



Lara
Dee

Daddy
Christmas

DADDY CHRISTMAS



CARA DEE

Daddy Christmas
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Edited by [Silently Correcting Your Grammar, LLC.](#)

DEDICATION

*To my amazing readers and friends in the romance community.
Have a wonderful holiday.*

*Much love,
Cara*

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DECEMBER 1



Parker Jacobson

“*P*arker!”

Not again.

This was it. This was how I was gonna die. Not from panic at the disco but at the office.

“I want the record to reflect that this isn’t my job,” I said loudly.

Mya and Kim shot me looks that told me where to go. The sun didn’t shine there.

Flustered and completely stressed out, I left our cubicle area and all the phones ringing and headed to Mr. Williams’s office.

What a great start to December.

I stayed in the doorway. “You summoned me with a shout heard in China, sir?”

“I’m not in the mood, Parker.” When was he ever? “I need you to personally bring this down to corporate and deliver it to Mr. Abrams.”

I furrowed my brow, walked over to his desk, and accepted the two parcels, the bigger one the size of a briefcase. The other box made a little *clunk* when I shifted it in my arms, so it had to be a bottle of something.

“I don’t need to point out that this isn’t my job, right?” I asked to make sure. “I’ve been tasked to do things I’m not qualified for all week.”

“It’s Wednesday.” He lifted his gaze from his computer and raised a brow. “I think you’re qualified to be an errand boy for a couple of hours. Luanne can help you with cab fare.”

I didn't need a cab. I didn't need to take this to corporate downtown. Mr. Abrams was here today, as he was every Wednesday. And Monday and Friday.

"All right..."

"Team effort, Parker," he reminded, somewhat patiently. "The department will hopefully be back to normal before the week is over."

I sure hoped so because this was bullshit. But hey, at least I got to get out of the IT department for a little bit. It was absolute chaos down here. Phones ringing nonstop, people yelling, higher-ups breathing down our necks for updates.

I made my way through the mayhem area toward the elevators and wondered if I should bring my Christmassy earmuffs for tomorrow. Maybe they'd drown out some of the noise.

Did people even know what they were doing? A question I asked myself more frequently for every year I worked here. The company was just so massive. Thousands of employees across three continents. Countless branches. "Entertainment" was in the name, but I'd never seen any of the entertainment myself—or anything related to it. Except for random tickets to movies the company was involved in. But not with production. Our branch in Glendale manufactured setups for craft services for movie sets and events. The branch in Pasadena recruited people straight out of Caltech for something in technology. My little branch here in Culver City was focused on the corporation's main website and online support.

And sometime last Sunday, our servers had gone down.

I took the elevator up to the top floor where the suits sat, and I adjusted the packages in my arms so I could straighten my tie. I tended to tug at it when I was uncomfortable, and down on my floor, nobody gave a crap.

I kinda wanted to change floors. My own department was so small that it fell under Mr. Williams's leadership in IT. Two floors of engineers, web administrators, developers, and other tech-savvy folks...and Mya, Kim, and me.

The top floor stole all the light from the rest of us. They had big bay windows, as opposed to our tiny square ones. The building used to be a factory of some sort, so it was all exposed brick and concrete floors. But not up here. Oh no, sir, they got hardwood floors and potted plants.

This should be my floor.

Mr. Abrams's office was in the far back, past the bullpen of worker bees

who handled social media marketing and flippin' Instagram support. Up here, you could get paid to banter with *Variety* and Sony online. Downstairs, our online support got stuck with angry emails and phone calls.

On Friday, the two top floors would turn into the crime scene for our annual holiday office party. Something to look forward to, at least.

After the bullpen came two hallways of fishbowl offices, and then the space opened up to Mr. Abrams's grand office. And his assistant's desk.

She wasn't here, though.

I scratched my head.

Should I just leave the stuff on Suravi's desk? Perhaps she was out to get Mr. Abrams's lunch, what did I know? I usually communicated with her through email. In fact, I'd only been in Mr. Abrams's office once before, and he hadn't even been there. Kim and I had snuck in at last year's holiday party. We'd been curious.

Oh, screw it. I got closer to the doorway since the door was open and peered inside, finding Mr. Abrams behind his desk to the right. It was a pretty big office, but he didn't have much in there. All those windows, the biggest Persian rug I'd ever seen, his desk, and cabinets behind him. He could've had an entire seating area—or a pool table, if I got to pick—and perhaps a bar table because all rich top dogs had that. But nothing. Two chairs in front of the desk that looked uncomfortable.

Mr. Abrams, however, looked comfortable. I'd *love* to sit on him. He had that whole Daddy vibe, including silver at his temples and a trimmed beard, crow's-feet in the corners of his eyes, and suits made exclusively for his body. I guessed he was in his mid-to-late forties.

It was a travesty that he had a giant stick up his ass. He wasn't merely demanding as fuck and strict; he was dull and seemingly devoid of emotion.

I cleared my throat to get his attention. "Mr. Abrams?"

He stopped typing on his computer and peered at me over the rim of his glasses.

"I have a delivery for you from Mr. Williams on the ground floor," I said. "Suravi's not here, but I can leave it on her desk if you'd prefer."

He dismissed that and motioned for me to come forward.

I could make some serious strides on my Fitbit in his office, it was that big. At least compared to the tiny office I shared with Mya and Kim. And "office" was a stretch. Only a single wall separated us from the cubicle area.

"It sounds like a Christmas gift, sir," I commented as I handed him the

parcels.

“It makes sounds?” He wasn’t pleased. “Then please stay here while I open it so I can decide whether to send it back with you.”

Hey. Rude. “Maybe Santa can replace it with a lump of coal.”

“Perhaps,” was his only reaction.

While he carefully tore the wrapping, I inspected his boring desk. I mean, the desk itself was nice, probably some expensive mahogany or oak thing, but he had nothing personal on it. No photos, no knickknacks. I knew he was unmarried and had no kids, but he had several nieces and nephews.

“It’s a nice rug you have here,” I offered. “I kinda wanna do cartwheels on it.” Or break-dance all over it with Kim.

He paused his unwrapping and glanced up at me. “You don’t have to fill the silence.”

“No, I know. I do that voluntarily.”

“That’s a shame,” he muttered and returned to his gift.

I suppressed a sigh and stuck my hands down into the pockets of my slacks.

The only thing that was a crying shame was this fun-sucker of a man. I could count my interactions with him on one hand—in the four years I’d been here—and they’d all required some serious aftercare to brighten my mood again.

Underneath the plain wrapping paper was a bottle of whiskey or scotch, and he held it up to read the tag strapped to its neck.

“This is a nice bourbon,” he commented. “I’m sure my uncle will enjoy it.”

“Sir?”

“It’s addressed to Clarke Abrams, my uncle.” He set the bottle aside, along with the other parcel, and I cursed to myself. “I assume this package is for him too. I’ll be at corporate tomorrow—I can deliver them to him.”

Fuck, fuck, fuck, fuck.

Very few things embarrassed me, but this kind of mistake definitely did. My collar felt tight, and my ears started burning.

“I’m so sorry, sir. That’s my mistake,” I managed to say. “Mr. Williams told me to personally deliver it to Mr. Abrams at corporate, and I just assumed he meant you—and you’re here on Wednesdays, so... I’m sorry. This isn’t actually my job, so you don’t have to worry about this happening again. I’ll be back at my desk as soon as the servers—”

“Please, for the love of God, stop rambling.” Mr. Abrams leaned back in his seat. I swallowed uncomfortably. He observed me. “If Mr. Williams gave you the instructions, your assumption feels...foolish.”

“Yep. Well aware. It’s been a long week.” Fuck, let me get out of here, please.

“It’s Wednesday.”

“So people keep telling me.” I gestured to the packages. “May I have them back? I need to go downtown before your uncle leaves for the day.”

“He won’t get them, regardless.” He checked his watch. “He leaves right after the breakfast meeting on the days my aunt gets dialysis.”

That was...sweet, I supposed. Clarke Abrams was in his seventies, if I wasn’t mistaken. It probably wouldn’t be that many years before he handed over the corporation to two of his sons and the nephew in front of me.

I suddenly had an idea. “You’re going to corporate tomorrow.”

“As I mentioned.”

“And you live in Santa Monica, right?”

His forehead creased. “I do.”

“So you’re passing Culver City on the way,” I said. “We can carpool. Pick me up outside the office tomorrow, and that way, I can follow Mr. Williams’s order and deliver the packages to Mr. Abrams myself. What do you say?”

“I was unaware that you were capable of following orders.”

“Hey.” I put my hands on my hips, getting a tad irritated. I knew I’d fucked up. How long did I have to suffer? “You’ve never complained about my work before. Please cut me some slack.”

He frowned at me. He was good at that. “I don’t even know who you are, what your name is, or what it is that you do here.”

“My name is Parker Jacobson, and I’m a mildly insulted graphic designer,” I snapped. Damn it, he was stealing all my holiday cheer! “I designed your business cards, among other things.”

Such as this year’s gift to the employees from corporate.

“I see.” He leaned forward and picked up one of his business cards from the little holder. “Well, Parker Jacobson, it’s not normal behavior to ask your boss for a ride.”

My ears felt hot again. The man made me feel like Bambi on ice, which I’d already thought was my default setting in life. I usually tumbled around and hoped for the best. And I knew I wasn’t always normal. Most people had

a little voice in the back of their head that let them know what was okay to say out loud. Well, that voice fell out and died when my mom dropped me as a baby.

“Excuse me for trying to save the planet,” I fibbed. “We’re in a global climate crisis, you know.”

He snorted at that, and for a fraction of a second, I swore I spotted a smile. I took that as a huge win.

Then he pushed the packages my way again. “Be downstairs at seven thirty on the dot, and if you speak excessively in the car, you’ll walk the rest of the way.”

“Thank you so much, sir.” I grinned and hurriedly scooped up the packages again. “I’ll have the bottle rewrapped. I’m looking forward to my walk. See you tomorrow.”

He shook his head at me, but I focused on the pinch of amusement in his eyes.

DECEMBER 2



*J*yawned as an expensive car drove up right outside the entrance, and I supposed I shouldn't be surprised to see Mr. Abrams rolling down the window from the back seat. Of fucking course he had a personal driver. Of course he did.

"Get in, Parker Jacobson. We have a planet to save."

"Ha-ha." It was too early to acknowledge his probably first joke ever. Before I could open the door, his driver was out of the car and opening it for me. "Oh, wow. Thank you."

This was unbelievable. Maybe it wasn't grand enough to be called a limousine, but it still had a divider between the driver's section and the rear, and two seats faced each other back here. With my boxes from Mr. Williams in my grasp, I sat down across from Mr. Abrams and buckled my seat belt.

Mr. Abrams was reading the paper. No glasses today.

What a fun travel companion he must be.

"Did you bring a paper as a social cue for me to keep my mouth shut?" I asked. "Because that won't work."

He didn't even look up from the paper. "It's a long walk to corporate from here."

I wrinkled my nose.

He had a point.

As we headed out into traffic, I took a few seconds to have a look-see. Cupholders in the doors, always nice. He had a small to-go mug stuck in one.

He was probably an espresso guy.

His entire character was kind of immense. I couldn't *not* observe him. And it was the air around him, the vibe he gave off, more so than his stature.

I mean, that was pretty impressive too; he was tall and had a stocky build, but most people looked like skyscrapers next to me.

Not that many could be so quiet and yet ooze “I own the world” like Wyatt Abrams could, on the other hand.

I had a slight thing for such men.

The Daddy Dom type.

“It’s not polite to stare, Parker,” he said mildly and turned the page.

I let out a laugh, unable to help myself. Could he be any hotter? He smelled incredible too. Another day, another bespoke suit. It was dark blue today. Never a wrinkle in sight, obviously. One leg folded over the other. Shoes professionally polished, I bet. Rich people had services to hire for everything.

“Can I ask why you treat every day at the office like it’s your own funeral?” I asked.

“When I die, there won’t be a funeral,” he responded coolly. “I intend to donate whatever I can to science.”

I shook my head. Noble and all, but even after his death, he would rob people of the fun experience of hosting a funeral service.

“Surely someone loves you enough to throw a memorial...? You have a big family.”

Most of them were involved in the family business—on his uncle’s side. As far as I knew, Wyatt didn’t have any siblings, just cousins. Many of them. And three stood out. Three men had risen over the years and managed their own branches. Clarke’s two eldest sons, both located on the East Coast, and Wyatt.

“Hm.” Exciting response.

“Wow,” I mouthed to myself.

Safe to say, I wasn’t going to become besties with my boss.

Starting to feel hungry, I opened my jacket and retrieved the stack of cookies I’d wrapped in a napkin before leaving this morning.

The first bite brightened my day instantly. A perfect batch. Chewy on the inside, a thin crunch on the outside. With lots of cinnamon-sugar.

My cousin and I traded recipes sometimes. Cam was a submissive too, and he’d recently told me I reminded him of his new boyfriend, who was “a total brat.”

“Would you like a snickerdoodle?” I offered. “I made them myself last night.”

I'd been baking Christmas cookies anyway, so I'd had all the ingredients out.

Mr. Abrams lowered his paper and eyed me with an unreadable look. "How old are you, Parker, if you don't mind my asking?"

I cocked my head and took another bite of the cookie. "Almost twenty-six. Why?"

His eyebrows lifted a fraction. He appeared surprised. "You act much younger."

My own eyebrows bunched together at that. "Maybe you're the one acting super old. Or, you know, your age. You're...sixty-two, sixty-three...?"

His mouth flattened in dismay, and he folded his paper with enough force to let me know I'd struck a nerve. "I'm forty-six."

"Then you have no reason to act like a snickerdoodle is a child's toy," I replied stubbornly and crammed the rest of the cookie into my mouth. "You're a damn grinch, you know that?" I accidentally let some crumbs fling out as I spoke, so I quickly brushed them off the packages on my lap.

Mr. Abrams didn't say anything else, and it was just as well. I'd lost my desire to try. I didn't know why I'd bothered in the first place. Everyone who interacted with Mr. Abrams at work said the same thing. It was no use. He never let a conversation derail if it resulted in him having to stick around longer than necessary. He never went out to lunch with coworkers. He didn't have friends at our branch.

When we arrived at corporate, I was quick to escape the vehicle before he did—before the driver could get the door for me—and I told Mr. Abrams, "I'm leaving three cookies for you. I strongly advise you to eat them. Maybe they'll make you sweeter." And then I aimed straight for the entrance to this huge skyscraper in front of us. Possibly the city's largest mirror. It was covered in glass tiles—or whatever material they used to prevent seven thousand years of misfortune after an earthquake.



This day needed to be over!

It was impossible to find anything in this goddamn building. I'd been rerouted to three different lobbies and reception desks before I found myself face-to-face with Clarke Abrams's assistant outside of his office on the

twenty-third floor.

I left Mr. Williams's gifts with the assistant, wished her a nice day, then hightailed it back to the elevators.

Wait.

I came to a screeching stop outside a door with Mr. Abrams's name on it. Wyatt Abrams, that was. No assistant's desk here.

I should knock.

I definitely *shouldn't* knock. My God, was I a masochist? What was wrong with me? Why was I seeking out more interactions with that turd?

Oh, I knew why.

Mr. Abrams had buttons I wanted to push...

He let me speak to him in a way most stuffy bosses definitely didn't do. I didn't treat him with enough respect. He was also so ridiculously attractive.

I chewed the inside of my cheek and glanced around me. Just a few feet away from this floor's lobby and the elevators. All the corridors were lined with offices, many with the name Abrams on them.

I unzipped my jacket and loosened my tie next. It'd been a workout and a half to play errand boy. Checking my Fitbit, I nodded in satisfaction to myself. Nearly four thousand steps, and it was only 8:42 AM. Nice.

My best course of action right now was to call an Uber and head back to work.

So I cleared my throat and knocked on Mr. Abrams's door.

"Come in," I heard him say.

Don't mind if I do.

I opened the door and poked my head in, immediately registering an office with more furniture than the one in Culver City. Seating area—typical British fancy leather sofas—a bulletin board on one wall cluttered with notes and papers. A bar table in one corner! I knew it. He was the type. Spectacular view of the city... And the man himself, seated behind a large desk, looking none too happy to see me.

My gaze fell to his hand as he quickly stowed away a napkin, and that did it for me.

I grinned.

He'd eaten the cookies.

"What do you want, Parker?" he asked impatiently.

I smiled so hard that my cheeks hurt. "Were they good? Are you sweet now?"

He clenched his jaw. “Get out.”

A laugh burst out of me, and I hurriedly closed the door again. Oh God, I was going to ride this wave of joy all freaking day. It’d worked! He’d eaten the cookies. Not even an old grouch like him could resist homemade snickerdoodles.

DECEMBER 3



*M*ya and I arrived to work at the same time, and I grinned at her getup. Specifically, the antlers in her hair.

The entire office had breathed a collective sigh of relief yesterday when they got everything up and running again, so I had a feeling people were ready for the office party later today. I knew I was.

“Cute antlers, hon.”

“Cute hat, darling.” Mya flicked the fuzzy ball at the end of my Santa hat. “Wanna get breakfast with me upstairs?”

I checked my Fitbit. Yeah, we had time. “Sure. I guess today isn’t the day you bring food from home.”

“Correct. I love sleep too much.”

I smirked and stepped into the elevator after her. The car filled up quickly, and I adjusted my messenger bag to make room. It was packed to the limit today because I was gonna hand out a crap-ton of Christmas cookies, something I’d started doing two years ago. Not to everybody—I couldn’t afford that—but at least to the people on my floor and a few others. Like Mr. Abrams.

“I have a new goal in life, by the way.” I spoke for only Mya to hear. “I’m gonna make Mr. Abrams nicer.”

She choked on a laugh and clearly thought I was kidding.

“I’m serious.”

“Doh, yeah, sure,” she laughed. “And I’m marrying Mila Kunis.”

She probably had a better shot.

Once we reached the sixth floor, we went into the cafeteria, where Mya got her usual yogurt cup and blueberry muffin. A few employees were

already busy hanging up decorations for the party.

Fuck, I was getting excited. I didn't drink often, but when I did, I drank all of it. And they were generous at this company. The bar opened at five, and it was damn near bottomless.

"Are you going home over the holidays?" I asked.

Mya shook her head and pinched off the top of the muffin. "I left Hawaii for many reasons. The lack of snow in the winter is one of them. I'm heading to Aspen with some friends."

"Damn. I'm jealous." I loved the snow in the winter too.

"What are your plans?" she asked.

I shrugged and eyed a guy walking past. He reminded me of the dude I'd made out with at last year's holiday party. I couldn't be sure... "My sister and I have two options. Either we head up to Thousand Oaks and spend Christmas with our grandmother and her two sisters, or we go see our parents in Pensacola."

Actually, my sister had a third option. She might very well be with her boyfriend. They'd been together almost a year now.

"We'll see what happens, I guess," I said with another shrug. "Our folks are flying in for my birthday on the fifteenth, so it's possible we'll celebrate Christmas early, and then I'll just Netflix my way through the actual holidays."

I wouldn't mind that. Much.



"Almost done, almost done, almost done," I rambled. My department had already forgotten that Kim, Mya, and I had helped them all week. Mr. Williams had let them finish work an hour early, whereas my cronies and I had to go on till five. Not cool.

People in the cubicle area right outside our little nook were chatting and waiting for the moment they could head up to the cafeteria and start liquoring themselves up. I was jealous.

"Save file," I muttered under my breath.

Henric, one of the hero coders of the week, poked his head in. "Parker, I hear you're impossible to embarrass."

Mya giggled but didn't look away from her screen.

“I may or may not have a reputation from previous holiday parties.” I was exaggerating. Last year, someone dared me to sing karaoke. Easiest twenty bucks I ever made, considering I would’ve done it for free. The year before, I’d ended up in a swordfight with giant dildos. I still didn’t know who’d thought it’d been a good idea to bring sex toys to work. But it’d been fun!

The trick was to go nuts once Mr. Abrams and a couple other boring higher-ups had gone home.

Henric smirked and pulled out a roll of bills from his pocket. “Hundred bucks if you attend the party wearing nothing but your underwear and that Santa hat.”

Hot damn. For a hundred bucks, I could afford a nicer present for Nana.

“That’s all?” I asked to make sure. “Underwear and Santa hat?”

“The whole party,” he added. “At least till ten o’clock. You can’t run off and hide.”

Why would I hide? I had a nice body. I only wished I’d picked more festive underwear. Maybe red or green briefs instead of plain white.

“Leave the money with Mya.” I jerked my chin at my friend. “She’ll hold it until it’s mine.”

“That was easy.” Henric went over to Mya and handed her the cash. “I’m looking forward to seeing you without clothes all night.”

My eyebrows went up, and it was quickly followed by a grin. How about that, Henric was flirting with me. Not that I’d let that go very far. He’d only been working here a year, and I knew he’d banged at least four women and three guys in that time. But he was easy on the eyes, and flirting was fun. No harm in entertaining the idea for a night.



“Remind me to give Mr. Abrams the Christmas cookies later,” I told Mya as I headed into the elevator. He hadn’t been in his office when I’d made rounds at lunch, and I didn’t feel like lugging the cookies with me to the party.

I had no pockets in this outfit.

“You’re a dork.” Mya reapplied her lipstick in the mirror, and Kim was still eyeing me with laughter in her eyes.

“You act like you’ve never seen a naked guy before, babe.” I threw an arm around Kim’s shoulders and smooched her cheek. “And we both know

that's not true."

Who could forget that she'd gotten caught with not only one but two guys in a supply closet last year?

Computer girls were the best of freaks.

"No, I act like it's going to be hysterically embarrassing to see you prance around naked in front of our bosses," she corrected me and pushed up her glasses. "I suggest you have at least four drinks before you face any of them."

Her advice wasn't bad. Even I had limits, and I could admit I'd already planned to stay in the back of the party when Mr. Abrams made his appearance.

But until then...

The elevator doors opened once we'd reached the sixth floor, and I immediately felt my mouth twisting into a grin. The only upside to getting off work fifteen minutes later than everyone else, the party was in full swing when we arrived.

The usual brightness in the cafeteria had been dimmed and replaced by disco lights and more Christmas decorations—not to mention loud music. The effect it had on me was instant. Energy buzzed through me, and I ushered my ladies straight to the cafeteria.

"Oh my God, Parker!" One of the chicks from the social media department laughed and hurried over with a tray of what looked like Jell-O shots. "I didn't believe Henric when he told us."

"Believe it." I grinned and snatched two cups right away and threw them back. Oh God—candy-cane-flavored shots. Not their best idea. "Wait—I need two more. Fuck." I coughed and screwed my eyes shut as I tossed back my third. Jesus. They definitely didn't skimp on the vodka.

All right! I was ready to show my moves on the dance floor. And hopefully not get my feet mangled in the process. Henric could've at least let me keep my shoes on.



This party, no matter how energetic it was upon entry, desperately needed Kim and me. She was the only one I'd known before I started working here. We'd gone to high school together in DC, though we hadn't been friends at the time. Then, all random-like, we'd run into each other when we'd

auditioned for the same dance squad in LA.

It was the reason I'd moved here. Plus, my sister had already been in LA a year by the time I'd arrived, so I hadn't had to go through the whole "Shit, I gotta live in my car before I find a place."

"All right, let's show 'em how it's done," Kim said.

She was the best dance partner a guy could ask for. She could be a backup dancer to the stars if she didn't prefer working in web design. To the upbeat tune of OneRepublic's "Run," we carved out our own space on the dance floor, and it didn't take long before the thirty or so people around us wanted to watch us instead.

I guessed my wearing nothing but a pair of tight briefs made it more interesting...

We danced like Justin Timberlake, like Usher, and like the queen herself, Britney.

Kim fell back, feigning a drop, right before we grabbed each other's hands, and then I pulled her forward again so she could do a full flip around my arm. That was how we got the cheers. And all the booze we wanted. We laughed breathlessly as the song faded into another and accepted shots that maybe weren't as bad as I'd originally thought.

"Pictures!" someone hollered over the music.

I didn't know why they announced it. People were taking pictures of their drinks, with their friends, of those dancing, and of themselves all over the place.

"Don't forget to use the hashtag, people!" someone else yelled.

A few of us found a table in the back of the cafeteria and spent the next hour doing more shots and speculating wildly about this year's gift from corporate. They all knew I'd designed the logo, but I wasn't going to blab.

"It's another beach towel, isn't it?" Trina slurred.

"Could be." It wasn't. I actually loved this year's gift. For once, I planned on using it.

"Hey, everyone!"

I squinted toward the booming voice near the exit of the cafeteria. It was Henric.

"Time for Santa's speech upstairs!" he announced.

Oh, my grumpy grinch in a Santa costume. I was so ready.

As I stood up, I was hit by vertigo, and I started laughing. "Holy shit." Now I felt the shots. "I'mma hold on to you, Mya."

“She’s more wasted than you are,” Kim guffawed.

Yeah, and Kim was what, sober? Riiight.

Since everyone was heading upstairs, we didn’t even consider one of the elevators. They’d be packed. And screw standing in line. So the three of us—and Henric, I noticed—took the stairs.

Ouch, the lights were too bright here.

“You’ve got some moves, babe,” Henric told me.

I snorted, finding that funny for some reason. Maybe it was having him call me *babe*. It was weird.

“Babe,” I said, sidling up next to him. “You know we’re not happening, right, babe?”

He shot me a lazy smirk. “Are you sure?”

“*Positive.*” I would’ve draped an arm around his shoulders if I hadn’t been so damn short. Instead, I settled for linking my arm with his. “You’re hotter than sin—you already know that—but you’re way too young for me. And way too much of a player.”

He chuckled. “I’m older than you, squirt.”

I laughed. Man, I hadn’t been called squirt since kindergarten.

We left the stairwell and reached the lobby of the seventh floor at the same time as a loud group of people exited the elevators.

“By what, five or six years?” I guessed. “We’re about to hear my type give his annual holiday speech in a Santa costume.”

“He’s got a serious Daddy fetish,” Mya tossed over her shoulder in agreement.

Legit.

“It’s so serious that he’s ogling the most boring man on the planet,” Kim laughed.

I couldn’t help but crack up. It was true! What the fuck was I doing?

Henric merely shook his head in amusement. Then he left me to join his friends—and hopefully to find another target—but that wasn’t entirely good for me. I hadn’t leaned on him to be cute. I just needed some fucking support to stay upright.

“Hey, can someone help me, please? The world is *spinning.*”

Thankfully, I could count on my girls, and we supported one another on our way into the office.

This was the dull section of the party. They had Christmas music playing in the background, and they’d cleared a part of the bullpen, but the lights

hadn't been dimmed down enough, they served wine and cheese instead of shots and chips, and people were talking instead of dancing.

"The *mature* crowd doesn't seem happy to see us," Mya stage-whispered.

I grinned and scanned the cleared area, where several coworkers tried to keep up with their mellow chitchat even as the rest of us arrived with our not-so-indoor voices. Some of them threw us dirty looks.

Meow.

"They're afraid we're gonna steal their wine and chee..." My mouth suddenly went dry when I spotted Mr. Abrams coming out from his office. "...sus Christ, he's sexy."

He wasn't the average mall Santa either. No fake beard or belly. No wig. The red costume seemed more expensive too, like the material or whatever. But it did look like he'd dusted his already graying beard white. That was fucking hot.

A bit endearing too, because I knew this wasn't his thing. My first year here, there'd been a lot of new hires, and he'd explained that it was his uncle who enjoyed the "dog and pony show." I still remembered it vividly, him standing there with a glass of whiskey in his hand and a charming smile on his face.

I had to make him smile again.

"I bet he'd smile if he fucked me six ways to Sunday," I mumbled.

That made Kim and Mya laugh a little too hard, effectively directing everyone's attention my way. Fucking great.

Mr. Abrams merely raised a brow at me, then shook his head and continued toward the little podium they set up every year. Next to it waited several burlap sacks with the gifts from corporate.

How could he be so damn composed? Not even the slightest hint of surprise at seeing me nearly naked?

"If he were gay, I'd probably do something stupid," I said.

Down to chuckles, Mya cocked her head and eyed the boss man. "I think he *is* gay."

"No! Get the fuck out." I balked. She couldn't say that shit to me!

"I think she's right," Kim mused.

I whipped my head her way. "How do you know? Have you seen him with anyone?"

"God, no—" Mya took over again "—but I worked with his niece before I transferred here. I'm pretty sure she indicated..."

Oh, balls. An indication was enough to get my ridiculous hopes up.

There was just something about him. Something underneath the ten layers of “I’d rather slit my wrists with a rusty spoon than spend an hour with you.” It was partly the calm assertiveness he exuded. His feathers were so unruffled. I kinda wanted to ruffle them a bit—or at least see if I had the ability. And what his reaction might be.

Case in point. Mr. Abrams didn’t need to ask for everybody’s attention. As he took the podium, everyone just quieted down and listened. If I went up there, I’d need a PA system to be heard.

Someone handed him a microphone, though I wasn’t sure it was necessary for the... I glanced behind me and backtracked. Okay, maybe it was needed. I guesstimated about seventy people were here. More than half the workforce at this branch.

And another case in point. Mr. Abrams’s speech was fucking boring, yet he still made the whole office listen quietly to every word he said. Sales numbers, *growth*, something about nine percent, plans for the coming year, blah-blah-blah.

By all means, keep talking, Mr. Abrams. But I was only interested in his voice. It was perhaps the warmest part of him.

“But not everything is about sales,” he continued. “Data shows an increase of traffic on our social media platforms and websites, primarily thanks to the changes we’ve made in design and accessibility.” Woo-hoo, I’d played a part in that. A small one. “Our goal to get visitors to spend more time with us has certainly been reached, and we see the results every day. Rebranding our event services has proved fruitful as well, and we’re noticing an uptick in small businesses not only reaching out but spreading the word.” He flicked a quick glance my way, and I smiled. I’d worked on the rebranding most of the summer. “To wrap things up, I’d like to convey my thanks for your hard work this year. A little birdie told me that the graphic designer who worked on our holiday gift was very particular about the branding not taking up too much space. ‘This is for employees, not for the company to push promotions.’”

Oh shit. I grinned.

“Yeah!” Several clapped for this certain graphic designer.

Mr. Abrams had asked around about me.

I had said that. I had complained about the logo being too big at first—or rather, the designated spot for the logo—and I’d basically accused corporate

of wanting to turn the gift into ad space.

A few of the employees on the seventh floor joined Mr. Abrams on the podium to start handing out the gift, which, funnily enough, always got more attention than the gift that really mattered: the Christmas bonus.

While Mya and Kim rushed forward, I stayed back and kept my eye on Mr. Abrams instead. I wanted a moment with him. I was drunk enough to feel bold. To do what, I wasn't sure of yet.

"Oh, this is cool!" someone exclaimed.

"What is it?"

Open the damn box and find out, Laura. It was a pocket grill. It didn't actually fit inside your pocket, but close. It was tiny, folding out of a tin case, and could hold four hot dogs on a small grid placed above a little box that you put the charcoal in.

The guy at corporate had requested a large company logo on both sides. I'd bitched enough to get my way, and in the end, I'd incorporated a mountain range into the company logo and placed it on the handle of the grill.

I watched Mr. Abrams carefully plan his exit. He left the podium and slowly moved toward the corridor leading to his office, indulging a couple coworkers in chitchat on the way. The man really didn't enjoy sticking around. But for tonight, he smiled politely and did a decent job of pretending.

There's another corridor...

One that was way less crowded with partygoers.

I chewed on my lip and glanced behind me. I could head down there right now and intercept Mr. Abrams when he returned to his office from the other hallway. It would be a minute or two before he'd gotten past the employees who wanted a moment of his time.

Screw it, I didn't have a whole lot to lose except face, and I could live with that. I ducked out from the party area and made my way down the corridor toward Mr. Abrams's office. At the same time, I was due for a stern talkin'-to. Mr. Abrams was an illusion in my head. He was the epitome of my fantasies, physically. His assertiveness. His height. His age. Which, in the grand scheme of things, was nothing. My best relationship so far was probably a high school boyfriend who'd been anything but my "type." It took a lot more than good looks to build something.

I wasn't going to build anything with Mr. Abrams. I just wanted to test the waters and see if it might be possible to flirt or talk to him without his internal grinch ruining everything.

As I rounded the corner in the back, I noticed two young women standing near Suravi's desk. I didn't recognize them.

They smiled politely at me, one of them a bit more amused by my undressed appearance than the other.

"Are you waiting for Mr. Abrams?" I wondered.

One of them nodded. "He said he'd see us after his speech." She exchanged a grin with the other one that left me feeling weird. They looked alike, both blond and pretty.

They weren't Mr. Abrams's...*type*...were they?

I had too little to go on, but my boldness had taken a hike. Either way, Mr. Abrams had plans.

So this was where I decided to go get wasted.



"Why're you leavin' me already?" I managed to get out. "It's only ten or something!"

"Mya went home an hour ago."

I squinted toward the voice and felt myself being hauled up from my chair. God—lights. Everywhere. "Too bright." The music had died too. People had gone home... Damn, was I the last one here? The cafeteria seemed empty.

"Where do you live?" the voice asked. "I'm taking you home."

"Uh..." If I focused really hard, I... Wait, was that— "Mr. Abrams, is that you?"

"I'm glad your eyesight works. Here. Your other friend brought you your clothes before she left."

Fuck. His words were too many and coming too fast for my brain to process them all. I screwed my eyes shut as the floor moved beneath me, and I scratched my head—which reminded me. I was clutching money in my other hand.

"They gave me a hundred bucks to wear only this tonight," I said. "Now I'mma buy more yarn for Nana's Christmas gift. Yarn's more expensive than you think."

"I see." Mr. Abrams disappeared. Or he sat down on the other side of the table and held up my slacks. "Put on your pants, Parker. You can hold my

shoulder for support.”

Nooo, not when he was finally here and didn't have beautiful girls waiting for him. I wanted my moment. I could get dressed later. “I have a better idea. You were Daddy Christmas earlier but didn't hear my wish.” I batted away the pants in his hands and plopped down sideways across his lap. “It's Santa's job to listen, and I've been a good boy all year.”

Mr. Abrams cursed and quickly glanced around us.

I found that funny. “Are you afraid someone's gonna see us, Daddy Christmas?”

“Parker, this isn't appropriate. You need to put your clothes on so I can take you home.”

That made me pout. “You don't wanna hear my wish for Christmas?”

He sighed and gave me an impatient look. “Out with it, then.”

Yay! I leaned in and whispered in his ear. “I just wanna wake up on Christmas morning with snow all around and a Daddy holding me tight.”

Was that too much to ask?

For the longest time, maybe two hours or four seconds, I didn't hear a sound aside from the ringing in my ears and Mr. Abrams's breaths. He still smelled so damn good. And felt good. Shame he wasn't wearing his costume anymore. He'd changed back into his suit.

Then he swallowed and carefully put a hand on my back. “You're cold. Please get dressed right this instant.”

I shivered at his warm touch yet didn't feel cold at all. “It doesn't feel cold.”

“Because you've had too much to drink,” he responded quietly. “Way too much.”

His low voice had a strange effect on me. Something that I didn't even know had been buzzing erratically within me slowed down and enveloped me in peace and comfort.

It made me yawn.

“Maybe it's time to wrap this party up,” I conceded. “No more candy cane Jell-O shots for me.”

“That's a good idea,” he agreed. “In any and all scenarios. Candy cane Jell-O sounds terrible.”

I grinned a little and side-eyed him. “After four or five, they taste nice.”

“Four or five.” He shook his head and reached for my pants again. “Time to go, Parker. Tomorrow, when you're sober, you can reflect on the

possibility that you might have a problem with knowing when to stop drinking.”

“I have that problem with lots of things,” I chuckled and stood up. Whoa, had to steady myself on the table. “When I have fun, I just wanna keep having fun.”

“Hm.” He helped me step into my pants, ’cause that was trickier than most people believed. “Boundaries are good for you.”

“Boundaries are boring!”

“There’s no need to shout.”

“That wasn’t shouting. This is shouting. Bound—!”

He slapped a hand over my mouth with enough force to make me look up at him, eyes wide, and I couldn’t believe what I was seeing at first. Mingling with the hot Daddy sternness was plenty of amusement, and it turned his blue eyes into pools of liquid sex.

“Behave, boy.” With another look of warning, he reached for my shirt.

I was in trouble.

DECEMBER 4



“I just wanna wake up on Christmas morning with snow all around and a Daddy holding me tight.”

My eyes flashed open.

“Behave, boy.”

Oh God.

“Stop being so difficult, Parker, and tell me your address. I’m trying to get you home safely.”

“Oh no,” I whimpered.

My sheets weren’t this nice. My bed was...softer than this.

No, no, no, no, no, no.

What had I done?

With my heart lodged in my throat, I scrambled out of bed and looked around me. Ouch—perfect time for a headache to just slam itself right into my skull.

My bedroom wasn’t this tidy. Or fancy. Every piece of furniture was of some dark wood, a stark contrast to the cream-colored walls and beigey stone floor.

Holy shit. I’d given him no choice but to take me home with him when I’d refused to tell him my address. Because apparently you didn’t give that to strangers. But going home with one was okay? I was a fucking idiot. I’d crossed so many lines. And I remembered it all. Why did I remember? I didn’t wanna remember.

I swallowed a bout of nausea as I scanned the floor for my clothes. That was how I noticed the door next to the large bed. It had to be a bathroom. At some point, I’d shed all my clothes and left them in a trail into the bathroom.

Man, I hoped he hadn't been around to see that.

I picked up my clothes on my way into the bathroom, where I quickly decided to stay for a while. Hot damn, a shower for two. I wasn't going to make myself at home—I'd already done that too much—but I needed to get rid of any traces that revealed I'd inhaled a bar last night.

There were actual dispensers in the shower for shampoo, body wash, and conditioner. Like at some hotel.

And the fluffiest towels...

Yeah, I was gonna end up taking a long shower. I couldn't face Mr. Abrams like this. I had shadows under my eyes, my hair was a mess, and let's not discuss how I smelled. I couldn't show up at dance rehearsal like this later.

Spare toothbrushes under the sink, thank you, thank you.

Okay, a plan. I needed a plan. Once I was done here, I was going to apologize profusely, make it clear that I would totally understand if he fired me, and then I'd call an Uber, go home, and put together a gift basket that screamed *I'm sorry*.

Embarrassment was one thing, and everyone made mistakes. But I'd gone way too far. I felt ashamed, and I might actually need a good cry as soon as I got home.



How the hell did I open this ancient block of a wood door—oh, it was a sliding door. All right. I swallowed my nerves and left the guest room. I assumed it was a guest room anyway.

The stone floor continued outside the room, and I could veer left and right along a hallway or go straight ahead, where it opened up to reveal a large kitchen with a priceless view of the ocean. No, not priceless. There was definitely a set price tag on this address. Mr. Abrams had an actual beach house in Santa Monica. That was a whole other level of rich.

He liked his cream-colored floors and walls, combined with the same dark wood I'd seen in the guest room. Maybe walnut. Along with lots of spotlights and natural light. The patio doors went along the entire length of the house, as did the patio outside.

The weather fit my mood. Overcast and foggy.

I spotted him when I was just a few feet into the kitchen. To the right, past a kitchen bar, was a dining area and then a sitting room. He sat at the kitchen table and looked like he'd just walked out of a Nespresso commercial with George Clooney.

Not a hair out of place. Suit pants, a light blue button-down that made me acutely aware of the wrinkles on my own shirt—hell, he even wore shoes. A small cup of coffee or espresso, the paper he was reading, and one leg folded over the other. Nespresso Daddy. That was it. He was a Nespresso Daddy.

I cleared my throat and didn't come closer.

He glanced over at me and put down his paper. "Good morning, Parker."

"Morning, sir." Fuck, I was seriously nervous. I wasn't used to that. My stomach knotted into a tight mess, and I hated it. "I, uh...I wanted to apologize before I get out of your hair. My behavior last night was..." I shook my head, struggling to find an adequate word. "Obnoxious." Good enough. "I'm very sorry if I made you uncomfortable, and I wouldn't blame..." I trailed off when I heard the doorbell.

Mr. Abrams held up a finger and got up. "That should be your breakfast. I expected you to sleep till noon, but this is good. Now we won't have to reheat anything later."

He passed me on the way to the door, and I was just dumbfounded. At a complete loss. He'd ordered me breakfast?

"I understand if you wanna poison it," I blurted out.

He threw me a strange look over his shoulder, as if I was acting weird, then continued toward the door.

He was the weird one right now. And while he was out of sight, I did my best to tuck in my shirt and smooth down the fabric. I ran a hand through my hair too, in an attempt to tame it.

Mr. Abrams returned shortly after with a white paper bag, and he told me to have a seat at the table.

Having breakfast here indicated I wouldn't be making a hasty exit.

Just pointing that out.

I didn't dare defy him, though. I'd been doing that by pushing his buttons all week.

I made my way to the round table and sat down at a respectable distance. In the meantime, Mr. Abrams went behind the kitchen island and unpacked whatever he'd ordered for me.

"I took a shot in the dark and followed the holiday party's hashtag on

social media,” he said conversationally. “I suppose I shouldn’t have been surprised to see you tagged in oh-so many photos and videos.”

Gulp.

He poured a bottle of OJ into a glass, followed by some hot beverage into a mug. “You’re quite the clown around friends. Quite the drinker...” That one earned me a raised brow. “And quite the performer.”

He must’ve seen footage of Kim and me dancing.

“From there, it was easy to locate your own account and find out what you like to eat,” he said, plating something in a wrap. “Because as we all know, you can’t be on social media and not let friends know what you had for lunch. Dinner... Breakfast.” With that said, he gathered everything on a tray and returned to the table.

If I had been dumbfounded before, it had nothing on now.

He was supposed to yell at me—or, which was more apt to his character, quietly tell me to leave and never come back. Instead...he’d bought me juice, hot cocoa, a breakfast sandwich, and friggin’ pancakes.

“How’s your head this morning?” he wondered and sat down again. With his espresso and some tiny cookie. It looked like a biscotti. Typical Nespresso Daddy, I decided. “After I put you to bed last night, I was going to get you a couple painkillers, but when I came back to the guest room, you were in the process of taking off all your clothes.”

“Oh, of course I was.” I scrubbed at my face, beyond mortified. “This would be the perfect time for the ground to swallow me whole.”

He chuckled. He actually chuckled.

I looked up from my hands, and damn, his smile reached his eyes. It was the hottest sight I’d seen all year.

Then it faded, and he motioned to my food with his cup. “Eat your breakfast.”

Yes, sir.

“What about you?” I tucked into my pancakes with gusto and filled my mouth. “A cookie iff’n’t breakfast.”

He narrowed his eyes at me, just a pinch of mirth lingering. “Swallow before you talk.”

Oh, right. Yeah. I knew that.

“Are they good?” he asked.

“Very. But they’d be even better with more syrup.” I had to be honest. “And my head is okay, by the way. The shower helped.”

“Good, I’m glad.” He rose from his seat and headed over to the kitchen again. “I spent most of my thirties in both Rome and LA. This is what I had for breakfast every day in Italy.”

An espresso and a tiny cookie? That sounded boring.

“Maybe Italians should stick to pasta and pizza,” I said. “Do you by any chance have whipped cream? I already owe you the biggest gift basket known to man. I figure why not go all the way.”

“You lost me. Why do you owe me a gift basket?” When he came back, he had both syrup and whipped cream. Fucking yum. “You’re going to end up in a food coma.”

“That’s my kind of coma.” I grinned gleefully and sprayed a bunch of cream onto my cocoa, then poured lots and lots of syrup onto my pancakes.

“Hm.” Mr. Abrams clearly didn’t agree with me. “Answer my question, Parker.”

What ques—oh. “To show you how sorry I am, obviously. For stepping over the line last night. And for being pushy and stuff all week.” I poured a little bit more— “Hey!”

He’d stolen the maple syrup from me.

“I think that’s enough sugar.”

I pouted.

He merely dipped his biscotti in his coffee and took a bite, all while watching me, and it was becoming unnerving. This whole morning, in fact. It hadn’t ended the way I’d imagined or anticipated. He wasn’t mad—I didn’t think so, at least. He’d barely acknowledged my apology, which had been cut off.

Before last night, he’d been seemingly eager to get rid of me as quickly as possible whenever we’d been in the same space. Now I’d learned he’d checked out my social media to find out what foods I liked, *and* he’d asked around about me at work.

I bit into my breakfast sandwich instead, and it was *amazing*. Eggs, melted cheese, and sausage on a croissant. Heaven!

“You don’t owe me a gift basket of any sort,” he said after a while. “I appreciate your apology, but that’s unnecessary too. It’s been an interesting week.”

Interesting?

Interesting?!

“I’ve learned a lot.” He smiled to himself and took a sip of his coffee.

I scrunched my nose and reached for my cocoa. “You’re very cryptic, sir.”

That got me another chuckle.

“You’re very talkative, boy.”

I liked it when he called me boy. He’d done that last night too.

“Sorry.” I had to drop my gaze before I could be accused of staring too much. The deep blue color of his eyes did me in. And the way he expressed the power he held. No, wait, that was wrong. He didn’t express it at all. And that was what made it so irresistible. A man of true assertiveness didn’t feel the need to showcase his strengths or tell people how he was. It was simply there for the rest of us to discover on our own.

“I didn’t say it was a bad thing.” Mr. Abrams leaned forward and rested his forearms on the table. “I rather enjoy how expressive you are. It’s a good trait in people. I have some experience with the opposite, and that didn’t end well.”

I couldn’t look down any longer. He was offering up information about himself without any prodding.

“Former employee or relationship?” I took another huge bite of my sandwich.

His mouth twisted into a rueful smile. “The latter. Which, ironically, made me close myself in when it was over. My divorce essentially turned me into the reason I’d wanted a divorce in the first place.”

Oh. “You were married.”

He inclined his head. “It was a disaster.”

“That sucks.” I had some more of my pancakes too, even though I was starting to feel full. “When was this?”

He hummed, thinking. “Must’ve been...five years now—since we divorced. We were together for twelve but only married eight months.”

Damn. I suddenly felt unsettled, like I was standing on shaky ground or something. Like I had no business being here. My longest relationship had lasted a year, and it was difficult for me to get attached properly. And I wasn’t even gun-shy. The men I’d been with simply hadn’t ticked enough boxes for me to relax fully.

“So you’ve been the grinch since then?” I asked.

He let out a little laugh and finished his coffee. “Yes, you can say that. I bought this place, spent my free time remodeling it—when I wasn’t traveling—and I stopped meeting new people. I stopped socializing.”

I chewed on the inside of my cheek, then took a gulp of my juice. “You must’ve gotten hurt.”

He tilted his head. “What makes you say that?”

“I don’t know what thing other than betrayal would result in closing yourself in like that.”

He grew pensive before he eventually offered half a nod. “I suppose you’re right. There were a lot of empty promises, and it put a dent in my ability to trust.”

I put down my fork, unable to eat another bite. “I’m sorry you had to go through that.” I wasn’t sure it was only the food that was giving me a stomachache. “Can I ask, um... I mean—was this an ex-wife or an ex-husband?”

He smirked faintly. “Ex-husband.”

Confirmation, check! I managed to keep my face composed, but it did feel nice to have it verified.

“I wasn’t sure,” I admitted. “A friend told me she thought you were gay, but then you had two women waiting outside your office last night, so...”

“Ah. You mean Claire and Cassie—my new interns.” Mirth seeped into his eyes. “They’re my nieces, Parker. They mentioned they saw a naked guy asking about me.”

Fuck. I scratched my ear, and it felt hot. Eye contact was suddenly difficult too. I was so embarrassingly obvious.

“Are you finished?” He gestured to my food.

I nodded and inched back. “Thank you very much, sir. You didn’t have to do this for me.”

“Consider it a thank-you for the snickerdoodle cookies. They were perfect.”

That put a grin on my face so fast. “I’ll make you thousands more if you want.”

“Oof. Some of us don’t have the metabolism of a twenty-five-year-old anymore.” As he brought my plate to the sink, I grabbed some more stuff to help out, and I followed him there like a puppy.

We’d had such a nice time that I couldn’t bear to put any distance between us yet. I wasn’t ready. I wanted more. Much more.

Once we reached the sink, I put down the dishes there before I leaned against the counter next to him. “Oh, wow. I don’t think my sink has been empty ever.” Even after I’d just tidied up the kitchen, I found the random

spoon or plate somewhere, and it had to wait in the sink until I was ready to do the dishes again a week later.

“Discovering that you’re a slob doesn’t even qualify on the top ten surprises I’ve had this week.” He smirked to himself as he threw away the leftovers in the bin under the sink. “But this is interesting. You don’t like boundaries, you struggle to control your urges, you eat way too much sugar for breakfast, you were seemingly born without a verbal filter, you’re a goofball, and you’re a slob.”

I swallowed hard and looked away as I bit at a cuticle.

Talk about a reality check of the cold-shower variety.

What was I even doing here? Mr. Abrams was so far out of my league that I shouldn’t be allowed in the same room.

“Yeah, I know, I’m such a catch.” I needed to grow up.

He finished what he was doing, then positioned himself in front of me, and when he cupped my face in his hands, it was damn near impossible to keep my stare fixed to the floor.

Holy crap!

My heart began pounding furiously.

He dipped down till our foreheads touched, and then he waited me out. *Oh my God, was this happening?* I could barely breathe, much less understand what he wanted me to say or do to get...*more*. He had to kiss me, dammit. *He has to, he has to, he has to*. My whole body buzzed around those three words. *He has to, he has to*.

He smiled a little, just enough to show a hint of his perfect teeth. And he finally closed the last distance and kissed me.

I sucked in a quick breath and kissed him back, and I felt the need to lock my arms around his middle to prevent him from going anywhere. Just in case he wised up.

“An irresistible catch,” he whispered.

I shuddered and deepened the kiss, at long last getting a taste of him. He was all warmth and coffee and sweet almonds. And he kissed so damn well. Soft yet demanding, unhurried yet with urgency lacing every touch. There was no getting enough, and I didn’t have the patience he evidently did. I slipped my hands up his chest instead and stood on my toes to reach him better.

As his hands fell to my hips, mine went around his neck so I could press myself against his body.

He let out a quiet groan and kissed me hungrily, then reached down and squeezed my ass.

The kiss turned into an absolute drug, and I poured myself into it. Every brush of his tongue, every touch of his lips, and the air of control he exuded reduced me to a pile of needy mush.

“What on earth are you doing with an old man like me, Parker?” he murmured raggedly.

“All the unspeakable things, I hope,” I replied, out of breath. He couldn’t stop now. It was too soon. “Forty-six isn’t that old anyway.”

“I’m glad you think so.” He kissed me again, a deep, passionate one where he swept his tongue into my mouth and stole my breath.

DECEMBER 5



*H*onesty was the best way to go.

What are you doing? What are you wearing? :D I can't stop thinking about you! :P

I might've told him that boundaries were boring, but there was more to it than that. I simply sucked at setting up structure and following social cues. Most of them were lame. Like, there were rules for how and when to text someone new you were seeing. God forbid you came off too eager. Well, screw that. I *was* eager.

We'd been cut off way too early yesterday because he had a family thing in freaking San Francisco, of all places, and I'd had practice with my dance squad. All in all, best make-out session of my life, followed by a simple line that'd settled things for me.

"I have to see you again soon."

I'd nodded in a complete daze, and we'd made out until we had to part ways shortly after.

This could become something, couldn't it? I hadn't felt the slightest indication that this would be something he called a mistake on Monday.

In the meantime, I was distracting myself by baking Christmas treats for him.

My little kitchen had exploded.

I bobbed my head to the Christmas music playing and licked some green frosting off my fingers, then placed the cupcakes I'd just decorated on a chair. The work surfaces were all full.

So far, I'd made two batches of fudge, six cupcakes, one batch of sugar

cookies that still needed to be decorated, peppermint bark, and one bottle of syrup that Mr. Abrams could add to his coffee. It tasted of roasted hazelnuts and caramel.

I'd even gone to Michael's to buy cellophane bags and gift boxes, 'cause I was going all out.

Oh, and Christmas stickers.

When my phone dinged with a message, my pulse went through the roof, and I hurried over to see if he'd replied.

He had!

I just got back to my hotel after a dreadfully long brunch with my sister's family. Thus, I'm wearing a suit. And thinking about you, as I have since you left yesterday. What are you up to? More importantly, what are you wearing?

Oh, I didn't know he had a sister. I thought it was all cousins.

I grinned and figured I could show him what I was doing instead, so I held up my phone and took a selfie from a high angle. That way, he could see my Santa-red PJ bottoms with little snowmen on them.

Oops, looked like I was wearing a fair bit of frosting on my cheek too. Oh well.

I sent the photo along with a quick response.

I'm making treats for my super sexy boss! :D :D :D

His reply popped up pretty fast.

I cannot describe what you do to me, Parker.

I let out a breath as a million Rudolfs flew around in my stomach.

DECEMBER 6



“*P*arker, if you hum ‘Santa Claus is Coming to Town’ one more time, you won’t live to see another Christmas.”

I shot Mya a scowl before I returned to my screen. “That’s harsh.” But I wasn’t going to let her kill my buzz. Santa *was* coming to town. In fact, he’d recently landed at LAX.

“Are you almost done with the pamphlets?” Kim asked me.

I nodded. “Five more minutes.” I loved my job when they had me design logos for new projects and events within the company, but less so when I had to redo a bunch of crap past the deadline. And then I got shit because *they* were late? Today, we were editing some of the material for an international conference the higher-ups were hosting in Europe in a couple of weeks.

It was going to be huge. Five cities, countless vendors our corporation worked with, parties, dinners, and big money. I knew Clarke Abrams was the keynote speaker at a whopping three locations, so he was gonna spend a lot of time on a private jet this Christmas. Wyatt was attending too, though I didn’t know where yet. I was working on his material tomorrow.

That’s what he said.

I snickered to myself and sent another file to Kim.

“Two more files,” I said. “Have we received the schedule for our merry band of Abramses who are attending yet?”

“I’ll forward it,” Mya replied. “I’m making changes for Clarke’s address in Paris, which affects two of his children.”

“I hate changes,” Kim grouched. “They’ve had the event planned for a fucking year.”

I huffed in agreement. “How many are going from the West Coast?”

“Seven, I think... Lemme check.” Mya pulled up a new window on her computer and scanned a list with text I couldn’t read from here. “Sorry, nine.” Then she laughed. “It really is a merry band of Abramses. Only two are non-related.”

“I wonder if Mr. Williams is going,” Kim mused.

I cracked up. The whole department knew he’d been invited to speak at a banquet in Luxembourg. Which was both a country and a city, I’d learned. He loved to bring it up.

“So we have Clarke Abrams,” Mya said, reading from the list. “Then his kids, Sean, Christian, Mary, Joey, his nephew Wyatt, his grandson Toby, and Mr. Williams from here, and someone from corporate I don’t know. And that’s just LA. He has eleven others flying out of New York, five of whom he’s related to.”

I chuckled. The conference started on the nineteenth and ended on the twenty-second, so everyone would still be home for Christmas, but even if they hadn’t been, they would’ve had the entire family gathered.

“Okay, you have everything now, Kim,” I said. “I sent you the mock-ups for the Paris event’s hotel lobby tabletop banners and the Luxembourg goodie bag design that required changes too. They gotta go to print ASAP.”

Right as I finished speaking, I heard a knock on the dividing wall between us and the cubicle area, and I looked up and was instantly smacked in the face by the happiest surprise. Not only was Mr. Abrams back, he was down *here*.

He’s here, he’s here!

“I hope the conference isn’t causing too much hassle,” he commented. “I heard my uncle’s PA requested changes to his itinerary.”

I managed a lopsided grin. He looked so fucking sexy, and I’d missed his voice.

Kim and Mya were visibly shocked to see the big boss down in our little corner.

“Nothing we can’t handle, sir,” I replied.

He smiled. “Good. Are you by any chance available for lunch?”

Oh, fuck yeah, I was. Holy shit, I couldn’t believe it. He was asking just like that? With coworkers nearby? He had to know that people talked.

“I could eat,” I managed to say. The grin was gonna need surgery to come off, though. “Now, or...?”

“Yes. Now. I have a car waiting.”

Well, then.

Fully aware Mya and Kim were giving me looks that told me they'd have questions later, I grabbed my jacket, my wallet, and my phone before I followed Mr. Abrams out of there.

We had the attention of everyone in the cubicle area too, it seemed.

It was less me and a lot more him, of course. They weren't used to seeing him down here either.

When we reached the lobby, Mr. Abrams let me go first, and he put a hand on the small of my back to usher me toward the exit. Another thing he had to know people would talk about! It made me confused that he was so open. Overjoyed, sure, but confused.

"How was your flight?" I asked politely.

He held the door open for me. "Too long and uneventful."

Uneventful was generally a good thing in my book where flights were concerned.

Mr. Abrams had the same driver as the other day, and he greeted me with a courteous nod and opened the door for me.

He deserved cookies, and I'd made plenty.

"I have Christmas cookies for you later," I told him and got in. Same spot as last time. I didn't wanna assume I'd suddenly be sitting next to Wyatt, although I *was* hoping for a heavy make-out session.

He took his seat across from me and had mirth dancing in his eyes.

"Did I say something funny?" I asked.

He shook his head. "Something sweet."

Because of the cookies? I grinned. "There's a whole gift basket waiting on your desk."

He smiled, because he did that nowadays, and wouldn't stop observing me. It was kind of unnerving. I didn't know how to act or move forward. My body was already strung with anticipation to follow his lead—and I wasn't sure that was awesome. We hadn't really discussed anything. Were we going to date? Was this lunch a date?

"Where are we going?" I asked. "You're not saying anything. It's weird."

That made him chuckle, and he folded one leg over the other and clasped his hands in his lap. "I'm merely enjoying my view. It was...frustrating not to see you yesterday."

Just like that, the unnerving feeling evaporated.

"You've caused quite the stir in my head," he said.

“Okay, but what about in your pants?”

He coughed around a laugh and grinned out the window. “There too.”

Hot. Now I couldn’t stop picturing him hard. I wanted to see him nekkid.

“I saw the gift basket,” he added. “I dropped off my luggage in my office before I came down to get you.” He faced me again, affection simmering in his expression. “It may be the sweetest gift I’ve ever received, figuratively and literally speaking. I...I hope you’ll help me eat it all.”

If my smile was half as goofy as I suddenly felt, I was in trouble. Talk about full-blown crush in effect already.

I detected a hint of tentativeness in him, however.

That was nuts.

“I’d love to.” I unzipped my jacket because it wasn’t that chilly. “The cupcakes are my favorite after snickerdoodles.”

“Somehow, that doesn’t surprise me.” He smirked a little. “You eat the frosting first, don’t you?”

“How else do you eat a cupcake?”

He rumbled a chuckle. “As long as there’s room for food. Dessert comes afterward.”

The way he said it made it sound like he was testing me for my response. Because it went without saying that I disagreed with him. Cupcakes were a perfectly fine dinner alternative. And for dessert, you could have ice cream, maybe.

“If you say so.” I scrunched my nose.

His eyes held a tone of severity that drew me in. “I do.”

I chewed on the inside of my cheek and stared at him. He was testing me. Or feeling me out.

This stuff was gonna get me horny before we even arrived at the lunch place.



Mr. Abrams took me to a restaurant owned by a friend of his, a man who just happened to be a celebrity chef, and I was immediately excited when I saw the interior and got a sense of what kind of place it was. It was called MAT, and it was all Southern cookin’ in a cozy yet exclusive setting. Okay, I didn’t care about the exclusive part, but the hot chicken and mac and cheese, on the

other hand!

We were seated in an intimate, circular booth, and it didn't escape my notice that he chose to sit beside me rather than across from me. Our knees nearly touched, and I paid attention to such things. I mean, I couldn't not. I was running on a crush here.

I didn't open my menu until he opened his, and even then, I couldn't help but glance over to see what he was doing. More than ever, I needed to read him, to understand his reactions, to anticipate his needs and next move.

"There he is." Mr. Abrams's eyes sparked with friendly recognition as a handsome gentleman walked over, and he didn't need a chef's outfit to let anyone know it was his restaurant. Holy crap, August King was famous. Cam must've sent me dozens of his recipes. "It must be my lucky day to catch you on an LA trip. It's been too long, my friend." He rose to greet Mr. King, and the two hugged.

"You know you're always welcome to visit us in Nashville," Mr. King replied. "It's mighty good to see you, Wyatt."

Would ya look at that, Mr. Abrams actually had friends. Funnily enough, they reminded me of each other. Kind grins—now that I knew Mr. Abrams was capable of smiling—plenty of silver in their hair, similar builds. They looked to be similar in age too.

"I want you to meet my date," Mr. Abrams said and sat down again.

I perked up and felt a smile tug at my mouth. He wanted his friend to meet his date. That was me!

"How I've waited to hear you say those words," Mr. King commented with a wry smirk.

Mr. Abrams chuckled and rested his arm behind me along the back of the booth. "August is a dear friend of mine, though we don't see each other often anymore. Parker works for the company and spent last week turning my world upside down."

"Only from Wednesday," I felt the need to clarify. My stomach did a little flip at his openness too. "Nice to meet you, Mr. King."

"Likewise, Parker. Likewise." Mr. King sat down next to Mr. Abrams.

I felt Mr. Abrams's hand along my neck, his fingers rubbing my skin slowly, and it drew a shiver from me. It also had the weirdest calming effect, and I sent him a sideways smile and scooted a few inches closer.

"I actually spoke to August yesterday," he admitted to me. "I asked when he would be in town next time, and he said he was already here to create the

spring menu with his chef.”

Okay...?

Why did I feel like I was missing something?

“I didn’t know you needed a chaperone, sir,” I joked.

Mr. King found that funny.

“I told you he was a brat.” Mr. Abrams slid his buddy a smirk.

We were interrupted—or saved, maybe—by a server who asked about our orders. Mr. King let her take our drink order, but he wanted to handle our lunch himself. It wasn’t every day that happened, so I wasn’t going to complain!

While he stood up and spoke quietly to the server, I leaned closer to Mr. Abrams.

“If this is a date, can I start using your first name in my head now?” I asked.

His forehead wrinkled with a bit of confusion, but his expression held amusement too. “What have you been using so far?”

“Mr. Abrams, of course.” Duh. Then because I was me, I had to ramble about it. “It happens naturally when I’m around men who give off that sexy, dominant vibe. Aside from work-stuff, obviously. Every Abrams in the company is Mr. and Ms. Abrams to me, but to tell them apart, we have to use your first names too. I just wouldn’t address you by your first name to your face.” It was one of those few things that would’ve embarrassed me.

Maybe it was how I’d been raised, I didn’t know. My mom’s side of the family was strict on labels and formal stuff. I’d called my great-grandfather the Major until he’d died when I was ten.

“Sexy, dominant vibe,” Mr. Abrams echoed. With a slight grin tugging at his lips, he closed the distance between us and kissed the corner of my mouth.

I wasn’t prepared for that! I was a little unsettled, to be honest. I needed to know protocol.

“I’m only Mr. Abrams at work,” he murmured in my ear.

I shuddered and swallowed dryly. Could I kiss him? I wanted to kiss him. “Okay.” I tilted my face toward his an inch or two and tested a smile.

He did the same right before he pressed a kiss to my mouth—and that right there, that was the stuff.

I wasn’t going to get ahead of myself; we were in a public place, but I craved a small taste. I moved my hand to the curve between his neck and

shoulder and angled myself for a deeper kiss. He smiled at that and swept the tip of his tongue against mine, and that was all. It was the fuel I needed. Then we broke the kiss with an unhurried one and rested our foreheads together.

“I hate to interrupt.” Yet, Mr. King was interrupting. “I just wanted to say lunch will be out in ten minutes. We’ll catch up soon.”

“Thank you, August.” Mr. Abrams—Wyatt—sent him a quick, polite smile before returning his attention to me. He cupped my face in his hands and kissed me once more. “I hope you don’t mind I told him a little about you.”

“I don’t mind. I just can’t imagine what would be interesting enough to discuss.”

“I can think of countless things.” He sat back as our drinks arrived. “But the reason I went to him is because he shares a Daddy/boy dynamic with his partners. Two Daddies and one boy.”

Thank fuck I hadn’t taken a sip of my Sprite yet! I would’ve choked.

I gulped instead, and my eyes widened.

He eyed me carefully. “I didn’t mean for that to sound...drastic. Or sensational. I’ve picked up on some of your traits, and I wanted to be prepared.”

Prepared for what? I wasn’t some advanced kinkster. I’d dabbled, I guessed. I’d had a couple relationships with elements of that kind, and I knew I was a sub. I had fantasies and what I supposed I would call a core fetish, but I’d never met anyone I’d felt comfortable with enough to explore it all to the fullest. It’d been one thing or the other. Romance or playtime. Casual with kink components or regular relationship, never both, never at the same time.

To be honest, the topic made me a little uncomfortable because I didn’t know Wyatt’s agenda. Did he want to date me or just play with me?

Maybe I should call Cam. He was much more involved in that lifestyle. Like, he was part of a community and everything.

While we waited for our food, I did my best to explain my brief experience with Daddy/Little boy kink, with emphasis on how insignificant fantasies were if the chemistry wasn’t right. And that wasn’t the full extent of it. I could have blazing chemistry with someone and still feel like that kink part of me was dormant.

“It’s as if I’m two people sometimes,” I said. “The man I am and the boy I am. Both have to connect with the man in someone else, as well as the Daddy in them. Does that make sense?”

“Very much.” He gave my knee a squeeze. “Dabble is a good word for my own experience. It was cut short when I met my ex.”

That was interesting. I tilted my head. “So you were a Daddy Dom to someone before you got married?”

“That’s a stretch. But I did meet August at an event for Daddy Doms and Littles back in the day—it was how we came to know each other. I...I felt a connection to a part of myself I had barely acknowledged.” He dropped his gaze to his beer and brushed a finger over the foot of the glass. “Nothing went beyond casual, though, and I met Tom shortly after.”

Tom had to be the ex-husband.

“Meeting you is reawakening something I thought I’d buried for good,” he admitted.

I made a face. “If you bury living things, they tend to come back like zombies, sir.”

He chuckled softly and pressed a kiss to my temple. “They do, don’t they?”

I nodded and took a big swallow of my soda. It made my nose tickle, so I rubbed it vigorously.

For some reason, that made him cup my face and kiss me hard. A hard, swift kiss. “How you act—how you speak, how you carry yourself, the things you say—I need a bigger dose of you, Parker.”

Gah! He was draining every ounce of discomfort from before when he talked like that. I felt my body and mind gravitate toward him.

It hit me that maybe he didn’t have an agenda. Maybe he was just open about the questions he had, the preferences he’d once buried, how they were now returning, and that he simply *wanted*. But the exact route and pace, we could decide together.

“We should have dinner together too.” I found a quick hiding spot when I kissed his neck where he smelled fucking incredible. “They last longer than lunches.”

“Mm, it’s a good start, at least. Are you free tomorrow?”

“I—” Fuck. I actually wasn’t. “Kim and I squeezed in an extra rehearsal with a few others in our dance squad. What about Wednesday?”

“I’ll move some things around.” He nodded once. “I’m looking forward to hearing more about your dance hobby.”

I was looking forward to showing him my moves in the bedroom, first and foremost.

DECEMBER 7



Texting time!

Ask me what I did while you worked up a sweat.

I grinned and collapsed on my bed, not even bothering to remove the towel around my hips, and I responded to Wyatt's text.

What did you do while I bounced my booty off?

I would've hoped to have seen him more often around the office, just a stolen glimpse here and there, but work was busy, and he wasn't in Culver City all week. He'd been downtown today, for instance, and I was learning that he had a packed schedule that went beyond office hours. Work-related dinners, late meetings, and business trips were already making it difficult to find time for dates. We had dinner to look forward to tomorrow, but after that, no idea.

It made me happy that he texted me quite a bit instead, and I didn't have to feel bad about flooding his inbox throughout the day.

A picture popped up in our conversation, and I laughed under my breath. It was my gift basket to him. He'd brought it home with him, and there wasn't a whole lot left. The snickerdoodles were gone, as was the peppermint bark, I couldn't see any fudge either, and out of four cupcakes, one remained. The Christmassy sugar cookies seemed to be an exception; he had what looked like three stacks of ten left, but I'd also made him twice that.

I've consumed more sugar in the past twenty-four hours than I have in the past decade combined. I couldn't even stomach going to dinner.

I gasped and quickly wrote a reply.

You had cookies before dinner?!?!?!?

That earned me a wink emoji.

I chewed on my lip.

Daddies didn't follow rules. They provided them.

It was so unfair.

Wyatt changed the topic shortly after and asked about my dance hobby. He said he couldn't wait till dinner tomorrow to ask, and I liked that bit a lot. He was eager to get to know me and showed interest. Not that this story was particularly exciting; I'd picked dance because going to the gym was fucking boring, and my cousin had introduced me to break dancing. He was crazy good.

It's possible I found your dance squad's YouTube channel. It's also possible I've watched all the videos. You're an incredible dancer, Parker. I hope I get to see a show one day.

Oh man. I grinned and squirmed around in the intensifying infatuation until I ended up on my stomach. Only thing missing was my ankles crossed in the air.

We have an outdoor thing on New Year's that we're rehearsing for. It's in the middle of the day, so if you don't have plans, consider yourself invited, sir!

Was that too soon? I bit at my thumbnail as I watched him type.

I wouldn't miss it. Get some sleep, sweetheart. Tomorrow I finally get to take you out again.

Jesus Christ, he was making me walk on clouds.

DECEMBER 8



“It’s okay to check your phone,” he said with a knowing little grin. I shook my head. “It’s just Mya. She said she wouldn’t give up until I told her what’s going on between us.”

And she would have to wait because I barely knew yet myself.

Wyatt chuckled.

This French restaurant could not be more romantic, from the candles and white linen tablecloths to the intimate setting and dessert menu with items meant to be shared. It was also crazy upscale, and I’d accidentally swallowed my chewing gum when I’d first seen the prices on the menu.

I had more gum for later, though. I wasn’t ending this evening without having my minty-fresh breath kissed out of me.

Either way, I didn’t need Wyatt’s clarification that this was a date. The restaurant made that abundantly clear. So I guessed we were dating—that was the correct term. And I’d tell Mya that eventually, when I could also answer whether it was more than just dating. Since she knew what type of men I was drawn to and what fetish I had.

A server appeared to take our dessert order, and we’d settled on two dishes because we did not share the same taste in sweet stuff. Because he didn’t want much sweetness to begin with! He ordered something called *éclairs* with a coffee- and rum-flavored-mousse filling with the darkest of chocolate, and I wanted a French vanilla sundae with brown sugar meringue and caramel sauce.

I was so full from an amazing dinner, but I couldn’t resist dessert. I hadn’t pulled out my nicest threads for anything less than two tons of sugar. But unbuttoning my vest wouldn’t hurt. I glanced around us and hoped to see

loosened ties, untucked shirts, and...yeah, no. Wearing a suit just wasn't for me, but I did own a pair of nice charcoal pants with a matching vest that were fancy enough. As long as I didn't spill on my shirt or apparently unbutton my vest.

"How full are you, Parker?"

Yikes. Okay, he didn't have to be a mind reader to understand I was a bit uncomfortable. I was tugging on my vest and wiping my forehead. The meat sweats weren't a myth.

"Moderately," I lied just a tad.

The mirth didn't leave his eyes, but his eyebrow went up a fraction. "Is this a good hill to die on, boy?"

I swallowed. "If the hill is made of sugar, then yes."

He coughed a chuckle and shook his head at me.

I smiled goofily. He couldn't pretend to be stern with me yet!

Without the strict Daddy façade, he reached across the table and gathered my hands in his, and he brought them to his lips. "Sweet Parker, there are options. We can get the dessert to go."

"But then the meringue will be soggy," I protested.

"Not if it's stored in a separate container. You stay here—I will go talk to the server." He pressed a kiss to my knuckles before he stood up and left the table.

I grimaced. I wasn't a fan of this. We'd had such a great time tonight—I didn't want it to end because I was too full for dessert. I'd learned a lot about his family and childhood. He had two sisters and one brother, though none of them was involved in the corporation. Maybe that was why I'd thought he was an only child. But regardless, I still had questions, and if we left now—and took our desserts to go—chances were, we'd end up eating them alone. What if he just dropped me off at my apartment?

Developing a crush on a man I knew essentially nothing about had turned out to be a gamble that so far worked bizarrely well. After all, I'd only viewed him as a grumpy grinch before. Now I knew he had a lake house that he hosted family reunions at every summer. I knew he liked to golf and swim. I knew he preferred classical music and blues and that he loved to drive up the coast in an old car I'd already forgotten the name of. I knew that he missed the East Coast sometimes, especially during fall and winter.

I was peeling off layer by layer.

He was doing the same with me.

I checked the time on my phone. Almost ten PM; hot damn, we'd been here nearly two hours already. So this wasn't entirely awesome. Ten PM was a reasonable hour to wrap up our first dinner date, and if there was one thing I was learning about Wyatt, it was his traditionalist way of dating. He didn't strike me as the type who would suggest we move this date back to his place at this hour.

Dammit.



I was right. He was taking me home.

Tonight was the first time I got to experience him behind the wheel of his own car, a nice silver Aston Martin with a black interior, and it was easy to see he enjoyed driving. And nobody liked driving in LA... I liked it even less when he had Culver City and my address plugged into the GPS.

Why had I given it to him?

I wondered if there was a way to lure him up to my place instead. My sister's name might be on the mailbox next to mine, but she was never there anymore. Our parents had helped us take out a loan for the condo when Nana couldn't handle walking up the stairs any longer. So she'd left Culver City for a retirement community in Thousand Oaks where her sisters already lived. Now it was just me in the tiny two-bedroom. My sister's room was all but empty.

The day she moved in with her boyfriend officially, I was going to buy her out. 'Cause there'd been plans to install elevators in the old building forever, which would make the condo worth a whole lot more. After that... who knew? Unlike her, I wasn't sure I saw myself living in LA forever.

"You're thinking about devouring your dessert as soon as you get home, aren't you?"

Ha! For once, he was dead wrong. "Almost. I'm thinking about real estate."

He lifted his brow but didn't take his eyes off the road. "That's... different. Is real estate another hobby?"

I shook my head and smiled a little. "Not specifically real estate, but I like a good investment."

Real estate tended to be a good one.

Wyatt was still showing surprise. He hadn't expected that from me. "I can't wait to get to know you better, Parker. You've entered my life like a breath of fresh air."

I smiled, and as the urge struck, I leaned over and kissed his cheek.

He smiled back and grabbed my hand. "I very much enjoy what we're doing. Just tell me straightaway if something is wrong—and that includes if *I* do something wrong. It's been so long since I dated that I feel like I'm flying blind at times."

I'd sort of figured that out. And to be honest, it was reassuring. Even the most polished man had to fumble in the dark every now and then.

"Can I ask what went wrong between you and your ex-husband?" I wondered. "I've noticed you're very open with me, and you said something about empty promises."

He inclined his head and checked the rearview before switching lanes. "Even before we got married, we had problems—partly because he didn't want to leave Rome, and I had no desire to leave my family here. But we'd agreed to cut down on work so we could see each other more often. And I did. I tried to rekindle what we used to have in the beginning of our relationship..." He trailed off, and his brow furrowed. "Deep down, I suppose I always knew we weren't a great match, but I was willing to work to get to a better place."

He scratched his jaw, seemingly deep in thought.

Right now, I couldn't believe I'd ever viewed him as devoid of emotion and closed off. He was a completely different person.

"After one too many missed dinner reservations, he knew I was all but done," he went on. "At that point, I was doubting my feelings too. I'd lost the energy to fight. But Tom got paid to plead his case. By day in a courtroom, by night in our relationship—and he proposed marriage to me."

I couldn't help but stick out my tongue, as if Tom were here in the car with us.

Wyatt grinned faintly and threaded our fingers together. "You're right. I am open with you, Parker. I'm hoping to avoid another failed relationship in which we try to be someone we're not. I was never meant to be with him long-term, and he's not meant to be with anyone long-term. And once I admitted that to myself, I filed for divorce. I was angry with him, with myself, for wasting all those years trying to fit a square peg into a round hole."

I couldn't imagine fighting for something for that long if it didn't feel 100% right. At the same time, I admired any man who kept his word and did his best to uphold a vow.

"It's better you stick with me," I said decisively. "I just wanna make you happy and smile a lot."

He squeezed my hand. "You're succeeding."

Fist pump.

Unfortunately, my own happiness took a hike when he pulled in right outside my building a few minutes later, and not even a big dessert on my lap brought any comfort. I was gonna end up eating the half-melted mess alone in bed.

Wyatt was big on chivalry and wanted to get the door for me, so while he left the car, I tried my hardest to mask the disappointment welling up. I couldn't really explain it. I had a growing unease in the pit of my stomach, and it reminded me too much of vulnerability. I was lowering my guard and growing comfortable with Wyatt, and the end to an evening was evidently enough for me to feel a little wounded and exposed.

It was as if there were a little boy in me going, "You're leaving me so soon?"

And I supposed, in a sense, that was exactly what was happening. That part of me had already latched on to Wyatt.

It was going to be super tough to practice patience.

The door opened, and I left his dessert on the dash before I reluctantly stepped out.

"Thank you very much for a perfect dinner, sir." I should probably say more than this. I should be as open as he was being with me. I should confess that I didn't want the evening to end yet. I swallowed a flurry of nerves and wondered where the hell my usual happy-go-lucky attitude and fearlessness had gone. This wasn't normally something I hesitated to be vocal about. "Do, uh..." Christ, just say *something*. "Do you know when we can see each other again?"

Close enough. Maybe if I had a date or day to look forward to, it would be easier to say goodnight.

Wyatt hummed and walked a little closer to me. "Well, I'll be at corporate tomorrow, so it's going to be difficult to steal you away for lunch."

Yeah, that part sucked donkey butt. I didn't want him at corporate at all.

"Corporate stinks." I fiddled with his tie and scowled to myself.

“I’m inclined to agree with you.” He gently grabbed the dessert bag from me and set it on the ground. Then he closed the distance between us and kissed my temple. “I have a one-hour window after four. How about I pick you up from work?”

One hour. Not even that, actually. He had to make it back too. But I’d take whatever I could. So I nodded and rested my forehead against his sternum. He smelled so damn good. And I wasn’t particularly cold, but he felt warm and comforting all the same.

“Any minute you can spare, I will take, sir.”

He sighed and inched away enough to cup my cheeks, forcing me to look up, and then he dipped down and kissed me hard. A rush of desire tore through me, and I slipped my hands up his chest and locked them around his neck.

It was as if his resolve broke. Gone was the patient gentleman, replaced by raw hunger, and it smacked a forceful wall of urgency right into me. He moved his hands to the back of my neck and angled me for a deeper kiss, and I pushed back. I did everything but climb him like a tree.

I knotted my fingers in his hair and swirled my tongue around his. I pressed myself closer and couldn’t stop all the needy little sounds from escaping me.

“I wanna see you all the time,” I admitted between kisses. It felt much easier to be honest now. “All the time, all the time, all the time.”

He cursed under his breath and cupped my cheeks again, slowing down the kiss until we were just breathing heavily with our lips touching.

“There is a way we can see each other more often,” he murmured huskily.

I swallowed against the dryness in my throat and nodded. “If you take me home with you right now.”

He let out a breathy chuckle and kissed me quickly. “I take it you’re on board.”

I nodded again, vigorously this time. “I’d drag you upstairs if my kitchen wasn’t such a mess. You’d probably make me clean it.”

I really loved how his eyes smiled.

“You might be right. Let’s go then, my sweet Parker.”

Fuck yes!

DECEMBER 9



*M*y legs wrapped around him was the way to go, even with the kitchen counter cold against my butt. My underwear helped a little, and so would my pants if they weren't on the floor in the living room.

"Are you sure you want to discuss Christmas decorations now?" he asked as he kissed my neck.

Oof, right there. He'd found the spot below my ear.

"I'm trying to get my brain to stop, but I can't help it." I wove my fingers into his hair at the back of his head and gave him all the access to kiss me wherever he wanted. In the meantime, I was sizing out his massive ocean-view windows for holiday curtains.

Something was wrong with me. We could've jumped into bed the second we got back to his place, and then we'd ended up *talking* in the living room. Talking. Talking and kissing and swapping life stories and losing a few items of clothing and more talking. Which was great and all, but I was super horny—so it was fucked up that I couldn't stop thinking about decorations!

"In my defense, it's December eighth—technically ninth now—and you don't have a single decoration," I huffed, out of breath. "Where's your tree? All the Santas? The lights and the red, green, and gold?"

"I'm half tempted to turn your irresistible little ass red if that counts."

I shuddered violently.

That counted.

I met him in a deep, hungry kiss and finally told myself to pick my damn battles better. I could sweetly hint about decorations in the morning on our way to work.

"You like that idea, don't you?" he murmured.

I nodded and began unbuttoning his shirt. It was all wrinkled from my pulling on it anyway. It belonged next to his tie on the floor of his living room.

Fuck, his kisses were so damn drugging.

In the middle of the next heated kiss, he untucked his shirt and took over until it was thrown next to the sink, followed by his undershirt. Then he secured my legs around his hips and lifted me off the counter.

I sucked in a breath, decorations long forgotten, and I gave him all my focus. I heard him in my head, the memory from the car when he half awkwardly offered to stop somewhere to buy protection. Nuh-uh, I didn't want. Not anymore. Not with him. We'd covered the safety bit, and I wanted his hard cock without anything in between. Unlike that dude at the office, Wyatt didn't keep rubbers in every drawer in case he got lucky on the go.

Along the way to wherever his bedroom was, he pressed me up against a wall and stole my breath with an intoxicating kiss. I couldn't help but whimper and cling to him. And I wanted *that* name out there in the tension surrounding us.

“Are you gonna fuck me now, Daddy?”

Shit, the second it was out, something happened inside me. My stomach tightened, my face got hot, and I felt weirdly small and vulnerable.

“*Fuck.*” Wyatt exhaled a curse and pressed a kiss to my neck. He slowed things down, except for his breathing, and I squirmed in his grasp, rubbing my crotch over his cock.

Jesus.

He was so hard, and it made my mouth water.

“Yeah...” He drew a deep breath and dropped an openmouthed kiss below my ear. “Daddy’s finally going to take his beautiful little boy.”

I whimpered again, so needy that I couldn't find the right word to describe it, and he picked up the pace. Up the stairs, just a few steps, maybe five, and then he was rounding a corner.

At long last, we ended up in his bedroom, and he lowered me onto the big bed. We just continued. We kissed as if we couldn't get enough, and I sure couldn't, and he pressed himself against me, causing a ball of pleasure and need to explode within me.

In a messy rush between kisses and grabbing at each other, we lost the last of our clothes, and I couldn't fucking stop touching him. His chest, his chest hair, his sides, his neck—I dug my heels into his ass cheeks and let my

hands roam up and down his back.

About that thing before, though... Something needed to be said. “Yes to spanking and yes to cuffs and yes to you taking me without much preparation, just...um, I’m not a fan of, like, whips and spiked paddles.”

He rumbled a low, lust-filled chuckle and slipped a hand between us to grip my cock. *Hnngh*. “In other words, I don’t have to worry about you wanting a torture dungeon.”

I shook my head vigorously and bit my lip. God, that felt good. He stroked me slowly but firmly from base to tip, and I was leaking already.

“Get the oil in my nightstand,” he whispered.

Right this second!

I squirmed around and reached for the stand, but it wasn’t easy because his bed was super big, and he was holding me tightly. Oh my God, oh my God, oh my God—then he was sucking my cock into his mouth too.

“Daddy,” I gasped.

He hummed around me and pulled away slowly. “Mmm, Daddy just needed a quick taste.”

Daddy could taste all he wanted, but my butt needed to be filled ASAP. It was his fault.

Daddy, Daddy, Daddy.

I could suddenly not imagine calling him something else when we were like this. I hadn’t anticipated the sense of freedom I’d get from a title. It was just a word, right? Except, it carried meaning and whispered of the liberation of our sexual identities.

It fueled me. It spurred me on.

I managed to dig out the bottle of oil with all these new sensations surging through me like wildfire, and then I attacked like a possessed little animal. I had to have him right now.

He picked up on my urgency, and maybe he had a beast to unleash too. We rolled around and made out as if our lives depended on it, and I’d never been so thankful for a giant bed. Unlike the one in the guest room, this one was crazy comfortable too.

At some point, I ended up on top of him, and he sat up and kissed me forcefully while he shifted his cock between my butt cheeks.

“Christ, I need to fuck you hard, boy.” He cupped my face in his hands and met me in another tongue-teasing, brutal kiss. I shivered and shivered, and we needed to find that bottle of oil again. We’d lost it in the foreplay.

“Maybe we should have a safeword,” I mumbled, reaching blindly along the covers for the oil.

He nipped at my bottom lip. “How about stop?” he half chuckled.

Oh no, that wouldn’t work for me. I wriggled against his big cock and nuzzled my way down to his neck. “But, um...what if I got off on saying stop, but Daddy can’t stop because he really needs to keep fucking me...?”

I felt the shudder that flowed through him, and he stilled all our movements. For a moment, all I heard was our breathing.

Was he picturing it? Was he grossed out? Was he indulging in his imagination about what it would be like to take everything he wanted from me? Was he insulted? Wyatt had been nothing but a gentleman to me—

“Your safeword is red.”

But praise baby Jesus, he was leaving the gentleman at the door now!

“Fantastic.” I grinned.

He didn’t smile back or anything. He was on a mission; he tossed me down onto the mattress, causing my stomach to flip, and evidently had no problem finding the oil. I eye-fucked him in his naked glory as he slicked up his big, perfect, hard cock in front of me, and I teased him by brushing my fingers up and down my body, my cock, my nipples, and—

“Either I fold you in half, or you get on all fours,” he said.

We could fold later! I scrambled onto all fours and shook my butt at him.

He gripped my hips and yanked me closer to him, and I yelped at the motion. And before I could brace myself for a painful impact, shock tore through me when I felt his lips. And tongue. Holy hell, my eyes nearly rolled back. He kissed me wetly down there and pushed his soft tongue inside me.

I moaned like a slut, and he didn’t hold back either. He made a hungry sound and tongue-fucked me like he’d been born to do it. He dug his fingers into my flesh, and I dug mine into the duvet. There was no stopping my sounds or my movements.

“That’s a good boy—fuck yourself on Daddy’s tongue.”

“*Hnngh.*” I swallowed against the dryness in my mouth, and then I cried out when he reached between my legs and fisted my cock. “Oh my God. More, Daddy—*please*, I need more.”

So he pushed in a long, wet finger instead, then two, and he licked and kissed around my opening.

He was gonna make me freaking delirious with horniness!

I didn’t know how long we were at it, but he was in no rush, and he

fingered me and tongued me until I was a pleading mess. He wouldn't let me jerk off either, so I was super frustrated. All those needs were kept bottled up inside.

"Please, Daddy," I begged. "Please fuck me, please fuck me. I need your big cock, Daddy. Please—I need it to fill me so bad."

He withdrew his fingers slowly and dropped a kiss on my butt cheek. "You have a filthy mouth, boy. Do you need Daddy's cock in your little hole that desperately?"

"Yes!" And he called *me* filthy?

He eased away and kneaded my flesh, then with just one hand, so I could only hope he was getting ready to—yep! I sucked in a breath as he pressed the head of his cock against my ass.

"Push back and try to relax," he murmured.

I swallowed and nodded, and I pushed and pushed until I felt his pelvis against my butt cheeks. Holy fucking fire of pain, he was in. I kept hearing a mewling, pathetic little sound and realized it was coming from me.

"Shhh, little one. You're all right." He stroked my spine affectionately and brought me back to him, and it made the pain flare up even more. "We'll stay like this for a bit," he whispered in my ear. Then he hugged me to him and touched my cock, stroking it teasingly. "Daddy loves being buried deep inside you."

I sniffled and nodded. I'd never been so torn. I was hurting, but I was also on fire with desire and need, and when he said things like that, I wanted to jump up and down on his cock, no matter how much pain it caused me.

"My Daddy," I whimpered.

"All yours, baby." He kissed my neck and rubbed my cock a little firmer, and a drawn-out shiver rolled through me. "My beautiful, sexy, amazing little goofball."

"Yeah—that's me." I sniffled again and blinked hard to see clearer. "And you gotta want me all the time."

He exhaled against my neck, and I felt the tip of his tongue swiping over a sensitive spot. "I already do." His low voice rumbled from his chest, and I shifted over his cock and moaned. "Fuck," he whispered. His large hands—he touched me so greedily that I felt how much he was restraining himself from fucking me like a savage. His kisses along my neck grew more passionate too, and he pinched and manipulated my skin. Rough kneading, soft, wet kisses, the scratch of his beard, shallow breaths. "My God, you're

perfect,” he exhaled. “Don’t forget to use the safeword if you want me to stop, okay?”

I shook my head and tilted my head back. “I won’t. And you’re not allowed to stop if I only say stop.”

“I won’t,” he echoed and kissed me. He started off slow, seducing me with sensual touches of his tongue against mine. “Daddy won’t be able to stop,” he whispered. “Now that I have you here—all tight and small and soft...all fucking mine.”

Oh God.

The desperation flooded me, quickly outweighing the pain, and maybe he couldn’t wait either. While we made out, I started rolling my hips over him, and he tightened his hold on my cock and urged me to move faster. He scratched his blunt fingernails over my nipples and pinched them one by one, swallowing my every gasp and moan. Until we couldn’t keep up with the kissing any longer.

I fell forward and gripped the duvet, and he pulled out of me, then pushed back in and set a steady pace of deep, heavy thrusts that filled the air with our breaths and the sound of skin slapping against skin.

Whenever he pushed forward, I pushed back.

He gripped my hips tightly, yet I felt the traces of his touch on my cock. How he’d squeezed me at the base, twisted the tip, and swiped his thumb over the wet slit.

A while later, it felt like I was drowning in a pool of crazy stuff. More pain meant more pleasure, hurting resulted in my craving more, so I lost all my inhibitions and literally tried to hurt myself on his cock. I pushed back harder and moaned uncontrollably. That very second when he was balls deep, he sent two kinds of pain through me. One sharp sting that sucked the air out of my lungs—and one muted, wider, shiver-inducing ache that flared outward in ripples.

I completely lost my composure on his cock, and I didn’t even care about touching myself or wanting pressure on my own cock. I just chased that feeling in my ass, and it might very well get me off. It felt so fucking good.

His sounds rocked me too. His almost growl-like groans that came from deep within, his hissing noises, and his indulgent moans that seemed to release a lot of tension in him.

Needing his mouth on mine, I eased back and positioned myself on his lap, and he sat back on his heels. I managed to twist my body enough that I

could lock one arm around his shoulders, and then we could finally make out again. All while he controlled my movements, my hips, and moved me up and down on his cock.

“I love your kisses, Daddy,” I moaned.

“Hang on—it can get better.” He gently pushed me off him, then dropped me onto the mattress and rolled me onto my back. I grinned and got the hint when he lifted my legs, so I pulled them up, my knees nearly touching my chest. “Wider apart.” He nudged his cock against my opening again, and I obeyed. “Good boy. Keep them there.”

I always wanted to be his good boy!

Holy fuck, this new angle. My eyes widened as he pushed in, and he reached so much deeper. Or maybe he didn’t, but the sensations were *more*. More intense, more overwhelming.

He moved over me, capturing my mouth in a wild kiss, and started fucking me into the mattress.

“Fuck, fuck, fuck,” I cried out. *Say stop, see what he does, pretend to struggle against him.* A rush of heat pressed to the surface of my skin, and I had to cut my moan short. “Stop,” I said weakly. Nope, not good enough. “It’s too much, Daddy. Please stop.”

He shook his head, grabbed my jaw, slammed his other hand against the headboard, and picked up the pace. “No. You’ve taunted me for too long.”

I flushed with sheer need, and I freed my hands to try to push him away.

“Quit it,” he growled. “You brought this on yourself, son. If you tease Daddy, this is what you get.” He fucked me even harder, like he was trying to bottom me out, and it almost fucking felt that way too. “You’re gonna take Daddy’s cock until he’s filled your tight little ass with all the come he’s saved up.”

Fuuuuck!

Moments later, he pulled out once more and flipped me over, and he didn’t offer any recovery time. His cock found me fast, and then he was jackhammering himself into me over and over, his balls slapping against my ass.

The friction caused by his thrusts and my cock rubbing against the duvet sent a new rush of fire through me, and I was suddenly just a mess of horny sounds. Wailing moans, desperate pleas, breathless whimpers, and zero pretending I didn’t want this. I fucking couldn’t. Sex had never been this fucking good.

“Harder, Daddy,” I gasped.

He hauled me back and onto all fours again, and he fucked me brutally hard.

“There’s my boy,” he grunted. “Works better when you’re honest about how needy you are for Daddy to fuck you.”

“Daddy’s little cock-whore,” I moaned.

“*Fuck.*” He slammed in and groaned. “That right, baby? You wanna be my cock-hungry little whore?”

“Yes,” I cried out. “Always, always, always!”

He released a harsh breath, and I sensed a finality in his movements. He was chasing his orgasm now. He was done talking. Daddy needed to come inside his boy.

He told me to stroke myself, and I was almost afraid to go near my cock. I could go off any damn second. But I obeyed, and the onslaught of pleasure nearly melted me into the mattress. If he didn’t hold me up, I’d collapse. Composure, long gone. Now I was losing my voice too. My endless moans became hoarser—not to mention more high-pitched as my orgasm started taking over.

I couldn’t handle the sensations. They were too intense, sending me straight into the abyss.

In the distance, or so it sounded, Daddy was coming too. He was filling my bottom with his hot come and fucking his release deeper into me, and it prolonged my own climax.

Wyatt Abrams had turned me into a fucking screamer.

Oh my God, oh my God!

The last trickle of come coated my hand, and I didn’t have the willpower to stay upright. I collapsed in my wet spot, Daddy coming with me, though he managed to plant his hands on the mattress to prevent his entire body weight from falling on me. Which was kind of a pity, but then again, I had to breathe. Jesus H. Christmas, I had to breathe.

I panted.

My heart hammered furiously.

“Christ, baby...” Daddy blew out a heavy breath and kissed my neck. “How am I gonna be able to walk tomorrow?”

“*Unghh.*”

He chuckled, out of breath, and pulled out of me before he lay down beside me.

I winced and shuddered at the soreness in my butt.
“What if...” I had to catch my breath. “We called in sick?”
“Oh goodness, don’t fucking tempt me, boy.”
I mean...



I wriggled my butt, taking him deeper, and glanced at him over my shoulder.
I had a firm grasp on his firm, sexy thighs.
And he had a firm grasp on his sleepy smile. Then he brought a finger to his lips, and I nodded. I was gonna be quiet.
“Yes, at nine AM,” he confirmed into his phone. “No, just cancel it. I have a fever, so postponing it won’t help. Hopefully, I’ll be in tomorrow.”
I blew him a kiss.
He winked at me.
We were playing hooky today!

DECEMBER 10



“*Y*eah, I’m really not feeling well,” I croaked. I reached over to where Daddy was slicing up strawberries, and I stole a piece and popped it into my mouth. Delicious breakfast coming up! He was even making pancakes. And I was just sitting here on the counter, wearing his dress shirt, and enjoying the porn of watching Daddy cook in his boxer briefs.

“It’s interesting, though,” Mya said, drawing out every syllable. “Mr. Williams was complaining that Mr. Abrams called in sick too, for the second day in a row. Just like you did.”

“That *is* interesting,” I said. “Maybe he gave me the flu the other day. I should call and yell at him.”

Daddy narrowed his eyes at me and failed to hide his amusement.

I licked some strawberry juice off my thumb.

“Yeah, you do that,” Mya deadpanned. “Enjoy your fuckfest. I gotta go call the print place in Paris.”

I stifled a giggle. “Ask for Raphael—he speaks English. Have a great day! Bye.”

Soon as I’d ended the call, Daddy came over and stepped between my legs.

“So this fake flu is my fault, huh?” He snuck in and growl-kissed my neck.

I laughed. “Totally your fault.”

He shook his head, and we met in a kiss. He must miss his shirt, because he was often trying to get inside it. Or he just liked skin-on-skin!

“You’re a terrible influence,” he murmured into the kiss. “But don’t stop. I haven’t been this happy in decades.”

I smiled and locked my arms around his neck. “I like making you happy.”

He’d already shown me he liked making me happy too. Case in point, he was having an actual decorator come over here today to turn his home into a winter wonderland—because of my midnight Christmas bitching the other night. I’d balked at him, maybe I’d even cursed once or twice, but he’d silenced me. He’d kissed me. He’d said he finally felt like the holidays were worth celebrating.

“When do we have to leave?” I scratched his beard a little and kissed his jaw.

We had a full day planned! We just had to run by my place first so I could change clothes and pack an overnight bag.

He eased away to check on the pancakes and the time. “About an hour.”

I could do a lot with an hour.

“Then maybe I should suck Daddy’s perfect cock,” I whispered.

The heat in his eyes turned me on every friggin’ time. He brushed his thumb over my bottom lip. “Perhaps you should.”



It was an *outrage*.

That Wyatt had never had Benny’s Tacos.

“Will you stop huffing at me, boy?”

I huffed.

As soon as he pulled into an empty parking spot, I climbed out of his car, and I huffed again. The man lived in LA—he’d lived here for as long as I’d been alive, almost! Whatever, he’d lived in New York, Boston, and Italy too. Whatever. His car was registered in California. That *meant* something. And he’d never had Benny’s Tacos.

I slipped my hand into his and nearly dragged him into the joint, which... I mean, maybe it didn’t look like much. It was a hole-in-the-wall without being surrounded by that many walls. Let’s call it a cantina that may or may not have been a run-down diner at some point—it didn’t matter! They had the best quesadillas in the world.

“What’re you doing?” I stared at him, offended, when he pulled out his wallet. “We have an agreement.”

He made a face and promptly tucked away his wallet again.

I might not be flush with cash like he was, but this was my stipulation. If he was paying a decorator God knew how much to add Christmas stuff to his home—primarily for my sake—I was buying him lunch and paying for our activities today. We'd been to the tar pits, we'd had ice cream sandwiches, I'd bought ingredients so I could bake cookies at his place, and I'd bought us two ugly Christmas sweaters!

He'd had the sexiest and, at the same time, humblest grin on his face when I'd picked the sweaters. 'Cause I got the sense that this was as meaningful to him as it was to me, and I never wanted him to think he was rushing too fast or smothering me. To use his word from earlier. He'd literally said, "You have to tell me if I'm smothering you or taking up too much of your time."

Like, how about no? How about, he wasn't taking up *enough* time?

Once we had our combo plate of tacos and quesadillas, I filled our tray with extra salsa and napkins, and he carried our sodas to a table.

"Okay, prepare to be amazed." I sat down and hauled my hoodie over my head. I didn't wanna get salsa on it.

He totally *was* amazed. At the first bite of his shrimp quesadilla, I could tell he was a Bennyliciever.

"Jesus," he muttered.

"I know." I took a big chunk from my chicken taco and went straight to heaven.

And the chips...? Freaking yum.

"Makes me wonder what else you haven't tried." I spoke with my mouth full, 'cause that was me. "What if you've never had lunch at a food truck? Like, could we even be together?"

He snorted in amusement and picked up a napkin, only to reach across the table and wipe my mouth.

I smiled like a goof.

"First of all, swallow before you speak, sweetheart," he reminded me. "Second of all, what do you take me for?"

I was gonna obey.

"I'm practically a food-truck regular at corporate," he said. "This may shock you, but I don't choose upscale restaurants because I don't enjoy anything else."

I circled a finger around my face. "This is my dubious face."

He chuckled. "I'll just have to show you."

I leaned forward. “In the spirit of that, I also doubt you enjoy sex.”
He grinned and shook his head.



Holy Christmas, Santa had taken a huge crap in Wyatt’s house, and I *loved* it!

I dropped my freaking jaw as I walked through the kitchen and the living room, the hallway before too, and even the patio outside. Oh my gosh, the whole place was suddenly so warm and cozy and Christmassy. The tree! There was a big tree! And the fire was lit! Red and green blankets, super fuzzy and soft, draped over the couches. Plush pillows with snowflakes. All the lights! I was speechless. That decorator must’ve brought an entire crew over.

In five hours...I mean, it was a whole new place.

I beamed, hearing soft Christmas music from the speakers.

The glass railing of the terrace that stretched along the beach-side of the house had been covered in greenery and lights.

The living room was my new favorite room in the house. I wanted us to fuck on that soft rug in front of the tree, then on the one in front of the fire, and then on that couch, that couch, and up against the patio doors—

“Does this satisfy my little reindeer?” Wyatt came up behind me and hugged me tightly.

“My heart is so happy,” I whispered.

“Good. So is mine.” He kissed my neck. “Note that there are empty bowls, baskets, and trays scattered about.”

I lit up and spun around in his arms. “You want me to fill them with Christmas cookies and sweets, don’t you? Say you do, please.”

He grinned faintly and dipped down and kissed me. “I absolutely do.”

DECEMBER 11



Could this be considered another milestone in our very new relationship? It'd come as no surprise at all when I'd found out Wyatt had to work a couple hours on Saturday, and I'd said, "No problem. I gotta rehearse with my dance squad anyway." *Then* came the surprise. He'd asked if he could watch. If it was an open rehearsal—because he could bring his work phone and laptop and get some things done in the background.

So here we were. I climbed out of the car, resisting the urge to remind him once again that Kim would be here. Also, my sister sometimes turned up because she lived nearby, and our temporary practice spot offered way more entertainment than our usual warehouse.

It was a trampoline park south of Glendale.

Every Saturday at noon for the past six weeks, we'd had the place to ourselves for three hours. Kim and I had come on our own at least once a week too, 'cause this shit wasn't easy, even with our experience.

The company was opening a second location, an outdoor trampoline park, on January 2, so...that was what we were rehearsing for. The grand opening, which took place on New Year's Eve.

"I told you Kim will be here, right?" I asked nervously.

"Twice." Wyatt donned his shades and smirked softly. "If you remind me again, I'll start worrying you want us to be discreet."

I blinked and moved toward his side of the car. "Dude, I'm not the one facing a firing squad for sleeping with my boss when they find out. You know we have a nonfraternization policy, right?"

He let out a laugh and pulled me in close. "My sweet boy, do you never read the fine print?"

I scrunched my nose. Uh, no? Nobody did that.

“Our policy is pretty clear,” he said. “You’re not allowed to have a relationship with someone you work directly under or over. For instance, you wouldn’t be allowed to date John.”

Ew, Mr. Williams?

“I’m technically at corporate.” He dipped down and kissed me. “Technically, I only give you orders when you’re off the clock too.”

“Oh.” I bit my lip and peered up at him. “I like that policy.”

He hummed and rested his forehead to mine. “Me too.”

“So, um...” I fidgeted with the collar of his shirt. “We’re official? We’re together? None of that, let’s see what happens, non-exclusive, casually dating crap?”

His distaste for my last sentence was clear. “Absolutely none of that. You’re mine and only mine, thank you very much.”

I beamed.

Holy fuck, this was definitely a milestone.

“All yours.” I reached up and smooched him.

“That said...” He cleared his throat and smiled carefully. “It would spare me some grief at corporate if we let HR know we’re involved.”

I exhaled a laugh and smirked. “It doesn’t get more official than that. Sign me up!”



So...we walked hand in hand into the trampoline park, and I showed my ID to the bored teenager behind the front desk. All paying customers were leaving, and she’d be here till we were done.

Then we walked through the changing rooms that probably never saw much action aside from people changing their shoes. If they were like me, they arrived in the clothes they jumped in. In my case, a pair of sweats and a body-hugging tee.

“The short end of the park has a cafeteria,” I said. “It’s down this hall.” I pointed toward the very end. “Once you go through there, you’ll look down at the trampolines. Like, it’s open or however I should explain it.”

“I think I understand.” He pressed a kiss to my temple. “Enjoy your rehearsal. I’ll see if I get anything done.”

I kinda hoped he didn't! I wanted to be captivating and stuff.

On the other hand, I didn't want him to work when we got back to his place.

We parted ways for now. I entered the park through a set of heavy doors, and I dropped my bag just inside. I sort of had to, because down here, there were no chairs or off-to-the-side benches. Just the soft mattress framework and approximately twenty trampolines in various sizes. On the opposite side from where I was now, the trampolines extended halfway up the wall too, and there were a few platforms as well. A giant bouncy castle of trampolines.

I couldn't lie, it was the best fucking rush to combine dancing and trampolines.

"Hey, Parker!"

"Hey!" I nodded to Andy and Kim as I removed my shoes. We'd bought these ridiculously soft-sole sh...actually, I couldn't call them shoes. More like really thick rubber socks. Perfect for jumping in.

The park's theme colors were black and purple, so that was what we'd opted for with our workout clothes too. On the opening day, we'd get tees with the company logo.

Before I jumped over to my group, I glanced up at the cafeteria and spotted Wyatt looking out over the trampolines. I waved at him, and he smiled and waved back.

If I went nuts on the trampoline below the cafeteria, I bet I could make him laugh when I jumped the same height he was at. I guesstimated the cafeteria was about fifteen feet up.

Later, maybe. For now, I ran along the mattress framework till I reached my dancin' buddies. It wasn't a big crowd, but we were hella good, all nine of us.

Andy was in charge, and he was a good leader. "Five minutes of warm-up!"

I left the mattress and gave the nearest trampoline a couple test jumps, and I stretched my arms and rolled my neck.

Kim jumped over to me. "Hi."

"Hello." I grinned.

She pointed toward the cafeteria. "That's Mr. Abrams up there."

"By golly, is it?!" I swung my gaze that way, all theatrical-like. "Oh my, it is."

She laughed and shoved me. "Mya says you're together. Are you?"

I couldn't pretend to jerk around anymore. I wanted to tell her. "Yeah. He's just...yeah."

"Oh my God, look at your face." She grinned and shook her head. "So you faked being sick together, huh?"

I snickered and put a little more oomph into the jumps, and she followed. When I hit the surface, she was in the air and vice versa.

"We totally did."

"Aww, that's cute—and mildly frustrating because we had to deal with *four* emergencies for the conference."

Oops?



I considered it a win the first time I did a flip in the air, and I caught Wyatt doing a double take at me.

But he'd seen nothing yet. After a music-less warm-up, Andy asked Kim and me to demonstrate the program we had so far, which covered the first minute of a song that was two minutes and forty-five seconds long. It was the chunk she and I were in charge of.

"Okay, just spread out along the sides for now," Kim instructed. "Aadesh, you can push play when Parker and I are at the wall."

We jumped down to the short-end wall—the opposite one from the cafeteria.

"I'm gonna film it." Andy gave us a heads-up.

Seconds later, a slightly sped-up version of "Merry Xmas Everybody" pumped out of the speakers, and Kim and I exchanged a nod. Those fourteen seconds of semi-calm in the beginning were the perfect length to get people's attention at the opening.

After that, the song morphed into a hardcore EDM remix, and that was our cue.

We pushed off the wall, sprinted along the mattresses before we jumped onto two trampolines—she took the left; I took the right—and we gained altitude in three jumps, then performed a double flip, landed once, jumped over to the next trampoline, two heavy jumps, we locked eyes, and we dove diagonally at the same time so she landed on the next trampoline in my row, and I landed on hers. No rest for the wicked, Kim performed a series of twists

and spins in the air while I jumped up on a platform and then sprinted off it.

I spun in the air and landed on my back on the trampoline, jumped up, landed on the mattress, jumped to the next trampoline, did a cartwheel into another, and met up with Kim on the biggest mat at the center, where we took turns doing triple side flips.

Heart pounding, adrenaline surging, I wasn't ready to stop when Andy cut the music, but I *was* ready to see the look on Wyatt's face. It did things to my stomach, and I grinned gleefully. Now, he wasn't the type to drop his jaw or anything, but the blank stare and lifted eyebrows told me plenty. Someone had been stupefied!

Triumph.

DECEMBER 12



I grinned when I saw my cousin's name on the display, and I quickly wiped away my bubble beard and answered the call, putting him on speaker.

"I had a feeling you'd call!"

"Well, no shit?" Cam chuckled. "Where's that selfie from? Last time I visited, you did not have a tub that four people could fit inside."

"Yeah, about that..." I sighed contentedly and left the phone on the edge, then leaned back comfortably in the water. "I met someone. He's our type, Cam."

"Oooh, what's he like?"

Fucking amazing? Perfect? Sweet and funny and kind and sexy and...

Slight movement caught my eye, and I tilted my head toward the door, where I totally saw the shadow of two feet! Ha! *Oh Daddy, you're supposed to work, remember? You said you had to catch up on a few emails!* Even though it was Sunday.

"He's almost too good to be true," I replied honestly. "We're at that beginning stage where we keep saying we're just gonna spend one more night together. Just one more."

The plan was for me to go home after work tomorrow, though that'd been our initial plan yesterday too. Home after dance practice—and today, home after lunch, because he had work that included a conference call. I guessed that one was over now.

"What do you mean—like, it's temporary?" Cam wondered.

Oh crap, no, not like that. "No, I mean—since it's so new. We're supposed to take it slow and meet up for dates and stuff when we have time.

You know? But his schedule at work is so hectic, and last week, after our first proper dinner date, he finally brought me back to his place and screwed my brains out. And then we called in sick the morning after, and I've been at his place ever since."

Cam sighed wistfully. "That's the stuff right there."

I leaned back against the bath pillow again. If Wyatt wanted to listen in, he could. I wasn't saying anything I didn't want him to know anyway. But knowing him, he'd only indulge a few seconds and then pull himself away. In the end, he was a gentleman.

"How are you and the boyfriend?" I asked. "Noa?"

"Yeah, he's..." He chuckled softly. "He's amazing. But you know our deal, right?"

"Sort of..." I squinted. "You were hoping for a third?"

"We'll need one eventually, I guess," he replied. "Our core kinks line up too well. He's a brat like you, totally wild and can't spell boundaries, and I'm...well, you know what I'm into. It just sucks because I'm so damn in love with him."

I raked my teeth over my bottom lip and made a sudsy mountain with my hands. "Weren't you hooked on a Dom in your community?"

"Yup, but that's not happening. Sometimes, I swear he's looking at me in, you know, *that* way—kind of lingering and stuff...but he's evidently happy with his douchebag boyfriend. Who's a total manipulator, by the way."

That sucked more than one donkey butt.

"But anyway. I'm happier than I've been in a long time, and Noa keeps me busy," he chuckled. "I hope you can meet next time you visit. Which—when is that happening?"

Hopefully soon. I missed DC. Our family came from all over the place. The grandparents we shared were from DC, though they'd moved to Georgia after they'd retired. Mom was from Florida, so she'd screamed yes when Dad had been offered a job there a few years ago. Her parents, however, were from out here, and Nana had moved back after Pops passed away. Here, she had her sisters. But yeah, when my sister and I were little, we'd lived in DC, and I'd spent most of my school years there.

"Work is usually slow after the holidays," I said pensively. That was when airfare wasn't outrageously expensive either. "Maybe I can take a few days off in January or February...?"

"That would be awesome," Cam said. "You can stay with Noa and me—"

unless you wanna go to my parents’.”

“Hell no, I’ll crash with you if you don’t mind,” I laughed. “How are the mean girls?” Totally referring to Cam’s sisters. They’d mellowed out a lot as we’d grown up, but man, they’d been cruel once upon a time. In that annoying sit-still-I’m-gonna-paint-your-nails way.

“They’re vicious,” he exclaimed. “They stopped eating carbs, so I’m not going near them.”

I laughed.

“By the way, before I forget,” he moved on, “what’re you doing for your birthday?”

“Mom and Dad are flying out,” I answered.

“Cool. How’s Uncle Keith anyway?”

“Still in a cast for another couple of weeks, which works out great because that means they’ll stay at a hotel and I don’t have to clean the apartment,” I chuckled. “I’ve never been so glad I don’t have an elevator in my building.”

He chuckled too. “Are you gonna go to a restaurant or...? I mean for your birthday.”

“I guess so.” I shrugged and scratched my neck. “I wonder if it’s too soon to introduce Wyatt...”

“Ooh, Sir Wyatt. I like it.”

“Daddy Wyatt, yo,” I corrected. That was the difference between me and Cam—he wanted the Master, and I wanted the Daddy. “Eh, I bet he’s busy. He has so many business dinners and meetings.”

“Maybe, but you should still make sure,” Cam responded. “I bet he’d at least appreciate being invited.”

That was true. I would do that.

“Yeah, you’re right. I just gotta add that I don’t want a gift from him, and...like, I don’t have any expectations. I mean, I don’t want him to feel pressured since it’s so early.” I looked toward the door again, relieved when the sliver of brightness didn’t come with shadows. He wasn’t there anymore.

“How old is he?” Cam asked curiously.

“Forty-six.”

“What does he do for a living?”

“Oh—he’s part of a huge corporation. It’s a family thing. His uncle is the CEO, and I’d say Wyatt is one of three or four relatives who will eventually take over.”

Cam hummed. “So he’s a mature man, maybe well-off...? Dominant. A Daddy. Presumably lives his life just fine. So I’m thinking he’s capable of deciding for himself what he’s ready for?”

Oh, *turd*.

“Dude, you don’t know what he’s already done for me,” I said in my defense. “After our date when he brought me back here, I made some comments about how he didn’t have any Christmas decorations...? And before I knew it, he hired a freaking decorator to come over, and now I’m walking around in Santa’s workshop. And like, dinners and lunches and—all of it. He insists on paying. He drove me to dance rehearsal, he—”

“He likes to dote on you,” Cam murmured. “What’s wrong with that?”

I huffed a breath and deflated. “What can I give in return?”

“Oh, sorry. I didn’t know he measured affection in money. I guess you’re shit out of luck.”

I rolled my eyes to myself. “And you say you’re not a brat.”

“I’m not!” he laughed. “I’m serious. Unless he’s one of those rich fuckers who only sees money, chances are he doesn’t give a fuck. Maybe, and hear me out—this might sound crazy—but maybe he just wants *you*.”

I opened my mouth to respond, because I actually had an argument, but that was when I heard a knock on the door, which meant only one thing.

“Crap,” I whispered. “Cam, lemme call you back. I think Wyatt’s been eavesdropping.”

“Oh shit,” he chuckled. “All right, later.”

“Later.” I reached over and ended the call, and I told Wyatt it was okay to come in. Then I ducked lower into the water so he could barely see me over the bubbles.

“Hey, brat.” He smiled carefully and stuck his hands into the pockets of his suit pants. He’d rolled up the sleeves of his dark blue shirt at some point, and I appreciated the forearm porn.

“Hello, sneak.” I blew away some bubbles.

His mouth twitched, and he walked closer.

“How much did you overhear?” I had to ask.

He released a breath. “Let’s see. I stopped outside the door when I heard you telling your cousin you’d met someone. Then I left when you asked how he was doing. Once I got to my study, I remembered I’d forgotten my coffee in the kitchen.” He rubbed the back of his neck. “I told myself I was better than someone who eavesdrops, so I walked back to the kitchen through the

living room instead of the hallway, and then I failed taking the same route to the study again, so now there's a cup of coffee on the table right outside, and I started listening in when I heard 'Daddy Wyatt, yo.'

A giggle burst out, 'cause it was funny to hear him say "yo."

But that was one impressive run-through.

"I take it you have a birthday coming up."

I nodded. "On Wednesday."

The tension was a little nerve-racking. I didn't know what he was thinking or if he was mad or...

He nodded once and took another couple steps toward me. "I see. That's, ah..." He cleared his throat and eventually sat down on the edge of the tub. "I won't intrude on the birthday talk, but I felt the need to let you know that everything your cousin told you is spot-on. If I valued money more than... whatever else, I would've been happy before we met. I would have loved my life, Parker. Instead...the man you met in the office when you came up with the Christmas present for my uncle..." He lifted a brow.

I chewed on the inside of my cheek and nodded slowly. That man hadn't been happy. He'd been rude, indifferent, and closed off.

"I spend recklessly sometimes because I *don't* care," he murmured. "I haven't earned half of what I'm worth. I was born with money, and it made me resentful long before I sank into a lifestyle of repetitive comfort."

I half squinted, a little confused. "What do you mean by resentful?"

He shrugged slightly. "I was never really close to my own parents, because they do value money more than anything. If a hobby doesn't cost more than what most make in a year, they don't bother. It has to be golf and yacht clubs with them. And you won't see them at the public course in Calabasas—it's Scotland, Florida, and Spain. Clothes *have* to be expensive. They *have* to fly private. They *need* to host big dinner parties just so people can see how much they have."

He was closer to his uncle, I bet. Not that I knew much about Clarke Abrams, but I'd heard enough through the company grapevine. He cared for his employees—we had good benefits and stuff. He absolutely loved his family, and he adored his wife very, very much. Employees with children could send their kids to a private day care near corporate for less money than most people spent.

Wyatt motioned for me to turn around, and he grabbed the shampoo bottle and the showerhead.

I smiled curiously and slid closer, and I turned my back to him.

“My siblings and I all wanted to pursue different interests over the years that didn’t please our parents.” He turned on the water and waited till it was hot before he began washing my hair. I tipped my head back and closed my eyes. “That sort of thing causes rifts.”

Yeah, I could see that.

“I’m not saying I wasn’t fortunate,” he added. “I was, and I am. Very much so. I’m only saying it was never what made me happy.”

I shivered at the feel of his fingers in my hair—and the warmth of his voice.

When he switched off the water again, I peered up at him, so he was totally upside down. “I make you happy?”

He smiled. “Incredibly. You’ve breathed life into my existence, Parker. You can’t put a price tag on that. You walk into a room, and the whole place lights up.”

Goodness, he had a way with words.

“Close your eyes.”

I closed my eyes.

He started working shampoo into my hair, and I groaned at how good it felt.

“When I was in college, I grew closer to my uncle,” he went on. “I trusted him, and he listened when I complained about my first-world problems. I was furious with my father, who wouldn’t let me minor in ecology.”

Whoa. I cracked one eye open. “Like, plants and stuff?”

He chuckled. “That’s the start of it, I suppose. Partly. But I was drawn to finding solutions in developing countries. I spent a summer in Botswana before my senior year in high school—looked great on my college application, my parents said. We built a school there, and all I saw was this barren land, and I came home with the niggling worry that life couldn’t flourish where nothing grew.”

Fuck, now I felt bad. There was so much to learn about Wyatt, and I’d barely scratched the surface. I’d asked the most basic stuff, like siblings, how many celebrity chefs he knew, what his favorite foods and music were. We talked so much, and a simple two-second question could easily turn into a two-hour conversation. And I loved that. I loved that he was easy to talk to—and he listened as well. He didn’t mind when I rambled.

We had time, though. Right? We had to. I wanted to know everything.

“I got even angrier when I didn’t get the opportunity to go back to Botswana,” he said. “But I was partly to blame for that. I obeyed my parents for too long. Until Uncle Clarke told me it was okay to piss off my folks sometimes. And then I chose his path.”

“You mean at the company?”

“More like his philosophy in life,” he answered. “Have you met Clarke?”

I squinted. “Not really. I’ve seen him from afar at a work thing. He’s boisterous.”

“That, he is.” He grinned faintly and dragged his fingers along my scalp. Homina, homina, that felt so friggin’ amazing. “He noticed once that I tended to feel bad about wealth—the topic made me uncomfortable. So he took me aside one day and told me to buck up. Money’s great. Making money is wonderful. The trick, he said, was to spend it wisely. Keep making it—just take care of those under you. Do something good.”

I shivered when he covered my neck, rubbing my flesh unhurriedly and scratching his nails up my scalp.

“Right after college, I applied for a job with him,” he said. “I wanted to work my way up, and he waved that off. He had just the thing for me, he said. Two things, actually. He wanted my production brain—I’m good at strategizing big projects and leading rather large departments.”

“And the other?” I asked.

“He knew I needed to feel good about what I did,” he sighed. “As you know, we have a department that works with charity.”

I nodded. “Yessir. Did he put you in charge of that?”

“No, but he told me to make sure the money was spent wisely.” He winked. “He said he didn’t want our money to be lost in the system. He showed me the average cut of a dollar that goes straight to relief and aid, and it pissed me off. We’re talking a few cents. The rest gets shuffled around and never makes it to where it’s truly needed.”

I scrunched my nose.

“When I finally got out of my marriage, I let my job become everything,” he admitted. “I poured all my time and energy into digging out the right nonprofits, the best people on the ground, the spokespeople I wanted to keep close, the organizations that sent volunteers instead of outsourcing the task and paying them instead.”

I smiled to myself and closed my eyes once more as he showered off the suds from my hair.

“I love my job, Parker,” he murmured. “It fills me with a sense of purpose and keeps me afloat. But on a personal level, I’ve been drowning for years. I’ve distanced myself from everything and everyone. I became moody and cynical.”

That was the Mr. Abrams I’d known!

Not anymore.

“Then one day, a boy rambled about doing cartwheels on my Persian rug,” he mused. “He just wouldn’t shut up.”

I spluttered a laugh.

“He told me I deserved a lump of coal from Santa,” he added. “And that I was a grinch. Then he asked if we should carpool the next day, and he gave me snickerdoodles.”

He shifted the showerhead away from me, and I turned around and looked up at him.

He let out a breath and returned the showerhead to its mount. “You changed everything for me. And that’s what I want more of. More excitement, more adorable yet bizarrely wise rambles from someone who sees the world differently than I do. More spontaneity. More...insane triple backflips that blow my mind.”

I grinned, and I started falling...

He touched my cheek. “I simply adore being around you.”

I simply adored being around him too.

He wasn’t the grinch anymore anyway. He was the best, hottest, kindest Daddy Christmas.

I scrambled up onto my knees and glided over to him, and I reached up to kiss him. “I honestly can’t get enough of you, Wyatt.”

He drew a breath and cupped my cheek. “Then let’s not pretend,” he whispered. “I have a busy December, and I want to see you as much as possible. Stay with me for a while.”

I nodded and kissed him again, deeper this time, suddenly very needy. I locked my arms around his neck, and he groaned into the kiss. I hoped he knew me well enough to see this coming...

I pulled him back.

He sucked in a breath, and a second later, he was tumbling down back first into the tub, and water splashed all around us.

He resurfaced with a laugh and a cough and instantly yanked me to his body. “You little shit, I was waiting for that.”

Good! Then he could've prevented it if he didn't wanna get wet!
I climbed up on his lap and kissed him silly.

DECEMBER 13



“*I* forwarded them to Mr. Williams—I’m not going out there again.” I was going to stay hidden behind my computer screen for the rest of the day.

So you plant a smooch on your man outside the HR office, and suddenly you’re the talk of the town in all the bullpens.

Pffft.

I’d just been happy about our HR-official status. It was the office romance’s equivalent to marriage. I wasn’t completely brand-new; I wasn’t planning on riding Daddy’s cock in the cafeteria or anything, but yeah, fuck it, I’d jumped up and kissed him real quick, and people had noticed. Now everyone knew.

“Aww, Parker’s grumpy about being the star of today’s work gossip.” Mya pouted.

I flipped her off.

“I take it you’re not having lunch with us?” Kim asked.

I held up my food container that’d been on my desk all morning. “I’m all set. See you later.”

I’d made a pasta salad last night, so I ate and worked through my lunch. Wyatt was at a business lunch anyway, and his whole week was going to center around their upcoming trip. Actually, so was mine. I had his itinerary now and knew exactly where and when his assistant was going to pick up the correct material.

My phone rang, and I saw Mom’s name on the display. I inserted one of my earbuds and answered while I categorized all the graphics into two folders. London and Luxembourg.

“Hey, Mom.” I stabbed a cherry tomato and some pasta on my fork and shoveled it into my mouth.

“Hi, sweetie. Are you busy?”

“It’s all good. What’s up?”

“I just wanted to let you know we changed our flights,” she said. “We’re flying in late tomorrow night instead of early on the fifteenth. We’re having breakfast with Emmy and Levi, and then the rest of the day is all about you.”

I grinned and dragged another set of graphics into the Luxembourg folder. “I don’t get off work until four, so you have my permission to give Em some attention until then.”

Mom laughed softly. “You’re kind, darlin’. Speaking of which, I spoke to Emmy, and she said we’re adding a plus-one to the dinner reservation?”

Oh yeah, crap, I was totally gonna get to that. “Yeah, would you mind? I’m sure she also told you I’m seeing someone.”

“She did. Will you tell me about him?”

Try’n stop me!

DECEMBER 14



I did my best to tame my hair on the way to Mr. Williams's conference room next to his office, but it was of no use. Maybe I could tell him that it wasn't my fault I looked freshly fucked. It was Wyatt's.

"Fuck—I forgot the Brussels folder. I'll be right back." I hurried back to our corner and picked up the folder from my desk, then jogged through the cubicle area once more.

Mya and Kim entered the conference room just a second before I did, and we took our seats next to one another at the table that seated eight. Mr. Williams had his assistant here too.

"You can leave the door open, Oliver," Mr. Williams said. "Mr. Abrams is joining us soon."

Word?

Hot Daddy in work mode. That could be fun.

"To prevent any confusion, let's proceed with this meeting by using the Abramses' first names," Mr. Williams instructed.

"Yes, sir." I nodded. Probably for the best.

True enough, Wyatt entered with Suravi shortly after, and I did my best not to get smirky. He did too, and he was much better at acting than I was. The affection and the amusement mainly showed in his eyes, and they were gone within seconds.

Mr. Williams totally kept an eye on me, and it was important to me that I didn't veer off course. I was a professional and whatnot.

"Parker, you go first," Mr. Williams told me. He turned to Wyatt. "For the sake of getting all information right, I asked them to use first names for this."

Wyatt inclined his head. “Of course. There are a few of us to keep track of.”

Luckily, we weren’t dealing with the other freaking Abramses flying out from New York. Kim, Mya, and I had worked on the material for Clarke, his children Sean, Mary, Joey, and Christian, then Wyatt, and Clarke’s grandson, Toby.

I stood up and headed over to the whiteboard, and I fanned out the five folders that belonged to “my” three Abramses.

“I’m saving Sean for last since he will fly directly to Luxembourg and then to Brussels,” I mentioned. After grabbing one of the markers, I started making notes on the whiteboard, and I could only hope Wyatt didn’t have too many adjustments. We wanted to get this cemented and sent out as soon as possible. “Okay, so Clarke, Wyatt, and Toby are flying out to London on the seventeenth—and with the time zones and middle landing in New York, you arrive in the UK late in the afternoon on the eighteenth,” I said. “The print place in Archway will deliver your personal material to the hotel, and your assistants can pick it up in the lobby.” I side-eyed the London folder and flipped a page, making sure I started with the right meeting. “Clarke has a dinner meeting scheduled for that night, but we didn’t receive any notes or speeches, so I’m assuming it’s informal...?”

Wyatt nodded. “It’s with the other organizers.”

Right. Okay. Yeah, I bet there was plenty of coordinating going on, considering all seminars in all venues, all dinners, all luncheons, and all workshops were estimated to attract over six thousand people. And it was all these invisible fields you never heard about. Attendees came from companies that provided software and products for other companies in order for them to bring out their own products, and the Abrams family covered so many sectors. From entertainment logistics, event services, and branding in the food industry, to studio production and product development—and then marketing and print design to wrap it all up in a nice bow.

“In that case, your assistants can pick up the first material on the evening when you arrive at the hotel in London,” I said, adding that to the board. “So that brings us to the breakfast meeting the morning after. Wyatt, sir, you’re speaking at Grosvenor House before you’re heading straight to the convention center, and Toby will be with you.” I looked to Suravi. “I’ll make a note to ensure the Grosvenor House material is separated from the rest—it’s mostly his speech, a few pamphlets, the reports, and the flash drives with the

presentation for next year's ambitions."

Suravi nodded and made notes on her iPad.

"Why aren't we just printing the reports at the office?" Wyatt asked.

"Clarke requested higher quality since you're handing them out to potential clients," Mr. Williams answered. "Every report is a presentation."

Wyatt scratched his eyebrow, seemingly not too happy. "Fair enough. God forbid they receive digits on copy paper."

I felt my mouth twitch. He was thinking about spending money "wisely." But marketing was good. This multicity conference was an Abrams display. They had something to show, to sell, to promote. Or rather, a million things to showcase.

"By the way—" Wyatt turned to Mr. Williams. "How are you coordinating with the New York office? How many graphic designers are coming?"

"Four from New York, none from us," Mr. Williams replied. "Our graphic design department is too small."

I scratched the bottom of the marker against my temple.

Wyatt flicked me a glance, and I... Oh crap, he wasn't going there, was he?

He cleared his throat and faced Mr. Williams again. "I'd appreciate if you could spare one and convince Parker to join us. I want him on the floor with me during the workshops."

Holy fuck, he totally went there.

I blinked.

This...was maybe not great—and maybe it could be handled with more finesse? Kim was the official head of our little squad, and she might be giving me a sly smirk right now, but it looked like favoritism to me.

Mr. Williams looked...uncomfortable. "Uh, well, you see—Kim is our head designer. You don't want me to ask her first?"

Wyatt was completely unfazed. "I've already spoken to her."

Really? I looked at Kim.

"I can't go," she explained. "Technically, I asked not to. My flight home is on the twenty-first, and I haven't seen my family since Easter." She turned to Mr. Williams. "I recommended Parker, sir."

Oh my God, so I could go to Europe with Wyatt?

Fuck, I should've given him more credit. No matter how open he was, he wouldn't favor me at work in front of others—or in any way that impacted

coworkers.

“I see. In that case...” Mr. Williams glanced over at me. “Do you have your passport, Parker?”

I grinned. “Yes, sir.”



“He’s expecting you,” Suravi said with a smirk.

I chuckled and walked by. “Thanks.” I opened the door to Wyatt’s office and found him sitting behind his desk, fiddling with his phone.

“Took you long enough.”

“I had to talk to Mr. Williams, because apparently, I’m going to Europe.” I was rounding his desk as he pushed out his chair, and I immediately jumped up to sit on his lap. I threw my legs over the armrest and cupped his smirky mug. “I’m going to *Europe*?”

“I had to try, at least. I was ready to bring all of you. Or make an attempt.”

He was the best! I’d been prepared to just wallow my way through those days when he was in London and Luxembourg.

I kissed him and slipped my arms around his neck, and he hummed and squeezed me to him.

“But you have to tell me if it’s too much.” He kissed my jaw. “Having you with me will actually be a great benefit work-wise, but I admit it’s for selfish reasons as well.”

“If it’s too much?” I laughed. “Too much to fly to Europe on the company dime and steal extra time with my man?” I leaned in again and brushed my lips to his. “Because, to me, it sounds like the adventure of a lifetime. I’ve never been fucked by my Daddy in London, for instance. Or that other Luxembourg place I had to Google.”

He hummed and kissed me back, tightening his hold on me, and my mind had one track as soon as he swept his tongue into my mouth.

“I want you next to me on the plane.” He slipped his hands under my ass and squeezed. “Underneath me every night—in the room we’ll share.”

I shivered and nodded, throwing myself into the fantasy—that was about to become reality—and he picked me up and positioned me on the desk.

“That’s where I belong—always next to my Daddy.”

“That’s right. Because Daddy needs you all the time.” He rose to his feet, never breaking the kiss, and began undoing my pants. “Down the road—maybe one day when we live together—I want it to be a rule. If I go out of town for longer than two nights, it’s best you come with me.”

Jesus, he couldn’t throw that at me when he was pulling out my cock. I couldn’t think straight! Except, I could nod vigorously because that was the best rule ever.

“Some rules are awesome,” I said shakily. And a beat later, he sat down in his chair and sucked me into his mouth.

A breath gusted out of me, and I wove my fingers into his hair.

Fuck me.

I was rock hard within seconds, and the way he worked me over made it clear this wouldn’t last long. I wasn’t going to last when he sucked me all greedily like that.

“Daddy,” I whimpered. “It feels so good.”

He hummed around me and slipped his hands up the sides of my thighs, then back to my ass. I fucking loved how he manhandled me. How he threw me around, manipulated my pleasure points, and touched me with so much urgency.

“Can you fuck me after, please?” I moaned.

He squeezed and kneaded my butt cheeks, causing me to nearly lift off the desk. It was as if I weighed nothing to him.

“Daddy has a meeting...” He swirled his tongue around the tip and sucked harder. “Tonight, though.”

I guess I had to wait.

I clenched down on nothing and split my focus, feeling Daddy’s mouth and tongue on me, thinking about tonight when he could fuck my bottom till I couldn’t walk. Till I was a pleading mess begging for Daddy’s come...

I started whimpering pathetically as the pleasure built up, and the only reason I didn’t try to stifle those sounds was because he loved them. He said I sounded so desperate, and that was how he wanted me.

“I can’t wait for tonight,” I gasped. “I think we should have pizza in bed, and then you can breed me, Daddy.”

He tightened his hold on my ass so much that his fingers dug in painfully, and it nearly pushed me over the edge. He moved faster, sucked me harder, and I moved with him.

I couldn’t take it. Knowing that I had to keep my voice down, I released

his hair and slapped a hand over my mouth. Heat spread throughout my body, and I couldn't control my breathing. Before long, I was panting and muffling endless moans, and then I exploded with a rush of euphoria that washed over me.

Christ on a Christmas cookie!

How was I supposed to work now? I needed a nap.

In a fraction of a second, I pictured myself napping on a soft cushion under Daddy's desk while he worked, and I wanted it so badly. It could be my own little fort. With blankets and maybe a stuffed animal to cuddle with.

His desk was big, and you couldn't see through it. Solid wood all the way, from the heavy top to the two sections of drawers. I could totally curl up by his feet, and nobody would know.

Daddy tucked me back into my undies and my pants, and then he stood up and kissed me hungrily. He was horny, I could tell. He needed me but didn't have time.

"Daddy?" I shuddered and gripped his shirt.

"Yes, baby?"

Unf, tough to focus when he was dropping openmouthed kisses along my neck.

"I, um..." I swallowed dryly. "I was wondering if I could build a blanket fort under your desk. 'Cause I could nap there when I'm on my break and wanna be close to you while you work."

He drew a breath and cupped my cheek, and he gazed down at me with such heat, both affection and desire, that I had a feeling I knew his answer already.

"Like, with soft cushions and blankets and a pillow," I said. "Possibly fun string lights too. And a cupholder for a soda. Maybe."

He leaned in and kissed me softly, teasing the tip of my tongue with his, and then he offered a slow nod. "Daddy will personally take care of that for you. Of course you need a blanket fort at Daddy's feet. It feels foolish we haven't already made one."

I could swear...I was the luckiest boy in the whole darn world.

DECEMBER 15



Who was I, even?
I blamed Daddy!

In what universe did I get off work early and go to Daddy's place to tidy up and *clean*? Not that it needed much tidying, but I caught myself several times. I was straightening pillows, making the bed, ordering more coffee capsules for Daddy's coffee machine... I made a batch of snickerdoodles for him, I steamed the suit I knew he wanted to wear for my birthday dinner tonight, I made him a card that said Best Daddy Ever and hung it on the fridge, and I even did his laundry! Well, our laundry. I had half my wardrobe at his house now.

He was being a *sneak*. Slowly but surely incorporating structure and simple rules, and I...I was soaking it up. Every boundary we discussed pushed me to a new level of submissiveness. I wanted to serve him, cater to his every need, and make sure he could relax the moment he came home from work.

I'd thought I was working hard—and I was—but at least I could clock out at four most days. Meanwhile, we'd left Culver City at the same time today, shortly after two o'clock, and I had borrowed his car to go to his place, while he'd called his driver to take him to corporate. He had meetings... So many meetings. But even when he worked so much, he made time for me. Like my birthday lunch today? He'd called for takeout to be delivered to his office, and he'd presented his "first of two" presents for me.

The friggin' blanket fort! And a cute little stuffie, a blue bunny with the softest ears.

He'd confessed that he'd picked out the items himself, but then he'd had

a personal shopper bring it over to the office. He'd been contrite about that, which was weird, because it was no different from ordering something online and having it delivered by UPS.

He'd given me my blanket fort. And a key to his office so I could take a nap whenever I wanted and he wasn't there.

No wonder he was drawing out the submissive in me, more than I thought was possible in the beginning. Thanks to his setting the pace with easy-enough rules for me to follow, I was falling into a new role that brought me a sense of serenity. I couldn't explain it any other way.

And these rules...

I chewed on my lip, wondering if I could call them that. Sure, some of them, but most of all, it was just a healthy everyday structure that made me feel better. My bath time? He washed my hair and my body. Thoroughly. His shower time? Either I washed him, or I sat outside the shower and enjoyed my view. And I made sure his towel was warm and coming straight off the towel rack. He prepared my breakfast while I prepared his espresso and biscotti. To prevent stress in the morning, he wanted me to pick out my clothes for the following day before I went to bed. When he had to work extra in his home study, I checked in on him once every hour to make sure he had coffee—decaf after four o'clock.

I had to text him once I'd arrived someplace, just so he knew I'd gotten there safely.

I had to eat all my veggies...

Pout.

I wiped down the kitchen bar and did a final scan of the house. Everything looked great! Now I just needed to shower and find something nice to wear. I'd brought over a few less-casual outfits since Daddy and I tended to eat at fancy restaurants here and there. Okay, partly my fault, because the upscale Vietnamese place not far from here was so good that I could die.

Goddamn, I was getting spoiled.



Daddy finally came home a little after five, and I helped him get ready. He was all kinds of endearing, asking questions about my parents and wanting to

make a good impression. But he had nothing to worry about. My mom was excited to meet him, so was Emmy, and he didn't have to do much to impress Dad and my sister's boyfriend. Levi was climbing the ranks at a studio and probably already knew of the Abrams family, and Dad was a money guy. He was a financial adviser or something equally boring and defied Florida's heat in nice suits every day. I was sure they could bond over that.

Daddy chuckled as he buttoned up his shirt. "That's all I am, a suit."

I grinned. "Don't forget the yacht club!"

Too funny, that one pushed a button every time. He narrowed his eyes and came at me too fast for me to react, and he tickled my sides and nipped at my neck.

"Fuck! Quit it!" I laughed, squirming out of his hold.

"Damn brat. I ought to spank you till your ass is red."

Threatening me with a good time?

"Promise?" I smiled goofily.

He hummed approvingly and kissed me hard. "Good to know. Now—let's go before I make us late. I already want to bend you over for everything you've done here today." He cupped my cheek and kissed my smile. "My wonderful boy. You don't know how much you please me."

Oh God, that was the stuff right there.



I grinned, spotting my folks outside the restaurant as soon as I stepped up on the curb. The valet accepted the key from Wyatt, and I aimed for Mom and Dad. It was the same place we'd gone to last year, an Italian restaurant in Venice, near the beach.

Mom threw out her arms and beamed at me. "There's my baby! Twenty-six years old—you're getting awfully close to thirty, Parker!"

I laughed and jogged over to hug her. "Hey, Mom."

"Hi, sweetie." She made that *hug sound* that only moms and grandmothers made when they embraced someone. The "ohhhoh!" as if they were trying to squeeze you half to death. "Oh, he's handsome," she whispered in my ear.

I chuckled and eased back, then hugged my dad quickly.

"It's good to see you, son."

“You too, old man. How’s the leg?” I noticed he’d gotten a walking cast now, but he still had one crutch.

“Eh, apparently it’s become your mother’s excuse to ban me from the garage,” he replied.

I scratched my nose. “Harsh. I would’ve just banned you from working on your car when it was stuck in reverse.”

He snorted in amusement and shook his head. “You’re supposed to be on my side, you know.”

“I totally am!” I laughed. “Anyway—” I took a step back and brought my sexy man into the fold. “Mom, Dad, this is Wyatt. Wyatt, meet my parents, Lynette and Keith. Dad’s usually not in a cast, but he was crawling underneath his ancient Chevy one day, and it sort of rolled over him.”

Dad instantly gave me a cutting look of betrayal. “You’re *not* on my side. The accident sounds ridiculous when you spin it that way, you little terror.”

I cracked up.

“I mean—he ain’t far off,” Mom drawled. Then she turned her charm on Wyatt and extended her hand. “It’s lovely to meet you, Wyatt. Parker’s been telling his sister so much about you. She, in turn, tells me.”

“Yeah, where’s *that* terror anyway?” I looked around us.

“They’re on their way,” Dad said.

“It’s great to meet you too,” Wyatt replied, shaking Mom’s hand.

Dad was incredibly supportive of me when it was his turn to shake Wyatt’s hand. “Parker’s your problem now.”

“We love one another very much in our family, contrary to what you might believe,” I told Wyatt.

The look in his eyes was too funny. He was relieved, presumably at the banter going on, but he was also a bit overwhelmed. At least that’s what it looked like.

“Hey, birthday boy!”

I peered out on the traffic—*there*. My sister was crossing the street, jogging in between cars that were stuck at the light.

Now that we were both with others, we didn’t see each other at home... well, barely at all since I was shacking up with my hot Daddy at the moment, but we texted a lot. Even if it was just to check in briefly or call each other idiot or loser, she had my back, and I had hers. And yeah, it was possible I’d rambled about Wyatt to her.

Emmy reached the curb, while her boyfriend was just about to begin

crossing the street.

“Happy birthday, you crusty sock!” She threw her arms around me.

I patted her back awkwardly and looked up at Daddy. “I don’t know who this is. Ma’am? Please release me. Can I take you to the nearest hospital?”

“Ugh.” She pushed me away. “Ma’am? Freaking *ma’am*?”

Daddy grinned to himself and scrubbed a hand over his face.

Welcome to the family!

DECEMBER 16



*S*hut, up, Emmy.

Nana's gonna guilt you hard for not coming with us. I'll help her.

My sister could be such a turd. I pocketed my phone without responding to her. It wasn't my fault! I had a million things to do since I was going to freaking Europe tomorrow. I had to pack, I had to sort shit out at work, I had to go over to corporate with Mr. Williams for a meeting—and in my defense? Nana could've come to dinner last night. It wasn't my fault she'd thought the world had lost the plot and therefore refused to leave Thousand Oaks.

“Parker, did you find the speakers' material for the first leg of the tour?” Mya asked.

“Yeah—and I spoke to Milton at Archway. They're ready for any rush orders in case we have changes.” I double-checked a few folders so I knew where to go when I had to work in airplane-mode. InDesign and Illustrator were done, thanks to the IT guys when I'd picked up my laptop, but they'd neglected to download Photoshop and Sketch. I had to sync it all up with my iPad and my sketchpad too, because I preferred to think in illustrations when I was brainstorming templates and mock-ups. Of which there would be *many* for this shindig.

As a graphic designer, I had to say I really loved Wyatt's vision for my role at the event. He was like, “You know what potential clients get enough of? Speeches from men in suits. They wanna see their product getting made.”

In short, he and I were gonna schmooze with eventgoers, and I'd show them what I could do—and how quickly we could get things done when, the

day after, for the second part of the event, we showed up with the finished product.

Speaking of, I had to call that British guy again. He hadn't responded to my last email. They'd promised they were ready for anything that needed prioritized delivery, but we were about to rush-order heaps of promotional items. And this was typically the New York office's area; we didn't deal with the European branches out here on the West Coast.

"Kim, do you have the list of the promo items?" I asked.

"Yeah, I forwarded it to you, babe. It's been approved at both Archway and the place in Germany."

"Thanks, sugar tits." I went to my email, and Kim and Mya gigglesnorted at my term of endearment.

Checking the list, I confirmed they'd added the quantities too, and I made a quick note in my phone. Both print places had lanyards, two types of pens, ice scrapers for cars, tumblers, and key ring LED lights set aside for the events we were hosting. I scrapped the tumblers altogether, possibly influenced by Wyatt, because they were expensive to just give away willy-nilly. Instead, I highlighted the ice scrapers, the LED lights, and one of the pens, and I jotted down the measurements for the logo surfaces on those three items.

"By the way, did you hear back from Andy?" Kim wondered.

"Yeah—he was surprisingly understanding," I replied. "He said he wasn't too worried since we're getting four rehearsal days at the outdoor place before New Year's. The rest of you will still practice on Saturday, though."

She nodded. "That's good. I gotta help Kate nail the cartwheel drop from the third platform."

I was about to respond, but the phone rang, so I reached over and answered. "Vitamin D-deficient graphic design at the bottom of hell, this is Parker."

"Imagine if we took calls from others than just in-house peeps," Mya mused.

I grinned.

Oh crap—it was Wyatt. His low chuckle triggered my reindeer senses.

"Come upstairs, brat. I brought lunch."

He was here! He was supposed to be at corporate all day, but he was here!

"Yessir, I'll see you in approximately one minute." I hung up the phone

and got out of my chair. “See you later, muh bitches—I’m having lunch with muh Daddy.”

Man, I needed this break. I was so freaking tired.

“Oh, Parker, you forget that you’re *our* bitch,” Mya teased.

I paused and looked back at her. “Yeah, okay, but you don’t have to say it so the others can hear.”

They laughed, and I headed off, satisfied, and jogged through the busy cubicle area till I reached the elevators.

Aaaall the way up to the top, where employees did not need to take extra vitamin D.

I hurried to Daddy’s office, and Suravi had to be on her lunch because she wasn’t at her desk. I knocked twice, then entered, and Daddy glanced away from his computer and smiled at me.

“There you are. I ordered from the Thai place you like.”

“Yes!” I fist-pumped the air and ran over to his side of the desk. “I didn’t know you were gonna be here today.”

“We had a lull in between meetings, so I decided to make the most of a few hours and be where I could see you.”

Ugh, he always said the right things. I had to remind myself that it was way too soon to fall in love—it was just that new-love feeling, the intense attraction, the crush that bordered on obsession, and...whether that was true or not, I totally felt he was on his way to steal my heart.

As had become our thing, he kept a chair by one of the bookcases so I could sit by his side when we ate together here. I yanked it with me and sat down next to him while he brought our food containers out of a bag.

Yum, green curry and chicken for me. “Thank you so much, Daddy.”

I pulled up my legs and folded them, my knees poking out from underneath the armrests, then used my lap as my food holder.

“You look tired, baby.” He handed me a fork.

“Yeah. I think I’m gonna take a nap when I get home.” I yawned just because he’d brought it up. “Do you think you’ll be late tonight?”

I had a big date with my birthday gift either way. He’d bought me a really nice luggage set, one big rollaboard, one small, and one matching laptop bag. Oh, and the coolest luggage tags! He’d said since the bags were standard black and would blend in on any conveyor belt, I needed my luggage tags to stand out—just like me. They were baby blue and had dancing snowmen on them.

“No. I’ll make sure to be downstairs when you get off,” he replied.
“We’ll go home together.”

Home together.

I smiled goofily, sleepily, around a mouthful of awesome curry.

“I don’t see the harm in extending your lunch break half an hour either,” he added. “You can take a nap here while I suffer through a phone conference with the New York office.”

Like I could say no! My fort was waiting for me.

“I gotta name my bunny,” I said, forking up more food. Unlike Daddy, I couldn’t eat with chopsticks. “I’m thinking Sir Grumpy as an ode to the former you.”

Daddy rumbled a laugh around his food and shook his head.

I loved making him laugh.

DECEMBER 17



I totally brought Sir Grumpy. I packed him in my carry-on with my laptop and tablet. He almost fit perfectly in my hand, making him an awesome travel buddy. Ooh—my new travel mascot! Yeah, that was awesome.

I hadn't needed the small rollaboard, just the big one, so getting through security was easy enough, even more so because Wyatt had upgraded my ticket. He wanted me right next to him, which he showed repeatedly and wordlessly. Because we were surrounded by important people he worked with, plus Mr. Williams, I tried to stay in the background, and Daddy would have none of that. In between Abramses and their assistants, at least one person was talking all the way to the gate, so Daddy didn't have time to acknowledge me verbally, but when he acted the way he did, I didn't need his words.

Like, he held my hand or brought me back into his fold, and—

“Just a second, Toby,” Daddy said and ducked into a coffee shop.

Clarke and his PA followed, presumably for a caffeine boost, so I stayed right outside with Suravi.

I yawned and checked my phone to see what time it was.

Ugh, bedtime was the answer. Unless we were at Daddy's place, he struggled to get me to sleep sometimes.

I didn't bother Suravi; she was busy with her phone. The other PAs had so many details to get right, and this was showtime for them. Instead, I texted Cam, though he was probably asleep by now.

You gotta meet Wyatt. I'm gonna convince him to visit with me after the holidays.

Daddy came out soon again, and he'd bought something for me too.

"Cocoa with extra marshmallows for my boy." He kissed my temple, then dove right back into work talk with Toby.

I did my best to contain my ridiculous grin.

DECEMBER 18



Oh my gosh, London was so cool and old!

I stifled a yawn and kept my face all but plastered to the window so I could see as much as possible. It was only Daddy and me in the back of one of those classic London taxis, so I didn't feel the need to put my adult face on.

"You have a choice to make, baby boy," Daddy said. "We don't have dinner plans, so either I make us a reservation, or we order room service."

Fuck. As much as I wanted to go out, I was so damn tired. I barely knew what day it was, much less the time. The stop in New York had only messed with my grasp of reality further.

I turned to him and chewed on the inside of my cheek. "Am I a terrible tourist if I want room service and our naked butts in bed?"

"Yes." He grinned faintly. "But you're my perfect boy."

I lit up. "Are you tired also?"

That made him chuckle. "Sweetheart, I'm dead on my feet."

Room service and naked butts for the win!



Daddy traveled in *style*. We were talking view of the Thames and Tower Bridge, big windows, giant bed, hot tub in the bathroom, and a mini bar that failed with the "mini" part. It was stocked weirdly too. Like, on top of the fridge was an actual candy bar with fancy selections of chocolate Santas, fudge, and colorful lollipops and gummy sweets.

I couldn't help but slow down at the sight. "Whoa."

Daddy grabbed my bag and kissed the top of my head. "Go nuts. And maybe thank Suravi. She saw they were offering different packages, so I told her to pick the most Christmassy one."

Holy crap. "I can actually take something here?"

He found that amusing. "I hope you take more than something. It's already paid for."

I snapped my gaze back to the candy and swallowed.

I'd died and gone to freaking heaven, hadn't I?

"Just save me some roasted cashews," he went on. "Now, how about you take a bath while I call room service?"



How could you not love taking baths? Especially when you had an enormous hot tub and massive amounts of bubbles. Daddy was cray-cray. After ordering room service to be delivered at seven thirty, he opted to take a shower instead, 'cause the fancy-pants suite had a separate shower room.

Rich people, I swear.

In the meantime, I dove between the mountains of bubbles and occasionally treated my butt to a massage by one of the jets. My view didn't hurt either. I could see straight into the shower stall where Daddy was showering.

"I feel an *immense* love toward your butt, Daddy."

It was mad sexy.

He chuckled and stepped under the spray to wash off the shampoo. "I feel the same about yours, little love."

Oh. Little love? That was new.

I was a fan.

Once he was done, he stepped out and wrapped a towel around his hips. And he lifted his eyebrows at the sight of the tub.

"Just how much soap did you pour in there?"

I glanced around me. "A healthy amount? In my defense, the jets keep creating the bubbles."

I'd amused him again!

He came over to me and reached for the showerhead. "You ready to wash

the airplane smell out of your hair?”

“Yessir.” I scooted closer to the edge and got up on my knees before him. “What do airplanes smell like, though? I didn’t smell anything yesterday and today.”

“Hm. I suppose it’s just a saying. It sounds better than let’s wash off the travel sweat and airport germs.”

That made me laugh, and I peered up at him and planted my hands on his hips. “You’re funny, Daddy.”

“You must be drunk,” he chuckled. He angled the showerhead over me, and I closed my eyes.

Drunk on loooooove.

Not to mention pleasure. Bath time had quickly become a favorite of mine—Daddy’s too. It was a moment that sort of defined our dynamic and showcased the balance between littleisms and submission. He wanted me to be the goofball who loved the bubbles and splashing water around me, and then he also wanted me to obey him when it was time to get out of the tub. It simply made me super happy. And it felt so good with his fingers in my hair.

I hummed a Christmas tune to myself as he started massaging the shampoo into my hair, and it was tough to stand still. I had ants in my no-pants.

“You don’t look exhausted anymore,” he noted.

“Nope,” I snickered. “I have hotel energy.”

It was a thing. Because it was such a relief to be able to close myself in with my Daddy after all that traveling, and knowing that our only plan for the evening was to eat pizza in bed filled me with jolly joy.

I opened my eyes and brushed my fingers over his towel, and it was his fault because that perfect *bump* was right there in my face.

“Daddy?” I inched closer to where he’d tightened the towel around himself.

“Yes, baby.”

“What would you say is a more apt name for your cock—pacifier or throat scratcher?”

He coughed and stared down at me.

I smiled sweetly.

I could practically read his mind. He never knew what I was gonna say, and it made me giggle.

“Jesus Christ.” He cleared his throat and shook his head, eyes flashing

with mirth. “Never change, Parker.”

Okay, but I hadn’t gotten my answer!

I guessed it didn’t matter. Both were accurate, and I wanted me some throat scratching.

He didn’t say anything when I tested the waters and loosened his towel, though I sensed he was watching me.

“Do you need something from Daddy?”

I nodded and took that as a green light. The towel landed on the floor, and I leaned in and nuzzled his perfect cock. It was all warm and soft and slowly growing thicker and harder. I captured the head with my mouth and lifted my gaze to his, and his fingers slowed down in my hair.

“So fucking beautiful,” he murmured. “Go on, suck on Daddy.”

Unf.

I sucked him in unhurriedly, coating him with my tongue, and I didn’t look away from him. I saw how his jaw ticked with tension, felt how his fingers eased down to the back of my head so he could hold me in place, and heard the long breath he let out.

Knowing that our food would be here soon, I picked up the pace as soon as he was hard.

It wasn’t long before he was holding my head in place and fucking my mouth in long, measured thrusts. I sucked and sucked, craving every drop of salty goodness—and his sounds. Those low, whiskey-voiced groans and whispers.

“That’s perfect.”

“My sweet, cock-hungry little baby boy.”

“You’ll get all of Daddy’s milk soon.”

“Right there.”

I whimpered and exploded with lust, and I couldn’t help myself. I had to jerk my cock too. I became so needy that I instantly wanted his cock in my bottom, but we didn’t have the time. Later, I promised myself. Before bedtime, I would beg him to fuck me stupid.

“You best hurry if you want to come with Daddy,” he warned, out of breath. “I’m close.”

Yeah, well, I was twenty-six. I could come in a minute if I wanted to.

I clenched down on nothing and fisted my cock harder, and he let go. He pushed his cock down my throat and groaned, then fucked me in sharp thrusts that made me choke around him.

Panic tinted the edges of my consciousness, and my eyes welled up.

“Breathe through your nose,” he reminded me.

I nodded with my mouth full of cock, and I stupidly let a moan bubble up, which only made me gag again. I couldn't help it—again! I was so horny and needy, and the raw hunger in his eyes had to be better than Viagra.

He clenched his jaw, and his eyes fluttered to a close, so I knew he was right there on the edge.

I redoubled my efforts, sucking him as hard as I could, and he cursed and started coming.

Finally!

I couldn't fucking describe the greed that welled up. I drank and sucked, drank and sucked, and it set me off too. In between breathless whimpers, I came in the water and shuddered over and over.

Oof, all my energy disappeared again.

DECEMBER 19



Even though I'd known from the start it was going to be a big expo, I wasn't prepared to see so many people when I walked into the convention center. It took me twenty minutes just to hand over my jacket at coat check.

I pocketed my slip and made sure I hadn't left anything valuable in my pockets.

As promised, Suravi met up with me near the entrance, so she could take me to Wyatt. He'd recently arrived after giving his speech at Grosvenor House, and I was ready to be his graphic design helper and talk to potential clients.

I'd put on an event T-shirt, and I had my own lanyard so it looked official. I mean, it was, but I couldn't shake the vacation feel and that I was here with my Daddy. But I did have work to do! In fact, the print place was about to get crazy busy.

We passed so many tables and displays, that our Culver City branch suddenly felt tiny. In a way, we sort of were, despite the downtown office being the official headquarters. But with departments and buildings all over the place, in Europe too, it was the first time I witnessed the size of the Abrams family's business.

"He's over there." Suravi pointed toward an elaborate booth, where I automatically noticed the pop-up banners and marketing material before I spotted Wyatt with a few other men. "I gotta go make sure they're ready for him at the next seminar."

I nodded. "Thanks, Suravi. Let me know if you need any help. I have some spare time when he's there."

“Thanks—I appreciate it.” She flashed a quick smile before she scurried off again.

Let’s get to work, then. I’d slept in and everything, so I had all the energy. Although, I hadn’t been a fan of waking up alone—but I wouldn’t have been a fan of getting up early either.

With my tablet ready, I made my way over to Wyatt, and he smiled in relief when he saw me.

“You know what,” he told the man he was talking to, “there’s no reason for me to ramble about rebranding when you can see it in action. I want you to meet Parker Jacobson, one of our best graphic designers.”

Aw, shucks.

“Such praise, sir. Thank you. And accurate.” I grinned and faced the other man. “What are we rebranding?”

DECEMBER 20



“That’s perfect—before five will be great.” I trapped my phone between my shoulder and cheek and added a final touch to the design I was working on. My sketchpad had never seen so much action as it had the past twenty-four hours. “My boss has a speech thing around then, so I’ll head out and meet up with you outside the main entrance.”

I wrapped up the call as the cab pulled up in front of the convention center, and Wyatt paid the fare.

“Take a breather, sweetheart. We have lunch now.”

“I’m almost done, sir.” I could walk and illustrate at the same time. Well, illustrate was a strong word. I was moving around rectangular boxes to frame a logotype that definitely needed an upgrade.

It’d been a busy morning for both of us, and while Wyatt had been in and out of meetings and seminars, I’d used every free minute to fulfill the backlog of orders. Because seventy-fucking-four clients had not only vowed to continue their ongoing contracts with the company, but they’d discovered that we did so much more than whatever they already used us for.

Wyatt and Clarke had put me in charge of these seventy-four clients since they were already paying customers, so to speak. As for the rest... I mean, at least two hundred *potentials* had been interested in knowing more, so I’d had to forward their requests to Mya and Kim as well as to the team in New York. This afternoon, those potentials would return for their second day at the expo, and we’d have something for them. Freaking ice scrapers and whatnot—with mock-ups and examples of logo designs.

The logo itself wasn’t important right now. It was to showcase how quickly we could go from, “Well, what’s the name of your company? What

do you do?” to “Here’s some merch for ya—we printed it overnight.”

I almost bumped into Wyatt when he came to a stop, and he glanced back at me and gave me a pointed look.

I smiled sheepishly.

“You’ve worked too much already. I think it’s best I take this for now.” Ugh, he stole my tablet. “You’ll get it back after we’ve eaten.”

Oh, *fine*.

I followed him through the busy entrance until we reached the restaurant, and that joint was equally as chaotic as the rest of the place. If I remembered correctly, Clarke had just given his final speech at a big meeting, so many of those going to lunch here now had recently listened to him. Now, Clarke was on the next flight to Brussels.

I’d seen him briefly last night when we’d had dinner at the hotel restaurant, and he’d complimented my work! Then he’d nudged Wyatt and said, “Maybe we should recruit him to headquarters.”

Not too shabby!

DECEMBER 21



I woke up with a jolt as the plane touched down, and I didn't wanna believe it. We'd just fucking boarded in London! God, I was tired. I scrubbed at my face and cleared my throat. And no rest for the wicked—we had to go straight to where the Luxembourg expo was being held. New convention center, hundreds of businesspeople, two back-to-back seminars for Daddy, then mingling at a workshop event for industry folk.

“Ugh.”

“I know, baby.” Daddy kissed the side of my head. “On the flip side, it's not a long day.”

Define long. It was nearing noon now, and he had his last commitment at four.

I yawned and did my best to shake it off.

Hello, Luxembourg, and all that!



Okay, so Daddy spoke *French*. It was one of the several languages spoken in Luxembourg. I'd also heard lots of German and Portuguese today—and what Daddy told me was Luxembourgish.

Sounded made-up to me.

The French, though, was *on point*.

I walked beside him from one elaborate booth to another as he showed his face to old, new, and potential clients. Suravi was never far away, always making sure Wyatt's next move went as smoothly as possible. But I had to

admit, I'd lost steam. London had been so fun, even though I hadn't gotten the chance to sightsee, because the work itself had been right up my alley. I loved working with people, and I worked well under pressure. It was just... once I reached my limit, it was tough to keep going.

By the time Wyatt was done at a little past five o'clock, it was almost impossible for me to stifle my yawns.

To think, we had tomorrow too! Luckily, only a morning session, but still.

"Suravi, could you grab our coats, please?" Daddy asked.

"On my way, sir," she responded. "Your car will be outside in five."

"Oh—you know." Daddy paused. "You take it. Head on back to the hotel and have a relaxing evening. Parker and I will walk."

We would fucking what?

I had a better idea. We *all* took the car back to the hotel and had a relaxing evening. How about that?!

"Are you sure, sir?" Suravi had doubts, like any normal person would. "It's very cold outside."

Daddy smiled reassuringly. "We'll be fine."

What a load of reindeer crap.

I managed to keep my mouth shut through two chats Daddy had with clients, then while Suravi returned with our coats, and aaaall the way to the exit. We stepped outside, and it was actually snowing. And we had what, half an hour to the hotel?

My feet were *tired*. Luxembourg at snowy dusk. Yay.

"May I ask what you have against comfortable rides back to the hotel, Daddy?" I asked stiffly.

He chuckled under his breath and put on his leather gloves. "Not a damn thing, but I wanted to show you around one of my favorite cities on earth."

I scrunched my nose. My breath was already misting in the air.

So far, Luxembourg hadn't impressed, but that was probably because I hadn't seen much of it. Just a crapload of modern buildings, busy roads, and some older structures too.

I guessed we were walking, then.

After pulling down my beanie a bit and making sure my mittens were on properly, he grabbed my hand, and we started freaking walking.

Traffic was busy, and I threw a longing glance at every cab that whooshed by.

Banking was big in Luxembourg. Possibly the car industry too, 'cause we walked past lots of dealerships. And banks.

"I suppose it's a bad time to say I truly love having you with me," he said. "I feel much more energized."

I scowled up at him. "You're stealing my energy—give it back."

He laughed and linked my arm with his. "What I mean is, I want you to travel with me, Parker. Not for boring meetings, of course, but events like these. We do quite a few of them every year—big and small—and everyone's very happy with what you've contributed. Even my uncle—we actually talked earlier, and he thinks we should bring fewer suits and more creators and engineers. Clients need to see more of the production stage."

I chewed on my lip, confused about why this was bad. It sounded like a compliment to my ears. "Why would it be bad to say that? I'd love to travel with you."

Silly man.

"Even when I make you walk back to the hotel?"

A breath gusted out of me, and I shrugged in a "what're you gonna do?" way. "I guess I'm a masochist. A hungry, tired, cranky masochist."

"Well. I can take care of two of those things," he promised me.

We'd see.

Before long, we crossed a street and then another. The snow was falling heavier, but I didn't hate that part. I loved snow. I just preferred not to walk around in it when I was sharing my space with honking cars and construction sites. That said, I did see light at the end of the tunnel. I glimpsed much older buildings not too far away, and if I was reading the street signs correctly, we were nearing the city center.

"Did you know Luxembourg is famous for its gorges?" he asked.

I rubbed my nose. "No, sir."

"There's one up ahead here." He grabbed my hand again, and we crossed another street. I tried to see what he was seeing, but it was getting dark. There was a patch of nothingness, so that had to be it. I spotted a stone wall along the sidewalk we were aiming for—oh! Across the valley or whatever, there was a big castle up on a mountain! And a really tall bridge that looked old.

Daddy ushered me over to the wall, and I planted my hands on it and peered out. Holy crap—yeah, a gorge. It was *beautiful*. The sides were lined with tall trees and bushes, but the center was a part of the city. A neighborhood buried at the bottom of the gorge, with old buildings and

narrow streets.

“This is cool!” I pulled out my phone to take a couple pictures.

I’d never seen anything like it.

I turned around to take a selfie with the gorge in the background, and then I grabbed Daddy’s hand. “Let’s take a photo together.”

He dipped down and kissed my cheek, and it made me smile like a dork as I took the picture. I had to look. I pinched the screen and zoomed in, and just like that, I was reenergized.

Like, what was wrong with me? I was in a beautiful city with the man I was falling in love with, and I was bitching about being tired?

We looked so good together. He had a soft smile on his face as he kissed my cheek in the picture, and my grin was as silly as it always was. His fancy coat and neatly wavy hair with silver in it against my parka, bright-green beanie, and dorky smile.

I glanced up at him, finding him watching me already.

He better be falling for me too.

Or I’d spank him.

“Let’s go. We have someplace to be.” He offered me his arm again.



When we reached the heart of the city, I felt so much better. It was Christmas here! Old buildings, pretty lights, shoppers, and cozy cafés warmed me up in the snowfall. We passed a cobblestone square with a giant tree that ignited my holiday spirit, and I was now a fan of Luxembourg.

I wanted to come back.

“Are we going to a restaurant?” I asked.

“Eventually,” he replied vaguely. “To be honest, the restaurant at the hotel is really good, so I was thinking we could eat there. But first—” He nodded toward a narrow alley between two buildings. “I’m going to treat my boy to the best hot chocolate he’ll ever have outside Paris.”

Oh. I *loved* hot chocolate. It was a favorite of mine!

“Will you be speaking French?” I asked. “Because that was seriously sexy. You were all *oh, vou-vou, mon chi fair au lau bon!*”

Daddy coughed a laugh and stared at me, bewildered.

“That’s what you sounded like!” I laughed too, unable to help it.

He pulled me close and chuckled. “I have no words for how delightful you are, sweetheart.”

He wasn’t wrong. I was delightful.

A couple minutes later, we arrived at a corner café that was decorated in tons of pastel colors. Ladurée—sure sounded French. Oh, it actually said Paris on the window. And some other cities.

We walked inside, and I was immediately met by a wall of sweet treats. Macarons had to be their specialty, but they had other goodies too. Jams and fudge and tea and stuff.

Daddy got us a table, and he pulled out my chair for me. The place wasn’t big, but it was popular.

As I shrugged out of my jacket, he went French on me and ordered for us, and I filed that away for tonight. Maybe he could do French dirty talk!

“What did you order?” I wondered, removing my beanie and mittens.

“Everything,” he joked. “No—a hot chocolate for you, cappuccino for me, and a selection of treats. I thought we could bring the leftovers with us to the hotel later.”

Yum.

I loved treats. Treats were the best.

“It’s like you know me.” I grinned.

He smiled and just watched me.

I grabbed my napkin—fancy linen, of course—and tucked it into my shirt.

That made his smile widen a bit.

When he looked at me that way, I wanted to blurt things out. I wanted to ask him if he was falling for me, like I was for him, and if he believed we might spend the rest of our lives together. Which would be crazy of me. I kept telling myself it was *way* too soon to think in those terms.

He wordlessly turned his hand on the table, palm up, and I slipped my hand in his.

He brushed his thumb over my skin.

I wanted to say something. I *had* to say something.

Nerves formed a tight ball in my stomach, and rhyme and reason told me to shut the fuck up. It was an intense attraction, a wild infatuation, a perfect holiday—all of which could absolutely turn into more; I just had to be patient.

He smirked faintly, as if he could read my mind.

I couldn't fucking help it. I had to. "Daddy? Um..."

He shook his head, all calm and... The affection didn't leave his eyes, and the tiny smirk slash smile didn't leave his lips.

"Don't say anything, baby," he murmured.

But—!

He knew, didn't he? I mean, with where we were, the air around us—people came here on dates—new city, Christmas around the corner, how we'd behaved toward each other since our very first dinner together... He had to know.

"But you feel it, don't you?" I asked quietly, almost pleading with him.

He squeezed my hand and sat forward. "Every second of every day."

I took a deep breath and let those words settle.

He feels it too.

"But when we exchange those words," he went on, keeping his voice down, "I don't ever want them to be taken back."

I swallowed hard and managed a wobbly smile. He totally felt it—and he wanted us to be patient so we could do this right, so we could last forever.

He leaned forward a bit more and kissed my hand. "I'm not letting you go, Parker. At this point, it's not possible. You're mine."

Fuck, I needed to hump his leg or something. Maybe lick his face. Sit on his lap, squeeze him tightly, and never let go.

"Promise?"

"I promise." He smiled before shifting his gaze to something behind me. "I believe our sugar coma is here."

I was ready!

DECEMBER 22



A YEAR LATER

A lot could happen in a year. One could definitely grow accustomed to flying first class in that time. One could also be on his fourth travel pillow because he kept forgetting them in lounges all over the world. Work environments could change—case in point, Kim, Mya, and I were now on the fourth floor in our own little office area, booyah—snickerdoodle recipes could be improved, people could move in together, and adorable boys could build up an impressive collection of stuffies because Daddy was awesome.

Just kidding—my snickerdoodle recipe had been perfect for years.

I munched on one right now and brushed the crumbs off my hoodie, and I laughed at the movie playing. *Elf* was the best! Poor Daddy—he had to work all the way to DC, while I got to nap and watch movies and eat cookies. With my newest stufie in my lap! I'd named him Turtleton.

Every now and then, Daddy glanced my way with that sexy, soft smile of his.

I loved the red-eye, because I had no bedtime, and everything was dark and peaceful. Plus, when we arrived at our destination, we could nap together and order room service. We were champions at that!

When the movie ended, I removed my headphones and told Daddy it was time he took a break. Then I prepared some snacks for him. I ordered coffee and brought out the tiny-tiny flask of syrup I'd brought—'cause Daddy loved the one I made for him—and I gathered two cookies and some peppermint bark on his tray table.

Daddy sighed contentedly and stowed away his laptop. "What would I do without you, baby?"

"Eat way less sugar," I laughed.

He chuckled and stretched a bit. “I still see those dark-chocolate orange squares in my dreams.”

Yeah, they’d been so good—for Daddy. The chocolate had been too dark for my tastes. “One of the upsides to my recipe exchange with Cam. He made them for Lucian.”

I was so excited to meet the new additions to Cam’s relationship tomorrow. Daddy and I had met Noa twice this year, and then we’d all had a busy summer and fall—and so much had changed for Cam and Noa! Not only had they found their third, they’d found a freaking fourth, so they had an entire kink family going on now.

Even better, Cam’s new Master was the man he’d been in love with for so long. I was very happy for my cousin. Lucian had just needed to recover from a bad relationship, and then he hadn’t been able to resist Cam for a second!

When Daddy’s coffee arrived, I poured a little bit of syrup in there before he took a sip and nodded with approval. “Excellent. Did you and Cam settle on our plans for tomorrow?”

“Yessir, he and I gotta buy some last-minute presents, and then we’ll all meet up for lunch at a restaurant he recommended,” I answered. “You won’t be outnumbered by brats this time!”

He laughed at that. “I admit, I’m looking forward to meeting Lucian and KC.”

Yeah, me too. I didn’t know much about KC, only that he was Noa’s Daddy Dom. And, um, former stepdad? Something like that.

To be honest, I hoped meeting Cam and Lucian would make Daddy think about the relationship he shared with me. ’Cause Cam told me he and his Master had recently begun discussing the idea of marriage, and my Daddy had never once mentioned it! So yeah. I wanted that thought in his head. I mean, he seemed traditional enough that marriage wasn’t a strange concept. For Santa’s sake, he’d been married already! And it felt so wrong that Daddy supposedly wanted to spend the rest of his life with me but only had been married to someone else. One might say I’d developed some jealousy issues on the topic.

He was mine, dammit. Only mine. Mine, mine, mine.

DECEMBER 23



“*H*ave you thought about *asking* him?” Cam asked.

I scrunched my nose and eyed my potential new All Stars in the mirror. “What, like, I would propose? Slap me silly, maybe I’m a traditionalist too, because fuck that. Wyatt proposes, not me.”

He snorted and sat down on one of the cushy cubes with his shopping bags. “No, I mean—ask what he thinks about marrying again.”

Oh.

I dunno. I’d much prefer Daddy read my mind and just know that I wanted to be tied to him in every way imaginable. Was that too much to ask?

“Let’s keep thinking,” I said. We had some time to kill anyway.

We had all the gifts. We were grabbing a cab outside the mall in approximately twenty minutes. In the meantime, I could always use another pair of All Stars, and these were Christmas green. I liked Christmas colors.

“Have you dropped any hints?” Cam rose again, having spotted a pair of shoes on the wall of sneakers. The blue ones he picked up would be great to dance in, I could totally tell.

I scratched the side of my head and kicked off my new shoes. Definitely buying them. “Sort of...? When Emmy and Levi announced their wedding would be on a beach in the Bahamas, I told Wyatt I’d never get hitched like that. I was like, if I get married, I don’t wanna sweat my balls off in my suit.”

Cam hummed. “That should be enough to at least make him give it a thought, but...” He shook his head and tried the shoes. “Older men are different, man. It’s highly possible he’s holding back because you’re so young.”

I furrowed my brow. “I’m older than you, dude. And you’ve got your

rings picked out already.”

He laughed. “Fuck you, we do not. We’ve only talked about it a little. Besides, it’s what *Wyatt* might think—why would he involve my age in that? You should drop a few more hints.”

Hmm. Maybe he was right.



About half an hour later, we arrived at a restaurant in Logan Circle, and Daddy was waiting outside. And he wasn’t alone. Noa must’ve handled introductions, ’cause Wyatt was chatting with two men I’d never met before, and Noa was standing next to them. One of the men was supporting himself on a cane, and it jogged a memory. Cam had told me KC had been in an accident or something like that.

After I’d paid the fare, we walked up on the curb and headed toward the restaurant.

“I swear he’s been working all morning,” Cam muttered.

“Huh?” I glanced at him.

“Lucian—he works way too much,” he clarified.

Oh. “I know the feeling—but Wyatt’s said he wants to work less now.”

“So has Lucian,” he sighed. “Keep an eye on your man, is all I’m saying. It’s tough to pull a workaholic away from *just one more project*.”

Maybe I couldn’t relate, after all. ’Cause Daddy had already eliminated some of his tasks. For instance, he’d delegated his shorter work trips. This year, rather than flying off to another meeting somewhere two hundred times and then coming back after two days, he’d opted for a few longer trips instead—and I had gone with him.

“You two are late!” I heard Noa call out.

I grinned and picked up the pace, and Cam and I jogged up the steps to the restaurant. “Why are you waiting out here? It’s freezing!”

The restaurant looked more like a residential building, to be honest.

“We didn’t think you’d take forever,” Noa huffed.

We bumped fists before he and Cam exchanged a quick kiss, and then Cam took over the introductions while I hopped up and smooched Daddy. He offered to take care of my shopping bags too.

“Sorry we weren’t here, Master.” Cam snuck close to Lucian, who smiled

politely at me. “My cousin, Parker—Parker, meet Lucian and KC.”

Both men were hella handsome in different ways. Lucian seemed to be more like Daddy, as in, the whole businessman schtick, but KC wore nice threads too. He was just a tad more casual, even in his approach.

“Great to meet you, Parker.” KC shook my hand since he stood closest. “Cam tells me you’re another Noa, and that’s a good thing in my book.”

Noa and I exchanged a grin before I turned back to KC. “Great to meet you too, but I’m pretty sure Noa’s another Parker.” I mean, I was a few years older and all!

The Domly types chuckled, and I shook hands with Lucian also.

“Always wonderful to meet Cam’s family,” he murmured. “Shall we eat?”

I smiled and nodded, and I slipped my hand into Daddy’s.



Okay, the food here was *amazing*. I had a plate full of sliders and the best fries ever. And I liked that the restaurant had several smaller dining areas instead of one massive one, because it never got too loud. Additionally, major brownie points for the Christmas decorations. Whoever ran this place liked the holidays.

“...and you’ll see for yourself how awesome I am with Tank,” Noa was saying. Tank was a lizard, I’d learned. Noa was going to be a pet sitter for a friend.

“Will that matter, though?” Lucian asked, amusement flicking in his eyes. “Santa’s already collected your wish lists for this year.”

Noa offered a hard stare. “You’re doing that thing where you’re saying things I don’t want to hear, you know. You should stop that. *Sir.*”

Daddy, KC, and I cracked up.

“Why can’t you accept that we don’t want a freaking lizard in our house, Noa?” Cam asked.

“Because that’s offensive to my people!” Noa defended.

“Your people?” Lucian chuckled. “Would that be the brat race?”

“Lizard people,” Cam muttered under his breath.

I snickered around a mouthful of a delicious slider, and I glanced up at Daddy. We’d had the pet talk already. We both wanted a dog or two one day,

but not yet. Funnily enough, it was what had sparked our love declaration last winter. A dreary day in January, we'd played hooky again to watch movies all day, and we'd ended up talking about the future—places we wanted to visit together, his niece's upcoming birthday party where he wanted me to meet his family, whether or not we wanted pets...

I'd blurted it out first.

"Daddy, I gotta freaking say it! I love you, okay? I love you so damn much. This is it for me."

The rest of the evening, he'd shown me how much he loved me too.

An insane amount, judging by how sore my butt had been the next day.

I dragged a few fries through the ketchup and watched Lucian and Cam say something to each other that I couldn't hear. Lizard talk forgotten. Noa had moved on to other items on his wish list.

Lucian seemed fine to me. Maybe Cam was worrying for nothing? Either way, the man was clearly head over heels in love with my cousin, constantly aware of Cam's presence, wanting him close, reaching out for those little touches and temple kisses, and that made me happy.

Like, it was equally clear that they were a foursome as well as two dynamics. Cam and Lucian had their thing, KC and Noa had their thing, and then they had their foursome thing. They all lived together in Mclean, not too far outside the city.

It had to be distracting with so many dicks in one bed, though. Daddy and I had no issues getting down and dirty to porn running in the background, whether it was two men or half a dozen, but our bed was totally just for him and me.

I'd grown so freaking territorial this year. Not like I was jealous in an insecure way; I just couldn't get enough of Wyatt and our adventures together, and I wanted to share every part of my life with him. For instance, this summer when he'd asked if I was ready to move in with him? The sentence had barely left his mouth before I'd mauled him. Stuff like that. Also, I liked the extra ka-ching from renting out my place because I loved to buy gifts for Daddy and surprise him with outings that I planned myself.

"You're usually not quiet, little love." Daddy spoke for only me to hear, bringing me back to the present. "Is everything okay?"

Um, more than! I bussed his cheek. "Heck, yeah. I'm just happy for Cam, and I'm glad we only have two dicks in our bed."

His eyes lit up with laughter, and he shook his head and kissed my

forehead. “I could not agree more—though, I’d probably word myself differently.”

Yeah, *probably*.

I grinned.

It was a great moment to drop a hint, wasn’t it? Besides, the other four were busy talking about errands. Boring topic!

I leaned closer to Daddy and whispered in his ear. “Spoiler alert, Cam and Lucian might get married. Isn’t that awesome?”

We inched away at the same time, and I gauged his expression. I detected mirth and curiosity and maybe a pinch of confusion.

“If you say spoiler alert,” he replied, keeping his voice down, “the polite thing is to give a man a chance to bow out. Because what if I don’t want any spoilers?”

I blinked.

For crying out loud!

“Hey, Parker.” Noa stole my attention, and it was just as well. I’d just end up scowling at Daddy otherwise. He didn’t get it! So I turned to Noa instead, suddenly in a huffy mood. “Where are you guys spending Christmas? Are you flying back to LA?”

“No, we’re heading up to New York,” I answered. “We got so overwhelmed by the countless invitations to parties with too many people that we decided to run away. We’re gonna reenact parts from one of my favorite holiday movies, *Home Alone 2*.”

Ugh, and as I said it, I could no longer be annoyed with Daddy, because he was doing all this for me. He’d set the whole thing up, and he’d surprised me with the plan the other week. We were talking a suite at the Plaza, limo ride, ice cream cart next to the bed, a visit to a toy store or two, and a stroll through Central Park—sans run-ins with pigeon ladies.

“Oh my God, that sounds so freaking cool!” Noa turned to KC and Lucian. “Can we do that another year, please?”

I glanced up at Daddy and felt the last of my annoyance melt away. “I love you so much,” I whispered.

He squeezed my hand. “More than words can express, Parker.”

Fuck marriage—I already had way more than I’d ever dreamed of having.

DECEMBER 24



*W*e took the train up to New York the following morning, and I was so excited that I couldn't sit still in my seat. Also, Daddy was so sexy sitting next to me and reading a paper—which meant I'd lost my damn marbles, right? He was just reading the paper. Was that reason enough to get stars in my eyes?

Oh, whatever. I was cooked and done.

This Christmas was already *epic*.

To kill some time, I brought out my notebook from my backpack and dropped it on the table in front of us. Turtleton had to wait in my bag—I'd take him out once we got to the hotel. Now, list-making!

I wanted to visit the M&M store in Times Square, I wanted to buy funny slippers for Daddy and me, and I wanted—

“We should decide where to get lunch, sweetheart,” Daddy said. “Do you want to go out or have it delivered to the hotel?”

I pursed my lips and turned to him. We were who we were, and I very much wanted some cuddle time upon arrival, so I had the best idea ever.

“I suggest delivery from Olive Garden, and we eat in bed,” I said. “Or wait! By the tree. We eat by the tree.”

Because Daddy had booked a suite that was freaking decorated, and I hadn't asked how much that had set him back.

Daddy smiled. “Excellent idea. Extra bread sticks?”

“*Obviously.*”

We could eat a million of those!



Yup, my *Home Alone* dream coming true! Holy Santa poop, this was amazing! The suite was so fancy, but more than that, it screamed of Christmas. With the lights and the tree and the garlands and the—whoa.

I stopped abruptly on the fancy rug in front of the tree. “Um. Daddy? There are gifts under the tree.”

He came up behind me and pressed a kiss to the back of my neck. “Huh. Santa must’ve delivered them early since he knew we wouldn’t be home.”

I beamed and looked back at him. “Don’t give Santa credit for the work that’s all Daddy Christmas.”

He rumbled a warm laugh and hugged me to him.

Now I just needed privacy to wrap Daddy’s presents and put them under the tree too. Maybe after we’d eaten, I could convince him to take a nap...?

DECEMBER 25



“*B*aby, it’s six in the mornin’...”

I couldn’t help it! I was needy, okay?

“You can go back to sleep, Daddy.” I got comfortable between his legs under the duvet and sucked his soft cock into my mouth. It was either this or I raided my M&M stash some more, and Daddy had a rule. No candy before breakfast!

Some rules sucked.

“If only,” he yawned. “Unfortunately for me, I fell for an irresistible little punk, so when he gets going, I can’t help myself.”

I giggled with a mouthful of Daddy’s cock.

Merry Christmas to me!

He pushed away the duvet and blinked sleepily, a faint smile tugging at his lips. “How did yesterday not exhaust you?”

It totally had! Despite the limo ride, my Fitbit had logged almost fifteen thousand steps because we’d been to so many places. But now I’d slept for seven hours. That was how rest worked. Daddy should know this.

He should also know you shouldn’t speak with your mouth full, so I didn’t respond. Instead, I sucked him a little harder and gave him lots of tongue action.

He let out a breath and combed his fingers through my hair.

I got him hard quickly, and he was no longer too tired to play. A few minutes later, he decided it was time to fuck his little boy. He drew me close and positioned me with my back against his chest, giving me the best view of the Christmas tree. It was perfect, really. The dim lighting, the early morning, and Daddy Christmas’s hard cock...

He did his thing, reaching for a lube packet in his wallet, and I just relaxed and wriggled against him. A yawn slipped out too, 'cause I was so blissed out and comfortable.

To think, this was the rest of my life. Some Christmases, we'd be with family, his or mine. Some, we'd fly somewhere just the two of us, and I...I could not be happier. I mean, I loved spending time with family, but this beat everything. We'd see everyone soon anyway. We were heading down to Florida to visit my parents the day after tomorrow, and then we had a big New Year's party at Clarke's residence—oh, and dinner with my grandmother before then too.

Daddy closed the distance between us, pressing his warm chest against my back, and slicked up his cock while he kissed my neck and shoulder.

“Merry Christmas, my sweet Parker.”

I peered back at him and smiled—at the same time as he pressed the head of his cock against my bottom. “Merry Christmas, Daddy.”

He kissed me slowly, seductively, hungrily, and inched inside me. I whimpered at the burning sting and instantly craved more.

When he was buried deep, he lifted my leg a bit and set an unhurried pace.

“My beautiful little baby boy,” he murmured against my lips. “How I love you.”

I shivered and clenched down around him, causing him to groan. He deepened the kiss and fucked me a little harder, and it wasn't long before he found himself held back by our position. It was always like this, usually for morning sex. Starting off slow and cuddly, when we were pressed up against each other like this, but then we got revved up, and he needed more.

“On all fours,” he whispered, pulling out of me.

Fuck yes. I scrambled into position and fisted the sheets, and he got behind me and kneaded my butt cheeks.

“Exquisite little ass...” He smacked it once, twice, three times, and I let out a long moan. “You know this belongs to Daddy forever, right?”

I nodded quickly and peered over my shoulder. “Always, Daddy.”

He was looking down and rubbing my opening with the head of his cock. “That's right. Same goes for the rest of you.” He gripped my hips and pushed inside in one fluid thrust, and I sucked in a sharp breath. *Oh my God.* “I own every goddamn inch of you.”

“Yes,” I croaked.

There was nothing unhurried about what came next. He began fucking me in long, quick thrusts that sent trails of fire through me and stole my ability to make sounds. Jesus H. Christmas, he punched the air right out of my lungs, and the pleasure built up fast.

I jerked my cock quickly until he took over.

“No, that’s Daddy’s job.” He yanked me back, controlling my movements with one hand and my cock with the other. “He loves it when you make a big mess on the sheets,” he whispered in my ear. I shuddered violently. “But it’s a bit filthy, isn’t it? How you always come in Daddy’s bed?”

Oh God, Daddy was in a dirty-talk mood. I stood no chance!

My body could roll with the punches, and I fucked myself on his perfect cock as if I’d been born to do it. Meanwhile, my mind was a sluggish mess swimming in every filthy whisper.

“So desperate and needy.”

“My wonderful little baby whore.”

“That’s it—milk Daddy’s cock, just like that.”

I gasped, black spots filling my vision, and I realized I hadn’t taken enough breaths.

“Daddy, I wanna come so bad,” I cried out.

“Beg.”

Fuck. I choked on a dry breath and cleared my throat. *Focus, focus!* He was teasing me, stroking me too gently, all while I was fucking myself on him like there was no tomorrow. I swallowed against the dryness in my throat.

“Please, Daddy,” I whimpered. “I wanna make a mess with you. Please? It’s your fault anyway.”

He took a breath and nipped at my neck. “How’s it my fault?”

“Because you always make me so needy!” I moaned.

Thank goodness, he grasped my cock tighter. I rolled my hips, taking him all the way in, then thrusting forward to fuck his fist. Fuck me, that was the sweet spot. I went faster and faster, and Daddy got caught up in it too. Daddy’s cock, Daddy’s fist, over and over, fluid motions, harder and faster, and I was suddenly a feverish puddle of desperation standing on the edge of a cliff.

“Jesus fuck,” he whispered huskily. “Only I make you needy, correct?”

“Freakin’ duh,” I whimpered. “*Please, Daddy. I’m so close.*”

He groaned through a chuckle and squeezed me to him. “Okay. Get us

off, baby. As hard and as fast as you can.”

I nodded quickly and chased our orgasms, and he poured all his focus on me. He kissed me, he touched me greedily, he whispered how much he adored me, how...

“I’m fucking obsessed with you,” he whispered roughly.

That did it. I choked on another breath, caught totally off guard, and felt the pleasure crash down on me. Holy fuck, the sensations hit so forcefully that I lost all my composure—and Daddy had to take back control. He lifted me up a few inches, then pounded his cock in and out of me, creating those slapping sounds, and I automatically took over and stroked myself through my orgasm. Within seconds, he was groaning out his own release, fucking it deep into my ass.

You gotta breathe, dude!

I fucking couldn’t. Or almost. Wait—okay, now it worked. I managed to draw a ragged breath, and it kick-started my lung function again. Goddamn. I should’ve worn my Fitbit.

Daddy said he’s obsessed with you. Let’s focus.

I shivered and blinked sluggishly. Holy crap, yeah. Because...if he was obsessed with me, like I was with him, chances were I could convince him to propose to me one day.

“Christ, baby boy.” Daddy shivered too, and he hugged me tightly from behind. “I say we move this party over to the couch where we can nap.”

“And open presents,” I added, holding up a finger. “And eat breakfast.”

He chuckled and kissed my shoulder. “That too.”



After a quick shower, I jumped into my new reindeer jammies, and then it was Daddy’s turn. He’d ordered breakfast and made some preparations while I’d freshened up, and the living room area was super-ready for our Christmas morning. He’d put cartoons on the TV, though the sound was off, and Christmas music was playing on my Bluetooth speaker.

We gave each other a big smooch in passing. He ducked into the bathroom, and I grinned gleefully at the setup in the living room. The tree, the Christmassy blankets we’d picked up yesterday—because that was a must! Oh! And he’d brought Turtleton to the couch. I sprinted over there,

only to change my mind and hurry over to the tree. I grabbed three of the gifts for Daddy, because that seemed like a good start.

I'd bought him over twenty! But, like, they weren't all Mont Blanc pens and stuff. I knew what my Daddy liked. He wanted a few of the finer things—like the pen he'd dog-eared in an actual paper catalogue—and he wanted... me. He loved gifts where my personality shone through, so I'd been creative. We were talking body worship coupons, a new picture of us for his desk at the office in Culver City, a mug that said World's Best Daddy Christmas, a cookie jar for his office at corporate...

I just loved giving presents!



“Your turn!” I crammed the last of my bagel into my mouth and hurried over to the tree. Oops, almost tripped over wrapping paper. The floor was littered with it!

I grabbed the last four gifts and returned to Daddy on the couch. I loved the smile he was wearing with those jammie bottoms. He had snowmen on his. I'd picked them out.

He took a sip of his coffee. “Boy, you’ve gone overboard with all these gifts.”

Had not!

“Nuh-uh.”

“Yuh-huh. Daddy’s gonna be all spoiled now.”

I giggled and handed him the next gift. It was time for a nice tie. His little sister had helped me order it, 'cause she knew fashion stuff—and what brands and styles Daddy preferred.

I fanned out the blanket over us as he opened the gift, and then he was smiling again. I should rank the smiles. The cookie jar, the picture of us, and the pen had earned me the best smiles in the whole world—and he'd laughed warmly at the body worship coupons.

“This is wonderful, sweetheart.” He wrapped the tie around his fists and tested the strength of it, and I lifted my brows. That was one way to do it, I guessed! “Thank you very much. If you think about it, ties are multitools you can use for so many things.”

Oh, giddy-up!

“Are you saying I should use it as a napkin for our turkey dinner later?” I asked innocently.

He smirked and placed the tie with his other gifts on the table. “You could try. Then you’ll find out what else we can do with it.”

Too tempting to resist!

“Now, I believe it’s your turn,” he said.

Huh? But he’d given me all mine already. A picture of a new gaming chair that was waiting for me at home, a freaking sketchpad—approximately six generations newer than my old one—some clothes, ’cause he was the best at picking out the nicer stuff for me, and cookware I’d really wanted. A couple of books too. A friend to Turtleton that I’d already named Mister Whaley...

Daddy grabbed a box from the floor, and it was the size of a baseball. “Let’s see what it says on the card.” He flipped open the tiny card on the box and read out loud. “Merry Christmas, Daddy, from your perfect boy.”

Wait, what? It couldn’t be one of my gifts; I didn’t recognize the wrapping paper, and I hadn’t made any cards.

“I must’ve counted them wrong—this one’s for me.” Daddy gave me a surprised look before he started opening it.

I scratched the side of my head, utterly confused. Like, what the fuck? “Um...”

Once the wrapping paper was gone, he was left with a box, and he lifted the lid. He smiled, like really wide, but I couldn’t see what was in the box. It was beginning to be frustrating!

“This is the best gift you could’ve given me. My God.”

“What is it?” I demanded. I crawled over to him and peered into the box, where I spotted a...what the *fuck*? It was just a white little card, and it read “Yes.”

What was happening?!

“This was exactly what I needed, baby.” In a fluid motion, Daddy pulled me close, kissed me hard, then inched back and somehow held up—holy fuck. Two rings on his index finger. I sucked in a breath as it all dawned on me, and I let out a strange laugh, and my eyes welled up. *Oh my God!*

A beat later, I was pushed back against the cushions as he covered my body with his. My stomach flipped, and my heart pounded furiously.

“Marry me, Parker.”

I grinned like an idiot and cupped his face in my hands. “You already

have my answer.”

He smiled faintly and kissed my nose. “Damn right, I do. But I’d love to hear it.”

I laughed, ’cause I had to release the reindeers in my tummy. “Yes.”

Holy crap, I couldn’t believe he’d proposed like that! Oh, I was gonna tell this story for fucking *years*.

He smiled into a kiss. “Don’t worry, we won’t get married on a beach.”

If I beamed any harder, I’d split my damn face in half. “I love you.”

“I love you more—and I’ve appreciated every hint.”

I didn’t know what he was talking about. “What hints? I’m innocent.”

He chuckled and rested his forehead against mine. “Darling Parker. I think that train left the station when you got drunk on Jell-O shots, planted your sweet ass on my lap, said you’d been a good boy all year, and called me Daddy Christmas.”

A genius move on my part, clearly!

MORE FROM CARA

Cara freely admits she's addicted to revisiting the men and women who yammer in her head, and several of her characters cross over in other titles. If you enjoyed this book, you might like the following.

Doll Parts

The Game Series | Standalone | D/s | Daddy/lb | Fear play | Objectification

I have the best boyfriend in the whole world, but there's one thing I won't tell him. It's that I don't believe in absolute happiness anymore. Not with the cards we've been dealt. While he's been pining after Lucian, one of the Masters in his kink community, I'm the lovesick monster-puppy Little who can't forget my former stepdad KC. Or the kinky porn I once found on his computer...but that's beside the point! The point is... I have a point. The point is that now the world's best boyfriend has gotten the worst idea in the universe. He insists we seek out a Dom for our relationship in the very community where we can find both KC and Lucian. It spells heartbreak and trouble, if you ask me!

We Have Till Monday

Daddykink | Vacation Romance | Regression Play | Age Difference | Rockstar Romance | All the Foodporn

When it seemed like everyone around Anthony Fender was reaching a goal or falling in love, he blamed an early midlife crisis for throwing him far outside of his comfort zone, all the way to Nashville. Hopefully, this vacation would bring him back to life—starting with a cooking class hosted by celebrity chef August King. But meeting the chef and his much younger husband Camden Adair changed everything. Their dynamic grabbed hold of Anthony and reeled him in before he even heard the magic word.

“Daddy.”

Power Play

MM | Daddykink Romance | Age Difference | Mental Health | Standalone

Love sucked. Correction: it sucked when you were in love with your parents' closest friend and he didn't feel the same. Madigan had always been there for me, from when I was a kid to when I got drafted by the NHL. Then I made the mistake of confessing my feelings for him... I was such a loser. My bipolar disorder was already difficult to manage as it was; add high anxiety and, most recently, as the cherry on a shit sundae, a suspension from the team. Why couldn't he see that I was perfect for him? We even had kink in common! Not that he knew that...

Check out Cara's entire collection at www.caradeewrites.com, and don't forget to sign up for her

newsletter so you don't miss any new releases, updates on book signings, free outtakes, giveaways, and much more.

ABOUT CARA

I'm often awkwardly silent or, if the topic interests me, a chronic rambler. In other words, I can discuss writing forever and ever. Fiction, in particular. The love story—while a huge draw and constantly present—is secondary for me, because there's so much more to writing romance fiction than just making two (or more) people fall in love and have hot sex.

There's a world to build, characters to develop, interests to create, and a topic or two to research thoroughly.

Every book is a challenge for me, an opportunity to learn something new, and a puzzle to piece together. I want my characters to come to life, and the only way I know to do that is to give them substance—passions, history, goals, quirks, and strong opinions—and to let them evolve.

I want my men and women to be relatable. That means allowing room for everyday problems and, for lack of a better word, flaws. My characters will never be perfect.

Wait...this was supposed to be about me, not my writing.

I'm a writey person who loves to write. Always wanderlusting, twitterpating, kinking, cooking, baking, and geeking. There's time for hockey and family, too. But mostly, I just love to write.

~Cara.

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