.

After a while, the cold begins to get to me, and I know I need to get home. I notice another bike coming in the opposite direction and give a small tilt of my head in acknowledgement. It's only as we pass that I realise it's Theo.

I don't know why, but I find myself easing off the accelerator as I check my mirrors, and sure enough, he does a U-turn and opens up, catching up to me and pulling alongside me at the traffic lights.

Trying my hardest, I try not to look over to him, but it's impossible. When I do, he revs his engine and I shake my head and do the same.

The way ahead is clear, and when the lights turn green, we both open up our throttles and speed down the open road. When I see another car, I slow down and fall in behind him, admiring the way he handles his bike and the road. His body

moves with the bike and the thought of being straddled behind him, leaning with him as he takes a corner gives me butterflies. And I want to slap my traitorous body and my thoughts for going there.

All too soon, we're back home and each pull up the alley to the entrance of the garage. He uses his fob to open it and I cut my engine as I climb off my bike and walk it into my spot, the heat from the tank heating my thigh. I kick out the bike stand. Removing my gloves and lid, I shake out my hair, fully aware this will not in any way shape or form be a movie moment.

Theo does the same, running his still gloved fingers through his hair, and fuck me if the vision of me tugging on those strands earlier doesn't suddenly bombard me. Only difference is, unlike me, he looks like he's just stepped out of a G fucking Q photo shoot.

The sound of the garage door lowering and the ticking sounds of our bike engines cooling down are the only noises.

"Did you follow me?" The question leaves my mouth before I can stop it as I stuff my gloves in the inside of my lid.

He raises his eyebrows, making up the small distance between us, and I take a step back, my arse bumping into my bike.

"I would have had to have known you were leaving to do that."

His eyes bore into mine and I find myself sitting on the seat of my bike, facing him, my legs suddenly feeling weak underfoot. I hate myself for having such a physical reaction to him.

I glance down to my hands and rub them together, trying to get warmth back into my fingers.

"Cold?" he asks in that deep baritone of his, the one that makes my lower stomach flutter with excitement.

Without a word, he pulls off his gloves and grabs my hands in his, bringing them up to his mouth, where he takes his time gently blowing warm air over the tips of my fingers.

I swallow hard, my body tingling from head to toe from the action.

Holy shit, he's blowing on my fingers, but he might as well be blowing on my clit.

It's what he does next that has me completely at his mercy.

Chapter Twenty-Eight

Theo

I should have just walked back upstairs into the flat. But seeing her riding her bike, after having my face between her legs has my entire body on a tenterhook, my restraint ready to snap at any moment. Taking care of myself in the shower did nothing to sate my desire for her, and I'd be lying if I believed otherwise.

Bringing the pad of her index finger to my mouth, I place a soft kiss over it and move on, doing the same to every finger before moving on to her other hand.

A low gasp slips through her lips, and our eyes lock and stay trained on one another as I kiss the palm of each hand. And then I seek out the pulse in her wrist, leaving a tender kiss before doing the same on her other wrist. It's both erotic and tender. And I could so easily get lost in finding every pulse point on her entire body, leaving a trail of kisses in my wake.

Wrapping my hand around both her wrists like a shackle, I gently tug her to her feet.

Her eyelashes flutter, eyelids slowly closing as I dip my head lower. She parts her lips just as my mouth covers hers. It's a slow and luxurious kiss, just a hint of tongue.

Because right now, I'm at war with myself, wanting to take her both hard and fast and slow and sweet.

And I don't know which one will win out. Easing back slowly, I rest my forehead against hers and breathe her in deep.

My hand moves to cup the back of her neck, squeezing. Her hands are still held in my other hand, resting between us. Stepping back, I bring her entwined hands and raise them above her head and spin her so her back is facing my chest, and I thrust my arousal against her jean-clad arse.

The moan it elicits from her has my mouth watering in anticipation and my dick straining painfully. Moving her hair out of the way, I lean down and bring my lips to the column of her throat, nibbling and kissing.

She fidgets, rubbing herself up against me, and I open my mouth and suck the flesh before gripping her chin and kissing along her jawline.

Her head lulls back, giving me more access, and I know she's just as needy for me.

"You make it impossible to think straight. The way you smell, the way you taste," I whisper, my lips grazing the shell of her ear. "All I can think about is how much I want—no, how much I need to be buried inside you."

She's panting now, her breathing choppy, reminding me of what she sounded like while I fucked her with my mouth.

"Do it," she says, breathless.

I pull back, keeping her hands in a tight grip above her head as I undo my jeans and shove them down my thighs, along with my boxer shorts.

"Undo your jeans," I say, letting go of her wrists and taking hold of my hard length, working my hand up and down my shaft a couple of times.

She keeps her back to me as she pushes them down her thighs, along with her thong, stopping above her knees. I reach around her stomach and lower my hand to find her wet as I tease between her folds with my fingers before cupping her sex, hard.

Bending my knees, I tug her back so my cock settles between her arse cheeks.

She sucks in a sharp breath.

“Oh my God,” she says as I slowly rock back and forth, causing friction between us.

With her jeans at her knees, her thighs’ grip my cock, only adding to the overwhelming sensations.

Her breaths come in harder and faster as I trail my nose along the shell of her ear, inhaling her sultry scent, both sweet and villainous in its pursuit to render me captive.

“Fuck,” she says as I rub my thumb over her clit in the figure eight. Her weight bears down on my cock even more, and it takes everything in me not to shoot my load.

Tilting her head back, she turns her cheek, resting against my chest as I lean in and take her bottom lip between my teeth and tug gently before sucking it and letting it go with a soft popping sound.

Her eyelashes rest on the top of her cheekbones, delicate like butterflies as her eyelids flutter back and forth the more I work her clit.

“Come for me,” I say against her lips, thrusting back and forth with more vigour, my cock still nestled between her arse cheeks. Desperate to be inside her but needing to make her come, I doubt I’ll last once I feel her velvet walls wrapped around my thick shaft.

“Now,” I demand.

Her mouth falls open as she coils tight and calls out my name. “Theeee-o.” The way her lips form the most delicious ‘O’ around my name is my undoing as I shove my tongue in her mouth, soaking up her orgasm. I have one arm crossing over her pelvis, holding her in place as I continue to stimulate her clit, and all without penetration.

“I need inside you,” I say, pulling back from the kiss.

She nods, and I love how accommodating she is in the throes of passion.

“Put your hands flat on the seat of your bike and arse in the air,” I say, bending my knees so her arse cheeks are no longer

groping my cock. I squeeze myself at the base, watching in the low light of the garage as she does what I ask her.

“It does things to me... you being so submissive,” I say, letting go of myself and palming her arse cheeks in each hand, spreading them apart, her rose pucker begging for me to fuck it—*soon*.

“I don’t have any protection, but I can pull out or we can wait until we get back up to the flat,” I say, leaning over her back to speak in her ear.

“You’re clean?” she asks, her voice cracking.

“As a whistle,” I reply. As soon as I caught Orla cheating, I got myself tested.

Peering over her shoulder, her eyes find mine, and when she’s satisfied with what she sees, she faces away.

“I’m clean too, and on birth control,” she says. “You don’t need to pull out.”

I swear to all that is holy, my knees almost buckle from her words.

Without waiting any longer, I move closer, spreading her and aligning myself with her wet core.

“It’s going to be a tight fit, baby, are you ready?” I ask, but don’t wait for her response as I thrust into her in one swift movement.

She cries out from the force, her bike rocking forward as she grips the saddle of the seat, until she pushes back against me, steadying herself.

I hold still, loving the way her channel envelopes around me—we fit perfectly together. Never has it felt like this.

“Fuck, you feel different. Good different,” she says on a satisfied sigh.

I let out a wicked chuckle. “I’ll take that as a compliment, but I also take it you’ve never been with a man with a piercing before?”

She attempts to look over her shoulder, but the padding from her jacket and me sheathed inside her like this makes it a little difficult.

“It’s a Prince Albert piercing. Don’t worry, I’ll let you see it before the night is over. I’m not done with you yet.”

And then I thrust into her in short, fast pumps. She rocks back, meeting my every thrust, and I hate that there’s clothes between us.

“I’m going to fuck you fast. But when we get upstairs, I’m going to fuck you so slow you won’t be able to move without thinking of my cock buried deep in your pussy,” I say with a low grunt as I hold on to her hips, pulling her tighter against me, needing to be deeper. The friction between us is off the fucking Richter scale

“Oh shit, fuck, damn,” she curses.

I bring my hand to her cheek. “Suck my fingers.” I hold my index and middle out straight in front of her mouth.

She moves her head slightly and does as I ask, wrapping her lips around them and hollowing her cheeks.

“Enough,” I say, and she releases them with a soft popping sound.

I move my hand around to her stomach until I reach her clit and then I swipe my fingers over the plump mound—no doubt sensitive from the orgasm I coaxed out of her, but I’m greedy and I want to feel her pulse around my cock as I finally let myself come inside her.

“I need you to come on my dick. Can you do that for me?” I continue to rub her clit and thrust into her harder and faster. Her body begins to coil, tensing as she arches into me, taking me deeper, as if that’s even possible.

“Yes, yes, yes,” she gasps out.

And just like that, her channel squeezes my length in a vice-like grip.

“Fuck,” she screams, pulsing around me.

My spine tingles with raw need as I throw my head back and slam into her. I come in long hot bursts, emptying myself and filling her with my seed, and it just keeps coming. The fact I got myself off earlier clearly has nothing over what her body does to mine.

I cover her back with my chest and pull her tightly against me, both of us breathing heavily from the exertion.

Chapter Twenty-Nine

Sienna

Never has it felt this good, and by good, I mean earth shattering, mind blowing, orgasmic.

I've heard of men with piercings making the experience more pleasurable, but I didn't expect that as my channel continues to pulse sporadically around his semi-hard dick, and I know at any moment he's going to have to pull out, but for now I just want him to stay right where he is. Never have I felt this full.

He swipes the hair off my shoulder and kisses my jaw.

"Are you good?" he asks.

And the way he asks makes my chest squeeze. He sounds like he genuinely cares, and the thought terrifies me. When we're arguing back and forth, I know where we stand. But the way he just said that has me feeling more vulnerable than having his cock still buried inside me or when he's tongue fucking me.

"Better than good," I reply, hoping he doesn't hear the unease in my voice.

He pulls back enough to suck the column of my throat, the only place there's visible skin. I'm sweating profusely. Never in my wildest dreams would I have expected to be fucked wearing my protective leather biker jacket.

“Good, because I’m not finished. I want you naked and spread eagled for me, so I can fuck you some more.”

I swear I feel him growing harder inside me already.

Pulling back, he slides out of me with a wet sound. It stings a little but in the best possible way, and I feel his come as it seeps from my pussy and down my inner thighs.

He surprises me when he kneels behind me and places a gentle kiss to each of my arse cheeks before reaching for my jeans and thong and pulling them back up.

Who is this man and what has he done with the Theo I love to loathe?

Sounds of him pulling up his own cause me to turn to face him. I can see his dick peeking out from the top of his open jeans, his engorged head glistening from our juices, and the glint of his silver piercing.

Curious, I reach out and touch the ball of the bar. His hands grip my biceps as he moves me back, and I kid you not, he just growled at me.

“You can play all you like when we’re back in the flat. Let’s move,” he says in a commanding tone, twirling his finger in the air.

Any other time, I’d want to punch him for talking to me like that, but when we’re like this, I find myself wanting—no, needing to please him.

“Leave your lid, we’ll get it in the morning,” he says, reaching for my hand as he tugs me along beside him, his fingers intertwined with mine.

He doesn’t even let go when we get the entrance of the flat and he unlocks the door, pushing it open and ushering me inside first, worried I’ll do a runner. He doesn’t need to be concerned, my legs already feel like melted ice cream. In fact, I think I’m running on pure adrenaline at the moment.

Pushing me against the wall in the small hallway, he crouches down and lifts my ankle, and I realise he wants to take off my boot.

Holy fucking moly.

He tugs them until my feet are free and then swiftly removes his before his fingers are at the zip of my coat, pulling it down in one precise movement.

Reaching out, I unzip his, only my hands are slightly shaking from the grip I had on my bike saddle, no doubt. I half expect a teasing comment, but when I glance up, he's watching me with something akin to awe, and there I go again, feeling raw and completely exposed to him.

He grabs my jaw in his hand, holding my face firmly.

"It's okay," he says, as though he knows I'm having an internal battle of wills.

Coats off, he leads me towards my bedroom, and I find myself raising my eyebrows.

"Your bed is more comfortable," he says.

I pause and tug on his hand.

"I knew it, I smelt you on my duvet, what the f—" He cuts me off, his mouth crashing against mine in a searing kiss, until I forget what it was I was even saying.

And before I can blink, he has me laying down on my bed.

His hands go to the hem of my jeans and thong as he pulls them lower. I sit up on my elbows and notice how careful he is when he gets to my knee.

"Looks like the bleeding has stopped," he says almost to himself as he pulls my jeans off.

He does the same with each of my socks, and I suddenly feel self-conscious. I've never liked my feet, but he kisses the arch of each foot before trailing kisses along my legs and up my thighs. Reaching my jumper, he pushes it up, exposing my stomach, and his eyes flick to mine.

"Pretty," he says, his attention going back to my tattoo. It's a hummingbird hovering over a flower, just to the right of my stomach, above my pelvic bone.

He kisses it once.

“Going to need you naked.” His voice is so deep and full of promise.

Sitting forward, I tug my jumper up and over my head and drop it over the edge of the bed as his eyes rake over my black lacy bra.

He licks his lips and quickly gets to his feet, stripping out of his clothes faster than I can blink.

And bloody hell, what a sight to behold. I’ve never particularly found the male appendage to be nice to look at, but he is oh-so-handsome. His erection stands to attention at least seven inches, and that piercing is captivating. Like a magpie, I hone in on the silver sparkle and get to my knees.

It’s a circular barbell, a horseshoe shape with beads on both ends.

Without thinking, I lower my face and lightly lick the tip.

“Fuck,” he moans through his teeth.

I glance up and find him laser focused on what I’m about to do. I don’t even care that he was inside me less than ten minutes ago, I need to taste him.

Kissing his engorged head, I slowly move down to the underside of his cock with the tip of my tongue and then move up and down the length of his shaft, peppering it with light, gentle kisses before licking the rest. I love getting to familiarise myself with his size, the way he tastes, the texture of his skin, and it’s intoxicating.

His breathing grows louder and his hands have moved to my hair, his fingers digging into my scalp.

Gently, I flick the tip of my tongue along his frenulum, back and forth, up and down, until I slowly creep my lips over his head and then I back off.

“Sienna, you’re killing me.”

And then it’s just the sounds of his breathing and moaning. His self-control is the biggest turn on for me, knowing how easily he could take control and fuck my face, but he’s given himself over to me, allowing me to play.

I repeat the motion, teasing until I can't take it anymore, and then I slide him all the way into my mouth and to the back of my throat. I gag slightly, so I draw back and flatten my tongue.

His dick jumps and throbs in my mouth. "Fuck, yes. Just like that."

I relish in the fact I am bringing him pleasure, as well as myself. I've always gotten off on giving head, but with him, it's on a whole other level.

Sliding him free from my mouth, I move to his balls, sucking and licking.

It's intense the sounds coming from him, and I'm so turned on I can barely think straight.

Taking him back into my mouth, I groan around his thick cock.

"Enough, I want to be inside you." He draws back slowly; a trail of my saliva follows his cock, and he reaches down and wipes his thumb over my chin and bottom lip.

"I love the sight of you all messy for me."

He kneels on the bed, and I shuffle back towards the pillows.

"Now I'm going to fuck you nice and slow... you ready for that?"

I nod eagerly and it gains me the most devilish smile.

"Good girl," he replies.

And what surprises me the most is how much I love the way those words spill from his lips. I'm embarrassed to admit it even to myself. I'm a feminist, for fuck's sake. I should be offended, and yet, I want to hear his praise, and I want more than anything to please him.

Chapter Thirty

Theo

I hold her stare. “Next time when you take me in your mouth, I’ll fuck your face too.” I raise an eyebrow in challenge, expecting her to sass back, but if anything, her pupils dilate, and I swear my words only turn her on more.

If it weren’t for her knee, I’d have her ride my cock, just like I know she can, but it can wait, *for now*.

Crawling between her legs, I nudge them wider. Taking myself in my hand, I squeeze my base, and then I ease into her hot waiting channel.

Both of us sigh in unison, and honestly, I don’t know how long I’ll last. Having her bare to me, beneath me, and wrapped around me is all-consuming.

“Sienna, you feel too fucking good,” I say, and then I begin to thrust.

I don’t hear her muffled response, but I do feel her short nails as they dig into my arse, urging me deeper, harder, faster.

I pull back and hook under her good knee in the crook of my elbow and raise it, allowing me to penetrate her at just the right angle. My piercing makes it even more stimulating, so many sensations vying for my attention, and it takes all my concentration to continue to fuck her, needing to get her off one last time before I do.

“Do you think you can come again?” I say through gritted teeth.

Her eyes find mine, and before she can answer, I lean in, needing to taste that mouth of hers again.

My tongue fucks her mouth to the same rhythm as my cock, and she meets my every thrust—taking, wanting, needing—her other leg hooked around my waist.

A match made in heaven.

With my entire body coiling tight, I know my orgasm is imminent. I roll my hips just so, hitting the spot deep inside. Her breaths come out in short pants, and I know she’s close.

“Come for me, Sienna.”

She explodes around me, her tight pussy strangling my cock as she pulses relentlessly. The shockwaves of her release send me over the edge, and together, we fall into a void of oblivion.

I think I might have blacked out for a few seconds because my body is smothering hers when I come to my senses. Easing my weight off her, I pull out slowly and watch as my come follows, and I can’t help but reach between us and spread it over her swollen pink vulva.

When I peer up to look at her face, my breath catches, and something happens in my chest.

I’ve never seen her smile, not properly, but she is now, and the one gracing her lips is my undoing. Something deep inside cracks under the weight of it.

“Beautiful,” I say, reaching up and cupping her cheek.

And I’m glad she’s not big on smiling, because if this is anything to go by, I don’t want her sharing this part of her with anyone else but me.

I’m caught in a post-sex haze and have to shake my head to try and clear it, but it’s impossible when her presence enthrals me.

Forcing myself to move, I make my way into her bathroom and grab a flannel that's neatly folded on a pile of towels, of course.

Holding it under the hot tap, I cover it in water before wringing the excess water off and walk back to Sienna, who hasn't moved an inch, and a deep sense of pride works its way through me. I did that.

Kneeling on the bed, I bring the flannel to her core. Her hand shoots out and she stops my ascent.

"I'll do that," she says, her cheeks flooding with colour that has nothing to do with our sexcapades.

Shaking my head, I gently move her hand away. "Sienna, let me take care of you." I keep my gaze focused on her eyes, and I see so many emotions cross her face.

Has no one ever taken care of her before?

The thought alone makes me mad, angry with myself for always being so crass with her, teasing and mocking her.

Fuck... deep down, has it always been her?

"You deserve to be worshipped. Not just in the throes of passion, but afterwards too." Carefully, I wipe between her legs and clean her up. "You deserve to be treated like the queen you are."

Her breath catches, and when I glance up from my ministrations, her teeth are biting down onto the corner of her bottom lip. I can tell she's apprehensive. Hell, why wouldn't she be? I haven't given her much cause to think otherwise in that respect.

"Just trust me, okay?"

I scoot up the bed until my face is level with hers and lean closer, kissing the tip of her nose and then hop off the bed to discard the flannel in the laundry basket she has placed perfectly in the corner of her small bathroom.

When I return, she's no longer in bed, and I hear the sound of the tap running in the main bathroom. I pad into the kitchen and glance at the clock. Fuck, it's late—or early, whichever

way you look at it—and we have to be up for work in a couple of hours.

Glancing in the fridge, I find a carton of fresh orange juice, pour us both a glass, and place one on her bedside table. I pull down the covers and sit back, resting against the headboard as I polish off the sweet-tart orange juice and then put it down beside me.

When she comes back, in only my T-shirt, my dick twitches, but it's the surprise of seeing me in her bed which makes me smile.

“Thought you might be thirsty.” I tilt my head towards the glass.

She clears her throat and walks over and picks it up. “Hmm, thank you,” she says, taking a large sip before placing it back down.

I pat the space beside me, and she raises her eyebrows.

“Come on. I don't bite. Not unless you want me to.”

This time, she rolls her eyes before climbing into bed, but I don't miss the slight rise of her lips. Getting her to smile will be one of my new favourite pastimes.

Switching off the lamp beside me, I move lower and pull the cover over us.

“Make yourself comfortable, why don't you?” she says, but there's no venom in her words. If anything, she sounds playful, lighter even.

She turns on her side, her back to me, and I reach over to tug her to my chest.

Her body tenses, and I think maybe I've pushed her too far, but when her hand covers mine, I feel her body relax, and I can't help the satisfied sigh that escapes me.

“Don't get too used to this,” she says. “If I weren't so tired, I'd be kicking you out of my room.”

I can't help but chuckle. To be honest, I expect nothing less of her after my behaviour, but I also like the idea of

wearing her down and earning her trust.

I've always loved a challenge.

Chapter Thirty-One

Sienna

“Wakey, wakey.” Soft lips caress my throat and cause my skin to prickle with goosebumps.

I blink, and it takes me a moment to recognise that voice—Theo. And then it all comes flooding back to me. Shit.

Reaching for the duvet, I try to cover my face, but he tugs it away.

“Oh no you don’t,” he says in a sing-song voice, which elicits a groan from me.

“You’re still here, I see,” I reply gruffly, but the truth is it sends a warmth straight to my chest.

“I wouldn’t want to be anywhere else.” His lips trail a soft path across my jaw until he reaches my mouth, and I turn towards him like a magnet and allow him to give me a chaste kiss. “Oi, let me in,” he says, pulling back slightly.

I shake my head, pressing my lips tightly together. Is he serious? I haven’t even brushed my teeth.

“Stop it. I fucked your pussy with my mouth.”

His response causes me to gasp, and he slips past my lips, his tongue probing mine. I forget my chain of thought as he kisses me like a starving man, and the idea has my stomach grumbling.

He draws back, his eyes darting over my face. “Someone needs sustenance,” he says, kissing my lips once more before pulling back and climbing out of bed in all his morning glory, and I can’t even hide my honest appraisal as he exits my room like he doesn’t have a care in the world.

I hear the bathroom door close and peer over at my bedside clock and groan. Sitting up, I throw my legs over the edge of the bed and get to my feet.

Making my way to the bathroom, I feel a twinge between my thighs, and I’m instantly reminded of him being buried to the hilt deep inside me.

Relieving myself, I turn on my shower, tie my hair into a messy bun, and make quick work of washing myself. I need to eat before heading to work, and I need more than cereal.

Once dressed, I brush some powder over my face, a flick of mascara, and some lip gloss. I make my way into the kitchen, where I find Theo with his back to me, in only his boxer briefs and my apron. I use one when cooking because I am the messiest cook that ever graced this earth.

He peers over his shoulder and winks. “Omelette,” he says, his attention going back to the stove. I move to the kettle and switch it on, grabbing our mugs.

A calm settles over me as he hums to himself while sending me glances.

I cross my arms. “What?” I ask, suddenly feeling very self-conscious.

“I like it when you smile,” he says with a shrug.

Bringing my fingertips to my face, I touch my lips—I wasn’t even aware I was.

“Oh.”

He turns off the stove, makes up the distance, and crowds me against the counter. I have to lean back to look up at him.

“Next time, I’m showering with you,” he says, dipping his head, grazing my cheek with his perfectly sculpted beard

before kissing it softly and stepping away and dividing the omelette onto two plates.

The kettle clicks and I pour the hot water over the coffee granules, the rich aroma filling my senses like a salve.

“Breakfast,” he says, carrying the plates over to the table.

I join him and place his coffee on the coaster by his plate.

“Thank you,” I say, and avert my eyes. Something about how he openly appraises me has me wanting to run and hide. It’s unsettling how vulnerable he makes me feel with just one look.

“You look nice,” he says, and my eyes dart to his.

I swallow down my bite of food and clear my throat. “Hmm, thank you, I think.” It’s just my casual work attire I wear under my protective clothing when I’m embalming.

“You don’t like compliments, do you?”

It’s not that I don’t like them, it’s always nice to receive praise, it’s just something I’m not used to hearing.

“Something like that,” I say, not sure how to take this side of Theo.

He smiles, and not the usual condescending one when he’s trying to get a rise out of me either. It’s genuine. “Well, best you start getting used to them, Sienna Morgan, because I foresee plenty more of them in your future.”

I don’t know how to respond, so instead, I concentrate on eating this buttery, fluffy goodness. I’m surprised at how good of a cook he is—to be honest, much better than me, for sure.

I swear he finishes his in like three bites, but I’ve always been a slow eater, and yet he places his fork down and waits patiently as I eat mine. He doesn’t have to do that, and I almost want to question him about it, but I find myself enjoying the comfortable quiet of his company.

It worries me how quick I’ve come to enjoy his presence and not just the mind-blowing sex we recently shared. It’s more than that—even before, I was growing used to him being

here. I was shocked to find the seclusion I used to crave isn't as strong as it used to be.

"What has you blushing like that?" he asks, pushing his seat back as he rises to his feet and reaches for my plate.

"Nothing," I reply, not ready to elaborate.

Walking backwards, he raises an eyebrow. "Keep your secrets, Morticia. I look forward to fucking them right out of you."

His words not only take me off guard but have my lower belly squirming with excitement at the prospect of him doing just that, and again, I'm not sure how to deal with that revelation.

Winking, he spins on his heels, and I finally form a response.

"In your dreams," I call out to his retreating back.

His shoulders rise and fall as he lets out a gruff laugh. "If you say so, beautiful."

I shake my head and finish my coffee before carrying our mugs into the kitchen.

He holds out his hands, covered in washing up suds, and takes them from me. Yet another thing about him I wouldn't have expected is he's quite domesticated. I've had boyfriends in the past who could barely put the toilet seat down after missing the bowl. And yet, he does clean up after himself. This is probably a compliment coming from me, seeing as, let's just say, I'm very particular about cleanliness. A thought which takes me straight back to last night and him taking care of me. I've never felt so exposed before, and it's both disconcerting and exhilarating at the same time.

"Thanks for breakfast," I say when I realise I've just been standing here like a plank.

He turns his face and smiles. "You're more than welcome."

And just like that, my cheeks begin to heat. No one has ever made me blush the way he does, and this will become a

real problem.

Chapter Thirty-Two

Theo

I laugh under my breath as Sienna walks away with a dazed expression, loving how it's because of me. Shaking off the excess water, I leave the mugs on the drainer and get ready for work and let out a heavy sigh. I hate how this pandemic doesn't allow mourners to pay their respects to loved ones the way they wish they could. I feel guilty. How do you choose just ten people to attend a funeral? We have been proactive, of course, with zoom capabilities, but still, even I'll admit the situation is heart-breaking.

Once in the shower, my mind wanders to being with Sienna last night and how much I wanted her again this morning. I physically ached from the need, and if it wasn't for fear of coming on too strong, I would have loved to have woken her up with my dick buried deep inside her, or my tongue fucking her pussy until she woke. I sure as hell hope there will be a repeat. I don't think it's possible to ever get my fill, not where she's concerned, and now I've had a taste, what I wouldn't give to feast on her every fucking day.

Today, I'm wearing a black suit because we have a service later this afternoon. And as the funeral director, I want to cater to the clientele. Though I don't have a strict dress code for the rest of the staff, I insist their attire are grey or dark blue suits and muted colour ties, along with black dress shoes and black belts for my male team. Female staff tend to wear trousers or skirts, with a blouse and shoes, no sling backs or open toes.

It's probably the only difference I implemented since Uncle Ewan handed over the reins.

I've been snowed under with obituaries all morning, and my stomach growls.

Passing Sienna's office, I glance through the window. Her head is hunched over the computer, always deep in admin if she's not in the embalming theatre, no doubt.

In the small kitchen, I wash my hands and then take a ready-made pasta from the fridge, along with two cans of coke. I grab a pot noodle from the cupboard, tearing off the foil lid and hold it under the filtered hot tap. Uncle Ewan upgraded the kitchen a few years back, which is definitely a perk.

I grab some forks from the cutlery drawer, stir the noodles, and let it sit for a few minutes before placing everything on a tray and then head back the way I came. Sienna's door is partially open, so I gently toe it the rest of the way as I enter, and her head darts up. Her cheeks heat, and I can't hide my smirk.

"Hungry?" I ask, approaching her desk, and she glances at her watch.

"Actually, I am."

I place the pot noodle on the coaster and sit a can of coke beside it.

"Voila," I say.

Granted, it's not a gourmet meal, but one thing I've noticed is how much she loves a pot noodle. Who am I kidding? There isn't much I don't notice about Sienna. I don't even know if it's something I just do subconsciously with her because I've never paid much attention to my ex's—not that she's my girlfriend, but it's something I would very much like to remedy.

"Thank you. Sweet and sour is my favourite," she says, her lips forming a smile, one I can't help but reciprocate.

"I know," I reply, sitting opposite. "Mind if I join you?"

She glances to the window, and I wonder if she's going to say no, worried about what the other couple of staff members might say.

"I can go," I say, hooking my thumb over my shoulder and rising to my feet.

Sienna shakes her hand and waves for me to sit.

"No, it's good. We're two metres apart," she replies, as if she's justifying the situation.

I can't hide my knowing smirk. "Something we were far from last night and this morning," I say.

She grabs something and throws it at me, but I'm quick to stop it from hitting me in the face—a squidgy stress ball.

I tut. "Now, that wasn't very nice. Maybe later, I'll have to teach you a lesson for that little stunt." Her jaw drops and her eyes go wide, but I don't miss the flash of lust as her pupils dilate, either.

Picking up my fork, I point it in her direction. "Eat."

I expect her to challenge me or tell me to piss off, but instead, she stirs her noodles before bringing a forkful to her mouth, groaning when she pulls the fork away empty.

Shifting in my seat, I open my pasta container. "I can't believe you like those things," I say, digging into my food.

She scoffs at my remark. "Please, they're a perfectly acceptable food source," she retorts.

"If you say so, baby."

As soon as the word spills from my lips, I feel the air grow thick. I don't know why I just called her that. I mean, it's not the first time, but unlike with previous girlfriends, it's natural. My ex used to try and force me to call her darling, and her pet name for me was Hunnybunch. I hated it. But again, the realisation Sienna isn't mine—not officially anyway—hits me, and I don't like it.

"Anyway, about last night," I say.

She sits up straight, her eyes darting everywhere but at me. And I accept that now might not be the best time to go there.

“How about we talk tonight after work?” I ask, attempting a different tactic.

Her shoulders relax, and I let out an inaudible sigh, pleased I managed to pull that back quickly.

“Yeah, okay,” she says, popping the tab on her can of coke before bringing it to her lips. She takes a sip promptly, followed by a small hiccup.

I tilt my head. “You okay?”

Her cheeks heat, and other than her smiling, I think it’s one of my favourite looks from her. “Yeah, I don’t know why, but it always happens when I have my first drop of coke.”

“You’re fucking adorable.”

She reaches forward, but I quickly pull the stress ball away before she can toss it at me again. I shake my index finger. “What did I say earlier?”

Sienna raises her eyebrows in defiance, but I know for a fact she’d submit to me, and I would enjoy tying her up while bringing her to the peak of pleasure and then back down again until she’s begging me to give her exactly what she wants.

Chapter Thirty-Three

Sienna

Theo is staring at me like I'm his next meal, and quite frankly, I don't know how to deal with all these conflicted feelings.

“Are you using subterfuge to get into my knickers?” I ask, unable to stop myself.

He studies me for a moment before he gets to his feet and walks towards my office door, and I think my question has pissed him off. But he doesn't leave like I was expecting. I hear the sound of the door closing and the lock clicking before I watch as he goes over to the window and lowers the blinds.

When he turns back to face me, I can't decipher what he's thinking. He wears a blank expression as he moves towards me and walks around my desk, pushing my chair back, his hands firmly on the armrests, leaning down so we're eye level. I can feel the heat from his body, and I can't stop myself from inhaling his scent.

“I would never deceive you, least of all to get into your knickers.” His hand grips my jaw firmly as his eyes bore into mine. “I know I've done things to cause you to doubt me, and I don't blame you for questioning my intentions, but my only goal is to prove to you that you can trust me.” Lowering his mouth to mine, his kiss is completely dominating.

When he pulls back, his eyes are so hungry with want that I swear if he asked me to, I'd let him bend me over my desk and fuck me.

“Later,” he says, giving me one last chaste kiss on the lips before stepping away. He moves back around the desk to retrieve the tray and deftly adds the empty containers and his coke can before turning on his heels and walking out of my office, leaving me rendered speechless.

I’m equal parts excited and fucking terrified. This could all end so badly.

He’s my boss and my landlord, not to mention my housemate.

I need some advice, and stat.

I pick up the landline and dial.

“Hello?”

I play with the ring pull of my coke can. “Quinn, it’s me,” I say.

“Sienna, where are you? Is everything okay?” she asks, and I can hear the worry in her voice.

Sitting back in my chair, I twist from side to side. “Yeah, sorry, just calling from my work phone.”

“Wondered why I didn’t recognise the number. Hold on, is this the only time you could call me where he who shall not be named can hear you?”

“Ugh, yes. I don’t know what to do.”

“Do about what? Has something else happened? Is he still being an arse?”

I smile at that. “I almost wish he was still being an arse. It would be easier to stay away.”

“Stay away, huh? Are you telling me that instead of staying away from his arse, you finally got to see it?”

An image of him naked immediately comes to mind. “Stop... tell me what to do about this... he’s my boss and we live together, for fuck’s sake.”

A dog barks and a deep male voice sounds in the background, followed by a girlish giggle from Quinn.

“Woah, who was that?”

“Who? Nell? She’s just a sweet sheepdog who belongs to Bonnie, the owner of the cottage I’m staying at.”

“Cute, but you know damn well I wasn’t talking about the dog.”

“Oh.” She releases a frustrated sigh. “That’s nobody.”

His chuckle is deep and can be heard over the phone.

“Uh-huh.”

“Anyway, I think if Theo makes you feel good and you enjoy each other’s company, you should just go for it.”

Of course she would say something like that.

I notice my phone flashing. “Shit, Quinn, I’ve got to take another call, but don’t think you’re getting out of telling me who that guy is.”

“And on that note, I’ll let you go. I love you.”

“Love you too.”

I hang up and answer the incoming call before it drops out and pull up my emails. I need to ensure our usual supplier can get my products to me by the end of the week.

My mobile vibrates while I’m discussing quantity—a message from Quinn.

A photo of her and a sheepdog sit on a small riverbank, and I’m jealous I’m not there with her. But it’s how happy she seems that really hits home, and I’m glad. It’s a good look on her, especially after all the shit she’s had to endure.

I type out a reply to her photo.

Me: Lovely, but I still want to know who the guy is???

Thankfully, my supplier can accommodate our order, so it’s one less thing to worry about, and they confirm delivery for Friday.

Quinn: It’s Callum. But I’ll explain when we talk. How about we FaceTime on Sunday?

My thumbs fly over my phone screen.

*Me: Gah, fine. And yes, it's a date, don't stand me up
xoxo*

Before sliding it into my drawer, her response comes through.

Quinn: Never xoxo

Smiling, I close the drawer. Quinn has never let me down, not once. I almost forgot why I rang her in the first place. I wanted her to give me some advice about Theo. I guess that will need to wait until Sunday when we can talk.

Walking through the hallway, I see Theo buttoning his jacket before he sees me, and I take a moment to appreciate just how handsome he looks. The arrogant way I thought he used to carry himself is now replaced with something else. Maybe I only saw what I wanted to? Yes, he's self-assured and confident, but he's shown me a side to him I didn't even know existed until recently. And honestly, I'd love to get to know him a little better. I'm aware of the restrictions in place, but we've been living and working together this long, and we follow all the safety measures in place. I don't begrudge myself some guilty pleasures during these uncertain times. I know I work with dead people, but it also highlights how important it is to live, and maybe I forgot that for a while.

Chapter Thirty-Four

Theo

I've been jittery all day, like a kid wired on Christmas Eve. I have no idea what will transpire between Sienna and me, but I'm hopeful it will end up with me buried deep between her thighs. I need to redeem myself, and it's not lost on me how I've treated her in the past, and I cringe. Am I saying I'm a changed man? Probably not, but for her, I want to be better.

The sound of the front door opening has me peering down the hallway. Sienna kicks her shoes off with a heavy sigh. Work has been taking an extra toll lately. High levels of stress and anxiety are occupational hazards of the job, but no one would have prepared anyone for this.

She raises her head and pauses when she sees me, chewing on her bottom lip before she slowly approaches me.

“Hey, do you fancy taking a walk?”

Tilting her head back, she looks up at me and shrugs.

“Yeah, why not? Let me quickly go change.”

I nod and then look down at my suit and do the same.

Five minutes later, we're both back in the hallway, and I can't stop the laugh which bubbles from my chest as I point between us.

“Shit, same brain,” I say.

We're both in black jogging bottoms and grey hoodies.

She glances down at herself and smiles. I want to drop to my knees and worship her right here, right now. Does she know the effect her smile has on me?

I grab my keys and stuff my mobile in my pocket before pulling on my trainers. When I glance up, she's stepping into hers—again, both in white trainers.

Once we're outside, she inhales a deep breath, tilting her face towards the sky. The sun is still out, highlighting her beautiful features. I mean, it's not like I haven't noticed how gorgeous she is. The way she acts at work, her empathy for strangers, even if this wasn't her job, comes naturally to her. But I can see it, the strain it's taking, the compassion fatigue. If I could, I'd make her take annual leave.

“I think you should take a couple of days off,” I say.

She opens her eyes, and I nudge my head as we fall into step together.

“I have this Sunday off,” she replies softly.

I reach out for her hand and squeeze it once before linking our fingers together. “Yeah, but you work too hard.”

She tugs on my hand and turns to face me, a ‘V’ forming between her brows. “You're being weird. Is it because we've had sex?” she asks, eyeing me suspiciously.

And I can't hold back my laugh. I shake my head. “No, but also kind of, yeah,” I say with a shrug. I bring my free hand up to her face, and she sighs softly and leans into my touch.

“I want whatever this is between us to carry on. But I also need to consider the health of my staff. So please, if it gets too much at work, let me know and we can sort something out, okay?”

Her eyes soften, highlighting their brilliant greenish blue.

“Wow, you said please. This is like something out of the twilight zone. Are you going soft?” she mocks.

I lean down and give her a chaste kiss on the lips, and then drop my hand from her face.

“I can assure you I am going anything but soft. And when we get home, I’ll show you just how much when I fuck you into submission.”

Her pupils grow darker as she darts her tongue out and licks her lips.

“Come on.” I tug her gently but don’t let go as we make our way towards Battersea Park.

We come to a stop at the Victorian Bandstand, surrounded by an arena of trees in the heart of the park. I smile as I’m flooded with memories from my childhood. I was so lucky, and if it wasn’t for Aunt Meredith and Uncle Ewan, I’m sure my life would be very different right now.

“Aunt Meredith used to bring me here all the time when I was growing up,” I say to Sienna and pull her into my arms.

We get a few dirty looks from passers-by, but whatever.

“It’s lovely. I’ve never been to this part of the park before.”

I lean in and give her a chaste kiss, and I like that she’s experiencing this with me for the first time.

“I was married here.” I wave to the bandstand and her eyes spring to mine as she steps back with a look of shock.

I pull her back to me. “I was seven,” I say, laughing.

She swats my shoulder. “You’re not funny,” she says, but there she goes again, fucking smiling.

I reach up and rub my thumb over her bottom lip. “I love it when you smile.”

Her cheeks redden—she’s not used to compliments.

Someone tuts as they pass us by, which only makes her blush harder. To be fair, I’m well aware we shouldn’t be this close. We should be social distancing, but whatever, got to live a little.

My phone vibrates in my pocket, and I tense. Orla will not fucking quit. I pull it out and quickly hit the side button, sending it to voicemail.

“Did you need to get that?” Sienna asks.

I shake my head. “Nope.” And I grab her hand.

As we head back to the flat, the sun sets behind us, highlighting Sienna in reds and oranges. An inner peace settles over me, something I haven’t felt in a long time, and I realise I have her to thank. Once I gave in to my desire and finally had her beneath me, wrapped around me, everything around me became more vivid, more alive.

Sienna gives off this closed-off persona, but I know it’s more self-preservation, not the stuck up, highly strung version of her I created.

There’s a lot more to this woman than I ever gave her credit for, and I know that’s on me. I’m determined to break through those barriers she’s erected until I know everything there is to know about who she is, what makes her tick, her biggest dreams, desires, and deepest fantasies. And if she’ll let me, I want to be there to watch them come to fruition.

Chapter Thirty-Five

Sienna

The walk was just what I needed. To be honest, I was nervous about finishing work today, apprehensive and excited after what happened yesterday. And then he turned up in my office with a pot noodle and a can of coke. As much as I tried to act indifferent, the dynamics have shifted between us now. We crossed a line from friends—wait... were we friends? Anyway, all I know is it's a line I'd very much like to cross again.

I've realised since he's lived here, I've cooked for myself, or he's cooked for us, but I've never once cooked for him. Granted, I'm not the best cook, and actually, my skills are limited at best, which is ridiculous—I'm a grown arse woman. Baking I can do, maybe because I see desserts and cakes as more of a reward than a chore. Honestly, I think it began after losing my nan. Dinner was always a family affair. Granted, it was just the three of us, but there was comfort in us all eating together, and then that was taken away from me. My nan's cousin tried, of course, but she was pretty much set in her ways, and as great as she was with me, we weren't close.

“What are you up to?” Theo's voice sounds from behind me.

I peer over my shoulder. “I'm making us dinner.”

He comes up and wraps his arms around my waist, and I tense unintentionally. I'm just not used to him being tactile with me. I guess that will take some getting used to.

I let out a breath and try to relax, which isn't easy when he smells like the only meal I currently want to eat.

“Us... I like the sound of that.”

I can feel the heat rising in my cheeks, so instead, I try to ignore him using the word ‘us’ and concentrate on the mince in the frying pan. My lasagne isn't the worst, and we have some fresh leaf salad, along with that baguette to go with it. There's just something about buttered baguette that makes my tastebuds water.

“What you making, anyway?” He looks over my shoulder at the saucepan with boiling water.

“Lasagne.”

I reach over for the pasta sheets, and he steps back, giving me a little more room. I place one in the boiling water and then add another a few seconds later until there is enough for the layers.

“Why are you boiling the pasta?”

Glancing at him, I bend down and pull out the square Pyrex dish.

“For the layers,” I answer with a shrug. “It's how my mum used to make it, and it just kind of stuck.”

I worry my lip, kind of expecting some sort of sarcastic retort, but yet again, he surprises me.

“I've never made it,” he admits, scratching his head.

This revelation surprises me, considering how accomplished he is in the kitchen.

I cock an eyebrow. “A connoisseur like yourself? You should be ashamed.”

He throws his head back and laughs.

“Morticia got jokes,” he says.

I point the spatula at him and try to give my best resting bitch face. “Easy, Gomez.”

Before I can move, he has me pinned against the counter, his hands gripping my hips. “Well, that’s most definitely an upgrade from Fester.” His lips skim over the shell of my ear, and it’s impossible to hold back my shiver. “And just so you know, me calling you Morticia was a compliment. Granted, it might have come across underhanded, and for that, I apologise.”

When he pulls back, his eyes fixate on my face, and I see the truth in his words. The moment which only seconds ago was light has now turned heavy. They say the eyes are the window to the soul, and right here, I feel like he’s entirely open for me. I can’t even form a response.

He tilts his head and leans in until his lips meet mine, sucking my lower lip between his and then biting it oh-so-slowly. And damn if I don’t want him. When he pulls away, he kisses the tip of my nose.

“Later,” he says, his voice full of promise. “But first, you can show me how you make this lasagne.”

It takes me a few seconds to clear my head and for his words to catch up with me... right, lasagne. I laugh and gently push at his chest, but his eyes turn dark. “Keep smiling like that and I’ll drag you to your room, and we can skip straight to dessert.”

Swallowing hard, I squeeze my thighs together. *Fuck me.*

What is it about this man that completely throws off my equilibrium?

The hiss of water draws my attention back to the hob, and I quickly turn it down before it overflows.

My hands shake when I pick up the tongs and gently separate the sheets. Theo’s heat warms me from the inside out as his chest brushes against my back, his head peering over my shoulder.

“Am I making you nervous?”

I shake my head and then nod. “Maybe a little.” Part of me wants to act like he doesn’t, but it would be a lie, and even if I

said otherwise, I'm pretty sure he'd see straight through my facade.

“Is that a good or a bad thing?”

I turn my head to the side and hold his gaze. “It's a good thing, definitely a good thing.”

His eyes are akin to an ardent glow right before his lips capture mine, only this time in a fierce and searing kiss. When we finally pull apart, my entire body is a withering mess. I have no idea how the hell we're supposed to make it through dinner without giving in to temptation.

If a person could be an aphrodisiac, I am pretty sure it's this man right here, and I am well and truly fucked, in every sense of the word.

He gives me a knowing smile, and if I weren't still on a high from that kiss, I'd give him sass over it. Theo watches everything I do with rapt attention as I line the dish with each layer before taking it from me and placing it into the oven.

I pull on the rubber gloves as I fill the sink and start washing up when he saddles up beside me.

“Now, let's talk about what we should have for dessert.”

I don't miss the innuendo in his words or the smirk on his face as he opens the cupboard beside me.

Chapter Thirty-Six

Theo

No one expected lockdown to be extended, a few weeks at best, and yet, here we are, nearly two months later.

And why have so many been furloughed? There are still so many of us under the pressure of not having enough hours in a day, or staff.

Sienna walks out into the living room, and I have to stifle my groan. She's wearing my T-shirt I discarded in her room last night. She's unaware of the effect she has on me.

She's tenderly touching the arch of her nose, and I know the protective masks aren't helping. Rising to my feet, I go to the kitchen and wash my hands, shaking my head that society has to be fucking reminded to do something like this in the twenty-first century.

Drying them off, I retrieve the first aid kit from the cupboard and find Sienna slumped on the sofa.

"Is it sore?" I ask, kneeling in front of her, taking her face in my hand and turning it from side to side.

"Yeah, a bit." She shuffles and tucks her feet beneath her.

I give her a chaste kiss on the lips and then rummage around in the first aid kit until I find the antiseptic cream.

"Voila."

She reaches out to take it from me, but I shake my head and unscrew the cap, beckoning her forward with my forefinger. I gently apply it over her sore and where her skin is damaged. I screw the lid back on and drop it in the bag before returning it to the kitchen.

“I’m just going to shower, and then did you want to watch another Dexter?” I ask already making my way to the bathroom.

“Yeah, but I want to take a quick bath when you’re finished in the shower,” she replies.



Just as I’m drying off and pulling on my underwear and clean joggers, I hear my phone ringing from the living room with my aunt’s ringtone. I’ve been keeping it on silent because of Orla and her constant ringing and texts but turned the sound back on so I didn’t miss my aunt’s call.

“Hey, Morticia, can you answer that, please?”

I quickly rub the towel over my head, toss it in the linen bin and go to the living room.

Approaching the sofa, I realise my aunt is on FaceTime to Sienna, who has it angled only on her face. She’s focused on something my aunt is saying about the kittens, and then I presume she’s showing them on screen from the ‘ahhs’ and ‘coos’.

Sienna hasn’t noticed me approach as I kneel in front of her and cup her knees. She smiles and looks down at me and gasps when I quickly spread her thighs.

Her eyes are wide. I can feel her trying to close them all while attempting not to seem distracted while on the phone.

I shake my head once, bring my finger up to my mouth, and cock an eyebrow.

With her free hand, she makes a lame arse attempt to swat me away, and I have to hold back my chuckle.

“Sienna?”

Her attention goes back to my aunt, and I take that as my opportunity to push the hem of her top out of my way. I blow on her pale skin and watch as it prickles with goosebumps. My fingers trail a path until they meet the apex of her thighs and are met with bare flesh.

She lets out a soft gasp, and I glance up at her cheeks forming a blush. I lean closer, blowing out a soft breath over her clit. She’s already glistening with arousal. I chance another peek at her, and she’s trying in earnest to concentrate on what my aunt is saying, but it’s a struggle.

I lick my lips, feeling thirsty for something only she can provide, and then with one long, slow and torturous swipe of my tongue, I lick the length of her.

“Theo,” she says on an exhale.

She reaches down, about to push my face away from her core, but I slide in a finger and feel her clench around it. I know she won’t resist. She’s already wet and wanting.

“What was that, dear? Did you say Theo was there?”

I insert a second finger and hook it inside her with a ‘come here’ motion.

“No, not yet, but I think he’s coming.” I can hear the tension in her voice, and honestly, I’m aware it’s all kinds of wrong while my aunt is on the phone, but what can I say? She makes me want to be bad.

Her fingers grip my hair, urging me to get closer to her clit, and who am I to deny her what she wants? I gently suck on her clit and alternate between caressing her with my tongue, licking and teasing her with the tip.

She arches into me, and I know my girl is getting impatient, so I flatten my tongue, building the tension even higher. Pulling my fingers out, I slide them lower until I reach her arse crack and glance up. Her eyes dip to mine and then

quickly back to the phone. Her cheeks are now crimson. If I were a better man, I'd feel bad, but watching her get off from me giving her oral makes it so worth it.

Sienna arches her back, raising her hips, and I reach for a cushion and slide it underneath her to keep her propped up.

Plunging my tongue into her wet cunt, I tap her asshole, and the bud tightens. I feel her clench around my tongue. She's close. It's incredible how quickly I've learned her body's responses to my touch. Bringing my other hand to her core, I replace my tongue with two fingers and tap her asshole again until she relaxes enough for me to insert my middle finger in to the first knuckle.

I suck on her clit gently. Her body is coiled tight, ready to snap at any moment, and her breathing has grown heavier too. My fingers are working her pussy, and I know she needs more, so I add a third finger. She loves being full. Riding my hand now, I move my fingers in a stroking motion, and just as her channel tightens, I slide my middle finger up to the second knuckle. While working her pulsating channel, I know the moment I hit her G-spot.

The phone lands on the sofa beside me with a thump, and immediately her other hand is in my hair as she pulls me closer, grinding into my face.

“Oh. My. God. You're an asshole,” she hisses, and I swear if my mouth weren't already occupied still sucking on her clit, I'd be telling her that might be true, but I'm currently finger fucking her asshole. I don't ease up as she continues to come over my fingers, coating me with her juices.

“Fuck, Theo,” she says.

My phone starts ringing. It's my aunt, again.

Sienna eases her hold in my hair, so I pull my face away and glance up. Sienna has her head thrown back, her chest heaving. Her channel is still clenching around my fingers as I move to my feet and hover over her until she opens her eyes.

Chapter Thirty-Seven

Sienna

Theo is an absolute asshole, bringing me to climax while his aunt was on the phone. I feel his shadow above me, and when I open my eyes, he's staring at me as though I was the one who just gave him the most explosive orgasm.

I'm trying to catch my breath when his phone rings beside us. I had to hang up. There was no way I would be able to hold back my obvious pleasure while she was still on the phone. I don't think I can look her in the face again anytime soon, even if she didn't know what was happening.

"I fucking love making you come, Sienna Morgan."

I let out a ragged breath. "I love it when you make me come, but that was savage."

He smirks in a way that used to piss me off, but strangely, not so much anymore.

"I'd say sorry but..." He leans down, his mouth hovering over mine, teasing the seam of my lips, asking for permission. I let him in, of course, like he knows I will. His kiss is slow and sexy as hell, even more so with the taste of me on his tongue.

He pulls back and picks up his phone and swipes the screen.

"Hey, sorry about that," he says when Meredith answers, as though he didn't just have his face between my legs, his

smile angelic—yeah, right.

If he thinks he's going to get away with that, he's very much mistaken. Out of shot, I grab a cushion, drop it to the floor, and kneel on it directly in front of him. His eyes dart down to mine before flicking back to his aunt.

I reach out and cup his hard-on, keeping my gaze fixated on him. His jaw visibly tightens and his pupils dilate.

And then I pull at the hem of his joggers until he springs free.

Moving my face closer, I lick his tip and over his piercing. His body jerks in response, and I hear a catch in his breathing. I think he might try and stop me, but instead, his free hand slides into my hair as he tugs me closer. He smells rich and masculine.

Wrapping my mouth around his thick head, I swirl my tongue over his tip. He told me how having the piercing increases his sensitivity, and to prove the point, his fingers flex in my hair. Reaching out, I tug his joggers, and he raises his arse, so I pull them to his knees and then I push his thighs open, gently playing with his balls before swiping my finger along his perineum.

Glancing up, I can see he's trying to remain stoic, knowing how much he probably wants to fuck my face right now. He does love taking control. As much as I love it when he takes charge, this is exhilarating. And something is empowering about having him at my mercy and the roles reversed.

I take him into my mouth again, teasing, and then slowly draw out, my lips trailing to his balls and sucking one into my mouth, and then repeating the action with the other.

And then I sit back on my haunches. His tip is leaking precum, and I'm pretty sure it won't take much for me to make him come.

Running my hands up and down his thighs, I take his hard length in my hands, working them in opposite directions as I twist gently back and forth. His balls are drawn so tight, and I

know he's doing everything in his power to remain impassive as he tries to concentrate on talking to Meredith.

Feeling wicked, I suddenly stop what I'm doing and stand up. His usually honey brown eyes are now dark. His pupils dilate as he glances up, his head tilting slightly. I smile, blow him a kiss, and then I wink as I turn my back on him, making a point to sashay my arse as I walk away. The sound of a heavy groan escapes him, and I can hear Ewan joining in on the conversation as he asks if he's okay, right before I lock myself in the bathroom, unable to contain my laughter as I start running myself a bath.

I go to my room and grab my book, and on my way back to the bathroom, I can still hear Theo talking to his aunt and uncle. I remember Ewan mentioning 'Teddy' and how he was living in Ireland, and they missed him—I still can't believe it was Theo they were talking about all that time and I had no idea.

But now, it does make me wonder why he stayed away for so long. I ponder this thought as I tie my hair into a top knot and then place my book on the bath caddy. Climbing into the bath as it fills with hot water, I let out a contented sigh.

I'm curious what would keep him away for so long, but as tempted as I am to ask, I also don't know where we stand. We're sleeping together, and he's my boss, oh and my housemate, but outside of that, what are we exactly? I'm not even sure. And maybe I'm a coward for not asking, but I like the bubble we've created.

I turn off the taps and reach for my book. I'm about a chapter in when Theo pushes the door open and leans against the doorjamb, sporting a hard-on straining beneath his joggers.

He crosses his arms. "Do you know how uncomfortable it is sitting there with a severe case of blue balls while talking to my aunt and uncle?"

Marking my page with my bookmark, I place it back on the caddy and sit back.

“I can’t say I’ve ever had that problem,” I say, unable to hide my smile.

Within two strides, he’s beside the bath, leaning over until his face is inches from mine. He reaches out and grabs my chin, but his hold is surprisingly gentle.

“Well, when you get out of this bath, I want you on all fours so that I can fuck that sass right out of you.”

I want to tell him in his dreams, but my nipples harden just at the thought. His eyes roam over my chest before landing back on my face, his lips forming a smug smirk right before his mouth crashes over mine.

Chapter Thirty-Eight

Theo

Finally, they are easing some of the lockdown restrictions, allowing non-essential businesses to open with Help Out Eat Out.

I've never been the kind of guy who actively goes on dates, even when I was with Orla. We'd go out, of course, she'd tell me where or what, and I'd just make sure I had my wallet with me.

But with Sienna, I wanted to plan something outside of the flat and work. We've managed to fall into an unspoken routine, where we compartmentalise work—keeping it separate from our sex life. I can't even remember the last time I slept in my room. And it's not just about the sex either. Don't get me wrong, it's fucking amazing, but there are more nights where we're both too exhausted to do anything but shower, eat, and then fall into a restful slumber.

I don't know how I would have coped, in all honesty.

But I look forward to a reprieve, one where I can stay up all night worshipping her over and over again and show her just what she does to me.

Because she has a power over me that no one ever has before. She can bring me to my knees, not just metaphorically speaking either.

I tap on her bedroom door. "How are you doing in there?" I'm beginning to get a little impatient. She agreed to a date on

the condition we got ready separately. I wipe my hand over my face, my palm brushing against the short hair of my freshly trimmed beard.

I don't have long to ponder the thought when her door opens. My jaw drops as she steps out into the hallway.

“Stunning,” I say as I take in her appearance.

I twirl my finger in the air, and she shakes her head as her cheeks heat but obliges me. She turns in a slow circle until she's facing me again, her hair down in loose curls, wearing a low-cut emerald-green summer dress which stops just above her knees, and she's wearing a pair of wedges which elongates her legs and makes her a little closer to my height.

Leaning in, I kiss her on the cheek, because if I go anywhere near her lips, we won't make it out of the flat. I breathe in her signature scent and am cocooned in a sudden burst of happiness. How is it that I never saw it before? How Sienna is like the rising of the sun, and man, if she doesn't set me ablaze.

“You look handsome,” she says as I take a step back.

I find myself wanting to puff out my chest and preen at her compliment. I'm wearing a smart pair of jeans and a shirt with the sleeves rolled up to the elbows, accompanied by my dress shoes. But I did make a concerted effort not to wear one of my many slogan mortician T-shirts. To be fair, I don't think she would have even minded. After her initial reaction to my T-shirt when I first moved back, but if anything, she has an even drier sense of humour than I do. And that's saying something.

I ordered us a cab for the short drive to Vagabond—an urban winery—and when she told me she'd never been, I knew this was where I wanted to take her on our first official date.

It's in West Circus Village, just on the edge of Battersea Power Station, which used to supply a fifth of London's electricity. After decades of sitting derelict, it's since been redeveloped and is now an iconic and innovative London destination.

We're both quiet on the drive over there. I got in the back with her and kept my hand in hers, resting it in the space between us. I never thought it would be possible to find a comfortable silence until Sienna. I feel like she takes me as she finds me. Okay, granted, I haven't always been the best version of myself in her presence, and maybe there was a reason for my behaviour in some deep and twisted way.

I want to show her how good we can be as a couple.

I make sure to leave the driver a tip through the app, and when we exit the cab, she links her arm in mine as I lead her into the winery. We're both in our face masks but remove them as soon as we're seated at the table. I booked us a bespoke tasting, so we have our own waiter. Sienna's eyes roam over the place, which is both unique and quirky, and I know I made the right choice just from her smile alone.

We spend the evening trying wines sourced from all around the world before getting stuck into our steak sharer. She doesn't know it yet, but I have her favourite cheesecake back at the flat. I know she likes something sweet after savoury, and I couldn't have her going dessert-less on our first date. I doubt she'd even say anything. She'd probably pull out a mars ice cream from the freezer and call it done.

I've noticed Sienna is low maintenance, she can take it or leave it, and if she doesn't have something, she'll just go without—the complete opposite to Orla.

“Thank you,” she says as we wait in the warm summer evening for our cab. “But I wish you'd let me go halves.”

Shaking my head, I lean down and kiss her forehead until I remember I'm also wearing my mask. She lets out a giggle, and then before I know it, she's full-on laughing. I also notice how heavily she's leaning into me now. I think the alcohol has hit her now we're out in the open and the fresh air.

Eventually, her laughing subsides, but she's a little unsteady on her feet as our cab pulls up, and I help her in and buckle her seat belt before going around and climbing in beside her. As soon as we pull away, she rests her head back and closes her eyes.

Not exactly how I saw the end of our date going, but I think it was a good one as far as dates go.

Back at the flat, I manage to rouse her awake long enough to get her out of the cab but end up picking her up—bridal style—and carrying her upstairs. Opening the front door is tricky, but I manage without incident.

Taking her straight to her bedroom, I lay her down on the bed, remove her shoes, but don't bother with her dress. Her hair is fanned out around her head as she holds her arms over her chest, and I can't help but smile because she's a cross between Morticia Addams and Snow White, but mostly, she's unapologetically Sienna, and I honestly wouldn't change a thing about her.

Chapter Thirty-Nine

Sienna

I try to swallow but my mouth and throat feel as dry as the Sahara bloody desert. My eyes feel raw, and I don't even want to chance to pry them open, but I'm also a little discombobulated as to why I feel like someone is trying to drill into my skull with a sledgehammer.

“Good morning, Morticia.”

I force my eyes open and blink until Theo comes into focus, staring at me with his perfect smile. Does he have to be so damn annoying?

“You want some water?” he asks, holding out a glass, sitting on the edge of the bed, facing me.

Immediately, I want to take back my crass internal thought.

I shuffle, sitting up against the headboard, and reach for the water with a shaky hand.

“How come you seem fine?” I ask, sounding like there's a frog in my throat.

Bringing the glass to my lips, I guzzle it down until it's empty, and he takes it from me, placing it on the bedside table.

He laughs. “I'm a big guy. What can I say?” He wiggles his eyebrows, and if I had the energy, I'd probably roll my eyes.

“Honestly, what happened? I don’t even remember getting home.”

I glance down to see I’m still wearing my dress and let out a groan, knowing that means I’m also still wearing yesterday’s makeup. Gross.

The last thing I want to do is get up, but I need a pee and shower.

“You were fine until we got outside and then bam. I carried you up to the flat.”

Fuck my life. Our first date and he had to carry me to bed. I cover my face with my hand to stop my embarrassment.

His hand reaches for mine, pulling it away, so I have no choice but to look at him.

“Hey, you didn’t throw up, and you weren’t a mean drunk.”

The thought of throwing up makes my stomach roll, but I try to push the thought away.

“Well, I’m sorry. It’s been a while since I’ve been out, and clearly, my alcohol tolerance is low.”

Taking my hand, he brings it to his mouth and kisses the inside of my wrist, and I suck in a small breath as the hairs on my arms and back of my neck tickle to life.

Bloody hell, how does he do that?

“It’s not how I would’ve liked the night to end, but I had a nice time on our date.”

And just like that, he manages to creep into my heart a little bit more than before. How he’s being so damn gracious is beyond me.

“I did too. I’m sorry I ruined it.”

His face takes on a stern expression, which is quite unusual for him. He’s usually the one making jokes out of anything and everything.

“You didn’t ruin anything.” He rubs his thumb over the palm of my hand, causing me to shiver. “Besides, your drunk snore is kind of cute.”

I swat his shoulder with my free hand. “I swear if you’ve put up another video on TikTok...”

His laugh goes straight to my lady bits. “Damn it, nope, but I should have. Bet I would have got another viral video for it too.”

“You’re a dick.”

He shrugs. “Yeah, but you love me,” he says.

My breath catches in my throat, and I almost choke on air. I don’t even know how to respond, but before I have to worry about it, he rises to his feet and flicks my nose.

“Go get dressed. I’ll make us some breakfast.”

And then he’s gone, leaving me with my mouth gaping open.

I see my reflection in the bathroom mirror. I want to die. I look like a damn panda. I waste no time stripping out of my clothes and getting in the shower. It feels good.

I think back to our date and how I loved everything about it. The wine barrels were so quirky, and I’ve never seen an enomatic wine serving system—it allows the wine to be served directly from the bottle to the glass. The closest I’ve had to something like that is wine in a box on a girls’ night with Quinn. I can’t wait to tell her about that place, she’ll bloody love it.

When I finally feel human again, and I’m dressed in loungewear, I follow my nose into the kitchen, where Theo is plating up a full English breakfast. And if I wasn’t in love before, I sure as hell am now. I pause my ascent, my heart racing. Am I in love?

He turns his head and smiles when he sees me.

“Please don’t tell me you’re one of those who doesn’t like a fry-up when they’re hungover.”

I move towards him and smile, going up on tiptoes and kissing his cheek now that my mouth doesn't feel like it's housing death.

"I'm not. This smells amazing."

He points to the cutlery drawer. "Can you grab the knives and forks," he says, picking up the plates and walking them over to the table.

I do as he asks and join him at the table, my eyes flicking to the massive bouquet and then back to his.

"They're for you. They were meant to be a surprise for when we got back last night."

And again, I instantly feel like an absolute fool. His finger hooks under my chin, raising my face to look at him.

"Whatever you're thinking, don't. I don't regret anything about last night."

He leans down and gives me a chaste kiss before pulling back way too soon.

"Now eat up, my little lush," he says, pointing to my plate. "The day's awaiting."

He sure is in a chipper mood for someone who didn't get any last night.

I cut into the fried bread and then dip it into the egg yolk before bringing it to my mouth, and I can't hide my hum of satisfaction.

"Good?" he asks before taking a bite of his sausage.

I nod but don't answer, too busy trying to get as much on my fork as possible.

When I'm halfway through, I glance back at the flowers.

"They're beautiful, by the way, thank you. Lilies are my favourite."

Theo smiles. "I know." He dips his bread into his bean sauce and brings it to his mouth, and I'm unable to look away.

Unlike other men I know, he manages to make eating look sexy.

“And you’re welcome, by the way,” he says with a wink.

I glance back to my plate and know I’m blushing. He manages to evoke so many emotions from me without even trying.

When he turned up in all his sexy as sin, vainglory, I thought it was a curse, but now I’m almost certain he is a blessing.

Chapter Forty

Theo

This past week has been exhausting, so as much as I would have liked to have taken Sienna out on another date, we decided just to spend the day chilling. Which is something we rarely get to do lately.

“I want you to show me how you pleased yourself after you watched me come, back when I called in that favour.”

Sienna looks up from her book, her cheeks tinged with a blush, and I know she must have already been at a spicy scene because instead of working from my laptop like I was supposed to, I’ve been sitting across from her, watching her read instead.

The way her breathing changed, the slight flare of her nostrils. How her throat bobbed up and down when she swallowed, her tongue flicking out and licking her perfectly plump lips. I move my laptop next to me and get to my feet, stalking towards her. She leans her head back to look up at me.

I hold my hand out and raise an eyebrow in challenge. I love to watch how far she’ll go when I push her and how much pleasure I can evoke from her when she lets go of her inhibitions.

“What’s the matter, Morticia, you chicken?” I goad.

Just as I had anticipated, challenge accepted. She reaches for my hand, and I swiftly haul her to her feet.

I lead her to her room without a word, accompanied only by our intermingled breathing as background noise. Pulling her back against my chest, I move her hair off her shoulder so I can access her throat and blow on it gently before kissing it softly, and then I release her and take a step back.

She turns to face me now, and I nod towards her bedside cabinet, where I am almost sure she keeps the vibrator that brought her pleasure.

Sienna goes over and, sure enough, pulls out a plain white drawstring bag, opens it and holds it upside down where a tube of lube and a five-inch vibrator fall to the bed.

I walk over and pick it up. Not only is it rigged for her pleasure, but it also has rabbit ears. I should know. I did, after all, buy Orla countless toys, but she just wasn't into them, which is fine. Not that I am comparing Sienna to Orla. Sienna is everything I never knew I was missing and everything I want for a future.

Glancing up at her face, her eyes are cast down as she watches me studying her battery-operated friend.

"Nifty," I say, taking a moment to press every button to gauge their settings. Then, picking up the lube, I pop off the cap and begin coating the vibrator.

All the while, I can feel her watching, and it has me hardening in my joggers, which likely gives me away.

"Do you like me getting your toy ready for you?"

She looks up at me, her lips parted. "No one else has ever touched Ronnie."

I laugh at her name for it but then grow serious. "I'm glad to hear it. Now lose the clothes."

It takes her less than thirty seconds to be standing before me naked. I love the small trail of curly hair she has covering her sweet little pussy.

"Back against the headboard." I put a knee on the bed as she shuffles into position.

She reaches out for it.

“Nah-ah, open your legs.”

Her eyes flick between the vibrator and my face. “But I thought you wanted me to show you how I pleased myself?” Her cheeks heat crimson.

I shake my head. “I did, but now I want to pleasure you. Now open your legs.”

She bites down on her soft, plump bottom lip and does as I ask.

“Good girl.”

I dip my head between her thighs, darting out my tongue. I lick the length of her, and she arches into me, and then I pull back.

She lets out a groan. “Tease.”

Glancing up, I hit the button on her vibrator. “You haven’t seen anything yet, baby.”

She bites her lip as I slide it between her slick, wet folds.

“Do you like that?” I ask, flicking my eyes to her face and then back to her glistening pussy.

When she doesn’t answer, I draw it back, and she levels me with a glare.

It takes everything in me not to laugh at the look of disdain she’s throwing my way. “I’m sorry, what was that? I didn’t quite hear you.” I cup the side of my ear and turn my head for emphasis.

“I’ll ask you again.” I nudge at her entrance with the tip and pause. “Do you like that?” I continue until the shaft is fully inside her, as it mimics a thrusting motion.

“Yes.” Her hands are gripping the sheets.

I press the vibration setting, and she bucks as it makes contact with her clit.

Leaning lower, I kiss the inside of her thigh, pressing the second thrusting speed.

“Fuck,” she hisses.

Chuckling, I glance up. Her eyes are squeezed shut; her lips parted.

Moving to my knees, I pull myself free of my joggers and squeeze myself at my base.

Before moving my hand up my length and rubbing the precum over my tip, I keep my focus on her and turn up the vibration setting. Her teeth dig into her bottom lip as she moves her pelvis along with the thrusts of the vibrator.

I straddle her and push her legs closer together, so she's squeezing Ronnie between her thighs, and I move until I'm level with her face. She opens her eyes when my shadow falls over her.

And then I switch to the highest thrusting speed, immediately followed by the third vibration setting. She releases her lip, her mouth forming an 'O', giving me perfect access to push my cock into her mouth, and like I knew she would, she takes me willingly. Reaching for her hand, I bring it to the base of the vibrator for her to hold.

And then I grab the back of her head, pulling her deeper on my cock until she gags and then I ease off. She hollows her cheeks and works me as only she can.

"Increase the vibration," I grit out, and the moment she complies, her head jerks forward, taking me deeper. I have to hold on to the headboard with my free hand to keep myself balanced and some semblance of self-control. My head rolls forward, the sight of her lips wrapped around my dick exhilarating.

I thrust into her mouth over and over again. The noises coming from her are intoxicating, and her eyes begin to water. Releasing the headboard, I reach down to her face and catch a tear. I bring it to my mouth, swiping my tongue over the pad of my thumb—she's so deliciously sweet.

Her eyes grow wide, becoming a dark shade of green.

"You like that, baby?"

She hums around my shaft, and I nearly fucking explode.

“Can you take the highest vibration?” I ask, my voice desperate. “I need you to come for me.”

As soon as her body bucks wildly beneath me, I know she’s about to fall off the precipice, but I want her to own this orgasm. I ease out of her mouth and cover it with my own, my tongue plunging and swallowing her scream as she convulses.

I grasp the base of my cock almost painfully and draw back and lean on my haunches, watching her entire body in awe—how she breaks out in goosebumps, her nipples hard and erect, her breathing heavy from the wave of her orgasm.

She switches the vibrator off and slips it out of her and tosses it to the side. The duvet is soaked beneath her, and then before she even has a chance to catch her breath, I grab her hips and drag her down the bed. A whoosh of air escapes her lips.

Hovering above her, I watch as she opens her eyes with a sated expression before I line myself up between her legs and rear up inside her, her channel still pulsating with aftershocks from her orgasm.

“Ahhh,” she cries out.

Her blunt nails drag down my back, and I hope to God they leave a mark. I pull out to the tip and then drive back into her even harder.

“It’s too much.” She pants. “Not again...” Her words are drowned out as her hot core tightens, and she comes again. I throw my head back and let out a curse of obscenities as I succumb to my own mind-blowing release.

I’m holding back the three words I desperately want to share with her, but the first time I say I love you, I don’t want it to be in the throes of passion and a lust-filled haze. I want her to know I mean it because I do. I am unequivocally in love with Sienna Morgan.

Chapter Forty-One

Sienna

It takes me a moment to regain my senses. Theo rolls us onto our sides, with him still sheathed inside me. The sheets beneath us are a mess, and I know we'll need to clean up and strip the bed. But I want to stay in this moment of euphoria for just a bit longer.

Theo raises his hand to tuck my hair behind my ear, his eyes roaming over my face like he's never truly seen me before. I want to look away, retreat inside myself to my safe place, but his eyes hold me hostage.

“You know I'm completely hypnotised by you, right?”

How is it that no matter what we do physically, it's his words that have me feeling the most exposed and vulnerable?

“You're beautiful, Sienna,” he says. His words hold so much conviction, and I have to blink back the urge to cry.

He leans forward, capturing my mouth with his in a kiss that leaves me ultimately at his mercy. He peppers kisses on the corner of my mouth and nose before drawing back, holding my stare. My chest tightens with a sudden pang. I don't know when it happened or when my feelings for him shifted from loathing to lust, but it's so much more than that, and yet, I can't even form the word—the four-letter word. Because then I'll have to admit whether I want to or not, I am his in mind, body, and soul. And that terrifies me to my core.

“Hey, what has you thinking so hard?”

I open my mouth but no words come out, and he must sense my apprehension. Thankfully, he doesn't push.

"Come, let's get cleaned up," he says. Pulling out of me, I miss the connection immediately. I laugh, leaning on my elbows. His joggers are at his knees, the evidence of our climaxes all over the bed.

"Go on, you go shower and I'll strip the bedding," he says.

And I do, because I need a moment to collect myself.

I probably take way too long in the shower, but it's the one place other than riding my bike that helps me clear my mind.

After I've washed and conditioned my hair twice, I wrap myself in a towel and step back into my room.

Theo has re-made the bed, but he's nowhere to be seen. I take the time to blow dry my hair. Usually, it's a couple of waves with the hairdryer and then either sticking it in a bun or tying it in a plait, but I'm not ready to speak to Theo just yet. I still need to get my thoughts in order, so I used the time drying my hair to do just that.

I'm pulling on an oversized T-shirt when Theo taps on my door before entering, holding a steaming cup of what smells like chamomile tea.

"Here." He places it on the coaster on my bedside table.

I go onto my tiptoes and kiss his cheek. "Thank you." I inhale his freshly showered scent before taking a small step back, but he quickly reaches out and pulls me into his arms.

"Are we good?" he asks, and I hear the uncertainty in his voice.

I tilt my head back slightly to look at him. "Yeah, of course. That was..." I wave my hand, trying to find my next words.

"Kind of intense," he says.

I nod. "And unexpected. But in a good way," I quickly reiterate.

It's one of the things I enjoy about him, he's so much more spontaneous than I am.

Taking my hand, he leads me back over to my bed and pulls the duvet back for me to climb in and sit up against the headboard.

“Thank you for changing the bedding.” I'm quickly hit with a scent that is so very him. “Wait, is this your duvet?”

He walks around to the other side and joins me.

“Yeah, yours is in the washing machine, but I'll wait until tomorrow to put it on.”

Reaching for my tea, I bring it to my lips. “Well, that's sweet of you. What will you use?” I ask. His eyes flick to mine as I try to hide my smirk behind my mug.

“Ha, ha, very funny,” he says.

Sipping my tea, I let out a satisfied sigh.

“You want me to stay with you, though, right? I mean, if you didn't, you'd tell me if you needed space?”

I glance over and notice his expression is pensive, and I feel bad—he's not usually like that. He's always so laid back.

Placing my tea back down, I take hold of his hand until he turns to look at me.

“I would *if* I did, but for some strange reason, you're kind of growing on me.”

This gains me a smile from him, and I find myself smiling too.

He cups my cheek, and I lean into his touch. His eyes dance over my face.

“Tell me something that no one else knows about you.”

His question catches me off guard. We talk, and I've mentioned losing my mum and nan. And he knows about my best friend Quinn, of course, but I guess there's a lot we don't know about each other, but at the same time, I feel like he also knows the important stuff.

“You’re thinking kind of hard there. Easy, Morticia. I don’t want you to burst a blood vessel.”

I swat his chest and then shake my hand out from the sting. How he is still solid with no access to a gym is beyond me, but then again, we have been spending a lot of time doing extra-curricular activities.

“Hmm, is someone having dirty thoughts?” he asks, swiping his thumb over my bottom. “Come on, just one thing.”

Inhaling a deep breath, I think of something that not even Quinn knows and then exhale as I straighten my shoulders and blurt it out before I have too much time to think about it.

“I’m terrified of death.”

He scrunches his nose in confusion.

“You’re afraid of dying?”

Looking down at the duvet and picking at nothing, the mattress dips as he moves closer to me, tilting my chin up with his forefinger.

“Really?”

I nod, and his expression is one of tenderness.

“And yet you work with dead people, Sienna.”

Clearing my throat, I try and explain. “It’s because I have some semblance of control while doing so. I can help them and their families.” I watch him, expecting him to say something sarcastic, but he waits for me to continue. “And, of course, the logical part of my brain knows death is inevitable. And I know how utterly weird I sound right now.”

He grips my jaw, holding my stare. His gaze is so intense I find myself holding my breath, waiting for him to speak.

“Not weird at all. You face your fear every day. Do you know what kind of courage it takes to do that?” If I could, I’d shake my head, but he has me mesmerised. “The kind that comes not just from the heart but from your soul. The compassion and empathy you have, Sienna, is in abundance and a rare gift. You’re incredible.”

His words hold so much strength and conviction, my heart feels like it's grown three sizes. Theo leans forward and seals his words with the most wondrous, enthralling, and mind-blowing kiss I've ever had the pleasure of experiencing. And I know without a shadow of a doubt, I am indeed head over heels in love with this man.

Chapter Forty-Two

Theo

The other day, Sienna almost rendered me speechless when she admitted her biggest fear was death. And, of course, it's something we're familiar with within our line of work. You'd be surprised how many people have Thanatophobia. Some are afraid of dying and fear being dead, while others are afraid of the act. There's been a few occasions where we've even had clients have full-blown anxiety attacks. Losing someone is hard enough but having a phobia can be consuming on top of that, and it's hard to watch.

I can't wait to get back to the flat. Sienna has no idea I've been keeping this from her, and I can't wait to see her reaction.

I told my aunt and uncle how I want to be with Sienna. My uncle seemed shocked, but Meredith wasn't even the slightest surprised. I was worried about what they'd think. Did they believe it unethical of me to date an employee?

My aunt was quick to tell me 'no', after all, it's how she and my uncle met. She said there was nothing unethical about having a romantic relationship, providing I ensure I treat her professionally and be courteous while at work.

I didn't admit how I felt about her, I want Sienna to be the first to know.

Leaving everything else in the car, I grab the pet carrier and make my way up to the flat. A familiar smell instantly hits

my senses, but I shake my head because there is no possible way.

Unlocking the front door, I push it open and call out, “Honey, I’m home,” in a sing-song voice.

But the person who comes into view as I reach the living room is no other than Orla.

She has her arms crossed, her face clouded with the smile I now know as fake—and one full of harmful intent.

“What are you doing here?” I ask, unable to keep the disdain from my voice as I gently place the pet carrier down.

Sienna appears from behind her and squeezes past. For someone who is naturally fair, she looks almost white now.

“I’ll leave you two to it,” she says, her voice small and so unlike Sienna.

She moves past me, but I grab her elbow and shake my head once.

“No, you stay,” I say, harder than I intend.

Her eyes grow a shade darker as she pulls away from my touch as though it physically hurts.

“Yeah, I don’t think so,” she says, going into her room.

Orla says something, but I ignore her and instead follow Sienna and shut her door behind us as she stomps around her room, grabbing her purse and keys.

“What are you doing?” I ask, not sure why she’s so fucking angry.

Marching over to me, she pokes me in the chest, hard, with her index finger. “I’m going out. I do not need to see your reunion with your *girlfriend*.”

I’d laugh if her expression wasn’t so serious. “She is not my girlfriend,” I grit out.

She arches her eyebrows. “Yeah, well, that’s not what she said,” she whisper-shouts, pointing towards her closed bedroom door.

“She’s a fucking sociopath.”

Sienna shakes her head. “Well, that might be the case, but according to *her*, you’re still together and just on a break.”

What the fuck?

I clench my fists at my sides. “And you believe her over me? Someone you’ve never met until now?”

She throws her hands up in the air. “I don’t know what to believe. I’m not stupid. I’ve seen the missed calls and how you send her to voicemail. Do you think I’m stupid? I just thought that at some point you’d tell me about her. But it’s not like it’s any of my business. I mean, we’re just fucking, right?”

I take a step back. “You’re not serious? Do you think I’d bother taking you on a date if you were just a fuck?”

Her cheeks are flushed as she goes to move past me.

“What, you’re just going to walk away and not even give me a chance to explain?”

Her eyes are cold when they meet mine. “Explain how you’ve been leading her on, or how you’ve been leading me on.”

I literally cannot believe this is even happening right now.

“You know what, you’re being ridiculous.”

She points to herself. “So, you’re telling me that if it were a guy turning up telling you him and I were on a break, you’d be perfectly okay with that?”

I let out an exasperated huff. “I’d give you the benefit of the doubt. Let you explain.”

Sienna reaches for the doorknob, but I slam my hand against the door, putting my weight into it.

“Do you know what, Sienna? You’re full of shit. You’re just using this as an excuse because you know how fucking good we are together, and that scares you.”

She pulls at the door, but it won’t budge.

“You don’t know what you’re talking about.”

My entire body is coiled tight, my adrenaline rolling in thick waves. “I do because it scares me too, how you make me feel. Do you know what? You said your biggest fear was dying, but it’s living, because you hide behind a death mask every day and you’ve forgotten what it’s like to truly live.”

She squeezes her eyes shut. “Let me out,” she says, her voice low and full of anger.

Shaking my head, I drop my hand and take a step back. Without a word, she flings it open. I follow her out into the hallway and watch as she pulls on her biker boots and jacket before grabbing her helmet and slamming the front door on her way out.

“Care to explain?” asks the nasally Irish accent I’ve come to loathe.

I round on her and am in front of her in three strides. She takes a step back and tilts her head back with a look of surprise.

“No, but you can fucking tell me who the hell you think you are turning up here claiming we’re on a goddamn break.”

She opens her mouth to respond, but nothing comes out. She swallows hard and tries again. Orla isn’t used to me raising my voice or talking to her like this. Even when she cheated on me, I didn’t give her the satisfaction.

But watching her now, I wish I had.

“I just thought after you had time that you’d forgive me and we could carry on where we left off.”

My laugh is humourless. “You’re delusional. I sure hope you didn’t fly all the way over from Ireland in the hopes I’d be dumb enough to take you back.”

She sticks her nose in the air. “Of course not. I’m here for my augmentation surgery.”

Shaking my head, I take her by the elbow and all but drag her down the hallway to the front door.

“A word of advice... all the surgery in the world won’t help you when your soul is ugly. Don’t call me, don’t text me.

You are nothing to me, and if you turn up at my residence again or my place of work”—I add in for good measure because I wouldn’t put it past her—“I’ll call the police and get a damn restraining order.”

I pull open the front door and unceremoniously shove her out.

“You can’t do that,” she says, stomping her foot.

I pull my phone from my pocket. “Watch me.”

“Fine, it’s your loss, Theodore. I hope you’re happy with your little fuck buddy.” I should have known she was fucking eavesdropping.

Stepping out of the threshold, I stand over her. “Oh, I’m happy all right, and do you want to know why? I love her—something I never felt about you.”

Her look is full of indignation as she takes in my words. “Well, you were a lousy fuck anyway.”

“As were you, and on that note, you can fuck off.”

I step inside and slam the door in her face. The sound of the kittens meowing reminds me they’re still in the carrier... fuck.

Chapter Forty-Three

Sienna

I ride with no destination in mind, but I know the last place I should be is on my bike. Finding somewhere to park, I kick my bike stand down and pull off my lid.

Taking a deep breath, I climb off my bike and walk into Battersea Park. I stop when I come to an empty bench and pull out my phone.

I dial Quinn and she answers on the second ring. “Well damn, two phone calls in one week, I feel special.”

All I manage is a strangled ‘hello’ before I burst out crying.

“Shit, fuck. I was just joking. What’s wrong? Are you okay? Has something happened?”

I sniff back my tears in an attempt to answer, but it’s no use.

“It’s okay, Ce, just breathe, okay? Talk when you’re ready, I’m not going anywhere.”

I nod, not that she can see me, and a stranger walks past but then doubles back and hands me a pack of tissues, and then continues on his way. For some reason, the kind gesture from a stranger just makes me cry harder.

After I finally get myself under some semblance of control, I tell Quinn about Orla and how she claimed she and Theo were just on a break.

“Aww, Ce, honestly, I don’t think you have anything to worry about. Do you really think Theo would be dumb enough to be sleeping with you while having a girlfriend somewhere?”

I shrug, but if I’m honest, I don’t.

“You should have seen her, Quinn. She looked like a fucking supermodel.” The sound of a woman tutting draws my attention to a mother and her child as she gives me a scornful look.

“Sorry,” I mouth.

“Looks don’t mean shit, Ce, and hello, have you not seen yourself? If I were gay and weren’t your best friend, I’d tap that.”

I can’t help but laugh. “Thanks, I think.”

“You’re welcome. But I can tell it’s not just about this girl turning up. What else happened?”

Picking at the frayed material of my ripped jeans, I tell her what he said before I stormed out.

“Oh,” she says.

“What do you mean, oh?”

She clears her throat, and I know she’s about to give a severe case of tough love.

“Ce, as much as I hate to say this, he’s not entirely wrong.” I bite the inside of my cheek as she continues. I unzip my jacket and tug it off, glad I have a vest top on underneath.

“You literally have one friend, and that’s me.”

I let out a snort.

“Come on, you might have acquaintances, but other than me and my friend group, you don’t go out or socialise with anyone else.”

“Yeah, well, I’m not a people person.”

Quinn lets out a soft laugh. “I think you might be right, but mostly, I think you’re an introvert. But when you do come out of your shell and let others see you the way I do, they want

nothing more than to get to know you better and be your friend.”

I wipe my nose with one of the tissues. “So you’re saying there’s something wrong with me?”

Quinn lets out a sigh. “No, Ce, there is nothing wrong with you. It’s just... you put up so many walls after your mum and nan died. I think it’s like some kind of trauma response, keeping others at arm’s length.”

My eyes roam over to the bandstand where Theo said he got married, and my first thought at the time was one of jealousy, and that was before I’d even developed these feelings for him.

“Sienna, I’m going to ask you a question and I want you to be honest with yourself when you answer. Do you see a future with Theo?”

I don’t even need to think about it. I’ve been with guys before, but not one of them ever evoked these feelings from me.

“Yes.”

“So, what are you going to do about it?”

I stand up and reach for my jacket. “I’m going to get my man.”

“That’s my girl, call me—” Before she finishes what she’s saying, I hang up—rude probably, but right now, I’m a girl on a mission. I pull on my jacket, reach for my lid and speed walk back to my bike. It takes everything in me not to pull the throttle back and gun it back to the flat, but the last thing I need is to get done for speeding.

It’s not even a ten-minute ride, but by the time I pull up in the garage and get off my bike, my nerves are shot to pieces.

What if he doesn’t let me tell him how I feel? Or worse, what if he tells me I have to move out? Shit, what if I drove him back into the arms of his ex, and they’re currently up there fucking...

I pull off my lid and place it on the seat of my bike, struggling to catch my breath. I lean forward and put my hands on my thighs.

Now is not the time to have an anxiety attack.

“Okay, Sienna, it’s now or never.”

Standing straight, I roll my shoulders once and make my way upstairs. At the front door, I wait for a beat and listen. Holding my breath, I turn the key and push it open, and close it quietly behind me before taking off my boots and jacket.

I tip-toe down the hallway towards the sound of Theo’s voice and try to prepare myself for what I might see.

Theo is sitting on the floor with two of the kittens from the ones we rescued playing in front of him. He turns his head when he hears me and scrambles to his feet.

I point to Morticia and Bucky.

“Surprise, they’re ours,” he says, holding up his palms. “I asked my aunt to keep them for us. It was only the other two that were adopted.” A plush grey cat podium is in the corner with a scratching post and two beds.

My attention returns to Theo. He approaches me slowly as if I might bolt, and if I’m honest, it’s a strong possibility.

“You’ve been crying,” he says, moving his hand to my face where he cups my cheek.

“I’m sorry,” we both blurt out at the same time.

“What? Why are you sorry?” he asks, a ‘V’ forming between his brows.

I try not to let his touch distract me. “Because of my reaction when Orla turned up.”

He shakes his head and moves even closer, so he’s now towering over me.

“I should have told you about her, but I promise there was no break, just a breakup with no plan to get back together.”

I let out a relieved sigh. “That’s good because it would be a little awkward, seeing as I’ve kind of fallen in love with you,” I admit.

His eyes widen in disbelief. “You’ve kind of or you are in love with me?” he asks, and I watch his Adam’s apple as he swallows, the only sign he’s affected by my words.

“I am in love with you.” Damn, it feels cathartic finally admitting my feelings.

Smiling, he leans down until our lips are barely a breath apart. “Good, because I’m so fucking in love with you, Sienna, I can’t even think straight.”

A happy laugh escapes me. “You are?”

He nods. “I am.” And then he kisses me.

Epilogue

Sixteen Months Later

Theo

“Morticia, breakfast is nearly ready. Get your cute butt in here.”

I want us to have a special breakfast before my aunt and uncle arrive. Last Christmas, we weren't allowed to mix households, even after another lockdown, but thankfully, that's not the case this year. It was Sienna's idea to host, and it blew me away. Orla would never have entertained the idea.

Of course I agreed to cook Christmas dinner, Sienna is still claiming incompetence in the kitchen, but part of me thinks it's mostly an act. But honestly, I don't mind. I get great satisfaction watching her enjoy my food. Besides, she more than makes up for it with her baking skills. Sienna even made a special batch of cupcakes for today, which she specifically told me not to touch. I might, however, have snuck one when she wasn't looking. What's life without a bit of danger, right?

Sienna has barely come up for air since she started reading one of the books from her book haul. I took her to a local bookshop and told her to choose whatever she wanted.

Her reaction was more than I could have hoped for. I just hope like hell I get a similar response not long from now.

“She has risen,” I say when she pads into the kitchen, wearing her Christmas onesie.

“Ha, ha, very funny.”

Sienna walks up and wraps her arms around me, leaning her face on my back.

I turn around until we’re facing and reach down to cup her arse and kiss her forehead.

“How’s your new book?”

She smiles up at me. “It’s so good, which I’m sure you’ll find out soon enough.”

I don’t bother denying it because she’s right. Besides, it’s kind of fun finding new things to try in and out of the bedroom.

I wiggle my eyebrows. “I hope there’s some good smut in it.”

Swatting my shoulder, she tries not to laugh, but there’s a blush on her cheeks that gives her away.

“You’re impossible,” she chides.

Leaning down, I brush her lips with mine. “Yeah, but you love me.”

“That I do,” she says before I cover her mouth with mine, teasing her lower lip. She opens up to me, our tongues colliding in an erotic dance.

The timer on the oven goes off, and I let out a groan as I reluctantly end the kiss and start plating up our breakfast.

“What can I do?” she asks, looking past me, bouncing from one foot to the other.

I shake my head. “Nothing, the table is all set. You can grab the Bucks Fizz.”

As she walks past me to the fridge, I slap her arse, and she lets out a soft yelp.

Sienna carries the bottle with her to the table, and I hear her let out a soft gasp as I follow and place our plates down.

“It’s beautiful,” she says, her eyes flicking to mine and then back to the table. “Aww, you even made placeholders.”

She picks it up and studies it before sitting down.

I see the exact moment she sees the small velvet box.

“Oh. My. God.” She covers her mouth with her hand as I get down on one knee beside her and reach for the box.

“Sienna Morgan, I never knew love could feel like this. I’ve seen how in love my aunt and uncle are and just thought they were the lucky ones, and then you came back into my life and flipped it upside down.”

Her eyes begin to brim with tears, and I take hold of her left hand in mine. I hope she can’t feel how nervous I am.

“There is no other person I could have done lockdown with, and you’re the only person in this universe I would want to spend the rest of my life with.”

I reach up and catch a tear as it escapes the corner of her eye. She sniffs and takes a deep breath.

“Sienna, will you marry me?”

Opening the box with a click, her eyes widen as she takes in the black onyx, oval diamond halo engagement ring.

“If you don’t like it, I can—”

I don’t finish my sentence as she pushes out of her chair and throws herself at me. I drop the box and barely manage to catch her as I fall back onto my arse as her lips crash against mine and she straddles my lap.



Sienna

“Is that a yes?” Theo asks, laughing as he cups my face, pulling back to study my face.

I nod and realise my tears are free falling. I never thought I’d cry if I was proposed to, and yet, here I am. “Absolutely, I’ll marry your arse.”

He chuckles and glances around until he finds the ring box and pulls out the most beautiful ring I've ever seen.

I hold out my hand and watch as he slides it onto my ring finger.

And then I hold it out in front of me. A halo of diamonds surrounds the black onyx.

"Do you like it?" Theo asks, his tongue poking the inside of his cheek—a tell of his when he's nervous.

"I love it. It's perfect."

He smiles, and I'm grateful I'm not standing because I'm pretty sure it would bring me to my knees.

"You're beautiful," I say and lean in for a tender kiss.

I can feel his arousal through my onesie and moan into his mouth.

"Our breakfast is getting cold," he says but makes no move to stop as his lips trail down my throat, his fingers going to the zip of my onesie as he pulls it down, exposing my breasts.

He takes their weight in each hand and massages them with both hands, causing my nipples to grow hard. He tweaks them with his thumbs and forefingers, and I throw my head back and grind onto his crotch.

And then, in one swift move, he rolls me onto my back, my legs wrapped around his hips, and holds his weight off me.

I already know I'm wet, seeing as I'm completely commando under this. I only threw it on for breakfast.

"I know you just slaved away and made me breakfast, but right now, I just want to make love to my fiancé."

He bites his lower lip and ruts against my core. "Hmm, I might be able to accommodate your request."

I turn my head to the side. "But if it's too much trouble," I say, letting out a sigh.

With that, he moves to his knees, cupping my arse as he pushes to his feet, the friction causing me to let out a breathy

gasp.

“Nothing is too much trouble for my fiancée, but for that remark, I feel like I should make you beg for it.”

“You bloody wish,” I retort and wiggle in an attempt to get down, but his hold on me tightens as he walks towards our bedroom.

He shakes his head. “Not even engaged for five minutes and we are already having our first fight.”

“Yeah, well, you started it—” I don’t get to finish what I was saying as his hands move to my hips, and he tosses me onto the bed. I land with a soft bounce.

Theo reaches over his head, tugs off his T-shirt, and then swiftly removes his joggers, taking himself in his hand, squeezing the base of his shaft.

I lick my lips, seeing how hard he is for me, my pulse racing in anticipation.

“And I’m going to finish it,” he says. “Take off your onesie, Morticia.”

A small part of me wants to refuse his request, but watching him move his hand up and down his cock turns me the fuck on, and he knows it.

I’m quick to do as he requests.

“Want to know the best part of fighting?” Theo asks as he kneels on the bed and crawls towards me.

I swallow hard, the air thick with palpable, exciting energy, and I shake my head.

“The make-up sex.” He lowers his mouth to my inner thigh, nipping and licking me until he reaches my core, flicking the length of me in a slow, torturous motion. I let out a deep moan as he hooks two fingers inside me, teasing my clit with the tip of his tongue.

And at this moment, I can’t think of a better way to make up than with his face between my legs.

Note To The Reader

Thank you for reading Unforeseen Love, Book 1 in the Love
in Lockdown Chronicles.

I hope you enjoyed getting lost between the pages with Sienna
and Theo as much as I did writing their story.

Unpredicted Love, Book 2 is Coming April 28th Available to
Pre-Order Now.

To stay up to date why not subscribe to my [Newsletter](#), you
can also join my [Facebook Reader Group](#) or visit my [Website](#).

Thank you for reading!

L.S. Pullen

xoxo

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Harley, my most loyal companion, gone but never forgotten.

About the Author

L.S. Pullen, aka Leila, was born and raised in North London, but now resides in Peterborough, England.

When she's not writing you'll find her walking her adopted pooch Luna. And taking care of her bunnies Bucky & Beatrix.

She is passionate about everything books, lover of photography and art. And in true English cliché fashion, loves afternoon tea.

No longer working the corporate life, she's currently writing full time and managing a small Wisteria Handmade Crafts and offers formatting services via Indie Author's Book Services.

L.S. Pullen

*writing dreams
into reality*



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