



WIFE PROJECT

MARRYING THE BOSS

CHLOE MAINE

Wife Project

a Marrying the Boss story

Chloe Maine

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Also by Chloe Maine

About the Author

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Nothing makes me happier than helping my serious, reclusive boss...but his next project requires a wife!

I'm a meek little mouse of an assistant, who calls my boss "Mr. Newton Smith" more often than not, but when I overhear that Rufus's business partner is bent on embarrassing him for inventing a fake fiancée, I know I need to reinvent myself immediately—as his wife-to-be.

But I only expect a single night of playing pretend. I don't expect every detail Rufus has told people about his fake fiancée to be...me. And now I have to re-evaluate every careful look he's ever given me, every quiet lean against my desk, and how he rumbles that I'm a good girl.

The truth is, though, that I don't feel good. I feel deeply wicked for how far I want to take this game of make believe. I want Mr. Newton Smith to consummate our fake relationship and make it very, very real, and take my V-card while he's at it.

Wife Project is a short, spicy novella about an innocent assistant and the big man who has been waiting for her his whole life.

Chapter 1

Clover

“IT WAS an absolute pleasure working with you as well,” I say smoothly as I hover my finger over the button for my boss’s extension. “Please hold for a moment and I’ll transfer you to Mr. Newton Smith.”

Through the door that separates my desk from his office, I listen to Rufus answer the overseas call.

I think of him leaning back in his chair, talking to the coffee producer with his unique brand of serious enthusiasm. A private smile plays at my mouth.

“*Call me Rufus,*” he said the first day I started to work for him.

And I do—to his face. But I really quite like calling him Mr. Newton Smith to everyone else when I can. It has a lovely formality to it that makes me sit up a little straighter in my chair.

While he finishes this phone call, I triple check that everything in his Special Projects online drive is properly labeled.

I love the satisfaction of finishing these proof-of-concept projects with him. There’s always a moment—once the final invoices are taken care of, the summary report has been

printed, and the paper copies of the most essential pieces are sitting in a manila folder on my desk—when Rufus comes out of his cavernous, serious space and carefully circles my desk.

That moment is mere seconds away now, and a tingle races down my spine.

Heavy footsteps cross to the door, and I force myself not to blush. *Get a grip, Clover.*

Can't help it, though. I have a crush on my boss, a hopeless, one-sided crush, and what is about to happen will feed it for another few months. He will have no idea, but I will float through the weekend on a high comparable to winning an Olympic medal or baking a perfect loaf of sourdough bread.

His office door swings open, and our gazes collide. I resist the urge to adjust my glasses.

“Well, we did it,” he says, his voice low and full of pride. “You’ve given a family-run coffee farm three years of solid orders, Clover. How does this feel?”

I smile, because there’s no way I can tell him out loud that it feels so brilliantly private, so personal and intimate, that it fills me with a bright, light happiness.

He means the work we’ve done over the last few weeks, not the way his proximity makes me feel, but all the same, I soak up the rare warmth of his proximity like a lizard plastering itself to a hot, sunbaked rock. I go very still, and just wait. If I don’t move too much, he’ll come even closer.

There is a chair next to my desk, but he doesn’t fit in it. Rufus is six-foot-seven, a towering hardwood tree of a man who might look lean from a distance—the height messing up whatever ratio you might expect from a human body—because

he seems to be all arms and legs until it's just the two of you in a small room, and then he's...huge.

And I'm not a short girl. I'm five-foot-ten myself, but I still barely come up to Rufus's shoulder.

So if he's going to come closer—and I'm being very still, so I think he will—he's going to have to sit on the edge of the heavy desk. I've made space for him there in anticipation of this moment.

He pauses, and his fingers brush the bare wood surface.

“We did it,” I repeat breathlessly.

“We did.” His gaze flicks down to the folder on my desk. “And you've already finished filing the details. Good girl.” I force myself not to shiver at the way he says that, or to read anything into the heavy silence that follows. He clears his throat. “Thanks for all the help. We pulled some late nights there.”

“Any time.”

“Oh, I hope not.” He laughs, a deep rich chuckle that makes me shiver. And then he exhales and sits, his hips on the edge of the desk, his long legs stretched out beside me. “Actually, I think you have earned the afternoon off.”

I almost don't hear him, because I'm distracted by how his shoulders are straining the limits of his blazer. He usually keeps his body well away from me, keeping a desk or a whole room between us. Having an up close view is—

“Clover?”

I jerk my gaze up to his face, my cheeks blazing. “Sorry?”

“You can leave now.”

I've missed something. "Pardon?"

His brow furrows as he rakes a confused glance over my probably beet-red face. "I said, you can leave early today. I need to take care of some personal business."

Oh.

I missed that because I was perving on my boss. And I probably made him uncomfortable. It wouldn't be the first time my painful crush has made things awkward between us. He never looks at me that way; sometimes, he doesn't look at me at all.

And then I wonder if my feelings are stunningly obvious. Probably have been since day one, when I was assigned to his desk by central Human Resources.

Before I arrived, Rufus Newton Smith, half of the brains behind Braxton Newton Smith Enterprises, churned through assistants like they were made of tissue paper. I was warned I wouldn't last more than a week, and then I would get placed elsewhere in the company.

It's been eleven months and he's never barked at me once.

"Leave early," I repeat dumbly.

But I don't want to leave. I love sitting at this desk and being a holler away from helping Rufus with whatever he needs. I love fixing problems for him, and making that furrow between his brows soften.

And there's nothing for me to go home to. My roommate is working today, at her pay-the-bills job at a department store, and our small studio apartment is extra depressing when it isn't filled with her laughter. Go home? Home isn't my happy place.

“One of us should have a good day,” he mutters before straightening up.

And it should be him! What is this personal business that isn't going to make him happy? I'm immediately irritated on his behalf.

“I have a few things I need to do before I go,” I say dully.

He pauses, then nods. “Say goodbye before you leave, all right?”

“Of course.”

The click of his door as he retreats back to his office is extra loud.

I immediately open his calendar, but I don't see anything out of the ordinary. He has an hour at the gym right after work today, then nothing until the same workout is scheduled next Tuesday. Three empty days stretch between.

Closing the calendar, I tell myself it doesn't matter. I don't need to be nosy. I'm paid, in fact, to *not* be nosy.

On the other hand...he gave me access to his email for a reason. I'm supposed to be on top of things in this office.

I'd like to be on top of Rufus.

That is never going to happen. So I'll have to settle for making him happy in the limited, non-naked ways I can imagine.

But there's nothing in his email, either. No hint at an annoying commitment, no family event I can get him out of with a helpful work emergency.

He loves a good work emergency. Staying late, coming up with a solution together that saves time or money or both.

I really don't like the idea of leaving him while he's clearly out of sorts. So I push away from my desk and go to his office door, fully intending to knock on it and explain myself. *I can sense that you are—*

A loud voice behind me stops me in my tracks just before my hand lands with a polite knock on the door. "Is he in?"

I turn just in time to see Andrew Braxton push past me as if I'm not even here, and for the second time in a few minutes, the door clicks shut.

From the other side, I hear a muffled but still clearly exasperated greeting from my boss to his co-founder. They started this business together in college, and it's grown into a multinational firm with offices on three continents.

Rufus is happiest when Andrew is on one of the other two continents. Until this moment, I didn't have an opinion, other than implicitly trusting my boss's instincts. I've only seen the other man in person a few times, and I don't think he'd be able to pick me out of a lineup.

But from the confrontational tone of the conversation, I'm immediately on guard.

"I wasn't expecting you until this evening," Rufus says to his partner. "Tell me you didn't fly here on the private jet."

"It's faster."

"Andrew, we're an eco-friendly company!"

"I'll off-set the carbon footprint," Andrew drawls. "Besides, I wanted to check up on you."

"We're having dinner tonight," Rufus says stiffly.

I don't hear Andrew's next murmured question. And I really shouldn't be listening to this conversation... I glance

back at my desk, knowing I should pack up and head out.

I don't move.

“Uh...” Rufus has that slow, careful drag in his voice, when he's trying to think of the answer the person he's talking to wants to hear. “She might be available? I'll have to call her. No, it's all right, I'll give her a ring after you leave.”

She? Her? *Her* who?

“Because she works during the day, Andrew. I can't just interrupt my...fiancée...because my business partner decided to fly halfway around the world and wants to meet her!”

I pull back from the closed door as if I've been burned by the eavesdropping. And in a way, I have.

Puzzle pieces desperately try to fit together in my head. I think about what Rufus said before his partner arrived. *Personal business. One of us should have a good day.*

“Fine, let's have dinner. I know you want to meet her, and I assure you, we are both touched. Can't wait for tonight, in fact.” Rufus says this all very firmly, his voice lifted a little, but not loud enough that I could hear if I weren't an inch away from his door.

My fiancée. We are both touched.

What the fuck?

Rufus isn't engaged.

And he doesn't say things like *We are both touched.*

“End of conversation, Andrew! For fuck's sake, I need to do some work this afternoon.” I smile despite myself at his frustrated swearing. We both do that. He's so mild-mannered

right up until the second that he loses his cool, and then it's f-bombs galore until the problem is solved.

The threat of being discovered listening chases me back to my desk. My heart pounds in my chest and my eyes are hot. I want to cry at the thought of Rufus having a fiancée that he's kept from me, even though that's ridiculous. He doesn't owe me any explanation about his personal life. I'm just his assistant.

But I can't cry at my desk, and my stupid computer won't turn off until I've saved a few things I was working on. I'm furiously closing tabs when Andrew steps out of the office. "See you in a few hours," he tosses over his shoulder at Rufus, sounding suspiciously cheery.

I keep my head down as he strides out.

Then my computer blessedly powers off, and I grab my purse from the drawer I keep it in.

Silently, I follow Rufus's business partner out the office door.

Rufus told me to leave for the afternoon. *He also told you to say goodbye.* But I couldn't do that without breaking down in front of him, and there's no way I could explain why I'm a mess right now. *You have a girlfriend? You are engaged?*

I don't deserve answers to those questions.

There's a crowd of people at the elevator, so I head for the stairwell, fist turning white from the grip I have on the purse strap running across my body. I'm probably not going to make it back to my empty little studio apartment on the other side of the city before I break down.

I'm going to have to quit my job. I can't work for a man who triggers this kind of reaction in me, even if he's done

nothing—

I skid to a stop on the landing.

Below me, Andrew is on the phone. “I’m telling you, there’s no way he actually has a fiancée. He’s such an idiot. It’s hilarious making him dance like that. You should have seen his face when I suggested he call her in front of me.” He guffaws. “Can’t wait to hear what excuse he makes up for why she can’t make dinner tonight. Meanwhile, I have you on my arm, my sultry sex kitten.”

My eyes bug out of my head. *Sultry sex kitten?* Who says things like that out loud? On the phone? At work? While being mean about someone they’re supposed to be business partners with?

“I’ll let you go and get all dolled up,” he continues smoothly. Too smoothly. Gross. “I need to do a few things here, then I’ll collect you at six. Yeah, the reservation at Meadowchurch is for six. It’s fine if we’re late. Gives him more time to worry about his cover story.”

The hot, frustrated tears that had threatened before have now turned into pure fiery adrenaline coursing through my veins.

Meadowchurch is the best steakhouse in the city. It’s where all the top business people go to be seen.

There is no way I’m going to let Rufus be embarrassed there tonight. I pull out my phone and text my roommate.

Any chance you could give me a makeover this afternoon?

Chapter 2

Rufus

AFTER COMPOSING MYSELF, I stalk into the front office space where Clover sits.

I circle her desk, expecting her to return any moment, but when I tap her keyboard to turn her monitor on and see what faraway vacation spot she's set as today's screensaver, I realize it's not on.

And the files are all put away.

I yank open the drawer where she keeps her purse and want to howl in frustration when I realize it's gone. She's gone. *You gave her the afternoon off, you idiot.* Sure, but I also asked her to say goodbye when she left.

And then Andrew's obnoxious visit made it so that I missed her departure.

The flood of desperate yearning that pours through my chest is downright embarrassing. This is how I feel every Friday now, filled with a frustrated ache that could only be soothed by the woman of my dreams not being my employee.

Which would mean firing her so I can love her, and that's obviously a nonstarter.

So I have to satisfy myself with the smallest but most precious moments. When we start a project. Finish a project.

When she arrives in the morning, her cheeks pink from rushing, and she skids to a stop in front of my desk. The slower way she slides in to say goodbye at the end of every day.

But not today.

You told her to leave.

I didn't really want her to go, though.

Fuck.

Slowly, I drag myself back to my desk. BNSE started as an eco-friendly, producer-driven import/export company inspired by a backpacking trip Andrew and I took through Central America a lifetime ago. When we were young idealists.

Now we have massive teams that do the work we once did, and we spend most of our time setting the vision for the business. Adding more divisions, acquiring firms who can improve our bottom line. Or we did, until Clover came to work for me. She has no idea she inspired me to dive back into proof-of-concept research. I should tell her, but I don't want to confess how far I had drifted from where I wanted to be in this company.

And I don't want her to know how divided Andrew and I are now that I've gone back to my roots.

It's for the best that she left before he and I fought. My whole body is still tense from the confrontation, and in a few hours, I need to meet up with him and make excuses for why my fiancée can't join us at the last minute.

My life is a mess, a disaster of my own making, and it cannot continue like this. It's time for a real change. It's time for me to come clean with Andrew and tell him how unhappy I am.

I'M the first to arrive at the restaurant. Of course I am. I order a drink at the bar, then take it out to the terrace that overlooks the city.

I savor each sip of the top shelf whiskey as if it were my last, which it very well could be, at least in this setting, with this ease.

This might be the last meal Andrew and I have as business partners. It *should be* the last meal like this, because we have grown apart and life is too short to live a lie.

From this point on, I only want to be honest with him.

I want out.

I made mistakes, chief among them lying about having a fiancée. But underneath that lie and all the other fudged answers about agreeing to the BNSE expansions lies a truth I can no longer deny—I want something simpler.

“Mr. Newton Smith, the other guests have arrived,” one of the restaurant staff quietly murmurs from the doorway to the terrace. I swallow the last of my drink and turn to follow, bracing myself for that first, annoying glimpse of Andrew gripping his fiancée Heather a little too tightly to his side like she's a virility badge of honor.

He's always been like that with women, and I find it exhausting.

It's why I finally snapped and told him all about the new love of my life, just to try to balance it out. *No need to preen around like you're the only one who's getting laid, old chap.* I

used Clover's middle name, because of course I couldn't use her actual name. She was CCed on every email we exchanged, and no matter how oblivious he is about the people who work for us, he'd recognize a name like *Clover*.

So Clover Jane Hall simply became Jane, my new girlfriend, and then my fiancée. And it felt good to finally reveal my deep affection for her, to someone, even if it was under a fictional pretence.

But it also made my wildly off-limits attraction to her that much worse. It heightened how much I crave Clover, *and* what was at stake if she ever found out.

Tonight is the last time, I tell myself just before I step through the door.

There he is, helping Heather into her seat at a table right in the center of the restaurant, not far from where a jazz trio is playing. My step falters, then I push myself forward.

"Andrew," I say with more enthusiasm than I feel. "And Heather, so good to see you again."

They both look past me. "Where's Jane?" Andrew asks, a weird smile playing at his mouth.

"She—"

"Sorry I'm late," Clover says breathlessly, appearing at my side from out of nowhere. "Hello, darling." Her hands wrap around my arm, one squeezing my forearm, the other gripping my biceps in a way that forces me to turn toward her.

My heart slams into my ribcage as I realize just how different she looks. Her usual black square glasses are gone, and her hazel eyes are transformed from their usual soft, knowing mossy depths to glittering amber popping from a frame of inky pewter makeup. Even her eyelashes look

different. Longer and fuller and darker. Her mouth is glossy, hypnotically so, and once my gaze tangles there, it takes me a second to drag my attention anywhere else. But I don't miss that she's wearing a short, sparkly dress and heels that bring her up over my shoulder.

There's no amount of a makeover that can erase the difference in our ages, though. If anything, the makeup and dress highlight just how much younger she is than me.

"Darling," I repeat dumbly.

Her mouth curves like we're in on a secret together, but we aren't—all my worst secrets are about her, and the filthy fantasies I have about her mouth. That mouth is now painted up in such a way that if I leaned down to kiss her I would probably make a mess of her gorgeous face, but oh *fuck*, now all I can think about is smearing that lip gloss for a very good cause.

Darling.

She can't find out what I've done, what I've said, how I've

"You're Jane?" Andrew asks, a tightness in his voice.

Clover's eyes sparkle as she holds my gaze a beat longer, as she pushes up on her toes like she might kiss me with that impossibly glossy red mouth, but then at the last second she laughs and turns her head. "I sure am," she says, laughing. "Who else would I be?"

I don't want him to answer that question. I inhale a ragged breath, breathing in the scent of her hair, which tumbles down her back in thick golden waves. Is this what it looks like when she lets it down from her usual twisted bun?

I want to sink my hands into it and tighten my fingers into fists.

I want to drag her right up against me and never let her go.

As Andrew gapes at her, I clear my throat. “Well, let’s sit down.”

I turn us both so, for a moment at least, I’m between her and my dinner companions. “You don’t need to do this,” I say quickly and under my breath.

She tips her head to the side, gently takes my tie in her hands, and adjusts the knot. “Nowhere else I’d rather be,” she murmurs back.

“But—” Before I can protest further, she slides around me and I find myself pulling out her chair across from Heather.

Which puts me on one side of her and Andrew on the other.

“Well this is nice,” Clover says brightly. “So sorry I haven’t been able to meet you before, but you know how it is.”

“Not sure I do,” Andrew says slowly. “Why don’t you tell us? You’re than I expected.”

“Am I?”

“Younger,” he says pointedly.

I’d kick him under the table if we weren’t twenty years beyond that kind of childish petulance.

She laughs. That’s it. No other response, as if she won’t be baited. As if she knows that’s his intent, and she just isn’t going to play his game.

How can she see that so clearly?

“We should toast to all of our youthfulness,” Heather says.

Bless her.

Clover nods. “Absolutely. Oh, look, we don’t have any wine yet.” She drops her hand to my thigh—my *thigh*, which has no choice but to tense under her touch—and squeezes.

My hand falls on top of hers. To remove her touch from my body, I tell myself, but then I find myself squeezing her fingers. Pressing her hand down instead of removing it. “We should get a bottle,” I hear myself saying. “Bordeaux, if we’re all going to have steak?”

Andrew flags down a waiter.

Menus get distributed and small talk is made. The whole time my hand stays heavily on top of Clover’s, as if her grip on my thigh is my only tether to keep me from being snapped to another dimension where my assistant has not just shown up out of the blue and assumed the identity of my fiancée, who was one thousand percent modeled after her, anyway.

A house of cards that will surely tumble down around me before dinner is over.

“Rufus tells me that you live overseas.” Clover says, putting Andrew in the seat of having to answer questions.

I suppose that is technically true. I did tell her that about them.

My business partner frowns. “When did he say that?”

“I don’t remember exactly,” she says smoothly, glancing my way. “Was it when we started dating?”

A leading question I recognize from times she’s interjected in conversations with business leads, filling in gaps I’ve missed. She’s asking me when we started dating. When did I

lie to my partner and tell him I was no longer a determined bachelor?

I swallow hard. “Almost this time last year.” My voice sounds rough. Fuck it. Truth time, one way or another. “I probably told you about Andrew the first time we met. And then I told him about you soon after.”

Her eyes flare wide. *Did you really?*

I force myself to hold her molten gaze. *Please don't hate me.*

Andrew laughed. “He sure did. It was Jane this and Jane that. I was convinced you weren't real, I have to be honest.”

Clover's hand tightens on my thigh. “I'm very real.”

“Indeed. Although it's taken so long for us to meet...” He trails off as the wine arrives and we order food.

I turn our hands so I can interlace our fingers. That feels less like a maniacal grip and more like something akin to how an engaged couple might hold hands. However my gorgeous and clever assistant found her way to this chair beside me tonight, it might be my only chance to live out this fantasy, and I want to know what her hand feels like in mine from every angle.

Chapter 3

Clover

I'M TRYING my best to keep up with the conversation, but Rufus keeps stroking the side of my hand with the pad of his thumb, and I'm melting down inside.

I thought I could do this. I *can* do this. For him, and a little bit for me—to prove to us both that I'm more than an assistant, that I can be anything and everything he needs—but oh my God, is it ever hard to stay in character when I just want to crawl into his lap and rub my face into his neck like a cat.

If his business partner wasn't glowering at us from across the table, this would be a seriously magical first date.

Who knew all I needed to do to get my boss to hold my hand possessively was to dress up like a caricature of myself and pretend we've been dating for almost a year?

Because based on everything Andrew and Heather bring up, it *is* me that he's been in a relationship with. Only identifying details have been changed—like my name, and where I work. And the minor detail like, I didn't get any of the relationship perks, since I didn't know I was his secret girlfriend.

Did I miss out on a year of being kissed goodnight by Mr. Newton Smith?

I go still, and Rufus immediately tightens his grip on my hand, a warm squeeze. Since when is my oak tree of a boss the “warm squeeze” type of person? I glance sideways, and he’s frowning. That’s more familiar. He frowns a lot.

“Are you all right?” he says, his voice low.

Now is not the time to tell him he owes me bedtime kisses. There is no way his reaction would be subtle. And as much as I want to confront him a little—what do you mean, almost a year??—I can’t let the act drop.

I’m his fiancée.

“Of course,” I say smoothly, leaning in against him. Our shoulders brush and I use the zap of electricity that skitters down my arm to squeeze his hand back. “Better now that I’m sitting next to you.”

“Awww,” Heather says sweetly.

Out of the corner of my eye, I see Andrew frown.

Our wine arrives, and it’s followed by some bread, and then our food.

The whole time, I play the part of a loving partner, and Rufus keeps touching me, and his business partner’s gaze stays narrowed. Watching. Thinking.

Whatever he’s considering, I’m going to be prepared. While my roommate painted my face and paraded the dress options past me, I played out a dozen variations of this conversation. My personal favorite is when I stand up and dramatically confront Andrew for his ruinous plans, but the problem with a big “*I know what you’re doing!*” moment is... I don’t know what he’s doing. I can’t figure out what his end game would be in embarrassing Rufus. My boss is

unflappable, and so what if he invented a fiancée? He probably had a good reason.

Sure enough, when the plates are cleared, Andrew points at me. “We haven’t met before, have we? Because you do look familiar.”

Yeah, I’m the girl he walks past like I don’t even exist. Like I’m not important. “I used to work at a divorce attorney’s office,” I say brightly. “Were you a client?”

His neck starts to turn red. “Certainly not.”

I lean in. I have a bunch of these prepared, and now my veins are full of fire. “Do you follow my cat’s Instagram account? She likes to curl up on my feet, and a surprising number of men seem to follow for that reason.”

He chokes. “No. That’s—”

“Oh.” I pull my hand out of Rufus’s grasp and tap my finger thoughtfully against my chin. “Then it might—”

“Stop it,” he yells. “You aren’t his fiancée! Rufus isn’t engaged. He lives alone and never dates and if he were engaged, that person would surely come to his apartment from time to time!”

Beside me, my boss growls. “How do you know she doesn’t—”

I reach for him, and as soon as he has my hand in his again, the growl in his voice cuts out. I squeeze his fingers to tell him I’ve got this, and I laugh lightly. “Of course I don’t go to his apartment. I’m allergic to grass.”

Rufus stares at me.

But so does Andrew. Good, I’ve thrown him for a loop.

I roll my eyes and give Heather a look that blatantly says *men, amirite?* Of course I don't mean Rufus, but she can think whatever she wants. "He has a living wall. And I love his commitment to the environment, but until I get my allergies under control, we have to keep all our wild fun to neutral locations."

I look at Rufus, worrying that I've gone too far, but he's gazing at me the way he does when I have a good idea about one of his passion projects.

"Our *wild fun* is none of Andrew's business," he says, his words carefully measured.

Heat flares low in my belly. That's his bossy voice. That's his Mister voice.

He turns to his partner. "This woman is going to be my wife," he snaps with sharp authority. And oh, how I wish that weren't just a fun little role-play reality. "Don't make the mistake of disrespecting her again."

"Jesus, Rufus," Andrew says, laughing awkwardly. "You can't take a joke, huh?"

"Was that a joke?" Rufus sounds cold as ice. "It sounded like you wanted to embarrass me. And in the process, you tried to hurt Cl—" He cuts himself off. "Fuck you. Fuck this. I don't know who you've turned into, but it's not the guy I started my business with."

"Our business."

Rufus laughs. "Sure."

Andrew's gaze goes cold. Ice cold. "What does that mean?"

Heather tugs at his arm. "Let's not do this—"

He shakes her off. “No. I want to know what Rufus means.”

My boss meets his business partner’s glare head-on. “When I point out that you have forced my hand at more than one turn, shoving *our* business in a direction I don’t like, and objected to me having side projects?”

Andrew sneers. “The ones your assistant helps you with, you mean?”

I stiffen.

Time slows, and for a long, painful beat, I think Andrew is about to put two and two together.

And then Rufus sweeps his chair back, curves his hand around my shoulder, and helps me up in what feels like one swift movement. “We’re leaving,” he says tightly.

I’m glad I wore heels tonight. It helps me keep pace with his long stride as he herds me toward the door, his arm tight around my waist.

“Don’t look back,” he orders under his breath, and no, I would never.

What Mr. Newton Smith says, goes.

An elevator car is waiting for us, and he pushes me inside, then jams the door closed button first, the ground floor button second.

The doors whisper shut, and we’re alone.

I open my mouth but whatever I was going to say dies on my lips because Rufus reaches for me, cupping my face in his big hand.

And then he goes still, too.

We stare at each other.

My heart stops, then restarts, suddenly going too fast.
Pounding against my ribcage.

He smiles slightly, his brow furrowing, and he leans in.
“Clover...”

“Yes, Rufus,” I breathe.

“Where are your glasses?”

Chapter 4

Rufus

THAT WASN'T EVEN what I meant to say, but I've never seen her eyes like this. They're missing the cute frames.

Focus, Rufus. *The grass wall. She can't come to your—*

But it's too late. Confusion falls over Clover's face and she blanches beneath her fancy makeup before jerking away from me.

I grasp at empty air as she thuds her back against the far side of the elevator.

"Hang on," I say, hating how desperate my voice sounds. "Come back."

"I thought they'd make me too recognizable. Don't worry, I will be wearing my glasses on Monday morning," she says smoothly, with more confidence than I've ever heard her say anything, but she isn't looking at me, isn't meeting my gaze.

She doesn't need to add, *and we will pretend this never happened.*

I can't let that stand.

"I need to go home," she says.

"I'll take you."

"You don't need to—"

“We need to talk. And we can’t go to my place.”

She shakes her head. “It’s all right, Mr. New—”

“Call me Rufus. For God’s sake, Clover—” And now we’re talking over each other, and the elevator is still descending. Fuck. I don’t have much time, because I can feel her putting this “Jane” persona away, and maybe forever.

Like it took too much of her to play my fiancée for an hour. Like this was just too hard.

She swallows hard and blinks up at me, a tear smearing the dark liner at the corner of her eye. “Please.”

“We need to talk,” I repeat firmly. I’ve crossed the car and now I’m crowding her—because I’m too tall, too big—and I’m close enough I can feel her whole body shudder with her exhale. “If you don’t want me to come to your place, we can rent a hotel room.”

She laughs. “What?”

Fuck, that came out wrong. “A car, then. I need to tell you... What happened upstairs... The grass wall—”

She cuts me off with a groan as the elevator dings. We’re on the ground floor. “I know, it was a reach, I’m sorry.”

The doors slide open, and she steps out.

I catch her hand in mind, interlacing our fingers, and indicate to the doorman that I need a car. We need a car.

We need to be alone, and I need my assistant to listen to me without feeling like I’m pressuring her to do something she’ll regret. *A hotel room. Jesus Christ, Rufus, why not tell her how many times you’ve come with her name on your lips, too?*

A black town car slides to a stop in front of us and I make sure Clover is seated and her door closed before I go around to the other side.

I give the driver Clover's address.

She interrupts me and gives him my address.

"No," I say sternly. "First address. Thank you. Don't argue, Clover."

She opens her mouth, then snaps it shut again.

The car slides away from the curb.

I take her hand, which immediately soothes the pounding in my chest, but replaces it with an equally complicated warmth. *That's not allowed.*

And then she squeezes my fingers.

Fuck. Yes. That's what I need.

I draw her against me, dropping my mouth to her ear so my words are private and for her only. "Thank you for today. It wasn't necessary, but it was very appreciated. And I should apologize for some of it. All of it."

She smiles, her mouth curving at the edge of my vision. "We're a team, though, right? That's what you say."

"In more ways than one, apparently." I bring my other hand up to her cheek, stroking her skin. "We have so much to talk about."

She sucks in a breath. "Maybe we shouldn't. Some things can't be unsaid."

That gives me pause. What would she regret tomorrow? "Maybe too many things have already gone unsaid, for too long."

“What do you mean?” Her voice is low and soft, a whisper to match my own quiet murmur, but we aren’t alone in this car.

I can’t say what is in my heart with an audience. I glance at the driver, who is doing his best to ignore the radiating tension.

“When we get to your place...” I inhale Clover’s sweet scent and try to make this sound like a perfectly reasonable thing for a boss to say to his employee. “May I come inside for a few minutes?”

“A few minutes...in my apartment?” Her words are suddenly fragile and I realize what I’m demanding.

I lift my voice. “Stop the car.”

The car stops.

“Rufus,” Clover says in a way I can’t read, but I want to imagine it’s endearing. As if she’s saying, *really, must you be bossy?* But in a way that suggests she likes it when I’m bossy.

God, I wish she liked it in all the possible ways, because I’m not sure I know another way to be. At least not when I’m this desperate.

I throw a generous fold of bills at the driver and leap out to get Clover’s door. We’re half a block from a high-end hotel, and if we can’t go to her apartment and my place is off-limits for now, that will do.

The second I open her door, Clover bursts out of the car. “What is going on?”

“I need to be alone with you, and I won’t force my way into an apartment you share with a roommate and I didn’t know you were allergic to grass.” I curve over her and cup her

face in my hands before rasping, “That damn wall will be removed this weekend, Clover. I promise you.”

She blinks up at me, her eyes wide.

Then she spins around and slaps her hand on the taxi door. “Get in.”

“There’s a hotel just—”

She wrenches the door open and says to the driver, “Sorry, we still need this cab.”

He shrugs. “Sure. He’s paid me enough for a few rounds of this game.”

I growl, because nothing about this is a game. I lean in as Clover slides into her seat, and she flashes me a surprisingly wicked grin. “Come on,” she says breathlessly. “That wasn’t true. I just said that to throw him off his ridiculous witch hunt. You want to show me your green wall, Mr. Newton Smith?”

Chapter 5

Clover

FOR THE SECOND time in less than twenty minutes, I'm alone with Rufus in an elevator, and my heart is pounding. For all of his bossy hard stares and the possessive way he holds my hand, he hasn't *said* very much.

The closer we get to the privacy of his loft, the more I worry that the reason he couldn't talk to me in the back of a cab, or at my apartment, is because he's going to let me down.

My heart twists. I'm not ready for a lecture about how I shouldn't have interjected myself into his private life.

The elevator in his building moves more slowly than the one at the restaurant. The numbers tick up, up, up.

I look down at my feet. At the expensive heels I borrowed from my roommate.

When I look up, Rufus is closer. His face is twisted in concern. "Your business partner is a jerk," I blurt out.

Surprise flares deep in his eyes, then he laughs. "Yeah, he is."

"He wanted to embarrass you." I chew on my bottom lip. "That's why I showed up."

Rufus frowns again. “So instead, he tried to embarrass you. That’s definitely worse. I can’t let that stand.”

“You don’t need to protect me from that,” I say softly. I’m a big girl. I made my choice, knowing it might get messy.

Rufus swears under his breath, then he closes the gap between his and hauls me into his arms. “God damn it, Clover, that’s exactly the wrong answer.”

I press my hands against his chest, the coiled tension there a real physical force. “What’s the right answer?”

He stares down at me, his gaze boring into mine, then zeroing in on my mouth. “There isn’t one. I’m your boss.”

“Not tonight,” I whisper. “Tonight, I’m your fiancée. Jane, was it?”

He swears. “It was always you. Which I should apologize for.”

“Or you could make it up to me.” My voice sounds pleading, halfway between aching and breathy.

The elevator arrives at his floor.

The doors open.

And he doesn’t move.

His eyes stay locked on my mouth. “You deserve that,” he murmurs. “You deserve everything.”

But that can’t be true, because if it were, I’d have Mr. Newton Smith to call my own, every day, instead of just today, for an hour of pretend. And no amount of bold flirting on my part will change that, no matter how tightly he holds my hand or how right it feels when he gathers me in his arms.

The man has had multiple chances to kiss me and he hasn't taken any of them.

The odds that I have gravely misunderstood this situation are rising higher by the second.

I push against his chest. "Can we just get this over with?"

"Definitely not." His voice is thick, his words slow. Then he frowns. "Get what over with?"

"You...I don't know. Giving me some kind of very kind reminder that we can't blur the lines between boss and assistant, and I shouldn't overstep or interject myself into a situation I don't fully understand, and—"

"There's more?"

"I hope not."

"That makes two of us." He groans and pushes off the wall of the elevator and catches my wrist, all in one sudden fluid motion. "Come on."

I follow mutely as he tugs me through the still-open elevator doors into a private foyer. There's only one door ahead of us, and he opens that in the blink of an eye.

I've never been in his private residence before. I've seen photos, but the grass wall isn't where I thought it was, and the whole place is bigger than I imagined.

Bigger, emptier, and...solemn.

That's very Rufus, of course.

I bet he has a whole room dedicated to bow ties and pocket squares.

"I'm not going to lecture you," he says as he guides me forward, his hand on the small of my back.

“I think I said *gentle reminder*.”

“But you were thinking *lecture*.” His voice is dry.

He’s not wrong.

“I kept that thought to myself,” I say.

“You kept it quiet,” he corrects. “Your face gave it away.”

Stupid face. I pull away from him, feeling silly. I let some fantasies carry me away and spin what might happen today with my handsome, older, wealthy boss. And in the end, he saw through me the whole time. Not to my desire, but to my self-conscious worry. To my fear.

And maybe to my guilt.

My heels tap on the hardwood floor as I cross to the living wall, which *is* very cool, then to the floor to ceiling window looking down at the city below. “It’s very strange,” I murmur.

His voice carries from across the room. “What is?”

“Being this mortified, truly, and yet not wanting to sprint for the elevator.”

That gets a low, rough laugh. “Please don’t run away.”

“I won’t.” I suck in a deep breath. “It was my suggestion we come here, wasn’t it?”

“It was.” He pauses for a long, sobering beat. “Please don’t be embarrassed. It’s just us.”

And that. *That* is why I’m not running. Because I’ve spent more time with this man in the last year than with anyone else. Because I trust the energy behind the way he held my hand, and protected me from Andrew’s sharpest words, even if he doesn’t want to kiss me.

I swallow hard. “You should know something.”

“You can tell me anything.” His voice is closer now. He is closer. Not right behind me, but no longer across the room, and I didn’t hear him move because my pulse was pounding too hard in my ears.

“I overheard him. Andrew. In the stairwell. He suspected you of lying about the fiancée.”

“I was lying.” There’s an edge of fatigue to his voice.

“You probably had a good reason.”

“You trust me too much.”

I gasp. I trust him implicitly. “No. Rufus.” I spin around, my back to the city now. He’s standing in a wide stance, his hands in his pockets, his head dipped just enough I can’t really see his face because of the long shadows. “Why...”

He lifts his head slowly, his eyes hooded but his attention electric. I can’t look away, and from the way his gaze locks on my face, I think—or hope—that maybe he can’t, either. “Why would I say that? Is that what you want to know?”

It’s a slow, leading question.

My pulse grows heavy. “Yes,” I breathe. “I want to know.”

And there’s that wild hope again, roaring back to life.

Whatever Rufus’s reason for me to be wary, I really, really want it to be about blurred lines and a lot more than holding hands.

“I haven’t been a good boss,” he says slowly. “I’ve used your name.”

“My middle name,” I say, because I lost my filter somewhere around the second glass of a very good Bordeaux.

I’ve never had wine ordered by the region before tonight.

I've never done a lot of tonight's firsts.

It's all made me quite sassy.

He nods. "Your middle name. But that's not the worst of it."

"Oh?"

"Clover, I need to confess something."

"Please do." That sounds eager.

And a smile tugs at the corners of his mouth, but he fights it. Oh, he fights it hard. He cares deeply about doing the right thing by me, which is going to be good in the long run, but it's making tonight an agonizing fight.

Come on, Mr. Newton Smith. Fess up. Step over to the—

"The truth is, Clover, I've had absolutely terrible thoughts about you since you showed up in my office and called me Mr. Newton Smith for the first time."

Dark side. My mouth falls open. Then snaps shut.
"Terrible thoughts?"

"Yes."

"Please be more specific."

"Clover—" And then he cuts himself off.

All right. My turn. I lift my chin. "I also have a confession. I didn't know what I was walking into tonight. Part of me thought you had hired someone to be your fiancée. I couldn't figure out why, but I was so jealous, I thought... I should show you a sexier side of me. But another part of me knew you wouldn't do that, you wouldn't be able to actually put another human being through that kind of act, and you'd make an excuse for her absence."

His brows are almost to his hairline. “You...knew that?”

“You’re a very good man, Rufus. You care about the people you do business with. You care about your employees.”

“Full disclosure, I was a bit of a bear of a boss before you.”

I prop my hands on my hips. “Uh, you’re still a bear of a boss. But I like bears. And I like you. A lot. More than I should, strictly speaking.”

“More?” He eases his hands out of his pockets. They’re so big, just like the rest of him.

Terrible things.

I’ve missed out on almost a year of those big hands doing *things* to me because neither of us thought to confess anything before tonight.

We are fools.

“So much more,” I say in a rush. “And I have for as long as you’ve thought about doing...things to me.”

“Terrible things.” He repeats the two words gravely. “I shouldn’t—”

“You should.”

The words hang between us. Not for long. Just enough time to suck in a breath.

Then he crosses the gap in what feels like a single, explosive stride, and pulls me into his arms. Heat races up my back, tingling my spine and blazing against my bare skin where his fingertips press into my flesh.

My fingers find his tie and tug. His throat moves, like he’s just swallowed hard, and then he hitches me up against his

body, banding one his arms around my lower back.

His other hand cups my face, his thumb rubbing along my jaw, to the corner of my mouth. “I want to make a mess of this lipstick,” he growls. “To start.”

I manage to smile around a trembling exhale. “Go for it.”

He groans and drags the pad of his thumb across my lower lip, his gaze darkening as I feel my lipstick smear.

I expect him to crash his mouth down against mine.

Instead, I get a slow lowering of his head, then a soft, surrounding breath against my lips. His hand slides around to cup the back of my neck as he lays a tender butterfly kiss on the corner of my mouth.

We both go still.

Can he feel my pulse jack hammering in my neck?

Can he sense how inexperienced I am?

Is that why he won't kiss me—

“You're such a sweet little thing, Clover.” The words drag out of him, his voice a rasp. “And you were the best girl tonight. Do you know that?”

“I really wasn't sure...”

“You're always a good girl.” He groans. “But I probably don't tell you that enough.”

“Not like...that.”

“I've thought it so many times.”

I gasp.

“I know I've been a bastard at times. But you have always been the best, most loyal assistant. And I have wanted to

ravish you every god damn day.”

My pulse skips a beat.

“I need to kiss you,” he whispers. “And I’m afraid I’m going to lose control.”

“You won’t.” I push my lips against his. Heat swarms through me at the barest of contact. “But if you do, I’ll like it. I promise.”

“I need you to like it.” His breath puffs against my mouth. Warm. Sweet. He’s making my head spin. “I need to feel how good it is for you. Do you understand?”

I’m terrified to say no, this is all new territory for me. So I nod mutely, and he lets out a deep, guttural groan before finally—finally!—slotting his mouth firmly against mine and giving me a real, hungry kiss.

His lips are firm and lush, a hot brand against mine. A searing kind of claim. I shiver in his arms, and those firm perfect lips part, just a little, before searing me again, this time with my lower lip caught between them.

Oh God.

I dart my tongue out because I can’t help it, and I taste him. His lip. His skin. He gives me another groan, this one in a way I feel as much as hear, and he slants his mouth against mine again. Different angle. Perfect angle.

And then he gives me his tongue. Just a glancing slide, but it’s wet, and mine is wet, and we’re tasting each other.

Slick, hot, needy.

Rough tastes.

I gasp as he eases back, just enough to slide his tongue along the full curve of my lip. Into the corner of my mouth and up. Over. Ah...

This is surreal. This feels so good.

This is everything.

I lick him back. I'm panting between tastes, and I don't care, I want to climb him like a tree. I need his hands lower and on my body. On my tits. On my thighs. I need need need so much, and I can't say any of it because my mouth is full of his tongue, so I press myself against him.

Arching.

Aching.

"That's my girl," he murmurs. "You taste so good. I knew you would."

I moan into his mouth as he kisses me again, this time long pulling tastes with his tongue. A different kind of kiss than I ever imagined.

His hands move down my body, to the hem of my short dress, and his fingers curl around the backs of my thighs, bringing our bodies together. Completely in line, every inch lining up so the hot, hard, thick brand of his erection is pressing against my belly. From my aching mound all the way to my belly button.

How is that going to fit inside, my brain screams at the same time as my insides groan in delight. Yes, fit that inside me. Do it.

His mouth pulls away from mine and trails down my throat. "Ah, Clover," he says, his voice thick with lust.

My head tips back. "Mr. Newton Smith," I breathe.

He stops. But against my belly, his cock throbs so hard I can feel it.

“Don’t stop,” I pant. “I’m sorry, please, don’t—”

“Say it again,” he growls. “Say it while you’re riding my face.”

Chapter 6

Rufus

CLOVER'S BREATHY voice panting *Mister* is all I'll need to come, I swear to Christ.

I spin her around, then crowd her against the window. "Hands here," I order, needing to be in charge, just so I don't absolutely lose it.

Clover.

In my apartment.

Clover, in my fucking arms.

My Clover, my clever little assistant. If this is a dream, I never want to wake up.

My fingers find her zipper, and draw it down, the rasp of it almost as loud as her trembling breath. Both make my cock ache with anticipation.

As soon as the zipper opens past her waist, the dress slips from her shoulders. She's helping me, but her hands immediately return to the window where I told her to press them.

The dress pools on the floor, leaving her almost naked between me and the city. She's not wearing a bra, just panties and heels that make her legs look endless and her ass...

Fuck.

Her ass is spectacular. Round and soft, her cheeks spill out of her panties. Begging to be bitten. Begging to be marked and spanked and—

“What do you like?” I growl. Because that matters more. That’s all that matters.

Her breath hitches. “Anything.”

That’s never the answer. I palm one perfect ass cheek and squeeze. “Would you rather I ask you as we go?”

She nods. “Please.”

I slide my hand around her waist, palming her soft belly as I tug her hips up and back. Slotting my cock against the cleft of her ass. Even through my dress pants, she feels incredible. The shape of her was made for me.

“This isn’t your cock yet,” I rasp. “How many orgasms should little Clover have before she gets Mister’s cock, hmm?”

A shudder rolls through her body. “Umm...”

“Five?”

She squeaks. “Five?”

“At least,” I say, sounding pleased with myself.

“You’re joking.”

“I would never joke about something as serious as your pleasure,” I promise her.

My hand skates up her belly to get my first feel of her breasts. Small but full, they’re perfect points that fit in my hand, and I need them in my mouth.

“Stay just like that,” I order, letting go of her long enough to shed my jacket and the tie she already loosened.

The rest of my clothes are staying on so I don’t fucking ravish her before she’s been pleased enough to make her fall in love with me.

Clover isn’t leaving this apartment— isn’t putting on that dress again—until she agrees to be my fiancée, for real. And the only negotiating tool I can reach for at the moment is my deep, year-long craving to make her feel good.

The kind of good that was off-limits until she called me *darling*. Now nothing else matters.

I twist her body around, scooping her in my arms so I can lean her back against my hands and bow my head to her tits.

Her hands come to my head, her fingers sinking into my hair, as I nuzzle her breasts. She smells heavenly, like sex and secrets and a hint of sunshine, just enough to reassure me this is fucking right. This is meant to be, and we’ll sort out the damage on Monday.

HR isn’t going to like that she’s got my beard imprinted on the tender flesh between her young tits. That’s...not ideal. Except it actually *is* ideal for me and for Clover, so HR can get fucked.

I’ll sign a pre-nup that gives her the entire company. A reverse pre-nup. An “erase the power imbalance” kind of pre-nup.

I inhale her scent deeply as I drag my nose to the tip of one breast. Then I swirl my tongue around the tip, savoring the way it immediately rises to attention. Good little nipple. Eager to please.

That makes two of us.

Clover is whimpering, her breath jerking in and out of her gorgeous body.

“Deep breaths, darling,” I warn her. She needs to pace herself. We’re going to be doing this all night.

“Rufus, that feels so good,” she gasps. “Suck harder.”

Gladly.

I pull most of her breast into my mouth, and the unholy moan she makes is music to my ears. Fuck. Yes.

I repeat the deep pull on the other side, then lick back and forth until she begs me to do it again. And again.

When I finally release her, she’s shaking in my arms and she’s kicked off one heel and is precariously balancing on the other.

I carefully kneel at her feet and help her out of the dangerous footwear. Then I kiss her thighs, and her knees, before stretching out on the floor between her legs.

She stares down at me.

I grin.

Her makeup is a mess. I fucking love it, but I’ll have to get her into the shower or something without her seeing a mirror.

Later.

First, I need to taste her cunt.

Don’t call your assistant’s pussy a cunt, Rufus.

Don’t call your future wife your assistant right before you demand she sit on your face, dickwad.

I’m only going to be able to remember one of those rules, so the A-word is gone, and the C-word can stay. Because my

future wife's cunt needs to be on my face, right fucking now.

"I should warn you, I get explicit when I'm turned on," I tell her as I curl my hand around her calf.

She huffs a shaky laugh. "Is that so?"

"Come here."

"Where?"

"Down here."

"Down there."

I see she needs some coaching. I nod. "I told you, I want you to call me Mister while you sit on my face."

"I thought that was just a saying," she says breezily. "Like the whole five orgasms thing. Hyperbole, perhaps."

"Ah. no. Literal statements on both counts."

She laughs.

I frown. "Not kidding, Clover. Get down here."

"You're lying on the floor." Her tits jiggle as she glances around. "Don't you want to go to a bed?"

I reach up, grateful for my extra-long wingspan, and grasp her by the hips.

She yelps as I yank her down and put her ass on my chest. "Mr. Newton Smith," she breathes.

I grin. "That's more like it." I squeeze her ass, then smooth my hands up to her tits, admiring the red marks I left there before I cup her face in my hands. "Are you comfortable?"

"You're the one on the floor!"

"I'm right where I want to be. You look gorgeous in the light reflecting up from the city. And we'll get to the bed

eventually.”

She wiggles her ass against my chest. “I’m comfortable.”

“Good. Now lean forward.”

She glances at the window behind my head.

“Yes, good girl. Brace your hands there...and bring me your lovely self.”

“My...” She glances down.

I skim my palms to her thighs and ease them wider. Her panties are black lace, some kind of cheap looking stretchy material, and through the pattern I can see the shape of her pussy. Beautiful lips and a secret seam. Her hidden entrance.

“Your cunt is beautiful,” I say as reverently as I can, which is really fucking reverent.

She sucks in a breath. Then she rocks her hips slightly toward me.

Yes. “The best girl,” I praise her. “That’s it. You know what I want.”

“Literal face sitting,” she whispers. “Like...this?”

I nod as her pussy gets closer. “That’s it.”

“With my panties on?” She squirms as I exhale, then inhale again sharply.

“To start.” I lift my head enough to rub my nose against where her clit is hiding. “You make me so hard.”

She tries to twist around, to see the evidence of what I’ve just claimed, but I don’t want that just yet.

“Clover,” I bark.

She twists back, giggling. “This isn’t how I thought this would go.”

“Mmm.” I kiss the inside of one thigh. “What did you imagine?”

“You laying me on a bed...” She sighs as I kiss the other leg, this time with a trailing lick that goes up to the edge of the black lace. “Uh... Mmm.”

I give her an open-mouthed kiss at the apex of her thighs, pulling on her flesh through her panties. It sounds very romantic. Sweet.

I’ll give her that later.

Right now, I’m a breath away from scraping my teeth against her mound, because she smells good enough to bite.

Dragging in a breath so deep it makes her bounce on my chest, I yank the panties to one side and bury my face in her sweet, soft, warm flesh.

Her pussy lips part for my tongue, and inside the puffy folds I find her clit, throbbing and firm, and below that a pool of glorious slickness.

She cries out, loudly, when I blaze my tongue through her arousal and pull it up to her clit. Her whole cunt blooms for me, her thighs splaying wide, and I settle my hands on her ass so I can keep her right where I want her.

Above me, she’s panting and babbling glorious nonsense. “Oh God, please, what are you, how...yes...ummm there please oh yes please, Rufus.”

I swat her ass cheek lightly.

She jerks.

“I mean, Mister.”

I groan appreciatively and reward her with a suckle on her clit.

Her whole body goes tight, like pleasure has just shot straight up her spine. She arches her back and screams.

Good. Yes. More of that, please. More of that wild abandon, and more of her heavenly release on my face. Jesus Christ, we have so much time to make up for. I could have been tasting her like this for months.

I moan and suck harder. I’m lost in the taste of her, in the jerking pulse of her entrance as it fills my mouth with nectar, that I don’t hear her at first.

Not until she slumps forward and pulls my hair. “Rufus, oh my God, stop! Stop!”

I stop. But I don’t want to. It’s only temporary, I promise the greedy monster inside me.

I’m breathing hard as I grin up at her. “Why would I stop?”

She settles her bottom back against my chest. “Because I came!”

“I know.” I exhale happily. “Can you come again?”

She blinks at me.

“Is that a *no*?”

She bites her lower lip for a moment. “That’s an *I don’t know*.”

“I do. I know. You can do anything. You’re so fucking gorgeous when you come. That felt so good. This time, I want to see it. And then again. And—”

“How many agains?” She licks her lips nervously, but her gaze is hungry for it. I can feel her thighs relaxing as she inches back toward my mouth. “The human body has limits.”

“Then it’s my mission tonight to find those limits and see how good they feel. I promise you, it’s everything I want.”

She pauses for a long beat, the kind of pause that says she’s thinking about her words. “I should tell you, I don’t know what I’m doing.”

“You just need to hold on for the ride.”

“What about you?”

“What about me?”

“Don’t you want to...come?”

“Maybe. Eventually. Yes. At some point. Fucking get back on my face, Clover.” I push her hips to give her the idea. “This time, lean forward so I can fuck you with my fingers from behind.”

“You really do have a dirty mouth when you’re turned on, huh?”

“You should hear my thoughts.”

She stills above me again. Holds my gaze. “I want to.”

“Yeah?” All right. Trust has to go both ways. “I want to rip these panties off you.”

“Do it.”

I study them for a split-second, guessing at the weak point, then rend the fabric apart in one swift motion. Her whole sex is revealed to me, and I kiss the crease between her thigh and her belly, then the curve of her mound, before putting my head

back on the ground so she can bring her pretty little clit to my mouth—and present the rest of her cunt for my touch.

I take my time working my fingers into her. She's tight, and so sensitive she's already shaking by the time I'm in her to the first knuckle.

Below her, I lick her clit and tell her exactly what *I* imagined doing to her. All of my filthy thoughts.

“I want to do this in the office. Locked door, so nobody can see you, but I'm on speaker phone. You'll have to be quiet for me as you ride my fingers, Clover.”

She chokes on a gasp.

We'll have to work on the quiet part first.

“And when I get frustrated, you might need to sit on my desk and spread your legs so I can have a restorative lick of your cunt.” I swipe my tongue up the center of her sex. “Your taste could restore my faith in humanity.”

She giggles, which makes it easier to ease a second finger into her. That's all she'll need to get off. She's close already, and lazy licks up each pussy lip that end in a sweet suck on her clit get her even closer.

“Fuck my fingers,” I growl against her skin before I flick my tongue over her clit once more. “Take them like you'll take my cock. Take them like the good little girl you are.” She gasps and rocks her hips back, burying my fingers deep inside her. A tight fluttering squeeze tells me she got there, and I groan happily. “You are *such* a good girl.”

Her thighs shake on either side of my head.

I ease my hand out of her, then press her whole body upright again, so she's sitting back on her ass. “You're being

the best girl for me, aren't you?"

She gives me a wide-eyed look of wonder that makes me feel ten feet tall.

I nod and pull her pussy to my mouth again. "Good girl, keep going, keep being good for me, that's it. You can give me another."

"No, I can't..."

"I have faith in you. I know you can do it." I thrust my tongue into her tight hole, where my fingers just were, and I taste the bright, beautiful tang of her body. Without a shadow of a doubt, I know I will always have an endless craving for her, and want to make her light up like a thousand suns so I can bask in the blaze of her release.

Above me, she sways, consumed by the aftershocks of her pleasure and the new building crest I'm pushing her to ride once more. Waves slamming into waves, pressure from all directions. That's how I imagine her, ricocheting from one pleasure explosion to another, and all at my hands. And mouth. And soon, cock.

I settle my hand possessively over her mound, my thumb rolling slowly over her swollen clit. She spasms, then slumps forward, and I catch her with my other arm, my forearm bracing her torso, my hand curled around her neck.

She comes on my tongue in lovely, extended flutter, and then I pull her down on top of me. She's damp with sweat and smells like heaven.

"I will have your pleasure as many times as I can tonight," I promise her as she shakes on top of me. "I won't be denied. I will have your orgasms, and your sweet honey, and gorgeous noises. All of them."

“And will I have yours?” Her question is so soft and innocent.

Fuck me. “Yes, my sweet girl.” I exhale roughly, then carefully roll her to the floor. Then I scoop her up in my arms, nestle her against my chest, and stride in the direction of the bedroom. “You’ll have everything.”

Chapter 7

Clover

MY HEART IS POUNDING as Rufus carries me across his loft. I need to tell him. I probably should have told him before I rode his face and he put his fingers in me, but that all worked out.

His cock, though, is bigger than his fingers.

And I don't want our first time to be bad for him because I've never done this before.

"Mister," I whisper. Something about the name feels right, especially now, in this moment, as I confess my biggest secret between us.

"Yes, my good girl?" He lays me on the bed, then stands beside me, unbuttoning his shirt.

I need to be holding him when I say this, so I push up on my knees.

I'm naked, and he's still dressed. The soft cotton of his shirt rubs against my sensitized nipples. He loved on those until they were standing straight up, and they're still...

Focus, Clover.

I wind my arms around his neck and pull him over so I can whisper in his ear. "Please don't stop undressing," I murmur. "I want you so much."

He groans.

I continue. “But I need to tell you something.” I press my face into his neck, my words muffled by his skin, but I make sure they’re clear enough I don’t have to say them twice. “I’ve never done this before.”

He goes completely still. The room is painfully quiet for a beat. Then his hands speed up, a blur as he removes his clothes, everything but his boxer briefs, and he stretches out on top of me, bracing his weight on an arm beside me.

He presses a hand against my terrified heart, beating wildly in my chest. His thumb strokes a circle between my breasts. “You’re still a virgin, Clover?”

“I mean, could I really be called that after riding your face?” I quip.

He waits.

I nod. “I’ve never fucked anyone before.”

That makes him groan. “I shouldn’t have been so crude. Your first time shouldn’t be fucking.”

“Is that reserved for like, my seventeenth time?”

He laughs, but it’s a little strained.

I shift beneath him, and then I feel it. His cock is rock hard, and as soon as I brush against it, he grinds it against my mound, making me tilt my hips even more.

“Mr. Newton Smith,” I breathe. “Do you get hard thinking about fucking your virgin assistant?”

“Let’s put it on the long list of things I need to beg your forgiveness for,” he says. “But it’s for my virgin fiancée, not my assistant.”

“Did I get just fired?”

“Promoted.” His voice is strained. “Co-founder of the Newton Smith family firm. We’re going to blaze our own path.”

“We are?” I gasp, genuinely excited. “What do you—”

“Monday, Clover. That’s a Monday discussion.”

As if I’m going to wait that long to ask him what he means. But I suppose I can wait until after he takes my v-card to get back to business.

“You don’t mind that I’m inexperienced?” I rub against him again.

He grunts. “You don’t mind that I’m possessive enough to prefer that you’ll only ever be mine?”

A smile spreads across my face. “I don’t mind at all.”

“Then that makes two of us.” He settles between the open spread of my thighs and gives me more of his weight. “I need *you*. There was never a chance I would push you away because you’re inexperienced. The only thing that matters is what we discover together.”

“I want that so much.”

“Good.” He cups my face and kisses my mouth softly before sliding his hand down to squeeze my breast. “You’re my good little girl. Is this why you couldn’t tell me what you like?”

I nod. But then I offer, “I like it when you call me little.”

And as soon as it’s out, it feels terrifyingly vulnerable. Why did I say that?

My face flushes, and I try to twist away, but he catches my cheeks in his hand, stopping me. “I like that, too. You’re perfectly little for me. You’re my little helper, my sweet little sunshine. My...”

I sway toward me. “Yes?”

“My fierce little protector.”

I whimper out loud and he crushes his mouth against mine again. Yes. *Yes.*

His voice rubs over my like a burr. “And I like it when you call me Mister. You’re going to spend the rest of my life teasing me with that, and I will like it every single time.”

“Oh, Rufus...” I arch against him, feeling like I’m suddenly on fire. “Why did we wait?”

“Fuck if I know.” He laughs and groans.

I push at his boxer briefs, needing more of his naked skin. Needing to feel everything.

He sucks in a breath as his cock is released, thick and heavy.

I try out the teasing and wrap one hand around his length. “Nice cock, Mister.”

He hisses between his teeth and thrusts his hips, slapping his cock up over my mound and onto my belly. “Let’s see if you still think it’s nice when it’s deep inside you the first time.”

Yes. Let’s.

I whine and squirm, and he pins me to the mattress. “You need to be as warm and soft and ready for me as you possibly can, mmm?”

I nod. “Yes. Yes, please.”

“So you need to come for me again.”

“No....” It’s a soft plea. Don’t make me wait any longer. But another twist of desire flickers to life inside me. *More? Yes, please.*

He ducks his head and pulls one of my nipples into his mouth. I arch my back, rising to meet his pulling tongue.

He pulls off with a wet sound. “No?”

“Nnnnggg.”

He grins. “Yes.”

I whimper again as he draws the other nipple into his mouth and his hand falls between my legs. I’m so messy there from the three orgasms in the living room. My arousal coats my inner thighs, and Rufus drags his fingers through that slick before working his way between my folds.

I open my mouth in a wordless scream as he works two fingers deep inside me, sucking at my tits at the same time.

It’s a push pull of pleasure and pain, of ache and need and strange new feelings.

I want to fall to a million pieces in Rufus’s bed and then maybe be licked back together. Can I ask him to do that?

But I don’t need to.

He works me right to the edge, licking and sucking on my breasts, then shoves his shoulders between my thighs.

“I want to see this one,” he growls. “Come on my fingers, Clover. Show me how you clamp down when it feels so good. Show me how your pretty pink cunt is going to strangle my cock next.”

The orgasm rips through me, as if it cares more about pleasing Rufus than giving me a heads up, and my whole body seizes up around his fingers.

The rumble of satisfaction that rolls up my body from my boss is almost as amazing as the soft swipe of his tongue that follows.

I close my eyes and ride the wild wave, stunned that he's made me have yet another orgasm.

The next thing I feel is his thighs against the inside of my legs. Then his warm weight on top of me. His lips brush mine, and he smells like me, tastes like me, and my head spins as I blink my eyes open.

“Rufus...”

He smiles at me softly. “Ready, my love?”

My heart slams against my rib cage. “I don't know.”

“I've got you.” He tilts my hips up and slowly drags his cock between my folds, rubbing against my clit. Long, slow grinds. “Ah, you feel so good. Need to be inside you.”

“Yes...”

“No.” He growls as he thrusts forward, snapping his cock up onto my belly again. “Only when you need it. Only when you can't go another moment without—”

“That moment is now.” I catch his face in my hands. “Please.” I smile shyly. “Please, Mister.”

He braces himself again and reaches between us. I hold my breath as he fists his cock, bringing it between my thighs, straight on this time.

And then I feel the hard, hot press of his tip at my entrance, and I can't hold my breath any longer. I exhale, shaking, reaching for him, and it hurts a little, yes, but then it feels so good, I feel so *full* as he pushes into me. I don't feel myself cry, but his lips touch my cheek and I feel that my face is wet.

I don't care.

He's inside me.

"Yes, Rufus," I breathe just before his mouth finds mine. His kiss is a balm as he starts to move, a raw slide of skin against tender, never-touched-before skin.

It's so intimate I want to cry all over again.

He kisses me over and over again until I'm moving with him, and then he hovers just above my lips, his kiss at the ready whenever I need it.

"Touch yourself," he murmurs. "Show me how you like to come. Show me what feels good."

"This does," I promise. "You do."

But I reach for my clit, anyway.

He bows his head, watching between our bodies. His breath brushes against my cheek, hot pants that feel electric. "Fuck, look at you. You're gorgeous. Taking my cock so well."

I whine and whimper and rock against him, my clit straining against my fingertips. "I'm so close."

"Good. Come on my cock. Come with me."

The rough promise that he's going to come, too, sends me flying.

“Ah, that’s it, Clover,” he growls. “Oh fuck, yes, squeeze my cock. Milk my seed, baby. I’m going to come for you. That’s it, that’s—”

With a strangled yell, he reaches between us, nudging my relaxed hand out of the way before fisting the base of his cock and pulling himself out of my still clutching pussy. Hot spurts of his release paint my thighs, my mound, and then my belly as he catches his breath above me.

I stare at the mess pooling on my stomach.

“Sorry,” he says, his voice back to Mr. Newton Smith-levels of careful. “We didn’t talk about...”

“It’s... That...” It’s so much. I reach for it, then stop myself.

He shifts to stretch out beside me and catches my wrist, bringing my fingers to his seed. “You teased this out of me, you naughty girl.”

I smile as I touch it. “Oops.”

“Do you want children?”

I squeak. “That’s a big question.”

“Isn’t that what engaged people talk about?” He shrugs. “I don’t know. This is my first day of actually being someone’s fiancé.”

I slowly turn towards him, careful not to spill the tummy of come. “Are you serious?”

He gives me a stern look. “You showed up looking like a million bucks and called me darling. That’s a binding marriage contract.”

I blink at him.

And then he blushes and laughs. “Too serious?”

“Rufus!” I shove at his chest.

He kisses my forehead. “How about a shower for my precious girl?”

Before I can answer him, he sweeps me up in his arms—we’re really going to have to discuss the fact that I can walk places—and carries me to the attached bathroom.

And my mouth drops open.

Chapter 8

Rufus

I SET Clover on the wide vanity and busy myself with turning on the shower.

Now that I've come, and come hard, my more beastly instincts are temporarily tamed and I'm deeply aware that all of this could be overwhelming for my sweet young assistant. Fiancée. Fuck.

She won't be rushed into a new relationship definition. Not because of a single evening's role-play.

So I'm going to have to swallow back my more possessive, outrageous ideas. We'll save them for Monday, when I tell her my new idea for a business—our business. Our new, fresh start, as partners and lovers and spouses.

This weekend, I'll do my damndest to stay in the present. Just be with her and make her happy.

Can I keep her distracted with enough orgasms she might not realize I am already desperately in love with her?

It might be important to her for us to fall in love together, slowly, over time.

And first she needs to get over the fact that I'm a very rich man who has a bathroom bigger than her apartment. Which

she shares with a roommate, so it's twice as big as her half of an apartment.

“Rufus...”

“Mister,” I correct her.

She sighs.

Uh oh. That's not a good sound.

I spin around and hold out my arms. “I'm just a naked man, Clover.”

“This room is *ridiculous*.” Her eyes are wide. “And you're huge, by the way. Nothing *just* about you.”

“Well, you're stunningly beautiful, so it's good that I'm huge. Makes it easier for me to beat people off you with a stick. Or my fists.”

She giggles as I cross to her, blocking out the big fancy bathroom, and pressing my huge naked body against her sticky body.

“Are you feeling overwhelmed?” I kiss her softly.

She kisses me back.

I lick into her mouth and make her moan.

Then she shoves at my chest. “I can't answer you if you're kissing me,” she protests. Then she smiles, a cute little lopsided secret smile. “I'm not exactly overwhelmed. Should I be?”

“No.” I brush my thumb over the apple of her cheek. “You surprise me at every turn. You're so young—”

“I'm twenty-three,” she says firmly. “That's not that young.”

“It is when you’re thirty-six.” I kiss her forehead. “And I know how old you are. I know when your birthday is. I know that you prefer Indian takeout over Chinese, but when I ask you what we should order in, you say Chinese more often than not because you know it’s my favorite. I know you dress carefully at work to not be too sexy, because you take your job seriously and it annoys you when young men hit on you, and from the moment I laid eyes on you, I wanted to do so much more than just try embarrassing lines. So I’m trying my best here to not be too much, but maybe you should just tell me what you want and where you want me to meet you, because you’re incredible, Clover. You’re simply the best thing that’s ever happened to me.”

“That’s...” Her eyes fill with tears and she shakes her head.

That was too much.

I know it.

Fuck.

She surges up, throwing her arms around my neck. “We’re idiots,” she whispers in my ear, her voice choked up. “Why didn’t you say anything?”

I shouldn’t tell her.

But as she clings to me, I find I can’t hold back. I don’t even want to. Fuck caution. I’ve been cautious for far too long.

“Because I wanted too much,” I admit roughly. “I wanted everything, immediately. From the moment I met you, I wanted to make you my wife. And all you wanted—what you needed—was a job. I loved that about you, and wanted it for you. I still do. I want to give you the world, because you’ve earned it.”

“Right now, I need a shower,” she says.

I pick her up, this time carrying her like she’s a spider monkey clinging to me, and march her into the steamy shower. It has a double set of shower heads and jets, but we stick to one part of the shower, rinsing each other off.

Then I take her face in my hands and kiss her deeply.

“I love your kisses,” she whispers against my lips. “I want them all.”

“They’re yours.” I kiss her neck. “Everywhere.”

I give her kisses on both shoulders as I turn her around. Then I kiss down her spine, until I’m kneeling behind her.

“Kisses for my pretty girl wherever she wants them,” I breathe against the cleft of her ass.

She trembles in my hands.

“Lean forward, Clover.” My beast is rising again. I lick between her cheeks. “Kisses everywhere.”

I WRING two more orgasms from her in the shower, then bundle her in warm towels and carry her back to my bed.

When I settle in beside her, I catch a worried look on her face for a second before she masks it.

“What is it?” I ask, catching her chin in my fingers. “Don’t hide from me.”

She bites her lower lip. “Did I make things worse between you and Andrew?”

I exhale in relief that it's only that on her mind. "No. That's been a long time coming."

I tell her about our unlikely friendship in college. Very much opposites attract, but after we booked the same backpacking adventure, it turned out we had more in common than I suspected.

"By the time we graduated, he felt like family. Like a brother," I admit ruefully.

She draws a slow circle on my chest. "What happened to that feeling?"

"We grew apart. Or maybe we were never that close, actually, and it was just coincidence that worked out at the time for us to start our business." I can hear the edge to my voice, and I know she can, too.

"You miss having someone to share things with."

"I did. I was alone for years." I nod. "But then you showed up. And sharing my work with you has meant everything to me."

"Is that why you...?"

"Used your life details?" I grimace. "I'm sorry about that. Truly. That was a horrible invasion."

"It didn't hurt me. I didn't know about it."

I kiss her temple. "Until tonight."

"Until tonight," she repeats softly. "But even now...do I look mad?"

I look down at her. Her eyes, sparkle and her mouth is curved into a very pleased smile.

“No.” Which fills me with pride. But it also leaves me with an important question. “Why aren’t you?”

“Because it all felt right to me to hear it. To know I’ve been...” She pushes herself up, her towel falling away from her body. “To know you’ve seen me as a woman all this time, that’s very nice.” She leans in, her breasts brushing against my bare chest. And she frowns. “But I am annoyed I’ve missed out on a lot of girlfriend benefits.”

I cup the back of her head, drawing her closer. “Fiancée benefits are even better,” I murmur.

“Those too. You owe me,” she says as sharply as she can manage while at the same time, climbing on top of me.

“Consider me severely in your debt.” I crush our mouths together, hard and firm, and drop my other hand to her ass. God, she feels good in my hands.

She squeaks into my mouth and kisses me back, her nipples tightening to such peaks that I can feel them drilling into my own chest.

I lift her hips up enough to get my hand between us, and give her my fingers because she can’t be ready for my cock again, not tonight, but I want her pussy filled.

My cock leaks against her thighs as we kiss. She didn’t answer my question about children, but as she rides my fingers, I imagine it’s my cock, pumping seed slowly into her womb.

Putting a baby in my fierce little assistant. Starting a family—and not waiting out of an overactive sense of caution.

Clover pulls off my mouth with a cry. “Put it in me,” she gasps. “Please.”

It doesn't take much this time. My fingers slip out of her and my cock knows exactly where it needs to be.

Her eyes go wide as I notch us together.

"Tell me I'm yours," I say.

"You're mine."

I cup her cheek possessively. "Tell me that you are mine."

She lifts her chin, holding my eye contact. "I'm yours."

"Tell me this is real."

"Rufus—"

"Mister. Say, this is real, Mister."

Her breath hitches. "This is real, Mister."

I thrust into her, all the way deep. "You're mine, Clover. This is real. This is forever. I want you every way I can have you. And I want everything with you."

"B-babies?" She arches beneath me. I imagine she's trying to get comfortable on my cock. Only the second time she's taken one into her body and I'm already talking about filling her with my seed.

"Yes." My pulse is pounding. "God damn it, Clover. You're so tight. You feel so good. I need you to come."

I snap my hips back, thinking I'll go down on her, get her another orgasm before I lose it inside her, but she wraps her legs around my hips.

"With me," she breathes. "I'm close, Mister. If you come inside me, I think..."

I pin her wrists to the bed and surge into her again. "You want me to fill you up? Will you come if I put a baby in you,

mmm?”

“Yes, Rufus, yes!”

“I’ll make you my wife,” I growl. “I’ll make you my whole god damn life.”

She cries out and I snap my hips forward, burying my cock deep inside her, all the way to her womb, and my first spurt of release explodes up my shaft.

I keep fucking her as she stares up at me, her pussy tightening, tightening, tightening until she curls up against my chest and goes still.

And then I feel her cunt squeeze me. One long, hard pulse, then more, squeezes that keep going as my orgasm finishes. She holds me inside her for a long stretch, until my pulse falls back to normal.

Then she collapses back. “Oh my God.”

“Good girl,” I murmur. I press her legs apart, needing to see that she’s okay—and wanting to see what I’ve done.

Her sex is swollen, pink on the edge of red, and when I touch her with my fingertips, even gently, she shivers.

“That sensitive?”

She nods. “Mm-hmm.”

“You’ve taken so much tonight.” I kiss her tender flesh. “Are you going to hold all my come deep inside you, or is it going to slide out?”

“Rufus!” She covers her face with her hands. “You didn’t just say that.”

I grin. “I did.”

“You’re insatiable.”

I lick a slow circle around her clit.

Her eyes go wide. “No, I was teasing. Don’t *actually* be insatiable.”

“Too late,” I growl. “Give me one more.”

“I can’t.”

I nod confidently. “You can. You said you couldn’t five orgasms ago, and we proved that wrong, didn’t we?”

She whimpers and rocks her hips up to my meet my mouth.

A very good girl indeed.

Chapter 9

Clover

BY MONDAY MORNING, Rufus has found my orgasm limits a few times, and he's so good about letting me sleep once I'm properly exhausted.

But I don't sleep in on Monday. Whereas on Saturday and Sunday, he was the first one up and the one to treat me to coffee and breakfast in bed, today I'm the first to wake.

I slide out from under his heavy arm, pull on a dress shirt of his hanging on a hook, and pad my way to the kitchen before I text my roommate another update.

I'll probably be home at lunchtime, but only to pack a bag. We're going on an adventure.

She texts me back a rubber ducky emoji, which is how we call each other a lucky duck.

I send her a heart, and then set out trying to figure out his high-end coffee maker.

The first espresso has just finished brewing when he stalks into the kitchen. "Can you not sleep?"

I smile to myself at his overprotective nature. "I'm excited and nervous for today, that's all."

“Don’t be nervous.” He pulls me hard against his chest. “Like you in my shirt, though.”

I squirm in pleasure. “It’s not a bad nervous.”

“Okay.” He kisses my hair, then tips my face up to give me a proper good morning kiss instead.

AN HOUR AND A HALF—AND two orgasms, both mine—later, we arrive at the office.

Everything looks exactly as we left it on Friday, but nothing is the same.

I sit at my desk. Today is the last day I will sit here, so I focus on the tasks we’ve discussed I should do—copying our personal projects to an external cloud storage system. Backing them up on an SD card, too.

Changing my address in the HR system to Rufus’s loft, so they can forward any correspondence there.

And then giving the company my formal notice.

It all takes eighteen minutes.

When I’m done, I stand, check that I haven’t left anything personal in the desk, and then push open the door to Rufus’s office.

He’s bent over his computer, still typing.

I skirt around behind him and read over his shoulder. He has some correspondence with his lawyers open in one window, and he’s writing an email to Andrew in another.

I drop a kiss to the back of his neck.

He writes two more lines, then hits send. And immediately hauls me into his lap. “Ah, you feel good,” he says on a rough exhale. He presses his forehead to mine, and I cup his face in my hands. “It’s done.”

“Good job, Mister.” I kiss him softly. “Should we go now?”

“We need to find new offices, don’t we?” He squeezes my ass. “Can’t start our new firm at the loft. We’d never get any work done.”

“Like you aren’t going to fuck me silly at the new office,” I tease.

He laughs, low and knowing. “I’m tempted to fuck you right here. Did you lock the door?”

“Nope.” I push up, to go and do that, but he holds on tight.

“Hang on a second.” He smooths a strand of my hair off my cheek. “I want to tell you how happy I am to do this with you. The business shift, I mean. We’re going to do amazing things, Clover Armstrong.”

There’s that glittering feeling again. Me and Mr. Newton Smith working on a private project.

Wild laughter burbles up inside me.

Rufus smiles broadly. “What is it?”

“I just...we’re so good together. But it’s still kind of hilarious how quickly a fake wife project escalated to a very real new business.”

“And a very real wife project, too,” he growls, lifting my hand to his mouth. “Need to get a ring for this hand today. That’s actually priority number one, before new office space —”

The door to his office is pushed open with enough force to sound like something cracked in the frame. “What the actual fuck do you—”

As one, Rufus and I turn to greet Andrew.

“Didn’t know you were still here,” Rufus says mildly. “Did you keep the private jet on standby for the whole weekend?”

Andrew glowers at me. “Get off him.”

“Excuse me?” I wiggle my bum against Rufus, who clamps his hands down on my hips. No, I’m not going anywhere.

“Oh come on, this is inappropriate,” Andrew blusters. “Rufus, you coerced your employee into pretending to be your fiancée, and now you’re mauling her. How far will this ruse go?”

I look at Rufus with an eyebrow raised. “Coerce?”

He smiles back at me. “Ruse?”

“Does this feel like a ruse to you?” I ask him.

He shakes his head. “Does this feel like coercion to you?”

We share a laugh. Then Rufus helps me stand, and he puts himself between me and his former business partner. “Andrew, as per the termination letter I’ve just sent you—which you should have read before you came storming in here—I am well within my rights to serve you my immediate notice. I remain an officer of this corporation until...” Rufus checks his watch. “Well, I guess until you figure out what your next step is, at which point we’ll be well over the ocean. I’ve never used the corporate jet before. Might as well get one flight in before we part ways. Have a good one.”

Andrew gapes at us as Rufus rushes me past him. I snatch my purse from my desk, then we keep our heads down and go straight to the elevator.

“What was that about the airplane?” I ask, my pulse racing with a whole new level of nerves.

Rufus draws me close and bends over to kiss me. “I need to take my wife on a honeymoon. Oh, and we’ll stop somewhere along the way to get married. The office search can wait until we return.”

Chapter 10

Rufus

I GIVE Clover the choice of where to get married. Gibraltar and Vegas are both options.

She shyly asks if we can go back to her hometown, Conception Ridge, even though it'll be a bit more complicated, and not as immediate.

“Of course.” I sweep my arm around the small cabin of the private plane we've hijacked from Andrew. “Then where should we take this free ride?”

“We could go visit the coffee producer we talked to last week.” Her eyes burn bright, and I can't deny my girl a business adventure.

For us, that's romantic, too.

So I give the pilot instructions to take us to Costa Rica, and I call ahead, asking an agent on the ground to find us a villa.

A THUNDERSTORM THREATENS in the distance, making the air heavy.

Inside the villa we have made our own over the last week, Clover whistles to herself. I'm still smiling when I hear the

screen door open and close.

“Are you asleep?” she murmurs, brushing her fingertips over my shoulder.

Without opening my eyes I snag her wrist and haul her into the hammock on top of me.

She’s wearing a bikini, but it’s mostly bare skin on bare skin. In my swim trunks, my cock twitches to life and thickens in anticipation. “Who’s my best girl?”

She squirms on top of me. “I am.”

“I want to feel you come on my fingers and my tongue and my cock before I let you leave this hammock.” My voice is rough and slow, still waking up, but now I have a clear plan, and I’m committed to it.

“I really thought you were asleep,” she gasps.

“Even if I were, I’d want to make you feel good.” I tug at the strings of her bikini, baring the rest of her body. “What were you doing?”

“Reading a book.”

“Anything good?”

“Very good. Very...filthy.”

“Did you get all worked up?”

She giggles. “Maybe.”

“Tell me about it.”

That gets me a scandalized gasp. “I can’t.”

“Why not?”

“It’s...” She clears her throat. “Some things are best read quietly.”

“And not repeated?”

“Precisely.”

“Is it monster fucking?”

She chokes on a laugh. “No.”

“Daddy porn?”

“Rufus!”

“I’ve seen your ereader.”

“It’s...bossier than that.”

“Ah. Handsome older employer, maybe? Drags a young girl into his lap and demands she call him Mister?”

“More like a farmer who tells her to shut the...” She squeaks as I grind my cock up against her.

“Continue.”

“I can’t say it.”

I grin wickedly. “I can.”

Her eyes go wide. “You know the saying?”

I’ve done my research. “*Shut the fuck up and take that dick like a good little girl.*”

“I think it’s just *good girl.*”

“I added an important element.”

“You did, huh?” She juts her chin at me.

Which I immediately grip between my fingers.

We stare at each other for a long, lusty beat.

Then I rearrange her so her legs are spread on either side of me.

“I said...” I cover her mouth with one hand. “Shut the fuck up.”

This time, her gasp is shaky.

I palm her ass, then hitch her hips, angling her glistening slit upwards. For my inspection. For my violation.

I drag my fingers through her wetness, then shove them inside her. And I sigh happily. “Fuck, you’re still wet from earlier. Good.”

She squirms as I stroke my fingers in and out of her, then use her wetness to coat my cock.

“Shh,” I say, unnecessarily because I’m still covering her mouth. My fingers are still wet from her when I clamp them on her hip and pull her down onto my cock, impaling her on the cock that craves her. “Yes, that’s it. Take your Mister’s dick like the good little girl you are.”

She shakes as I work her back and forth on my length, but it’s when I shift my hand to the back of her neck and pull her down on top of me that she really starts to lose it.

“You know why you’re so horny this week, little Clover?”

She whimpers and shakes her head, *no*, but she does. I know she does.

I fuck my hips up against her, the hammock rocking. She wouldn’t be able to get away from me even if she wanted to. I have her trapped on my dick, a squirming, horny, fertile girl.

“It’s the middle of your cycle, isn’t it? You’re ready for my seed. We haven’t use protection once. And I don’t want to. I want you to get pregnant here. I want you to have a part of me growing inside you when I take you to your hometown and put a ring on your finger. How about that? Is that what you want?”

She cries out and I growl at her to be quiet, which only makes her louder, and then she's coming, and I explode, gripping her hips tight as I thrust up and bury my seed where it belongs.

Inside my wife-to-be.

Epilogue

Clover

three months later

THE WHITE DRESS is a bit of a stretch.

Literally. It doesn't fit that well, the seams straining over the belly that didn't exist two days ago at my last fitting, but now...well...it only has to stay on my body for a few more hours.

And then my husband will peel me out of it.

I lift my gaze from where the seam is looking like it might bust and search the garden for him. He's not far away. He never is. Right now my older brother is introducing him to yet another business contact.

Anything to convince the Newton Smith family firm to set up shop here in Conception Ridge instead of returning to the world class city where we met.

I would laugh, except it looks like the hard press might be working on him.

My husband.

I press my lips together, suddenly giddy.

He really is mine, in every way.

And as heat rises up the back of my neck, thinking about the way he growled and demanded three orgasms this morning before he let me out of bed, his attention shifts. He lifts his head and looks my way.

“Excuse me,” I can see him say.

He doesn’t wait for them to reply before he strides in my direction.

“I can hear your thoughts across the garden,” he murmurs as he captures me in his arms. “And they are filthy.”

“It’s the pregnancy,” I protest.

He kisses me deeply, not caring that anyone is around.

But it’s not just the pregnancy. It’s me. It’s how much I crave him, and his beastly ways.

It’s my joy at completing another project, together.

And there’s only one way I want to mark the formal closure of the Wife Project—alone, naked, and more than a little messy.

“Have you had enough of the party?” Rufus asks, amusement dancing in his eyes.

“The dress is a bit tight,” I confess.

He nods. “Of course. We should get that off you immediately.”

And then he scoops me up in his arms and strides out of our wedding reception.

Excellent timing, too, because that seam gives away as he hits the stairs up to the inn’s honeymoon suite.

Want more Marrying the Boss goodness? Cassie Mint and Evie Rose both have standalone boss/assistant stories out now as well!

The boss needs a fake wife, and it has to be *her*. Three new steamy and spicy marriage of convenience instalove romances that will make you swoon and giggle and your cheeks heat.

Check out...

[Baby Proposal by Evie Rose](#)

He's rich, grumpy, and will give her a baby if she'll be his fake wife...

[Husband Skills by Cassie Mint](#)

My big, scary boss wants to practice his husband skills... on me.

And if you want another delicious slice of Clover and Rufus's life, five years later, [click here to get the bonus story "Life Project" sent straight to your inbox.](#)

Also by Chloe Maine

Before He Was Her Headmaster

My one-night stand? He's sitting behind the headmaster's desk.

We meet at a truck stop. The chemistry is immediate, and we both do something out of character: one night, no explanations. The next day, I arrive at yet another private school. I'm a mature student who just needs three credits before I can graduate. Now I'm the off-limits forbidden temptation Sebastian Craig can't forget, and we both try our best to behave. It works for a few weeks...until our secret cravings come tumbling out in the library after hours. How will we keep our private connection hidden until the end of term? I want to be his sweet girl forever, but the age gap and responsibility of his role might be too much to overcome...

Click here to start reading [Before He Was Her Headmaster](#)

Above the Shop

He was my mom's high school boyfriend.

I have seventeen dollars to my name and a one-way bus ticket to my new college town—two months early. Oh, and the name of a man I've never met scrawled on a piece of paper. Henry Wilde.

But when I show up on his doorstep, he has no idea that my mom said I could stay with him. And he only has one bed.

It's eight weeks until I can move onto campus.

Eight weeks of living with him above his barbershop. So I'm going to make myself useful. Help him out, and not try to pester him about what it's going to be like at college. Because this homeschooled girl has a lot of questions, but they're not appropriate for my de facto guardian. Not even if we're both consenting adults...

Click here to start reading [Above the Shop](#)

Santa's Baby

She calls him Daddy Christmas...

Ford Gamble is my dad's best friend. He's also the reclusive keeper of the Conception Ridge lighthouse. I remember a time when he was around more—the perfect, hotter-than-sin fodder for all my teenage fantasies. And if I'm being honest, for most of my fantasies since then too...

Now there's just enough silver in his shock of sexy hair and thick beard that he looks a little like a hot forty-year-old Santa with six-pack abs. And that's what has me heading to the lighthouse on a dark, stormy Christmas Eve when the retirement home where I work needs a fill-in Mr. Claus for their annual celebration.

Except I underestimate the bad weather. The next thing I know, I'm waking up in his bed, and I realize I may have revealed my forbidden fantasies to him in my feverish sleep. Can I convince him to finally let me call him Daddy Christmas? Or will he deny he shares my taboo feelings?

Because I know Ford can't stop looking at me with a wild heat in his gaze. And my desperate Christmas wish is that he's thinking about corrupting his little, not-so-innocent angel.

Click here to start reading [Santa's Baby](#).

Father of the Bride

She's the maid of honor. He's the father of the bride.

Thanks to a snowstorm on the East Coast, I'm the only member of my best friend's wedding party to actually arrive in Vegas as planned. But she has a plan... her father will pick me up at the airport, and we'll take care of any last-minute wedding details together. Not in the plan is the unexpected sizzling chemistry with an older, off-limits man and being talked into sharing his suite.

What happens in Vegas, stays in Vegas? Not if the father of the bride claims you as his own.

[Click here to start reading Father of the Bride](#)

Operation: Wife Her Up

I have a week off and a leave pass burning a hole in my pocket. I should go home to Conception Ridge. I head there, but when the exit on the highway comes up, I keep on driving to Virgin Peak, and my cabin on a mountain lake.

I don't expect to find a squatter. Or to immediately have a visceral connection to the young woman, who refuses to tell me her name. And despite the fact I'm a big guy, a Navy SEAL, she seems to trust me.

We have five days together. Five nights, too, and I'll use every second to forge a stronger bond between us. Before I leave this island, I will know her name—and give her mine, if she'll have me.

Operation: Wife Her Up is underway, and I never fail in my mission.

[Click here to start reading Operation: Wife Her Up](#)

Links to all books are on my website at

www.chloemaine.com

About the Author

Chloe Maine has written other books before, but none of them as purely id-driven as her debut, *Before He Was Her Headmaster*. She delights in the fantasy of bending big men to the wicked desires of supposedly innocent women. When she's not writing, she's probably reading. She lives in Canada with her own big man, raising the babies they made together.

