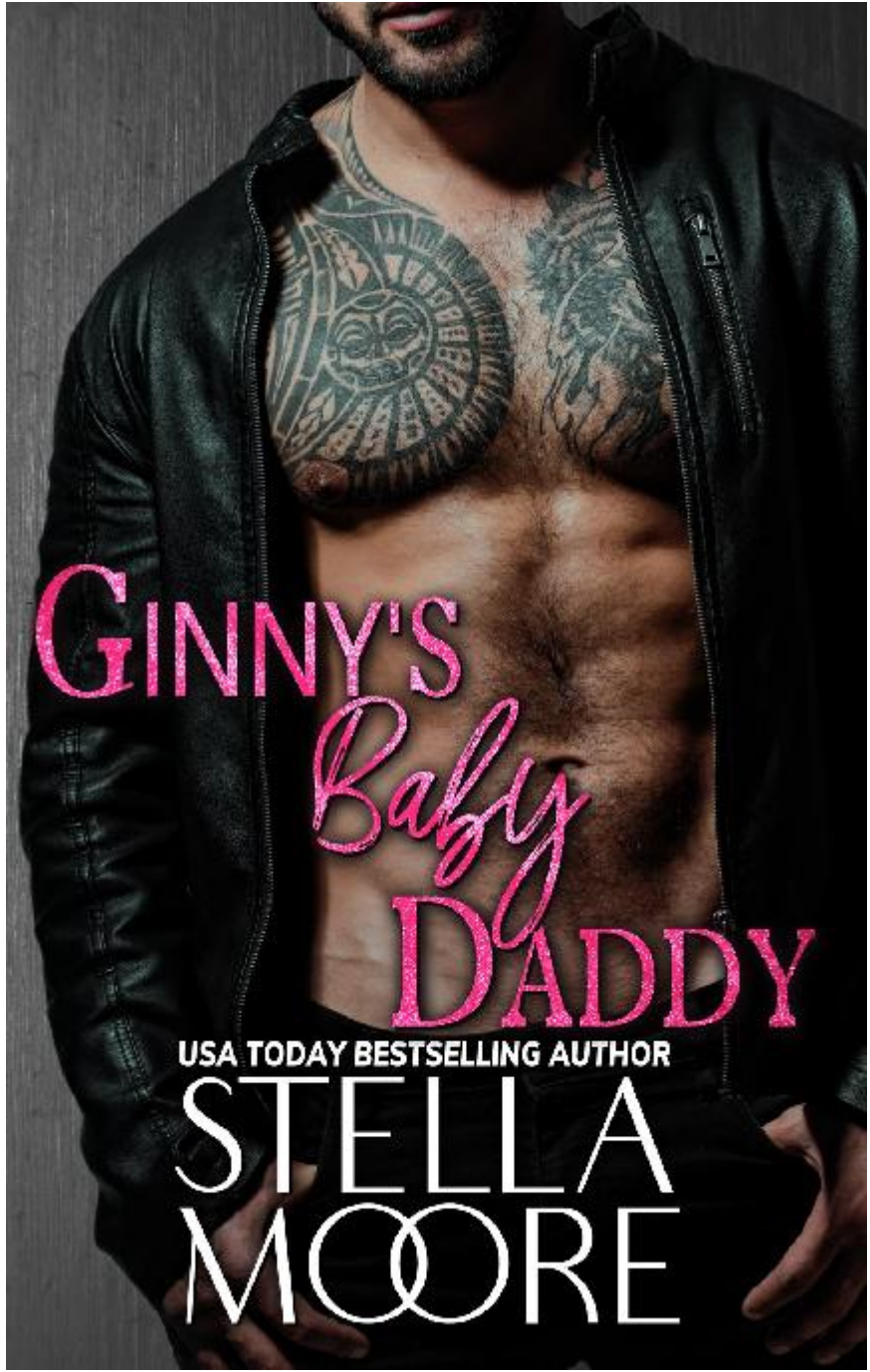


GINNY'S
Baby
DADDY

USA TODAY BESTSELLING AUTHOR

**STELLA
MOORE**



GINNY'S
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DADDY

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GINNY'S BABY DADDY

LOST RIVER LITTLES

BOOK THREE



STELLA MOORE

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Cover Design by: AllyCat Creations

Formatting: Formatting the Forbidden

Edited by: Cheryl's Literary Corner

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*This one's for the Big Girls. Don't ever let anyone make you
feel small.*

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CHAPTER 1



Negative. Again.

Glaring down at the little pink ‘minus’ sign on the white stick in her hand, Ginny Morgan tried to remind herself that these things took time. From everything she’d read online, six months was nothing in the grand scheme of things when it came to getting yourself knocked up.

It was just... she’d been so *sure* this time. Her period had always been reliable, and she was almost a full month late now.

Then again, she’d been on birth control since her eighteenth birthday when she’d driven herself to a clinic in Charleston and gotten a prescription. And she’d faithfully filled it—at a pharmacy also in Charleston—for the past eleven years. So maybe she didn’t actually know what her cycle was like, since it had been so carefully regulated her entire adult life. Making a mental note to ask at her yearly check-up next week, she tossed the test in the trash and got up to wash her hands while she ran through her schedule for the next few days in her head.

There was the photo shoot with Noelle’s potential future sister-in-law, Lulu. Photos she needed to edit for the lingerie

company she'd been partnering with. She'd also wanted to post a little inspirational life update for her followers.

Keeping them looped in enough that they saw her as a friend, while also keeping her private life, well, private wasn't an easy task. But so far, she'd managed the balance well, she thought. Some people, like Rex Carrington, the man who had been an absolute thorn in her side for as long as she could remember, might disagree but she wasn't worried about what he thought regarding her online presence. It was well documented that he didn't care for her career as a plus-sized influencer, and she'd long since made peace with his open hostility.

It had been easier these past few months, admittedly, as his hostility had died down to a few snide remarks here and there. When he wasn't picking at her, he'd turned out to be really fun to hang with, and she liked to think he thought the same about her.

Amazing what letting a guy put his dick in you on a regular basis did for his attitude.

The first time they'd hooked up, she'd been flying high on the thrill of getting arrested after her friend, Noelle, put a rock through some douchebag's car window over in Charleston. Rex had tagged along with his buddies, Ian and Matt, whose girlfriends had also been part of the prank-gone-wrong. And when they'd been deciding who would ride back to Lost River with whom, Ginny had thrown caution to the wind and hopped on the back of Rex's motorcycle. For months before that night, she'd been rolling the idea of having a baby around in her mind and Rex, despite his apparent dislike of her and her career, had seemed like the perfect candidate.

And she'd never been one to leave the door closed when opportunity knocked.

The rest, as they say, was history. She was self-aware enough to know that even if she hadn't been trying to get herself in the family way, she would have gone back for more. Rex was... potent was the only word that came to mind. Like the guys in those romance novels she sometimes liked to read. Rough and growly and really, really fucking good with his hands. And his tongue. And his shockingly pretty cock.

If sex was a drug, she'd gotten hooked the first night in his bed.

In her closet, she scanned the rows of clothes as she contemplated what to wear for tonight's seduction. Something in green, since it was Rex's favorite color on her, and she probably had a bit of groveling to do. The last time they'd hooked up had gone a little sideways, and even though Rex didn't *seem* mad, she could admit she'd been a bit of an asshole.

Was it her fault she'd freaked out at the idea of the whole town seeing them together? It was one thing for their friends to suspect—or in Noelle and Dom's case, to know for sure—that they were hooking up, but it was another altogether to set all the local tongues wagging by being seen in public, nonetheless on what could be easily perceived as a 'date'.

But even though she stood by her decision to turn down his offer of dinner, she was well aware she'd hurt him. Which meant a bit of effort to help soothe those ruffled feathers so they could continue having really spectacular sex.

So she picked out a short, sequin-covered dress she knew he favored and shot off a quick text letting him know she'd be on her way soon before sitting down at her vanity to reapply

the makeup she'd washed off in the shower after her last yoga class.

Just as she was applying her lashes, her phone buzzed and she leaned over to swipe it open. And immediately grinned at his message.

REX

You know where to find me, princess. See you soon.

Maybe it wasn't roses and poetry, but it made the butterflies in her stomach flutter all the same.

Luckily, she'd taken long enough getting ready that it was already dark when she left her apartment. It wasn't as though the people in Lost River were keeping track of her comings and goings on a regular basis, but she had a feeling people might talk if she left her apartment looking like she was headed to a nightclub when it was still light outside.

His front porch lights were on for her, as they always were. She didn't know for sure, obviously, if he turned them on when he knew she was coming or if he just left them on all the time. But there was that romantic part of her that liked to think he thought of her safety and turned them on just for her. Especially since he insisted on living out in the woods instead of closer to town like a civilized human being.

And just like always, the front door opened and he stepped out onto the porch to greet her as she climbed out of her SUV. "Took you long enough," he called, and despite his gruff tone, she grinned.

"Perfection takes time," she shot back as she made her way up the front steps.

His gaze raked over her, hot and hungry. “Worth it.”

When he reached for her, she let herself be grabbed and held. Gave herself over to the bite of pain as his fingers dug into her ass, hoisting her up so he could kiss the sense out of her.

She’d had to hone her photo editing skills over the past few months to smudge out the bruises in her social media pictures. But god, it was so worth it. As a Big Girl, she wasn’t used to being manhandled and she’d quickly become addicted to the way Rex did so.

“Want to play a game, princess?” There was a teasing note to his voice but with a dark current beneath the words that sent a shiver racing up her spine. That dark edge, that hint of something violent and dangerous, was another thing she hadn’t known she enjoyed so much before she’d found herself in Rex Carrington’s bed.

Letting her head fall back, she grinned up at him and let her voice drop seductively. “What kind of game?”

“Do you trust me?”

That he would ask was enough reason to give her pause. After more than six months of sleeping together, it seemed obvious to her that she trusted him, at least when it came to sex. So what did he have planned that would make him feel the need to ask? “Is there a reason I shouldn’t?”

“Oh, princess. That’s a loaded question.”

Heat flared between her thighs as he brushed a feather light kiss down the side of her neck. “You’re not going to hurt me, are you?”

“I absolutely am. But I promise you’ll enjoy it.”

Since up until that point she always had, she didn't see any reason to balk now. "Then yes. I trust you."

"That's my girl. Come on. Let's get you out of that dress."



FUCKING *FINALLY*.

He'd just about run out of patience with her. After she'd bailed on him a week ago because he'd dared suggest they go out to dinner together, he'd given her space. Given her time to think about what she really wanted. But she'd been down to her last couple of days before he'd been ready to say, "Fuck it" and storm the castle, so to speak.

Little brat didn't know how lucky she was she'd come to her senses when she had.

In his living room, he stopped beside the dining room chair he'd moved to the middle of the room specifically for their 'game'. Ginny raised an eyebrow in that haughty way she had when she was curious about something but too stubborn to actually ask.

That was fine. Tonight, he would be the one asking the questions. And he was damn well going to get some answers.

"Strip."

Her brow kicked up even higher, but she didn't protest. Wordlessly, she stepped back, a coy smile tugging at her lips as she slowly slid the straps down over her shoulders. Turning her back to him, she looked over her shoulder, temptation incarnate in a green sparkly dress. "Unzip me?"

It was a power play and they both knew it. She could damn well get herself out of the dress, but she liked to think she was making him do it. Would she be surprised to know he got a thrill out of doing those little things for her? Caring for her, even if it was just something as small as unzipping a dress?

And would she stop asking him to do them if she knew?

They were both about to find out, he supposed. For now, he took his time, savoring the brush of his fingertips over her skin, the shiver she tried to hide as he slowly, slowly slid the zipper from between her shoulder blades down to the sexy little dip at the small of her back.

Before her, he'd never known how addicting all those random dips and curves on a woman's body could be. Now, he couldn't seem to get enough of touching them, tasting them. He dreamt of the way the softest touch could make her sigh with pleasure.

"Beautiful," he murmured, letting his fingers drift over the soft exposed skin of her back.

"Thanks." She accepted the compliment as she always did; easily and with a smile that clearly said she knew how stunning she was. Knew the power she wielded with all those gorgeous curves he couldn't wait to sink into.

Because it was too tempting to rush things and get to the good stuff, he stepped back and crossed his arms. "I'm waiting, princess."

"Someone's feeling bossy tonight." She flashed him another of those knowing smiles as she shimmied out of the dress and kicked it to the side. "I like it."

"Good. Because I'm about to get a lot bossier. You remember your safewords?"

“Red to stop, yellow to pause and ask what the fuck you think you’re doing.” When she unhooked her bra, letting her heavy, pink-tipped breasts fall free, he very nearly wiped at his mouth to make sure he wasn’t drooling. It didn’t matter that he’d seen her naked a few dozen times already, every single time made him feel like a horny teenager about to lose his virginity.

And when she deliberately turned and bent at the waist as she was sliding her panties to the ground, giving him a glimpse of her glistening pussy, he finally gave into the urge to give his cock a hard squeeze through his jeans to alleviate some of the ache.

After what felt like an eternity of torture, she was gloriously, deliciously naked, one hip cocked to the side as she tossed her hair back and smirked. “What next, bossman?”

“Sit.”

“Strip. Sit. Are you roleplaying as a caveman?”

“If I was, you’d already be on your back with my cock inside you. Sit, princess, before I make it difficult for you to do so.”

Excitement glittered in her eyes at the threat. “Oh yeah? How do you plan on doing that?”

He’d always believed actions spoke louder than words. Wrapping one hand around her upper arm, he spun her around and landed half a dozen sharp smacks to her ass. With each one, his handprint appeared, pink and crisp on the pale canvas of her flesh. And the princess of Lost River squealed and danced like a naughty Little girl as he spanked.

“Sit,” he repeated as he released his hold on her.

Her bottom lip puffed out into an adorable pout as she reached back to rub the sting from her bottom. But the emerald of her eyes had darkened with need and that glint of excitement remained. “That hurt!”

“It will hurt a lot more if I have to do it again.”

“All right, all right, I’m sitting.” With a dramatic roll of her eyes, she dropped down into the chair. “Happy?”

“Yup. Legs apart, arms down by your side. You’re not going anywhere for a while.”

“Oooh, have I been captured?” Her laugh echoed around him, full of delighted mischief as she moved into position. “Am I the damsel in distress, waiting for the hero to come rescue me?”

Kneeling in front of the chair, he picked up one of the cuffs he’d attached to the chair leg earlier and wrapped the other cuff around her ankle, securing her leg to the wood before repeating the process with the opposite leg. With those secured, he rose, cupping her chin in his hand and forcing her head back. “Oh, princess. There’s no hero in this story.”

CHAPTER 2



For the first time in her life, she felt a tiny bit afraid of Rex Carrington. She'd been annoyed, pissed, delighted—usually when she managed to get a rise out of him somehow—and here lately, even aroused by him. But never fearful.

Until now.

But it wasn't real fear, not like she'd felt in that dark alley at Christmas, with a strange man's arm around her throat and her friends all watching, waiting to see what he would do next. That had been true terror, the kind that left her stomach coated in sickness for days afterward.

This was more akin to the fear that had driven her to ride every single roller coaster at the amusement parks her dad had taken her to as a child. The kind that thrilled even as it terrified, because logically you knew it was perfectly safe, but your instincts still kicked in, flooding your system with adrenaline.

“Then what's the plan?” she asked, inwardly patting herself on the back for not letting even a hint of the fear she felt color her tone. Her voice was as strong and true as ever.

“I have some questions for you.” Releasing his hold on her chin, Rex moved to one side of the chair and then the other to

attach her wrists the same way he had her ankles. “The rest, well, that depends on how you answer those questions.”

“What if I don’t want to answer your questions?”

“Then you don’t get to come tonight. At all.”

Shock had her mouth falling open and her eyes narrowing at him. “You wouldn’t! That’s just cruel.”

If she hadn’t been tied to the chair, she’d have been tempted to slap the smug smile off his face when he came to stand in front of her again. “I would, and I will. But all you have to do is be a good girl and answer my questions, and I promise to make you come so hard you question your own existence. Think you can do that for me, princess?”

Part of her was tempted to tell him to go fuck himself, to let her go and she’d take care of her own orgasms for the foreseeable future, thank you very much.

But the other part of her, the part that secretly enjoyed the marks he left on her, that enjoyed the way he made her feel small and vulnerable, wanted to see what would happen if she played along.

And more, even, what would happen if she didn’t.

“Fine.” Tossing her head back, she gave him her best ‘haughty princess’ glare, the one she knew made him crazy. “What do you want to know?”

Leaning in, he braced one hand on the back of the chair while the other caressed her thigh, pulling her attention down to the slow build of arousal between her legs. “Let’s start with an easy one. Do you want me to make you come?”

“Duh.”

Two sharp smacks landed across the tops of her thighs, making her cry out. “Watch the attitude, princess.”

Her mama had always said her mouth was going to get her in trouble one day. But Ginny didn’t think this was exactly what she’d had in mind. “Fine. Yes, I would very much enjoy receiving an orgasm or three from you tonight, Mr. Carrington.”

“Good girl.”

Heat flashed along her skin as her pussy clenched at his praise. She’d heard her friends’ Daddies say those words plenty of times, but they had never affected her the way hearing them in Rex’s low, gravelly voice had just now.

Interesting.

Not quite willing yet to tip her hand as to exactly how much she’d enjoyed his praise, she cocked an eyebrow. “Did you have another question, or...?”

“Someone’s impatient tonight.” His chuckle reverberated through her as his hand slid further up her thighs, the tips of his fingers just barely brushing against her bare lips. “But as it happens, yes, I do have some more questions for you, princess. Starting with the first night you came home with me.”

Alarm bells rang in the back of her mind. “What about it?”

“What made you decide to sleep with me that night?”

Well, she couldn’t exactly tell him the truth about *that*. “Do I need a reason?”

“Princess, I think we both know you don’t do anything without a damn good reason.” He brushed against her clit, enough to send a shiver of pleasure through her, but nowhere

near enough to give her the release she craved. “So, what was it?”

“Maybe I just wanted to see what all the fuss was about.” It wasn’t entirely a lie. She’d heard enough about Rex Carrington’s playboy ways over the years to pique her curiosity.

So it was the truth. Just not the *whole* truth.

“Uh huh.” To her dismay, he straightened, a smirk playing across his face as he shook his head. “Do you know what happens to Little girls who lie, princess?”

She let her lips tilt up in a smirk of her own in response. “Are you going to punish me, Daddy?”

If he was put off by her sudden use of ‘Daddy’, it didn’t show. If anything, his eyes flashed with hunger, as if he’d been waiting for her to say it. “That’s exactly what I’m going to do.”

Another jolt of electric need shot straight to her clit as he moved behind the chair. It wasn’t the first time they’d added a bit of kinky play to their hookups. She’d never realized how much she enjoyed the rougher side of sex until Rex had come along. So she was more than happy to go along with this little game and see how it all played out. “You can’t exactly spank me if I’m tied to a chair, Rex.”

A hand fisted in her hair, pulling her head back so she was staring up at him again. “You had it right the first time, princess. It’s Daddy tonight. And there’s more than one way to punish a naughty little liar.”

Anger and arousal were twin flames inside her, making her heart pound and her skin flush. “I am not a liar.”

“Maybe not. But you’re certainly not telling the whole truth.” Wrapping his free hand around her neck, he squeezed gently. Not enough to cut off her air supply, but enough to add a frisson of fear to the cocktail of emotions swirling inside her. “Why did you come home with me that night?”

“I wanted to fuck you.”

“That might explain a one-night stand. But it doesn’t explain why you keep coming back for more.”

“Maybe I was bored.”

Wrong answer. She knew it as soon as the words left her mouth, and the confirmation was there in the way his eyes darkened as the grip on her throat tightened. “Are you bored now, princess?”

“Yeah, a little.”

Really, *really* wrong answer. But before she could backtrack, the hand around her throat was moving down her neck, over her collarbone and her pounding heart to cup one heavy breast. Her breath hitched as he rolled her stiff nipple between his fingers.

And squeezed.

“Motherfucker!” Pain lanced through her and she arched up, yanking against the cuffs binding her to the chair. “Rex, stop! That hurts!”

“You know how to make this stop, princess.” The fingers on her breast tightened even further, and her vision swam with tears. “Tell Daddy the truth.”

Despite the pain—or, as humiliating as it was to admit it, because of it—her clit throbbed with desperate need. “I am!”

It was almost a relief when he released his hold on her hair to give her other breast the same rough treatment. As if the matching pain balanced her system somehow, even when he squeezed tighter yet. “Try again, princess. What keeps you coming to my bed?”

“Or-orgasms,” she managed between panting breaths. “Really great orgasms.”

The hold on her nipples loosened, and she felt rather than heard his chuckle. “I suppose I can’t fault you for that. Still...” Surprisingly gentle, he brushed a few stray strands of hair from her sweat-dampened face. “I don’t think that’s the whole truth. Is it, princess?”

“It is. I swear it is.”

He sighed, and she could hear him moving around behind her, which sent her imagination racing. When he rounded the chair again to stand in front of her, she had to bite the inside of her cheek to keep from whimpering at the sight of the slender crop gripped in his hands. He’d never used anything like it on her before, but she knew how much just his hand could sting. How much worse would the stiff leather be?

“You could get a decent orgasm anywhere. Including your own bed.” One of his eyebrows raised, and her stupid heart thundered even harder against her ribcage. “I assume you know how to get yourself off, don’t you, princess?”

She’d never considered herself a prude. And she’d never been embarrassed by the act of masturbation. But there was something about being tied naked to a chair, while her ‘Daddy’ interrogated her about her self-pleasuring practices that had her entire body flushing with humiliation. Trying her best to hang onto the last shreds of her dignity, she tilted her chin up and smirked. “Of course. I’m the best I’ve ever had.”

“Is that so?” The dangerous undercurrent in his words told her she’d once again said the wrong thing. “Well, now, which is it, princess? Are you the best you’ve ever had, or am I so good at making you come that you can’t resist the siren call of my cock?”

Dammit, dammit, dammit. “Who says they can’t both be true?”

Her gaze followed the crop as he lowered it and tapped the tip against her inner thighs. “Because, if you’re so much better at getting yourself off than I am, you wouldn’t keep showing up on my doorstep night after night.”

The crop snapped against her bare skin, and she cried out at the flash of pain. “Tell Daddy the truth, princess. What’s the real reason you keep coming back to me?”

“Look, if you don’t want to fuck me anymore, just say so.” Though she’d meant for the words to sound defiant, her voice cracked just enough to let some of the pain she felt at the idea of being rejected—more specifically, rejected by *him* as much as she hated to admit it—slip through.

Lifting the crop to her chin, he nudged her head up and her breath caught in her chest at the fierceness of his expression. “You’re not going to turn this around on me, little girl. I have every intention of giving you the long, hard fucking you need as soon as you tell me the truth about what’s going on here.”

“I don’t know what you want from me.”

“The truth. There’s a reason you keep coming here instead of taking care of your own needs or finding some random hookup in a bar.”

For the first time since she’d hopped on the back of his motorcycle, she was tempted to tell him. Not just because her

skin was stinging from his displeasure and she wanted so badly to be allowed to come. But because he was *looking* at her, and she could swear he saw the truth she'd kept so close to her heart already.

Red. The part of her mind that was desperate to keep her secret was screaming at her to say it. To put a stop to this before she said something she couldn't take back.

Two more swats landed, this time on the side of each breast, and she inhaled sharply as pain and pleasure shot through her in equal measure. "I can do this all night, princess. What is it you're really looking for when you come here?"

The truth stuck in her throat, so she fell back on the easy answer. "Sex."

Again he swatted her breasts, this time catching her nipples with the tip of the crop and bringing tears of pain and frustration to her eyes. "The truth, Ginny. What do you want?"

"Sex."

The next swats were delivered to her thighs, so close to her pussy it made her clench. "Try again, princess. Why do you keep coming back to me?"

Over and over they went through the same dance. And each time, the crop landed somewhere new, until every inch of her inner thighs and breasts were pink and aching and her pussy was throbbing with a need so powerful it nearly drowned out the pain.

Threading his fingers through her hair again, Rex pulled her head back, his eyes boring down into hers. "Why are you so fucking stubborn?"

"Just born that way, I guess."

His hold on her hair tightened, and she winced at the flash of pain. “I don’t doubt that for a second, princess. But so was I. Maybe I’m going about this the wrong way, though.” The corner of his lip curled up in a wicked smile. “Maybe I should untie you. Take you to bed and worship that gorgeous fucking body of yours until you’re crying and begging me to let you come. Maybe that would loosen your tongue.”

“Don’t threaten me with a good time, Rex.”

“Oh, princess. You’re going to regret that.”

CHAPTER 3



He should have known it wouldn't be that easy. Ginny Morgan may have been the spoiled only child of the richest family in town, but she was built of sterner stuff than most. It was part of what attracted him and infuriated him all at the same time.

With her hair still wrapped around his fingers, he lowered his head to capture her lips. She opened for him with a whimper, and he swept in like a Viking conquering a new land.

Pulling away slightly, he met her glazed eyes. "Last chance to tell me the truth before I get mean, princess."

"You don't scare me, Rex Carrington."

Little liar. The fear was there, right alongside the arousal he could smell on her, turning the emerald of her eyes nearly black. "Don't say I didn't warn you, baby."

One more hard, punishing kiss and then he released her, dropping to his knees in front of the chair. Jesus Christ, she was beautiful like this, her full curves on display and her skin pink from his 'punishments'. Eyes wide and dark, her heavy breasts heaving with each ragged breath, he'd never seen anything more perfect in his whole life.

Grabbing hold of her hips, his fingers sinking into her soft flesh, he nestled his head between her thick thighs and drove his tongue between her bare, glistening lips. Her cry of pleasure was muffled, but it still made his cock jerk painfully against his jeans.

He took his time, feasting slowly and deliberately, using everything he'd learned about her over the past few months to bring her just to the edge before backing off again. And every time he yanked her back from that cliff she cursed him, and some perverse part of him enjoyed her frustrated ranting as much as he enjoyed her pleas for more.

“Rex, I swear to god I’m going to fucking kill you if you don’t *make me come right this goddamn minute.*”

Lifting his head from between her thighs, he didn’t even bother to wipe at the juices soaking his stubble as he smiled up at her. “I’d love to give you what you want, princess. As soon as you tell me the truth.”

“Fuck you.”

“Have it your way, then.” He started to lower his head again, but her cry of dismay stopped him in his tracks.

“No, wait, I’m sorry!”

Sitting back a bit, he looked up at her, deliberately making his expression as bland as possible despite the fact his heart was about to pound out of his damn chest. “Are you ready to tell me the truth about why you keep coming back here?”

“Yes, yes, I’ll tell you.” For just a moment, the fierce, stubborn woman he knew fell away, and she looked more like a scared little girl. “But you can’t get mad and you can’t laugh.”

Everything inside him seemed to tense at her words. What the hell could she possibly be hiding? “All right.”

“I’m serious, Rex. If you so much as smirk, I’m out of here. I mean it.”

“Not a single smile, princess.” He held up his fingers in the time-honored salute. “Scout’s honor.”

Some of the tension left her shoulders as her lips twitched in a reluctant smile. “We both know you weren’t a boy scout, Rex.”

“I smoked a joint in the church parking lot waiting for Matt and Ian to get done with a meeting once. Close enough.”

She laughed and the sound unraveled some of the knots in his gut. “Fine. Okay. I’ll tell you.” Closing her eyes, she dragged in a deep breath and his breath seemed to stick in his lungs as he waited for her to finally confess. “The real reason I started sleeping with you is... I want to have a baby.”

Over the past few weeks, he’d played this exact moment over in his mind a hundred times, with a hundred different explanations for why she’d suddenly decided to jump into bed with him. She was secretly in love with him. She was sick and dying and crossing things off her bucket list. She’d been abducted by aliens and body swapped with a horny, sex-crazed doppelganger.

Not once, in all those hundred scenarios, had *this* ever crossed his mind.

“Run that by me again, princess?” he said, his voice tight and odd sounding even to his own ears.

Her eyes flew open, pinning him with a hard stare. “You promised you wouldn’t get mad. Or laugh.”

“I’m not.” And he surprisingly wasn’t, though some part of his brain recognized he’d be well within his rights to be pissed as hell. “Just making sure I heard you correctly. You’ve been fucking me for six months so you could get yourself knocked up?”

“It sounds crass when you put it that way, but yes.”

Fuck if that prim and proper tone didn’t make him want to do all manner of decidedly not prim and proper things to her. But first, answers, because he had a hell of a lot more questions now. “Why?”

“Because I want a baby,” she answered with a jerk of her shoulder. “I thought that would have been obvious.”

“Yeah, I figured that much out, princess. But why me? A few months ago, you couldn’t fucking stand me.”

“Correction. *You* couldn’t stand *me*. I never had a problem with you other than your obvious dislike of me and my money.”

Fair enough. “That still begs the question, why me?”

“You’ve got good genes.” Now that the truth was out in the open, the vulnerable little girl had given way to the confident woman once more. “You’re hot, you work hard. And, well, I sorta figured if I did get pregnant you wouldn’t be bugging me for custody.”

“So, you chose me because I’m a good-looking deadbeat. Got it.” The anger he’d promised her he wouldn’t show bubbled up to the surface. Jesus, did she really think so little of him that she assumed he’d just walk away from his own child without a second thought?

She at least had the grace to look ashamed. “Again, it sounds bad when you put it like that.”

Setting aside his anger for the time being, he sat back on his heels, studying her as he rolled the situation over in his mind. She wanted a baby. He wanted her. Despite the underhanded way she'd gone about things, it wasn't the worst possible outcome of this little interrogation session. "If you didn't want some hanger-on baby daddy, why didn't you go to one of those sperm banks where you can pick the perfect dude? Or hell, just some random tourist in Charleston would have done the trick."

"I considered it," she said with another careless shrug. Well, what amounted to a shrug with her wrists still cuffed to the chair. "But a sperm bank seemed so cold and impersonal. And I wasn't sure how long it would take, so I didn't want to risk getting an STD or something by hooking up with a bunch of random guys. Plus, if there was ever a problem or the kid got sick, I figured it would be a good idea to know the dad's family history."

Like he'd said, Ginny Morgan never did anything without a damn good reason. He just wasn't sure how he felt about her reasons. Pissed, yeah, because it was a pretty fucked up thing to do. And because she'd just assumed he'd walk away from their child without a second thought. He'd always known she didn't think much of him, but he'd never realized she'd thought *that* little of his character.

But all that aside, now he knew she wanted something from him. Which put her exactly where he wanted her. Setting aside the hurt and anger for now, to be taken out and re-examined at some later date—possibly never—he focused on the one thing that really mattered.

Her.

“All right, princess. I’ll put a baby in you. On one condition.”



THIS NIGHT WAS NOT GOING AT ALL how she’d planned. And Rex’s words had her heart jumping with joy right before her stomach plummeted to her knees. “What condition?”

He rose to his feet, and not for the first time his movements reminded her of a jungle cat. Smooth and graceful, but with a restrained kind of violence that excited her as much as it scared her. Bracing his hands on the back of the chair, he leaned in, invading her space, and she smelled herself on his breath. “I’ll give you a baby. You give me... you.”

That fear-slash-excitement mixture swirled wildly in her stomach. “What do you mean?”

“I mean, no more sneaky late night visits. No more pretending our friends don’t know we’re sleeping together.”

Of all the demands he could have made, that was the last one she’d been expecting. “So, what? You want us to date? Like, be boyfriend and girlfriend?”

“No, baby.” Cupping her face with one hand, he tilted her head back so she was forced to look up into those dark, glittering eyes. “I don’t want to be your boyfriend. I want to be your Daddy.”

Correction. *That* was the last thing she’d expected. It was one thing to call him ‘Daddy’ when they were fooling around, but she’d recently gotten a glimpse into what her friends’

relationships were like and she never in a million years would have thought Rex would want that kind of responsibility over another person. “Why?”

“In case you haven’t figured it out yet, princess, I’m fucking wild about you.” The corner of his lip kicked up into a smirk. “Even if you do make me crazy half the time.”

“Yeah, I noticed. But why a Daddy? Why not just a normal boyfriend?”

“Because the idea of making you obey, of making you be my good Little girl gets me really fucking hot. And I think you like being forced to obey, don’t you princess? You like it when I take away your choices, when I give you no option but to do as you’re told.”

Her clit throbbed and she briefly wondered if it was possible just to come from a man’s words alone. “Maybe.”

“Yeah, that’s what I thought. So, what do you say, princess?”

“Just so I’m perfectly clear. I go out with you, let you play Daddy, and you’ll help me have a baby? No strings attached?”

“I won’t be ‘playing’ anything, princess. But yeah, that about covers it.”

“And when we break up, no messy custody battles?”

He hesitated, longer than she’d expected him to, and she had a brief moment of panic that he would fight her on that point before he finally nodded. “In that unlikely scenario, sure. No messy custody battles.” Emotions flickered across his face as he threaded his fingers through her hair, tugging her head back. “But full disclosure, princess. Once I have you, I have no intention of letting you go.”

Jesus, the man was potent. That single move alone was almost enough to have her agreeing to whatever he wanted, right then and there.

Almost.

But a step like this required at least some thought. A relationship with Rex. She'd have been lying if she said she'd never considered it. Especially after that asshole Kyle had attacked her at Christmas last year, and Rex had spent a week coddling her and taking care of her. The idea of having that kind of care and attention focused on her all the time, from a man like him... it was a heady proposition.

The gossips in town would have a fucking field day. Which was exactly why she'd put the brakes on the last time he'd suggested going out to dinner. In a town their size, there would be no stopping the gossip and the speculation. That was true of any new relationship, but when it was the mayor's daughter and the quintessential town bad boy...

"People will talk," she said slowly, her mind working around his suggested solution. "And they won't all be nice about it."

"I've never cared before, why should I care now?"

I care. But it made her feel small and petty to admit it. She'd known going into this that getting pregnant without the accompanying ring and husband would make waves.

Was it really any worse to have them talking about what an *interesting* choice she'd made once they all realized whose bed she was warming?

Maybe.

"I have my own conditions."

He raised an eyebrow and her entire nervous system seemed to quake in response. “What conditions are those, princess?”

“As discussed, no messy custody battles. I’m not bringing a kid into a world where his parents are constantly fighting.”

“And as previously discussed, I agree. What else?”

“After this ends, we stay friends. Or at least do whatever we have to in order to stay cordial with each other. I’m not going to fuck over our friend group because we couldn’t keep it in our pants.”

“Also agreed. Anything else?”

“If I’m with you, then I’m with you. Nobody else. I expect the same respect in return.”

An emotion she couldn’t place swirled in his dark eyes. “Princess, there hasn’t been anybody else since the moment you hopped on the back of my motorcycle and asked to come home with me.”

Oh. Everything in her sighed with pleasure at that thought. There hadn’t been anybody else for her, either, but that had been as much out of necessity as anything else. She wasn’t about to confuse the issue of paternity because she couldn’t keep it in her pants.

At least, that’s what she’d been telling herself about why she hadn’t slept with anybody else. “Good. That’s good.”

“Any other demands, your highness?”

“No, I think that’s it.”

“All right, then.” His smile flashed, a promise of all the filthy, wicked things to come. “Then let’s get you untied so I can put a baby in you.”

CHAPTER 4



Oh, shit. Oh, shit. Oh, *shit*.

She was really doing this. She was really trading an out-in-the-open relationship with Rex Carrington for a baby. His baby.

She'd lost her fucking mind. *He'd* lost *his* fucking mind.

They were both so screwed.

Her mind raced with all the possible ways this could blow up in their faces. But then she was being pulled up from of the chair and into his arms, and all she could think about was how good he felt. How strong he was, and how tiny he managed to make her feel even though she was nothing of the sort. Despite being nearly five-ten in her flat feet, and eye to eye with him in her favorite heels, and despite her suspicions that she had a solid fifty pounds on him, she never felt bigger than him.

Maybe because she knew he could still easily throw her on the bed and fuck her senseless if he had a mind to. While he wasn't body-builder huge, he was stronger than he looked.

And, she realized as he maneuvered her toward the bedroom with little more than a gentle nudge here and a tug on her hair there, it was just as much mental as it was physical. Rex filled up every room he walked into just by existing. It

was impossible not to feel a bit overwhelmed by that in the best possible ways.

And now he was hers. All hers. Had been, according to him, for the last six months. She still wasn't sure exactly how to feel about that. Because if he'd been all in, all this time, maybe he was more serious about this whole relationship thing than she was ready to admit.

"You're thinking too loud, princess," he murmured, a moment before he brushed his lips down the side of her neck, making her sigh with pleasure.

"Too loud?" Amused, she tilted her head to the side to give him better access. "How can someone think too loud?"

"I don't know, but somehow you manage. Especially when you're obsessing over something. Whatever it is can wait until you're nice and full of my cum."

Heat again flared between her thighs, driving all the worries and 'what-ifs' to the back of her mind. "Mmm. Yes, Daddy."

And just like that, she found herself flat on her back on his bed with him over her, caging her in, his dark gaze boring into hers. "Say it again."

"Say what again?" she teased, grinning up at him.

With what sounded almost like a growl, he grabbed her wrists in one hand and pinned them to the bed above her head. His free hand cupped her mound, driving his fingers into her and sending frantic jolts of pleasure through her.

"Say it again, princess, and I'll let you come."

Maybe if her body hadn't been so primed from being kept on edge for so long already, she could have held out a little

longer. As it was, it already felt like she might actually die if she didn't get some relief right that very second. "Yes, Daddy!"

"Good fucking girl. Come for Daddy, princess."

As if on command, the orgasm slammed into her and she bucked under him, her screams of ecstasy filling the room as the pleasure overwhelmed her.

"God, you're so fucking gorgeous when you come."

The pure awe in his voice broke through the haze clouding her mind and she managed a lopsided smile. "Bet I'd be even prettier with your cock inside me."

"You're not wrong, princess."

He rolled off the bed, just long enough to strip out of the tight black t-shirt and jeans he'd been wearing before joining her again. Holding himself over her, he slowly slid his cock into her, stretching her with that little bite of pain she loved. With slow, deep, forceful thrusts, he fucked her, all the while keeping his eyes locked on hers.

"You feel so good, baby," he murmured, lowering his head to brush a kiss over her lips. "I love the way your sweet little pussy hugs my cock. I love the way you feel when you come with me inside you. Can you do that for me, princess? Let me feel you squeezing my cock before I give you my cum?"

She'd always thought she hated dirty talk. But over the past few months she'd come to realize she just hated bad, clichéd dirty talk. The way Rex Carrington did it never failed to turn her into a whimpering puddle beneath him.

"Yes, Daddy." Arching up to meet him, she gasped as another wave of pleasure rolled over her.

At her words, he slammed into her, harder than before but with that same maddeningly slow pace. Need coiled in her belly as he hit just that right spot inside her with every thrust, until soon she was standing on the edge of oblivion again, waiting to fall.

“Please, god, please. Rex. Daddy. Please.”

“What do you want, baby? You want Daddy’s cum inside you? You want Daddy to fill you all the way up and put a baby in your belly?”

“Yes, yes, Daddy, please. Please.”

“Such a good girl, begging for Daddy’s cum. You can have it all once you come for me one more time, princess.”

As if she could help herself when it seemed as though he knew her body even better than she did? When every thrust pushed her closer and closer to the edge?

Until she was flying again, shattering, her muscles clamping down around him as she screamed for him. Screamed for her Daddy.

“That’s it, baby. Fuck, you feel so good. Are you ready for Daddy’s cum, princess?”

“Yes!”

“Ask me like a good girl.”

Even though she’d come twice, her body instantly responded to the gravelly order. Need flashed through her and her pussy spasmed around him yet again. “Give me your cum, Daddy. Please. I need it.”

“Since you asked so nicely, baby.”

And then he was fucking her hard and fast, and all she could do was cling to him as he rode her until he finally slammed home one final time and the warmth of him filled her womb.

“Such a good girl, taking all of Daddy’s cum,” he cooed, his voice low and raspy. “I can’t wait to fill you up again and again until you’re so full of me you can’t think straight.”

“Mmm. I have to admit, this wasn’t exactly the reaction I was expecting when I told you I wanted a baby.”

Chuckling, he nuzzled her throat, and she had to blink back tears at the surprisingly tender gesture. “I wasn’t exactly expecting it myself. But there’s something about the idea of you, full of me, your belly all big and round with my baby that just... does something to me.”

“Yeah?”

“Yeah. So consider this your warning; I plan to fuck you every chance I get for the foreseeable future.” Lifting his head, he grinned down at her. “You should probably just forget about wearing panties for a while. And maybe wear some of those cute dresses you have, the ones with the little straps that swish when you walk.”

“Swish?”

“Yeah. You know.” He raised his hand and waved it side to side as he made a *swish* sound. “Like that. They’ve got the pretty flowers on them and stuff.”

“Oh! You mean a sundress.” Tossing her head back against the pillow, she laughed until her stomach hurt. “Rex, it’s the middle of March. I can’t wear a sundress in March.”

“Says who?”

“Says every law of fashion ever. And the weather. We may live in the South, but it’s still a little early for sundress season.”

“Pity. They’re my favorite.”

“Duly noted.”

“Good girl.”

Between his praise and the slow, thorough way he claimed her lips after, her heart felt like it might beat out of her chest by the time he lifted his head again and smiled down at her. “Did you have dinner yet?”

“No,” she admitted somewhat sheepishly. “I was more concerned with other things this evening.”

“Well, now that we’ve fed one appetite, what do you say we grab something to eat?”

Some of the uncertainty she was still feeling must have shown on her face because he laughed and shook his head. “Relax, princess. I meant I’ll run into town and pick up some food for us. I didn’t figure you’d be ready for a public date just yet.”

“Oh. Thanks. I appreciate that.”

With that same lethal grace she’d admired before, he rolled off the bed and reached for his jeans. “Tomorrow.”

“Tomorrow, what?”

“Tomorrow, I’m taking you on a proper date. That gives you almost twenty-four full hours to work through whatever weirdness you’ve got going on in your head.” With his jeans still unbuttoned, exposing that delicious V at the base of his torso that never failed to drive her wild, he knelt on the bed and took her lips again, this time in a quick, brutal kiss that left

her head spinning. “I’ll expect you dressed and ready to go when I pick you up at seven, unless you want your first punishment spanking before we even have our first real date.”

“You wouldn’t dare.”

“I absolutely would dare, princess. And I’d wager the booths at The Honk won’t be very comfortable to sit on with a sore bottom.”

“Hmph. Fine. But for now, could you please go get us some food? I’m *starving*.”

“Your wish is my command, princess.”

Once he was dressed, he kissed her again. A goodbye kiss. Nothing earth-shattering, but it was one more little way in which their relationship was shifting. Rex had always taken every opportunity to get his hands on her in the past, but little gestures of affection like a goodbye kiss had never really been part of their dynamic.

Feeling unsettled, she climbed out of bed and used the bathroom before pulling on the fluffy oversized robe that had magically appeared at his house one day. She’d never actually seen him in it, and had a feeling it would swallow him whole. And she just couldn’t see a guy like Rex lounging around his house in a magenta robe.

Which fed her suspicions that he’d bought it for her after she’d lamented that she couldn’t just walk around in one of his shirts since they barely covered her boobs. He’d made several suggestive jokes about her walking around his house mostly naked, but the next time she’d come over, the robe had been there.

She’d avoided thinking about it too hard at the time because that would just lead her down a rabbit hole of all the

little things he'd done to take care of her over the past few months. But now that she was staring down the prospect of a real relationship...

Wrapped in the robe, she hurried out to the living room and grabbed her purse from where she'd dropped it on her way in. Praying Noelle wasn't busy with her own gorgeous as fuck Daddy, Ginny pulled her phone from the bag and hit the button to call her friend.

Someone in heaven must have been smiling down on her because Noelle answered on the first ring. "Hey, Gin! To what do I owe the pleasure?"

Just hearing Noelle's voice settled some of the nerves jumping in her stomach. "Rex wants to date. Like really date, not just the frenemies with benefits thing we've been doing."

"Okay, well, duh."

The lack of surprise in her friend's tone had Ginny glaring at the chair in the middle of the living room. The chair she'd been tied to while Rex had done all those wicked, delicious... "What do you mean 'Duh'?"

"I mean 'Duh'. He's been talking to Dom nonstop about being a Daddy. I think Dom and Matt even got him into some club here in Charleston." Noelle paused, and when she spoke again, her tone was full of amusement. "I thought you knew all this and just weren't sharing with the class."

"No, I didn't fucking know! I mean..." Ginny trailed off, her mind in overdrive as she picked over every interaction they'd had since that fateful first night. All the ways he'd started taking care of her, the hints he'd been dropping about wanting to go out to dinner instead of just grabbing takeout or

her cooking. The way he'd been so protective and attentive after she'd been attacked at the Christmas parade.

Standing in the middle of his living room, she stared at the large wooden enclosure where Sir Hiss lived. One of Ginny's new favorite hobbies was joking about posing with the giant python for her social media pages and listening to Rex lecture her about safety and warning her away from handling the snake on her own. Not because he was worried about Sir Hiss, but because he was worried about her. As always. "I'm an idiot."

"If you didn't know he wanted to wife you up, then yeah, a little bit," Noelle agreed with a laugh.

"Nobody said anything about marriage."

"Aww, it's so cute you're still in denial. When a guy like Rex falls, he falls hard, babe. I've got a hundred dollars that says you're it for him. Hang on. What?"

There was a short, muffled conversation on the other end of the phone before Noelle returned. "Dom says it's not nice to place bets on other people's relationships, but if he was going to, his money would be on you being Rex's endgame, too."

"I need to sit down." More than a little stunned by her friends' conviction, Ginny lowered herself to the couch and dropped her head into her hands. "This is all just... a lot."

"Yeah, well, welcome to the club." Noelle's tone wasn't unsympathetic. "But you know, just because you're his endgame doesn't mean he has to be yours. You're allowed to say no."

"Well, it's a little late for that." Ginny managed a weak laugh. "I already told him we could give the whole relationship thing a try."

“Really?” Now Noelle did sound surprised. Ginny wasn’t sure how she was supposed to feel about that. “How’d he manage that? Blackmail?”

“Sort of.”

“Wait, what?” All traces of amusement vanished from Noelle’s voice. “What are you talking about?”

She hadn’t planned on telling anyone the truth. But she was feeling a bit like she’d been run over by a freight train, and she needed someone to talk to. And the only other living thing around was Sir Hiss, who was great for getting a rise out of Rex when she joked about posing with him for her fans but wasn’t so great at the whole giving advice thing. “If I tell you this, you have to swear you won’t tell anyone, Noelle. Not even Taylor or Edie.”

“Cross my heart, hope to die.”

“Okay, well.” Closing her eyes, Ginny dragged in a deep breath and blew it out. “I’m not going to give you the dirty details of how he got this out of me, but I told him I want a baby.”

“You want a *what*?”

“A baby. Like, from my bucket list, remember?” It was Ginny’s turn to be amused by her friend’s obliviousness. “I sorta figured you’d put two and two together already.”

“You figured I’d just assumed you went and jumped Rex’s bones so you could get yourself knocked up? No, Ginny, oddly enough that thought never even entered my brain.”

“Oh. Well, I thought it was obvious.”

“No, it wasn’t fucking obvious! I bet Carly would have made that connection, though,” Noelle added darkly. “She’s

always telling us how dense we are about shit like that.”

“I’m starting to think she’s right.”

“Me too, and I don’t know how I feel about it. But that’s a problem for another day. What did he say when you told him you wanted him to put a baby in you?”

“He was actually more chill about it than I’d expected. And he agreed, in exchange for me giving a relationship with him a shot.”

The silence that met her explanation was deafening. And long. Ginny was just about to ask if she’d dropped the call when Noelle finally responded.

“You know that’s like, kind of fucked up, right?”

You don’t know the half of it. “I do. And I also know I never would have agreed if some part of me didn’t actively want to try with him.” Saying the words out loud, she realized for the first time just how true they were.

“Okay, well, as long as this is something you actually want and not just some weird baby fever thing.”

Noelle still didn’t sound convinced, which made Ginny smile despite the emotions swirling in her gut. “It is. Holy shit, it really is. I think I was scared to want it because, well, it’s Rex. He doesn’t really ‘do’ relationships.”

“Yeah, I know. So just be careful, okay? Both of you. The last thing I want is my friends getting hurt.”

“We will be. Promise.”

“Good. Oh, hey, Edie will probably be calling you sometime tonight. Apparently, we’re having a girls’ night at her place Tuesday. She’s being oddly cryptic about it.”

“Why doesn’t she just use the group text like a normal human being?”

“Because she gets a kick out of pretending to be an eighty-year-old woman. And she knows it annoys us, which just makes it that much more fun for her.”

“I swear she’s a bigger brat than you. But I’ll be there.”

“See you then. Bye, Ginny. Don’t do anything I wouldn’t do unless you plan on sharing all the dirty details later.”

Laughing, Ginny told her goodbye and hit the button to end the call. And as she waited for her man—god, it was weird to think of Rex as hers—she laid a hand on her stomach. Maybe this really was for the best. Maybe she’d be able to have her baby and the baby daddy, too.

If one of them didn’t manage to fuck it all up, that was.

CHAPTER 5



For the first time in the five years he'd been working for Matt Crawford, Rex was early for work. And not just early, but early and with a smile plastered on his face that would have made any Miss America contestant jealous.

It was enough to have both Matt and Jack Hanson, the suspiciously spry mechanic who'd been working at that same garage since before Matt and Rex had been a twinkle in their respective daddies' eyes, looking at him as though he'd grown another head since the last time they'd seen him.

"Morning, boys!" he called on his way to the break room where they stored their crap during their shifts and scarfed down the mid-shift meals Matt forced them to take regardless of how slammed they were. The breaks and the pay were one of the reasons Rex had stuck around for as long as he had. As the only shop in town and the closest one within a thirty-minute radius of Lost River, he easily could have taken advantage of his crew. But Matty Crawford wasn't built that way. And Rex was perfectly content to spend his afternoons fixing cars that should have, for the most part, been sent to their final resting place years ago.

Such as the little Corolla Matt was busy cussing at when Rex walked back into the garage after stashing his dinner in

the break room fridge. “When are you going to make her get rid of that death trap?”

“It’s a sentimental death trap,” came Matt’s muffled response from under the hood. “And as long as she’s just driving it around town, it’s fine.”

“This is the third time you’ve had it in the shop since Christmas. She needs a new car. Jack, tell him I’m right.”

Popping out from under the car he had up on the lift, Jack sent a pained smile Matt’s way. “He’s not wrong, boss.”

Matt straightened, sending them both an annoyed glare. “Fine. Which one of you wants to tell my pregnant fiancé she has to get rid of her late husband’s car?”

“Pregnant?”

“*Fiancé?*”

The aggravation in Matt’s expression gave way to a grin so bright Rex was surprised it didn’t blind them. “Yes,” he said, pointing a finger at Rex. “I asked her this weekend, when we were in Atlanta. And yes.” He pointed at Jack. “She told me this weekend.”

“That’s a hell of a vacation,” Rex said, rubbing the back of his head. “Congrats, man.”

“It was, and thanks. But keep all that to yourselves. She hasn’t even told the girls yet, and she’ll never forgive me if the cat gets out of the bag before she has the chance. I probably shouldn’t have said anything, but...” Still grinning, Matt shrugged. “I couldn’t keep it to myself.”

Eyes suspiciously wet, Jack wrapped Matt up in a giant bear hug. “Congratulations, boss. You’re gonna be a great dad.”

“Thanks.” Matt gave a nervous laugh. “I’m scared out of my fucking mind.”

“You don’t need to be.” When Matt sent him a skeptical look, Rex shrugged. “Seriously, man, if anybody was made to be a Dad, it’s you. And Ian. I can definitely see the two of you driving matching minivans loaded up with kids.”

And it was the truth. Matt and Ian had both had the kind of upbringing that practically guaranteed they’d give their kids the same gifted childhoods they’d had.

Why hadn’t Ginny picked a guy like that for her baby Daddy?

Because she knew you wouldn’t stick around if you found out, dumbass.

“Well, let’s not get ahead of ourselves here.” Matt’s laugh shook Rex out of his descent into self-pity. “We’ll start with one and see how it goes.”

“Uh huh. Sure, man.”

“Anyway.” Matt gave him a pointed look that said he was clearly done talking about his potential brood. “Enough about me. Jack and I are dying to know what force of nature dragged Rex Carrington out of his bed before noon, and with a shit-eating grin on his face.”

Because thinking too hard about babies and Matt’s impending fatherhood made Rex more uncomfortable than he was willing to admit, he was all too happy to change the subject. “Genevieve Morgan.”

It was a tossup as to whether Jack was more shocked by Matt’s news or Rex’s. “You and Miss Ginny, ah... spent the night together?”

Matt snorted. “They’ve been ‘spending their nights together’ for a while now. Lost River’s best kept secret.”

It was odd, sitting around and talking about his love life like a normal guy. Odd, but not unpleasant. “She finally agreed to let me take her on an actual date tonight.”

He trusted Matt and even Jack with his life. But he was absolutely not about to share the nitty gritty details about how he’d gotten Ginny to agree to said date. While he had absolutely no regrets about the lengths he’d gone to, he was self-aware enough to know not everyone would appreciate his specific methods.

Eyebrows raising, Matt let out a low whistle. “Taking it public. That’s a big step.”

Are you sure you’re ready for that, Mr. No Commitment? Even if Matt didn’t say the words, they were there in the tone of his voice. “Not that big. Just figure a girl like Ginny deserves the whole deal, you know?”

“You know a girl like Ginny isn’t going to want to share.”

Okay, now they were treading into asshole territory. “Wasn’t planning on asking her to.”

“I’m just saying. It’s not really your style to stick with one girl.”

“I’ve been with one girl for the past six months.”

“Really?” Matt’s eyebrows somehow managed to lift even higher. “I didn’t know that.”

“Now you do. I don’t see what the big fucking deal is. I still have a sexy ass woman in my bed every night. Just happens to be the same sexy ass woman.”

“Right.” Though his tone still said he didn’t quite believe it, Matt smiled. “Well, I’m happy for you two. As long as nobody gets hurt.”

Without bothering to respond, Rex headed over to the computer in the far corner of the shop and pulled up his work orders for the day. And tried to ignore the little voice in the back of his head whispering that Matt was probably right and he’d end up fucking this whole thing up.



STANDING IN HER EXPANSIVE WALK-IN-CLOSET, Ginny stared at her wall of clothes and tried not to panic.

What the hell was she supposed to *wear*?

It shouldn’t be this hard. She’d been to The Honk a thousand times, in various states of dress. Nobody had ever looked at her sideways because of her outfit.

“Jeans and a cute top. Same thing you would wear on any other Monday night. Stop being ridiculous and just pick something.”

She was still standing there, wrapped in a towel and glaring at her clothes when someone knocked at her apartment door.

Shit, shit, shit. Was it seven o’clock already? Frantic now, she grabbed a random sweater from the shelf in front of her and yanked it over her head. But a quick look in the mirror reminded her why she never wore that particular sweater. The color was good, but it clung to all the wrong curves. With an

annoyed growl, she yanked it up over her head and tossed it on the floor.

She was on top number three when he knocked again. “Just a second!” she called, hoping it would buy her a few more minutes.

A dress. It was still too chilly for the sundresses he apparently favored, but she had plenty of early spring-appropriate dresses in her closet. She grabbed her favorite sweater dress and sent a prayer up to the fashion gods as she wiggled her way into it.

Nope. Horrible. Wrong, all wrong, even though she’d just worn it last week and gotten a ton of compliments on it.

“Fuck it. I’m staying home.”

“Like hell you are.”

Shock tore a scream from her throat as she spun around to find Rex leaning against the doorframe of her closet, a scowl on his face. “What the hell are you doing in here? You about gave me a heart attack, Rex!”

“Door was unlocked. Decided to come in and see what was taking you so long.”

Fisting her hands on her hips, she glared at him. “You can’t just waltz into someone’s house unannounced like that!”

“I did announce myself, but apparently you were too busy having a meltdown to hear me.”

“I am not having a meltdown.” Okay, maybe a tiny meltdown. But she was a girl trying to pick out an outfit for a first date with a guy she really liked. She figured she was entitled to one itty bitty freakout.

“Coulda fooled me. What’s the problem?”

Suddenly feeling defensive, she crossed her arms. “I don’t have anything to wear,” she mumbled.

“Princess, you have more clothes than the whole town put together. Just pick something.”

“First of all, I don’t have *that* many clothes. I have a perfectly reasonable amount of clothes. Second of all, if it was that simple don’t you think I’d have ‘just picked something’ already?”

“What’s wrong with what you have on? You look pretty.”

Hearing Rex tell her she was pretty never failed to give her a little boost. But even that warm glow wasn’t enough to ease the panicked knots in her stomach. “I don’t like it.”

One eyebrow raised in disbelief, he glanced down at the pile of clothes on the floor around her. “I’m guessing you didn’t like any of these, either.”

“No. Nothing fits right, and I hate everything.” There was an undeniable sulk in her voice, but she couldn’t seem to help herself.

“All right. Go have a seat on your bed and Daddy will find something for you to wear.”

Daddy. God, it shouldn’t make her pussy clench just to hear him call himself that. “No, it’s fine, I’ll just wear this.”

“Princess.” Placing his hands on her waist, he pulled her in close, dipping his head to capture her lips in a slow, easy kiss. “I’m a selfish man. I want your attention on me tonight and if you hate what you’re wearing, your clothes will be the only thing you’re focused on. Sit, and I’ll find you something to wear.”

“Bossy,” she grumbled as she wiggled past him and stomped over to her bed. “Fine. If you think it’s that easy, feel free to pick.”

“What about this?” He pulled one of her favorite dresses in a gorgeous deep rose from the top rack. It was one of the few pink things she had that didn’t completely clash with her hair. “I like this one.”

So did she, but she would be damned if she’d make it that easy for him. “Do you want me to freeze to death?”

“Fair enough.” Returning the dress to the closet, he stood back and scanned the contents again. “This is pretty.”

It was. The emerald green of the dress always made her hair look even brighter and redder than usual, and it made her eyes pop. As much as she wanted to give him a hard time, she also really, *really* wanted to wear that dress. “Maybe.”

“Just try it for me.”

“Ugh, fine.” Snatching the dress from his hand, she tossed it onto the bed before shimmying out of the one she had on. It made her feel a tiny bit better to throw the discarded dress at him, especially when it hit him square in his stupid, smug face.

“Keep it up, princess. I already owe you a spanking.”

“Whatever.” But her heart was hammering against her chest as the memory of his threat from the night before resurfaced. She’d forgotten all about it during her wardrobe meltdown.

Shrugging out of the black leather jacket he favored that never failed to make her mouth water, he tossed it on the bed and shoved the sleeves of his shirt to his elbows. “Have it your way.”

CHAPTER 6



Before she could process what his words might mean, he was seated on her bed and dragging her down over one knee.

“Rex! What are you doing?”

“Exactly what I promised you I would do, princess.” Cupping her ass, he squeezed, hard enough to send a flash of pain fueled pleasure straight to her core. “What time did I tell you to be ready tonight?”

“Seven. But it’s not my fault!”

“Yeah, I get that. And I was willing to overlook it since you were obviously upset. But that doesn’t mean you get to sass me and throw things at my face.”

Shame washed over her, and she suddenly felt like maybe she deserved to be punished. A little. “Sorry. That was uncalled for.”

“It absolutely was. So here’s what’s going to happen. Daddy is going to turn this naughty bottom nice and red. Then you’re going to put on that pretty green dress so I can take you out to dinner. And after dinner, we’re going to my place where you will be spending the night. Got it?”

Despite the happy flutter of butterflies in her stomach at his words, she shook her head. “I have to open the studio at

eight in the morning, Rex. I can't stay all the way out at your place and still have time to get everything ready in the morning."

"Then I'll stay here. I'll have plenty of time to run home and change in the morning before I have to be at work."

She couldn't think of a good reason for him *not* to stay over. Other than worrying that he might be seen. All their overnights up until this point had been at his place, out in the woods where the few neighbors he did have minded their own damn business.

But they were already going out to dinner together, and god knew how many people had watched him climb the steps up to her apartment. The gossip train would be running hot by sunrise anyway. Rex spending the night in her bed was certainly coal for the fire, but maybe it would be better to get all the juicy bits out in the open at once. Like ripping off a band-aid.

"Fine. You can stay. Just for tonight."

"Good girl." His praise was delivered in a low, guttural growl. "Ready for your spanking?"

"Couldn't we just skip that part? I promise I won't throw anything else at you."

"Nope. My little princess obviously needs to let off some steam before we go out and I can't think of a better way."

"I can," she mumbled.

His chest vibrated with laughter a moment before the first spank landed. Unlike the playful swats he'd given her on occasion, this was obviously meant to teach a lesson and she was suddenly wishing she'd put on some underwear with a bit

more protection. The black lace framed her ass beautifully, but it did little to protect her from the sting of his hand.

Not that she was about to let *him* know how much it hurt. Clenching her teeth together, she silently vowed not to give him an ounce of satisfaction by crying and carrying on like a child.

That resolve lasted right up until he aimed a particularly hard swat to the area where her ass and thighs met. She'd picked her friends' brains enough about their relationships to know that was called the sit-spot and it was where their Daddies spanked to make sure they were learning their lesson.

Apparently, she hadn't been the only one taking notes.

A yelp escaped her before she had a chance to stop it. She managed to keep quiet through another few swats to that same area before she decided maybe silence wasn't the way to go.

"Ow! Okay, okay, you made your point, Rex! I'll be good."

"Happy to hear that, princess. But I'm just starting to make my point."

And with that, she was suddenly introduced to the horrifying fact he'd been holding back. *A lot*. Each spank was a fresh wave of burning pain that layered over the ones before it until it felt as though her entire ass had been pressed against a hot griddle.

"Ow ow ow! Rex, stop! I'll be ready on time, I promise!"

"Princess, I could give a fuck less if you're not ready to go right at seven o'clock. But I know you and if you don't have a set time to be out the door, you'll spend two hours picking something to wear and then we'll never get anywhere."

“Joke’s on you, apparently—ow! Goddammit, Rex, that hurts!”

“Newsflash, sweetheart. It’s a spanking. It’s supposed to hurt.”

The swats moved lower to the tops of her thighs and to Ginny’s horror, tears sprung to her eyes. “Okay, I learned my lesson. Now please, stop!”

“Not just yet, princess.”

“I’m serious, Rex! If you ruin my eyeliner, I’ll never forgive you!”

To her relief, he did stop. But only, she realized a second later, so he could laugh so hard he nearly dropped her on the floor.

“Jesus, woman. Your priorities are completely out of whack.”

Sniffing delicately, she dabbed at the inner corner of her eye. “A good cat eye is a work of art.”

“Baby, everything about you is a work of art, with or without that gunk you put on your face.”

For a moment she simply froze in place, trying her best to hang onto the insult of being dragged over his knee and spanked like a naughty little girl. But she only managed it for about thirty seconds before she sighed in defeat. “How the hell am I supposed to stay mad at you when you say things like that?”

“You’re not,” he said with a chuckle as he helped her up so she was perched on his lap. Well, hovering was more like it, until he sent her a pointed look.

“Sit, princess.”

“I don’t want to hurt you.”

The grin that flashed across his face was more than a little smug. “You think I’m too weak to handle you?”

“It’s not about your ego,” she shot back with a roll of her eyes. “It’s simple physics. I don’t have a problem being fat, but I know my limits. And I know I’m too damn heavy to be sitting on anybody’s lap.”

“You weren’t too heavy when I had you bent over my knee, so you’re not too heavy to sit on it. And don’t call yourself fat. Pisses me off.”

“I am fat.” Annoyed all over again, she let her full weight settle on his thigh, but the big jerk didn’t so much as grunt. “You don’t want me to get on my ‘fat isn’t a four-letter word’ soap box or we’ll never get to dinner.”

“I’ve read all about it.”

“Really? Where?”

Suddenly looking uncomfortable, Rex shrugged. “I dunno. That site where you post all the pictures, probably.”

Knowing he’d not only checked out her social media but had taken the time to read her posts went a long way toward erasing her annoyance with him. “Then you should know how I feel about the word ‘fat’. It’s only a bad word if you have an inherent belief that fatness is bad. Which I don’t.”

“You know I don’t think that.”

“I know.” She pressed a kiss to his cheek. “And I know it’s hard to get over the idea that I’m putting myself down when I call myself fat, but I promise I’m not.”

“Fine.”

Wanting—needing—to soothe his obviously ruffled feathers, she shifted so she was straddling him, letting her lace-covered pussy grind against the thick, hard length of him. “Rex.”

“Princess,” he returned, raising one eyebrow as he cupped her ass in his calloused hands.

“Put a baby in me.”

“Hmm.” One corner of his mouth kicked up in a smirk. “Is that what you want, princess? You want Daddy to fuck you and fill you up with his cum?”

Unashamed of his words, or the need they conjured, she nodded. “That is absolutely what I want.”

“Then that’s what my girl will get.” He squeezed her ass, the smirk on his lips broadening to a smug grin when she yelped. “After dinner.”

“Why not now?”

“Because I want you to spend dinner thinking about all the ways Daddy is going to make you scream when we get back here.”

“What if I promise to think about that anyway if you go ahead and fuck me now?”

“Nice try, but I said no. Get up and finish getting dressed before I decide your ass isn’t sore enough.”

Even though the pain had mostly faded, she wasn’t really eager for another trip over his knee. Puffing her bottom lip out in an exaggerated pout, she slid from his lap. “You’re mean.”

“Yeah, I guess I am. You like it, though.”

“Do not,” she grumbled as she snatched her dress off the floor where she’d dropped it during her spanking.

“Liar,” he shot back with a laugh.

Because she couldn’t really argue with that, she turned and stomped into her bathroom to finish getting ready. And damn him if the dress wasn’t fucking perfect.

The bastard.

Between her annoyance at him, the arousal that refused to fade even a tiny bit, and her need to get at least some control back, she took her time in the bathroom. Far longer than she actually needed to get dressed and fix her hair and makeup, but he didn’t need to know that.

Not that it seemed to bother him, which unbalanced her all over again when she stepped out of the bathroom and found him patiently waiting exactly where she’d left him.

“God, you’re gorgeous,” he said with another of those wide, smug grins.

But knowing he was feeling smug about her instead of toward her went a long way in soothing her own ruffled feathers. “Thanks. Ready?”

“Just about.” Holding out a hand, he curled his fingers toward his palm in a time-honored ‘come-here’ motion. “First, give me your panties.”

“My what?”

“Those pretty black panties you have on. I want them.”

“Uh, no. I am not giving you my underwear, Rex.”

“I didn’t think you’d want me to wrestle them off you after you just spent all that time fixing yourself up again, but I will

if I need to.”

“No, thank you,” she said primly. And because she wouldn’t put it past him to do exactly what he’d said he would do, she reached under her dress to shimmy the requested underwear down over her ass and thighs before handing them to him.

“Good girl.” Eyes locked with hers, he raised the black lace to his face and inhaled deeply, his lids slowly closing in a look of such erotic bliss it made her already aching pussy throb even harder. “You smell delicious, princess. I can’t wait to taste you when we get back from our date.”

It was going to be a long fucking dinner.



MUSSING prim and proper Genevieve Morgan had always been one of his favorite pastimes, but it was even better when it left her squirming and blushing in her seat as she tried to get comfortable. Whether it was the lingering pain from her spanking or the fact she wasn’t wearing any underwear making her uncomfortable, he wasn’t sure. And he didn’t really care, as long as it was because of *him*.

Because then she was thinking about him, focused on him, and he was self-aware enough to admit he fucking loved knowing he was in her head.

And focusing on her discomfort helped him ignore his own. As big a game as he’d talked about not caring what other people thought, he could still feel the weight of the stares as

they passed by the other patrons of The Honk and settled into a booth.

What is Ginny doing with him? Do you think the mayor knows where she is? Even if he couldn't actually hear the whispers, his imagination was doing a damn fine job of filling in the blanks.

“Well, hi there.” Grinning from ear to ear, Kessily bounced up to their table, her reddish-brown hair swept up in a high ponytail that swung as she walked. She was a fixture at the restaurant, as much as the goose-themed decor that drove The Honk's owner absolutely crazy. “Where's the rest of the crew?”

“Just us tonight,” he answered, his tone admittedly a little gruffer than necessary thanks to his irritation at being forced to explain himself. Which in turn made him feel like a dick because logically he knew she'd ask the same question if any of the others had come in without the rest of 'the crew', but it still felt like an attack for reasons he couldn't explain.

“Cool.” If Kessily was bothered by his short response, it didn't so much as dim her smile. “Your usual, Rex?”

Maybe it was pathetic to have a 'usual' order at his hometown bar, but he preferred to think of it as comforting. “That'll be great, sweetheart,” he said, flashing a smile to hopefully smooth over his previous assholery.

“Perfect. And Ginny? Is it a wine or water night for you, babe?”

“Bourbon, actually. My dad's label, please.”

“Sure thing. I'll be back in a jiff.”

As Kessily sauntered off, Rex raised an eyebrow at the woman seated across from him. “Bourbon?”

“I was in the mood.” Ginny smiled, but it looked a little too close to baring her teeth for his comfort. “Is that a problem?”

“Nope. Just never pegged you for a whiskey girl.”

“You make a lot of assumptions about me, and I’d say only about half of them are true.”

“Oh yeah? Like what?”

With another flash of teeth, she leaned in, dropping her voice to a seductive purr. “Like your assumption I won’t rip your throat out for flirting with another woman right in front of me.”

The accusation was so absurd, he couldn’t help but laugh. Which he immediately recognized as the wrong reaction when her eyes narrowed, so he coughed lightly as he forced himself to stop. “Princess, I wasn’t flirting with anyone.”

“Really? Let me ask your *sweetheart* what she thinks.”

“Ginny.” Sobering, he leaned forward, reaching across the table to take her hands in his. “I know you don’t really have any reason to believe me, but I can promise you now that while we’re together, you’re it for me. Like I already told you, I haven’t even looked at another woman since the first night you spent in my bed. But if it makes you uncomfortable for me to call other women ‘sweetheart’, I’ll do my best to stop, though I can’t promise it won’t slip out on occasion. Bad habits, and all that.”

Her expression was still skeptical, but he could tell she was softening. “You don’t have to do that. I’m just being sensitive.”

“It’s not like it’s a hardship. Can’t think of anything I wouldn’t do to make you smile, princess.”

“Goddammit.” Despite the muttered explicative, a reluctant smile tugged at her lips. “At the risk of repeating myself, it’s kind of impossible to stay mad at you when you say things like that.”

“That’s why I say them,” he teased, lifting her knuckles to his lips in a move that had her pupils darkening. “But I meant it, too. No more pet names, or anything that even sounds like flirting.”

“Thanks. I know it’s silly but apparently, I’m the jealous type. Who knew?”

“Good to know. Because so am I.”

“Good to know,” she echoed, her voice a little breathless.

“Now.” Letting go of her hands, he picked up his menu and grinned. “What do you want to eat?”

CHAPTER 7



Dinner wasn't half as awkward as she'd expected it to be, which was a relief. There had been, of course, a steady stream of people stopping by their table under the pretense of asking after her parents while their gazes slid not-so-subtly to Rex every few seconds during the conversation. It was exactly why she'd wanted to keep their... whatever they had between them secret just a little longer. Some days it felt like she couldn't fucking sneeze in this town without it becoming the next bit of juicy gossip.

Rex, for his part, seemed to take it all in stride. Even the occasional comments about how someone was *surprised* to see him at The Honk, when they clearly meant they were surprised to see him with Ginny, specifically, rolled right off his back with little more than an occasional smirk.

At least, she'd assumed the snide remarks hadn't bothered him until they stepped outside into the brisk March air and he dragged in a deep breath, giving his shoulders a little shake as if he were shrugging off all the barbs he'd had stuck in his back during dinner.

"Next date, we're going into Charleston," he muttered darkly.

“You were the one who wanted to publicly stake his claim,” she reminded him with a smirk of her own. “I was perfectly happy eating takeout in bed between orgasms.”

“Can you blame me?” Turning to her, he slid his arms around her waist, hauling her up against him. Even in the dark, she could see the hunger burning in his gaze. “The most beautiful woman in the world is all mine. Damn right I want everyone to know.”

“Flattery will get you everywhere with me.” She tilted her head back, inviting a kiss as her heart tripped in her chest.

Rex obliged, capturing her lips with his own as his hands slid down to cup her ass, his fingertips digging into her flesh. The soreness from her spanking had long since faded, but the arousal hadn't. And his hands on her ass just reminded her she wasn't wearing any underwear, and nothing but a thin layer of material separated her throbbing pussy from his clever hands.

When she pressed herself against him with a whimper, he broke their kiss with a quiet chuckle. “Needy little princess,” he whispered. “We should go back to your place before I give your fans a real show right here on the street.”

His words were like having ice water dumped on her head and she pulled away, glancing around to see if anyone was watching them. It was one thing to be seen out on a date together, it was another thing entirely to be caught making out in public like a couple of horny teenagers.

“Relax. Nobody saw us.”

There was an undercurrent of something, maybe annoyance, in his tone that had her own temper flaring in response. “Not everyone has the luxury of simply ignoring what people say about them, Rex.”

“Too bad. It’s a lot more fun when you stop giving a fuck.”

“Whatever.” Annoyed with him, annoyed with herself, she turned and stepped out into the street without bothering to check for traffic. The blare of a horn mixed with Rex’s shout of alarm as he yanked her back onto the sidewalk.

“Jesus fucking Christ!” Face pale, Rex ran his hands over her as if checking for injuries. “Are you okay? What the hell were you thinking?”

“I’m fine. The car was like half a block away.” Not that her nervous system had gotten the memo. Her insides felt all jittery, but she wasn’t about to let him see how scared she was.

“You’re sure you’re fine?”

“Yes, Rex. Stop fussing.”

It was the wrong thing to say. She knew it even before the words left her mouth, but the hard glint in his eyes confirmed her error. “Fussing? You nearly got yourself killed because you were too busy having a snit to watch where you were going. You’re lucky I’m only *fussing* instead of bending you over and lighting your ass up in front of god and everybody.”

“You wouldn’t!”

“No, I wouldn’t.” Her relief at his assurance was short-lived. “I have something else in mind to teach my naughty girl a lesson. Let’s go, princess.”

Taking her hand, Rex made a show of checking both ways before dragging her across the street. Mind racing with thoughts of how he might ‘teach her a lesson’, Ginny hurried along beside him as they made their way back to her apartment.

“Rex, I—”

Stopping at the bottom of her stairs, he turned and raised an eyebrow, making her quiver with that odd combination of fear and desire only he seemed capable of arousing in her. “Who am I?”

“Seriously, Rex, we need to talk.”

“That’s five, princess. Who am I?”

“Five what?” She hated herself a bit for the slight quiver in her voice.

Rex stepped forward and she instinctively moved toward the stairs, stepping backward up onto the first step as his lip curled up into a smirk. “Five extra minutes before I let you come. Every time you call me Rex instead of Daddy, I’ll add another five minutes. And since you already started at ten for that little stunt with the car, you probably shouldn’t keep adding to the count.”

Another step forward for him, another step up and back for her. “I thought you were going to spank me.”

“Thought about it. But I’ve been waiting all night to get my hands on you, and since I’m not the one being punished, I don’t see why I should have to wait.”

Jesus, she was going to spontaneously combust right there on the stairs. “That’s not fair. It was an accident.”

Two more steps up. “An accident you nearly had because you were too busy being pissed at me to pay attention where you were going. I’m going to make sure it doesn’t happen again.”

“If you don’t want me to be distracted by how much you piss me off, maybe you should stop pissing me off all the time.”

To her surprise, he laughed, a deep rich chuckle that sent a shiver up her spine. “I think we both know that’s not going to happen, princess.”

Her back hit the storm door, the cold of the glass seeping through her dress. “That doesn’t seem very fair.”

“Maybe not.” With nowhere left to go, she could only watch as he closed in on her, his lips hovering mere inches from hers. “But I never said I was a fair man.”

He kissed her again, and she was almost able to forget they were standing right on her back deck, where literally anybody could walk by and see them. But when his fingers slipped under the hem of her dress, pushing the material higher and higher as he lazily stroked the skin of her bare thigh, she couldn’t ignore it any longer.

“We should go inside.”

“As soon as you tell me who I am, princess. What do you call me now?”

It shouldn’t be so hard. She’d called him Daddy the other night with no problem, but for some reason her brain was rebelling. Maybe because on some level she knew this was different. This wasn’t just for sex or play. This was her, submitting to him, giving him a level of authority over her he’d never had before.

“Rex...”

“Up to twenty now, princess. Keep it up, and it’s going to be a long night for you.”

The bottom of her dress was practically around her hips by this point. His thumb brushed along the inside of her thigh, and she nearly wept as her pussy clenched emptily in response.

Was it really *that* different to call him Daddy now? Just because she gave in tonight didn't mean she was giving up all control to him forever and ever.

Right. Like Rex was the type of man to give back control once he had it. Maybe she could distract him enough for him to forget all this 'Daddy' nonsense for a bit. Wrapping her hand around his wrist, she nudged him toward her throbbing clit. "Please." She deliberately pitched her voice up to a needy little whine she knew would drive him crazy. "Please, fuck me."

Two calloused fingers slid easily inside her, and the relief was so overwhelming she completely forgot they were on her back deck in full view of anybody who might be passing by on the street below. "Is that what you want, princess? You want Daddy to fuck you good and hard until you come all over his cock? You want to go to bed so full of Daddy's cum you can barely close those pretty legs?"

She wasn't entirely sure that was physically possible, but her body didn't seem to care. Need, hot and almost painful, raced along her nerves. "Yes."

"As soon as you tell me what I want to hear, I'll start the timer for your punishment. And once your twenty minutes are up, you can have all the orgasms you want, princess. I just need that one little word." Leaning in, he brushed his lips over hers. "Don't think it's escaped my notice that you didn't call me Daddy when I had you over my knee earlier. I let it go because you were nervous. But from now on, I'm always Daddy. Every second of every day, you belong to me, Genevieve Morgan. And I want to hear you say it."

Just what she'd been afraid of. "What if I don't want to belong to anybody?"

“Oh, princess. It’s a little late for that. You’re mine, whether you’re ready to admit it or not.”

Fuck if that possessive streak of his didn’t make her hot. “I’ll make a really crappy submissive. And I’m not a Little like the other girls.”

“I don’t give a fuck about the other girls. I want you, exactly the way you are.”

“Why?”

“Because you’re fucking perfect, baby.”

That did it. There went the rest of her walls, tumbling down like Jericho. “Dammit,” she muttered with a sigh.

His fingers moved inside her, making her gasp. “Tell me you’re mine, Ginny. Tell me who you belong to.”

The words trembled on her tongue, and her voice shook as she forced them out into the open. “You.”

“And who am I, baby?”

“My-my Daddy.”

“Good fucking girl.” With that, his lips were on hers, hot and possessive, claiming and branding her as his. “Now let’s get your punishment over with so Daddy can finally fuck you the way you deserve.”



THANK FUCK. He’d been on the verge of just giving into his cock, which was jammed painfully against the zipper of his jeans, when she’d finally caved.

Stubborn little brat.

But then, he'd known that going in. And he'd suspected there was a reason she hadn't called him Daddy when he'd spanked her earlier. She might have agreed to give a relationship with him a try, but that didn't mean she was all in just yet.

Maybe he shouldn't push so hard, but he couldn't seem to help himself. Everything in him craved her so deeply, it seemed as though her name had been etched into his very soul.

He didn't just want a permanent fuck partner. He wanted *her*. Every last piece of her, body and soul, and he wasn't going to stop pushing until he had it.

With great reluctance, he pulled his fingers from her and turned her around. "Open the door, princess. As much as I might enjoy the idea of giving the whole town a show, I'm not actually going to fuck you on the back deck."

Eyes widening with horror, she spun around, for once doing as she was told without argument, and he followed her into the cozy apartment where she lived and worked. Shrugging out of his jacket, he tossed it aside before settling on the couch. All the while, Ginny watched him much the way a deer might watch a hunter, waiting to see if they were going to need to run.

He took advantage of her unease, making a show of pulling his phone from his pocket and setting a timer for twenty minutes. Her bottom lip moved into a pout when he set the phone beside him on the couch where she could clearly see it counting down her punishment.

"Come here, princess."

With a soft huff of annoyance, she crossed the room to stand in front of him. “I can’t believe you actually set a timer.”

“Hmm.” Running his hands up her bare thighs, he pushed her dress up so he could press a kiss to the top of her bare mound, just above her swollen clit. “If you hadn’t been so naughty, I wouldn’t have had to set one. You could be coming all over Daddy’s cock right now.”

“It was an accident!”

“And the fact that you’re still arguing with me tells me you haven’t learned your lesson yet. Dress and bra off.”

The glare she shot him would have sent a lesser man to his grave, but Rex merely raised an eyebrow. “I can always add more time if you want to be obstinate.”

That got her moving. Off came the dress, flung to the side somewhere, followed immediately by her bra. When she was finally naked, he pulled her down to straddle him, cupping her heavy breasts in his hands. “I don’t think I’ll ever get tired of touching you,” he murmured as he leaned down to pull one rosy nipple into his mouth.

“Then touch me, dammit.” As if emphasizing her point, she rolled her hips and he swore he could feel the heat of her pussy even through his jeans.

“Not just yet, naughty girl. You still have...” He glanced over at his phone and grinned. “Eighteen minutes left of your punishment.”

“Fuck my life.”

CHAPTER 8



The need for him was an inferno, threatening to consume her whole if she didn't get his cock inside her right that fucking second.

Biting back the whine trying to break free, she rolled her hips again, desperate for any kind of relief. Rex just chuckled and pinched her nipples hard enough to send a flash of pain through her, straight to her already aching clit.

“Naughty little princess,” he practically cooed. “No orgasms for you until Daddy says so.”

“But that's not *fair*.” She no longer cared that she was whining, or practically on the verge of begging. All she cared about was the pleasure he was dangling in front of her like a fucking carrot.

Asshole.

“You know what else isn't fair?” His tone turned hard as he gave her nipples another hard squeeze. “Having to watch you nearly get yourself killed because you're too busy being pissed at me to watch where you're going.”

She swallowed back another wave of annoyance and the desire to point out, again, that if he hadn't pissed her off she

wouldn't have stepped out into traffic. "It won't happen again, I swear."

"Good. But obviously my little girl needs to learn that actions have consequences. Twelve more minutes."

"*Please*. Couldn't you just spank me instead?" She was under no delusion that if he spanked her for nearly getting herself run over it wouldn't hurt like hell, but at least it would be over with quickly and then he could finally fuck her.

"Not this time, princess." Running his hands down her sides, he cupped her ass, his fingers digging into the soft flesh. "But the next time I catch you playing fast and loose with your safety, I absolutely will take my belt to this gorgeous ass of yours until you can't sit right for a week. Am I clear?"

Even as a frisson of fear shot up her spine, her clit throbbed in response. Which was probably why she found herself asking, "Why can't you just do that now?"

"Because, princess. You're not in charge here. And the faster you learn that lesson, the easier this will be on you."

"What does any of that have to do with what happened at The Honk?"

His hands moved again, teasing little touches designed to drive her wild without actually giving her even an ounce of relief. "What were we talking about before you stepped off that curb, Ginny?"

What? How the hell was she supposed to remember any of that when his hands were so damn distracting? "I don't know," she whined, wiggling closer to try and grind herself against him.

"We were talking about how you spend too much time worrying about what other people think about you. About us."

There it was again, that *something* in his tone. Only now, it sounded less like annoyance and more like... hurt. It was enough to make her pause, her heart in her throat as she searched his face for any hint of what he was feeling.

To the untrained eye, there wasn't any to be found. But it was the deliberate absence of any emotion that tipped her off. A girl didn't spend six months in a man's bed without learning a thing or two about how he expressed himself.

"Rex..." Trailing off, she brought her hands up to cup his face. "I'm not embarrassed by you."

There. Just a flicker of it in his eyes, so quick she would have missed it if she hadn't been paying attention. "Could've fooled me, princess."

"I'm not. I'm *not*," she repeated more firmly when he raised an eyebrow. "It's just... I learned at a young age how to control the narrative when it comes to town gossip. But you're a wildcard, and it's really fucking hard to figure out how to tell other people what to think about us when I still haven't decided what I think about us."

The corner of his mouth kicked up in a smirk. "Maybe that's the real lesson for you to be learning right now. Life isn't fair, and some things are just out of your control. And the sooner you stop fighting it, the sooner you can let go and fucking enjoy the ride."

It wasn't in her nature to 'let go and enjoy the ride'. She was too used to having her finger on the pulse of everything from town gossip to the nitty gritty details of her business.

The only time she'd ever really let herself be even a little bit out of control was with Rex. And hadn't he proven, so far, that he could be trusted not to let her fall? That he would

protect her, even in the most literal sense possible, from any harm?

So yeah, maybe it was fucking terrifying to put their relationship out there for everyone to judge. And maybe there would be people whispering behind their backs, secretly hoping they'd fail.

But maybe it would be worth it.

“Okay. I’ll try to worry less about what other people think of me... Daddy.”

Hunger, raw and fierce, lit his eyes. “That’s my good girl. Do you want Daddy’s cock now?”

“The timer hasn’t gone off.”

“Fuck the timer. My princess deserves a reward.”

Reaching between them, he flicked open his jeans and she very nearly salivated at the sight of his cock springing up between them. The need that had ebbed a bit during their talk flared back to life as she rose up onto her knees and slowly sank down onto the long, thick length of him.

“Oh, god. *God.*”

“Daddy will do for now, princess,” Rex said with a chuckle. “Now, be a good girl and show Daddy how well you can ride a cock.”

There was some part of her that wondered if she should be insulted by his words. But she was too focused on the feel of him finally stretching her, filling her, to care. And she was honest enough to admit, there was an even larger part of her that wanted to be his good girl. That wanted to show him how good she could be for him.

Just for him.

And so she gave herself over to that part, rolling her hips and driving them both to the edge of oblivion as she stroked him with her soaked, throbbing pussy.

“That’s it, baby. Just a little faster. *Good fucking girl.*”

His thumb pressed against her clit as she obeyed, and the pleasure built inside her with every movement until it was more than she could bear.

“Daddy!” She screamed for him as it shattered inside her, sending waves of bliss through her veins, making every inch of her body sing with pleasure.

“Do you want Daddy’s cum now, baby?”

“Yes, yes, please, Daddy. I want you inside me. Please.”

“As you wish, princess.”

Gripping her hips, he held her in place as he filled her, the warmth of him coating her womb seconds before they collapsed together on the couch, sweat-soaked and gasping for air.

It was several long moments of post-coital bliss later when she lifted her head and cocked an eyebrow at him. “Did you... did you quote *The Princess Bride* while you were balls deep inside me?”

“Yup.”

“Oh, I cannot wait to tell everyone that Lost River’s resident bad boy is a huge fucking nerd.”

His eyes narrowed. “Naughty girls who can’t keep secrets get their mouths washed out with Daddy’s cum.”

“Worth it.”



HOURS LATER, he lay awake, watching her chest rise and fall with each deep breath as she slept. It had fascinated him to no end to observe her nightly rituals. Her skin care routine alone took longer than he normally took to strip, crawl into bed, and fall asleep.

That hadn't been his routine tonight, though. Tonight, they'd laughed and talked until he'd finally told her to go to sleep when it had become clear she was fading fast. Ginny being Ginny, she'd argued with him, and he'd taken the opportunity to give her a few good swats to her perfect ass just to remind her who was in charge. She'd pouted a bit, but she'd fallen asleep with her lips curved up in a small smile.

And though he'd been just as exhausted himself, he couldn't quite make himself close his eyes. Not when she was lying there, so fucking beautiful in the hint of moonlight drifting through the half-open blinds. Like something out of a dream.

Perhaps that was why he couldn't keep himself from reaching for her. Just to prove to himself she was real and would still be there when he woke.

She stirred slightly when his hand brushed over her stomach, the sheet slipping down to reveal her rosy nipples already stiffening as if anticipating his next move.

What would her breasts look like swollen with milk? His cock hardened at the thought as he pulled the sheet from her completely, baring her entire body to his gaze. He stroked the

soft skin of her belly, imagining it heavy and round with his child, and he couldn't take not being inside her another second.

Nudging her thighs apart, he slipped slowly into her, gritting his teeth against the moan that threatened to escape. Beneath him, she stirred again, her eyes fluttering but not quite opening. She whimpered softly, and the sound nearly snapped what was left of his control.

“Shh, baby. It's just me.”

Another needy little whine, as she instinctively arched up to meet his thrusts. “Daddy.” The word was barely a sigh, and still his heart swelled at the sound of it.

“Yeah, baby. Daddy couldn't wait 'til morning to have you again. Is that okay?”

Her eyes finally opened, still bleary with sleep. “Uh huh.”

“Good girl. You wanna make a baby with me, princess?”

Lips curving up in a delighted smile, she nodded. “Yes, Daddy.”

“That's my girl. I can't wait to see how cute you look, waddling around with our child in your belly.”

Her brow furrowed at the suggestion, and her head shook from side to side against the pillow. “Not gonna waddle.”

“Hmm.” Lowering his head, he trailed his lips down the side of her neck. “I bet you will. And I bet you'll look fucking adorable. Are you gonna come for me, princess?”

“Y-yes, Daddy,” she said on a gasp, her pussy clamping down around him as he filled her with slow, sure strokes.

“Good girl. Come for me, baby. Show Daddy how pretty you look when you come all over his cock.”

Her whimpers and moans filled the silence around them until she finally stiffened under him, her head thrown back as she sobbed out her pleasure. Rex braced himself over her, moving faster now, until he followed her over the edge of bliss, emptying every ounce of himself into her womb.

“Go back to sleep, princess,” he whispered as he tucked the covers back around her. And this time, when she tumbled back into dreamland, he followed, his dreams filled with her and the child he’d promised to give her.

CHAPTER 9



Wincing at the pull of her muscles as she shifted into her next pose, Ginny clamped her teeth shut against a whimper of pain. Not only had Rex woken her in the middle of the night for that wonderful, dreamy sex, he'd taken her again twice that morning before she'd made it down to the studio.

Thank god for yoga. She didn't want to think about how sore she'd be without it.

As she folded her legs under her at the end of her routine, she let her mind drift to Rex. There was something different about him, although she couldn't quite put her finger on it. This morning, he'd gotten up with her despite looking rather grumpy about 'being up before the chickens' as he'd mumbled when her alarm had gone off. He'd even suffered through her regular breakfast of scrambled eggs, toast, and yogurt before squeezing into her shower with her despite her repeated assertion they wouldn't both fit. They had, just barely, and he'd even washed her hair for her which was a perk of having a Daddy she hadn't realized she'd been missing until she'd all but melted into a pile of goo while he'd massaged the shampoo into her scalp like a pro.

It had all been very... cozy. Domestic.

And completely wrong.

The feeling nagged at her all day, through her classes where she deliberately ignored the women whispering to each other as they sent curious glances her way, through hours of filming and editing for her social media, all the way up until the sound of her friends' laughter greeted her as she stepped through Edie's front door.

"Ginny!" Taylor, Carly, and Noelle all cheered for her when she walked into the living room and held up two bottles of wine.

"The party has arrived!" Already feeling somewhat steadier just from being in their presence, Ginny grinned and struck a pose. "Where's Edie?"

"Right here." The oldest—though not as old as she liked to act—member of their group rounded the corner from the kitchen holding a tray of appetizers. "Figured we should all get some food in our bellies before the wine started flowing."

"Oh, thank god. I'm *starving*." Trading the wine for the tray Edie held, Ginny plucked a mini quiche from the tray and popped it into her mouth with a low moan. "I got caught up editing and totally missed lunch. These are amazing, by the way."

"I'll pass your compliments on to the chef," Edie said dryly, one eyebrow raising in a way that reminded Ginny a little too much of the looks Rex had been giving her lately. "Why didn't you stop for lunch?"

"Got busy." When Edie's eyebrow lifted even higher, Ginny rolled her eyes. "Relax, momma bear. I had a protein bar."

"That's not a meal."

"Close enough."

A burst of giggles drew Ginny's attention to where the rest of their group was watching them with mischievous grins. "What's so funny?"

The trio on the couch exchanged glances as if silently deciding who was going to answer her. It was Carly, the newest resident of Lost River, who finally spoke up. "We're just wondering what a certain tattooed mechanic thinks of you skipping meals."

Nose tilting up in the air, Ginny settled into her usual spot in one of Edie's oversized armchairs. "My eating habits are none of Rex's business, thank you very much."

But even as she said it, her mind raced with questions. Was he interested in being that kind of Daddy? Matt and Ian both kept an eye on when and what their Little girls ate, but Noelle's boyfriend, Dominic, was much more laidback.

What kind of Daddy was Rex planning on being? How much control over her life was he expecting to have? How much control did she *want* him to have? They hadn't, she was just now realizing, really talked about what it meant for him to be her Daddy.

Ugh. Why was this all so fucking complicated?

"That's not what we heard," Taylor sing-songed, her blonde ponytail swaying gaily from side to side.

Alarm bells rang in Ginny's mind, pushing out all thoughts of Rex's potential Daddyfication as she sat up straighter in the chair. "What did you hear?"

There'd been more of a snap to her voice than she'd intended, and she bit back a sigh as Taylor's eyes went round with a mixture of surprise and hurt. "Sorry. I didn't mean to snap at you. What exactly did you hear?"

“Just that you and Rex had dinner together at The Honk last night. And since we all know you guys have been sneaking around for a while, we just thought maybe it meant you’re like... you know.” Taylor shimmied her shoulders and wiggled her brows suggestively.

“Going steady?” Ginny asked, her lips twitching with amusement. “This isn’t high school, babe.”

“You know what I mean! Are you guys, like, officially dating now?”

The fact she’d managed to avoid the gossip train for nearly a full twenty-four hours was a miracle in and of itself. And these were her closest friends in the whole world.

So why was she feeling so hesitant about telling them the truth?

“I thought tonight was about Carly’s big news,” she replied, letting her tone turn teasing. “I don’t want to steal her thunder.”

“Oh, no you don’t.” Carly wagged a finger in Ginny’s direction, doing her best to look stern as far as Ginny could tell. “You’re not using me as an excuse to keep all the juicy details for yourself. *Spill.*”

Well, so much for that. “Fine. We’re officially testing the waters, I guess. He asked me to give an actual relationship a try, and I agreed.”

Excited squeals filled the room, and she couldn’t help but grin at their enthusiasm. “Yes, yes, it’s all very exciting and I’m sure I’ll have plenty of gossip to share later, but seriously. What about Carly?”

Obviously no longer able to contain her own excitement, Carly fiddled with something on her hand before holding it up,

her smile beaming as brightly as the diamond on her finger. “Matt and I are getting married!”

All the worry over her situation with Rex fell away as Ginny joined the chorus of happy screams and all but leapt from the chair to join the pile of women on the couch. “Oh my god! Congratulations! Let me see, let me see!”

Carly dutifully held her hand out for her friends to inspect the ring, and Ginny couldn't help but sigh over how perfect it was. Set in rose gold, with a pink stone beneath the main diamond and smaller stones running down each side, the ring suited Carly down to her toes. “It's beautiful, Carly. Have you set a date yet?”

“Ah, well... that's part of the reason I wanted to talk to you guys tonight. We were kind of hoping to get married really soon. Like, maybe the weekend before Easter soon.”

Edie let out a low whistle. “Less than two weeks to plan a wedding? Brave girl.”

“Well, I would really like to get married before the baby bump starts to show.”

Another round of excited squeals, but this time they were muffled as though someone had shoved cotton in Ginny's ears.

“You're pregnant?” she asked, though it still sounded far away like someone else was asking the question.

“I am,” Carly confirmed with an excited nod, her eyes sparkling with joy and unshed tears. “We weren't even trying. It just kind of happened. And I was worried he'd be upset, because we hadn't really talked about it, but he's just as excited as I am. Maybe even more.”

It was like a rubber band had wrapped itself around Ginny's chest, and with every breath it was growing tighter.

But she managed to force a smile and prayed it didn't look as brittle as it felt. "All this good news calls for wine. Except for you, baby mama."

Carly giggled as Ginny rose to her feet. "I can have exactly one glass of wine. A small one. Even Daddy said it was okay."

"You got it."

Somehow, she made it to the kitchen before the tears broke free. She was so fucking happy for Carly, she really was, but there was a small, petty little part of her screaming that it wasn't *fair*.

Six months. For six fucking months she'd been doing all the right things. Taking the prenatal vitamins, cutting down on her drinking, tracking her cycles. And the sex. So much sex, though she was woman enough to admit at least half those times had been simply because she'd wanted to and not because she was anywhere close to the right time in her cycle.

And then a couple who wasn't even trying just magically got pregnant? How was that even remotely fair?

Even as she thought it, guilt stabbed at her chest. How selfish and petty could she be? Carly was clearly over the moon, and instead of celebrating with her friend, she was crying in the kitchen because she felt jilted by the universe.

"Ginny? You okay, honey?"

Swiping at her streaming eyes, Ginny pasted on another bright, fake smile and turned to Edie. "Yup. Just a little overwhelmed with all the good news."

Her expression unreadable, Edie rounded the kitchen table and cupped Ginny's face in her hands. They were nearly the same height, but Edie always seemed so much taller in moments like this. Larger than life, Ginny had thought on

more than one occasion. “The laws of physics may say that two objects can’t occupy the same space at the same time, but emotions don’t give a fuck about physics. Happiness and sorrow can exist in the same body, in equal parts, at exactly the same time. You can celebrate with Carly even if you’re grieving for yourself.”

Anger and betrayal joined the confusing mix of emotions crowding Ginny’s chest. “Noelle promised she wouldn’t say anything.”

“She didn’t. I’m just annoyingly observant. Did you really think it slipped my notice that the same night you told us you wanted to have a baby you hightailed it off with the man you’ve been lusting after since you were sixteen?”

“I have not—” At Edie’s pointed look, Ginny huffed out a breath. “That is *incredibly* annoying, you know.”

“I’m aware,” Edie said cheerfully. “Your time will come, honey. In the meantime, you’ll celebrate with your friends, and if you need to slip in the kitchen and cry every now and again, I’ll keep them distracted. They’ll never suspect a thing.”

“In that case, I’ll let you pour the wine while I go grab my purse and sneak off to the bathroom to cry for a minute then fix my makeup.”

“Sounds like a plan.”

She turned to head off to the entryway where she’d stashed her purse but paused to turn back to Edie. “Can I ask you something personal?”

“Of course.”

“When you and Mr. McDowell first started living together, was it ever like... weird?”

Head thrown back, Edie let out a loud, delighted laugh. “It was awful. Don’t get me wrong, I loved that man more than anything, but I did not love sharing my space with another human. Even worse since I moved in here, which was his space. Took me a long time to get used to having another person around all the time like that.”

“Oh, thank god. Rex spent the night last night and we had a really lovely morning together, but it was just so *wrong*, you know?”

“I do know.” Edie’s head tilted to the side, and Ginny suddenly got the uncomfortable feeling Edie saw more than Ginny really wanted her to. “But did it feel wrong because you’re not used to having him in your space, or did it feel wrong because in your mind Rex is still just a guy you’re bouncing on occasionally and not a man you’re in an actual, potentially long-term relationship with?”

Eyes narrowing, Ginny jabbed a finger in Edie’s direction. “So. Annoying.”

“I know. Now, go on and have yourself that cry so we can get back to the happy bride to be.”

Surprisingly, she didn’t feel the need to cry any longer. But she did take the time to grab her purse and sit in the bathroom for a bit, long enough for her system to settle. Between Carly’s announcements and Edie’s annoyingly accurate insights, she wanted the time to feel steadier on her own feet before she went back out into the living room.

As she was digging through the contents of her purse for her emergency makeup to touch up the smudging from the tears she’d already shed, she spotted her phone, and for several long seconds she considered calling Rex. There wasn’t anything he could really do about the situation, but she just

wanted to hear his voice. Hear him call her princess and tell her everything would be all right.

Gripping her phone, her thumb hovered over the icon to open her contacts. But at the last second, she dropped it back into her purse and pulled out her concealer instead.

Being in a relationship with Rex Carrington was one thing. Opening herself up, letting him into all those dark, deeply emotional parts of her soul, was another thing all together. Just because he'd said all the right things so far didn't mean anything. A man like Rex was bound to run when things got complicated.

No. Definitely better to keep all those big messy feelings to herself.

CHAPTER 10



The best part about working well into the evenings was having the shop to himself. Even on nights like tonight, when Matt hung around a little longer, the other man stayed holed up in the office working on all the boring paperwork type things that kept a business running.

Rex had no desire to be involved in any of that. Give him a car or a bike, his tools, and some music of pretty much any genre blaring through the speakers and he was perfectly happy.

“Need any help?”

Rolling out from under the battered old Honda he was trying to infuse with at least a few more months of life, Rex grinned up at his boss. “Don’t know what to do with yourself when the missus is gone, huh?”

“Shut up.” Matt’s brows drew together in a scowl he’d gone from wearing all the time to only about seventy percent of the time since Carly had shown up in Lost River. “Do you want some help or not?”

“Nah. This is my last one of the night and I’m about finished.”

“Cool. Cool.” Shoving his hands in his pockets, Matt rocked back on his heels and looked around the shop as if he

were desperate to find something to do.

Not wanting to risk pissing off the man who signed his paychecks, Rex swallowed a laugh. “Wanna go to The Honk and grab a drink after I finish up?”

Matt wasn't quite quick enough to hide the flash of excitement before he carefully schooled his face back into its usual stony facade. “Sure. I'll let Ian and Dom know, see if they wanna join us.”

“Tell ‘em to meet us in about a half hour. Should give me plenty of time to finish here and wash up a bit.”

“That's fine. Dom's going to need at least twenty to make the drive over from Charleston. I'll let ‘em know.”

They ended up pulling into The Honk's parking lot, Rex on his bike behind Matt's giant old pickup despite the bite in the air, just as Dom and Ian were climbing out of Ian's sedan. Yanking off his helmet, Rex slid off his bike and smirked at the pair. “You two having a sleepover?” he called as they walked toward him.

Ian rolled his eyes, but beside him Dom just smiled that easygoing grin of his. “Something like that. The girls want us to be besties, so I'm trying to win Ian over with my devilish charm and boyish good looks.”

“How's that workin' out for ya?”

Dom glanced over at his companion for the evening, grinning wider when Ian just scowled. “We're getting there.”

Laughing, Rex threw an arm around Dom's shoulders. “I knew I liked you from the start.”

“Easy for you to say,” Ian grumbled. “It's not your sister he's corrupting.”

“Look, man, if you don’t want to know about the things I’m potentially doing to your sister, don’t ask in-depth questions about my experience as a Dom. You should be grateful I gave you the sanitized version.”

Ian’s face paled, and if Rex hadn’t already been leaning on Dom, he was fairly certain he would have fallen to the ground laughing. “Holy shit, dude, your *face*.”

Apparently taking pity on his best friend, Matt clapped Ian on the back and squeezed his shoulder. “C’mon. We should get inside. You’ll be able to bear the torture much easier with a cold beer in your hand.”

While Matt guided Ian into The Honk, Dom leaned in and dropped his voice to a loud whisper. “Shoulda seen his face when I told him I prefer forced orgasms over spankings for naughty Little girls. And Noelle is *exceptionally* naughty.”

“I think I might be in love with you,” Rex said with another low chuckle. “Maybe you can finally get that stick out of Ian Grady’s ass.”

“I consider it my sacred duty.”

They were still laughing when they joined Matt and Ian in the booth. Ian shot Dom another dark look but didn’t say anything. Probably decided he didn’t actually want to know what they were laughing about, and Rex couldn’t blame him. As an only child, Rex didn’t really know how he’d react to someone doing filthy, depraved things to his little sister, but he could imagine he’d be acting much the same way Ian was.

But since it wasn’t his little sister, he could sit back and enjoy the show. And so far, it had been worth the price of admission.

Kessily came bouncing up to the table, her ponytail swinging as she grinned at them. “Boys night out?”

“Something like that,” Ian grumbled, making Kessily’s eyebrows raise.

Matt elbowed his friend in the side before giving Kess an apologetic smile. “Ignore him. Could you grab us a round of that local beer I like, Kess? Put it on my tab.”

“Sure thing. I’ll be right back.”

As she sauntered away, Dom raised a brow. “We celebrating something?”

“We are.” The smile that split Matt’s face was nothing short of beaming. “Carly and I are getting married.”

A chorus of congratulations went up, and even Ian lost his wounded-puppy look in favor of a wide grin. “When’s the big day?”

“Weekend before Easter. One of the last items on Carly’s bucket list was to elope somewhere romantic and she’s decided the town where we met is as romantic as it gets.”

“Aww, that’s adorable.” With a dramatic sniff, Dom pretended to dab at his eyes. “So sweet.”

“Two weeks, though?” Ian shook his head. “You know as soon as she tells the other girls it’s going to be absolute insanity around here, right? What’s the big rush?”

“Well, apparently I’m gonna be a dad. Carly’s pregnant.”

“Holy shit, man, that’s amazing! Congratulations, again.” If Rex didn’t know any better, he would have said Dom actually got a little teary-eyed for real at that bit of news.

Not that he could blame him. He was feeling some kind of way hearing it all again. And his thoughts immediately went to Ginny and the idea he might be the one making a similar announcement in a few months. Maybe not even that long, if he had anything to say about it.

Would she want to get married? Even just six months ago, the thought of settling down with anyone would have sent him running straight for the door. And, if he was being honest, it still made him a bit jittery. But there was a part of him, the deeply possessive part he hadn't even known he had until she'd spent the night in his bed, that couldn't wait to see his ring on her finger and his child in her arms. If for no other reason than to let the entire world know she was *his*.

She'd probably balk at the idea if he brought it up now. So, he'd just have to wait her out, wait for just the right moment to mention marriage. And knowing Ginny, he'd have to spend another six months warming her up to it before he officially popped the question.

Which suited him just fine. Because whether she was ready to accept it or not, he wasn't going anywhere. Ginny Morgan was his endgame. He just had to get her used to the idea.



THE TALK with Edie only helped so much. By the time she got back to her apartment, Ginny was feeling distinctly battered and bruised by the emotional storm inside her. All she wanted was to wash her face, pour a shot or three of whiskey to make

up for the wine she deliberately hadn't indulged in at Edie's so she could drive home, and curl up on her couch with one of those movies where some stupidly large natural disaster wiped out half of humanity.

She certainly did not want to talk to a single other soul until her first yoga class tomorrow afternoon, at the absolute earliest. Which was probably why her temper got the best of her when she walked up her back steps and noticed all the lights were on in her apartment.

Not even bothering to hold back the anger, she shoved the door open and glared at... nothing. Rex wasn't on the couch where she'd expected him to be, which both disappointed and further infuriated her.

Since anger was her preferred emotion at the moment, she embraced it as she stalked into the kitchen. And yeah, maybe the sight of her bad boy Daddy standing at her sink in a shirt that showed off every muscle in his torso and equally tight, ass-hugging jeans while he rinsed the last of the dishes she hadn't had time to wash after breakfast made her feel all warm and fuzzy inside, but that wasn't the *point*.

“What are you doing here?”

Rex glanced over his shoulder, one eyebrow raising in a move that made her stomach quiver even as it fanned the flames of her temper. “Well, a second ago I would have said washing dishes but why do I have a feeling the correct answer is ‘starting a fight’?”

“I didn't ask you to wash my dishes.” It was a stupid, petty argument and she knew it. But somehow that didn't do anything to help her feel any less pissed off about it.

“Nope. This may come as a shock to you, princess, but I am capable of figuring out for myself when shit needs to be done around the house.”

“Then go home and wash your own damn dishes.”

“Ah.” Pulling the rag from his shoulder—why the fuck was that so damn sexy?—Rex turned as he dried his hands, one corner of his mouth kicking up in a smug, knowing grin. “Is that what this is about? I made myself at home and that makes you nervous?”

“No.” *Yes.* “I thought I made it clear that you sleeping over last night was a one-time deal.”

He closed the distance between them slowly, giving her more than enough time to back away if she wanted. But she didn't want to. Not just because she refused to be cowed in her own damn kitchen, but because some part of her was spoiling for a fight.

So, she settled for tilting her chin up defiantly as he crowded her. But instead of pouncing like she expected, he merely lifted his hands to cup her face. “Missed you,” he murmured, a second before his lips closed over hers.

Another time, that move would have had her sinking into him, into the comfort and familiarity of the kiss. And it was tempting, oh so tempting to do exactly that, but with her stomach still roiling with a tempest of anger, sadness, jealousy, and dozens of other emotions, she wasn't quite ready to give in. Not just yet.

Yanking herself out of his grip, she glared at him. “That doesn't excuse breaking and entering.”

“Princess, it's hardly breaking and entering when the whole town knows you leave a key under the frog on your

porch.”

“That doesn’t give you the *right*—”

“No. It doesn’t. And obviously I overstepped, so for that I’m sorry.”

Dammit. Just when she was really getting going, he had to apologize and knock the wind out of her sails. “Yeah. Well. Don’t do it again.”

“Noted. Now.” He moved so fast, she barely had time to squeak out a protest before she was bent over her kitchen table, his arm pinning her to the carefully distressed wood as his other hand cupped her bottom cheek and squeezed. “How about you tell me why, exactly, you’re trying to pick a fight with me, princess?”

“Rex! Let me go!”

“Nope. Not until you talk to me.”

She wanted to. Just like at Edie’s, when she’d had her phone in her hand ready to call him, she desperately wanted to pour out all the horrible feelings she’d been hauling around with her since Carly’s announcement. The words trembled on her tongue, desperate to be shared with the one person she wanted to be able to lean on when things got tough.

But just like back at Edie’s, she chickened out at the last minute. “Fuck you.”

“All right, princess. Have it your way.”

CHAPTER 11



Still holding Ginny in place, Rex glanced over at the dishes drying next to the sink. He had a hunch his hand wasn't going to make much of an impact on his naughty little princess, but the large wooden spoon he'd just washed certainly would.

Leaning over, he snagged the spoon from the rack and clamped it between his teeth as he reached under her to unsnap her jeans. It was a shame he wasn't peeling them off her for the purpose of fucking her senseless, but hopefully he'd get a chance to do that after he finished paddling the truth out of her.

When he'd finally managed to wrestle her jeans and her pretty pink panties down around her knees, he tapped the spoon against her bottom. "Last chance to tell me why you walked in here spoiling for a fight, princess."

"Maybe I just don't want you here. Ever think of that?"

Ignoring the stab of hurt, he tapped the spoon against her skin again. "The thought did cross my mind. But I know you, Ginny, and I know when you're trying to avoid talking about shit that's bothering you."

With that, he snapped the spoon against her ass twice, hard enough to leave two perfect pink ovals on her skin. "Ready to talk?"

“Fuck off, Rex.”

Apparently not. He gave her another four swats, which earned him a rather inventive string of swear words.

“Naughty girl. Keep it up and I’ll have to wash all those filthy words out of your mouth with Daddy’s cock.”

“You wouldn’t dare!”

“I think you know I very much would dare, princess. So try me. I’ve got all night to teach my naughty girl whatever lessons she needs to learn.”

This time, he didn’t stop at two or even four swats. He peppered her bottom with the spoon until every inch of skin was a gorgeous shade of pink and she’d stopped calling him every name under the sun. Pausing, he laid the spoon on her back and rubbed at her punished skin while she silently fumed beneath him.

“Ready to talk to me, baby?”

“There’s nothing to talk about.”

At least she didn’t sound quite so furious anymore. If anything, she just sounded... sad. “Doesn’t seem like nothing.”

“Just drop it, Rex.”

“Nope.” Picking up the spoon again, he targeted her sit-spots, where it would sting the most. She howled when the wood snapped against her sensitive skin, and he repeated the punishment over and over until she finally caved.

“Carly’s pregnant!”

Pausing with the spoon in the air, he frowned down at her. “Yeah, I know. What’s that got to do with you wanting to pick

a fight?”

“Because I’m a bitch.”

“Princess, you’re about this close to finding out what Daddy’s belt feels like on your bare ass. Nobody talks about my girl that way, especially my girl. Understood?”

“But I *am* a bitch,” she insisted, and now he could hear the tears in her voice. “Carly’s pregnant and instead of being happy for her I spent the whole night being pissed off that it wasn’t me.”

Fuck. He was an asshole. It hadn’t even occurred to him that Carly’s news would be difficult for her to hear. “Baby. Come here.”

Helping her to her feet, he wrapped his arms around her, his heart cracking in two when she pressed up against him with a loud sob. “I’m sorry. I know I’m a horrible person.”

“Aw, baby. I’m the one who owes you an apology.”

“Why? You didn’t knock Carly up.”

“Well, no,” he admitted with a chuckle. God, she was cute. “But Matt told me about it yesterday. I should have given you a heads up. I guess I just didn’t realize how big of a deal having a baby really was for you. So, I’m sorry for being an oblivious asshole. Forgive me?”

Shaking her head, Ginny pulled away and wiped at the tears streaming down her face. Even with her makeup smeared and her eyes rimmed with red, she was hands down the most beautiful woman he’d ever known. “You couldn’t have known. I didn’t even know until it happened. If you’d asked me yesterday how I’d feel about one of my friends getting pregnant before me, I would have said I’d be happy for them.

And I *am* happy for her, I'm so happy for her, I just..." she trailed off with a helpless shrug. "Like I said. I'm a bitch."

"Baby." The crack in his heart widened as he cupped her face, wiping away her tears with his thumbs. "You aren't a bitch. And you aren't a horrible person. You are, I'm afraid to tell you, just completely fucking human."

Her laugh was watery, but some of the sparkle he was used to seeing returned to her eyes. "You bite your tongue, Rex Carrington."

"I'd rather bite you, princess." To demonstrate, he lowered his head and nipped at her pouty bottom lip before kissing her. Unlike earlier, when she'd still been fighting him, now she sank into the kiss with a soft whimper.

Maybe he couldn't simply kiss her and make all her worries disappear. But he could damn well try. Sliding one hand into her hair, he cradled her head as he slid the other down to cup her breast. Even through the material of her sweater and her bra, he could feel her nipple harden at his touch. Breaking the kiss, he lifted his head to stare down into her wide, glassy eyes.

"My beautiful girl," he murmured, brushing another kiss across her lips. "I could worship this body every day for the rest of my life and never tire of it."

Her tongue darted out, wetting her lips. "Prove it."

Releasing his hold on her, he spun her around, forcing her back down over the table. "Don't move. If I have to stop to tie you to this table, you're going to be a very sorry little girl."

"Just fuck me already, would you?"

With a quiet chuckle, he dropped to his knees behind her, running his hands up her gorgeous, dimpled thighs to her ass,

still pink from his discipline. He wasn't exactly sure why he found that so fucking sexy, but the sight of his marks on her had his cock throbbing painfully in his jeans. "Spread those pretty legs for me, baby."

She did, as much as the denim around her legs would allow, and he nearly salivated at the sight of her bare, pink pussy lips glistening between her thighs. "God, you smell delicious. I can't wait to taste you."

Without waiting for her response, he leaned in, greedily lapping at her arousal before sliding his tongue down to her swollen clit.

"Oh, god. Rex!" Her voice, husky with desire as she called his name, only fed his own. And so he feasted, using his tongue and fingers to drive her wild. Every time he felt her stiffen, he switched tactics, never fully giving her relief until she let out a frustrated sob.

"Daddy, please!"

Something inside him snapped at those words and he pushed to his feet. It seemed like an eternity before he finally got his cock free, and he groaned as he slid into her waiting heat.

"Is that what you wanted, baby? Did you need Daddy's cock to fill you up?"

"Yes, yes, please. I need... I need..."

Reaching under her, he found her clit and rolled it between his fingers, his eyes nearly crossing when she spasmed around him. "Tell Daddy what you need, princess."

"Goddammit, Rex, I need to fucking come!"

“Tsk tsk. That mouth is going to get you in trouble one day.” Giving her clit a hard pinch, he thrust into her, his hips pressing against the warmth of her well-spanked ass. “Maybe I should put you on your knees and fill your mouth instead of your pussy, naughty girl.”

“Daddy, no! I’m sorry!”

Sliding his free hand up her back, he once again curled his fingers in her hair, holding her in place as he pounded into her harder, faster. “Then show me what a good girl you can be and come all over Daddy’s cock.”

Her cries echoed around the kitchen as she did exactly that, squeezing his cock with every ripple of pleasure. With her still spasming around him, he filled her one final time, letting her milk his cock until they were both completely drained.

“That’s my good girl,” he murmured, leaning down to press a kiss between her shoulder blades.

“Hmm. Thank you, Daddy.”

“Come on, princess. Let’s get to bed.”

“Aw. What happened to never getting tired of worshipping my body?”

Pulling her up to her feet, he held her close as she swayed on unsteady legs. “Every supplicant needs a place of worship, and your bed is about to become my temple.”

Her eyes went wide. “Oh.”

He brushed a soft kiss across her lips. “What do you say, princess? Want to take me to church?”

“Oh, hell yes.”



SHE HAD to give Rex credit. When he put his mind to something, he followed through. Thoroughly, enthusiastically, and repeatedly. By the time she settled down at her computer desk the next morning, she was already considering going back to bed for a nap.

But she had work to do, and deadlines that wouldn't wait just because she was feeling a little worn out from being kept up half the night. So, she sipped her coffee and said a little prayer that it would give her the boost she needed to at least make it to lunch.

She worked her way through her emails, including an offer for a new brand deal her agent had forwarded her that looked promising. It wasn't quite 'household name' level, but it was a pretty good step in that direction. Feeling rather pleased with herself and the offer, she sent the contract over to her lawyer for her to look over and let her agent know before she switched gears and opened one of her many social media platforms.

The posts for the lingerie company she was currently working with were getting some good traction. Hundreds of comments, which either meant there were people absolutely losing their minds over the pieces she'd modeled, or someone had started a fight. Either one was a possibility, which was why she made it a point to only check the comments once a day.

Taking another big sip of coffee, she opened the most recent posts. And waded hip-deep into a shitshow.

There were plenty of hype-girl comments, both from her fans and other influencers, and she took the time to respond to as many of those as she could before scrolling to see if there was anything she needed to handle. Sometimes the best thing to do was to say nothing, and let the trash take itself out. That was her preferred method when the comments were solely directed at her.

But this wasn't one of those situations. Not only had the asshole troll in her comments mocked her, he'd made broad, sweeping statements about fat women in general that made her blood boil.

Really? This is what passes for sexy in America these days? How far our great country has fallen. It's women like this who think they have the right to brush off good, decent guys because we aren't hot enough or rich enough. Like we owe them anything when they look like THAT. Disgusting.

Unsurprisingly, her fans had jumped to her defense, tearing him a new asshole in her absence. It was almost enough to make up for the fact men like that were allowed access to polite society.

Almost.

“I would not want to be the person who put that look on your face.”

Rex's hands came down on her shoulders, his fingers digging into the knots that had formed there as she tried to smooth out her expression. “Just some keyboard warrior who thinks I give a shit about his opinion.”

To her surprise, Rex leaned over her, his eyes scanning the screen for a moment before his own feature twisted into a scowl. “What the fuck is his problem?”

“Comes with the territory.” Though it did warm her heart to know he was angry on her behalf.

“Fuck that. You can be successful without putting yourself on display for assholes like that.”

“I don’t do it for them. I do it for the women who look like me and have to deal with assholes like him on a daily basis.” The tension he’d been working out of her shoulders returned with a vengeance. “And it’s not ‘putting myself on display’. It’s art.”

“If taking half naked pictures of yourself is art then I’ve known a lot of Picassos over the years.”

Fury churned in her stomach, completely obliterating any warm and fuzzy feelings she’d had toward him a moment ago. “Fuck you, Rex.”

“Careful, princess.”

“No.” Spinning around in her chair, she jabbed a finger into his stupidly perfect abs. “You be careful. I have to deal with bullshit from men like that every goddamn day because it’s my *job*. I will not put up with being talked down to in my own home. So if you’re going to be a dick about my career choices, you can just get the fuck out.”

“I’m not going to stand here and pretend it doesn’t piss me off that you keep putting yourself out there for people to shit all over you.”

“Then you can get out.”

“What?”

“I said, get the fuck out of my house. I don’t want to talk to you or see you right now.”

There was a long, strained silence before he finally jerked his head up and down. “Fine. I’ll see you tonight if you decide to get your head out of your ass.”

She turned back to her computer, refusing to acknowledge him as he grabbed his jacket and stormed out of her apartment, the back door slamming behind him. When he was gone, she closed her eyes and took several deep breaths, willing her system to settle.

And then she got back to work.

CHAPTER 12



Women were a goddamned mystery. And he had to pick the most confusing one of the lot.

“I’m not sure who you’re pissed at, but you’re gonna be even more pissed at yourself if you fuck up that bike.”

“What?” Sitting back on his haunches, Rex swiped at the sweat soaking his forehead. For mid-March, it was warmer than usual and he was tempted to take off the long-sleeved shirt that was currently sticking to his torso. “The fuck are you talking about?”

“That screw you’re tightening.” Matt nodded toward the bike. “Gonna rip the threads right off it in a second.”

“Shit. Sorry, I’m distracted.”

“I noticed. Girl trouble?”

Rex scowled. “Why does it have to be girl trouble? I have more going on in my life than Ginny Morgan.”

“Oof.”

“What? What now?”

“You only call her that when you’re irritated with her. So, what’s up?”

“Right now, the only person I’m irritated with is you.” It was a lie, and a bad one. And judging by the way Matt’s brow raised, he knew it, too. “You’re not gonna leave me be until I tell you, are you?”

“Not when you’re taking your frustrations out on our customers’ vehicles. Fess up. What did you do?”

His irritation with the situation grew as he glared up at his boss. “Why does it have to be something I did?”

“Because if it was something she did, you’d just spank her ass, fuck her, and call it a day.”

“Hard to do that when she kicked me out of her fucking apartment.”

Matt let out a low whistle. “Man. When you screw up, you *really* screw up.”

“Shut up. I didn’t screw anything up.” Though, the rock in his gut that had grown heavier throughout the day begged to differ. “Some asshole left a comment on one of her stupid social media things today and it pissed me off.”

“And?”

“And, what? I told her it pissed me off, and the next thing I know she’s kicking me out. See? Not my fault.”

“Uh huh.” The tone of Matt’s voice and the stupid smirk on his face clearly said he wasn’t convinced. “And when you say you told her it pissed you off, what exactly did you say to her?”

“I just told her it pissed me off that she let people shit all over her like that and she could be successful without putting herself on display.”

The hairs on the back of Rex's neck raised when Matt winced. "What?" he demanded. "What the fuck is so wrong about that? I told her she could be successful doing anything! I was being supportive."

"Dude. You weren't being supportive. You shamed her career choices and basically blamed her for the fact someone was a dick to her."

"That's not..." The rock in his gut grew heavier. "That's not what I was trying to do."

"Yeah, well, it sounds like that's what you did. What else did you say to her?"

Closing his eyes, Rex let his head fall back. "She said what she does is art. I told her if taking half naked pictures was art, I've known a lot of Picassos."

"Jesus Christ, Rex. You're lucky you made it out of there alive."

He wasn't wrong. And the fact he wasn't wrong made Rex a little sick to his stomach. "Well, what the fuck do I do now?"

"Come on. We're going into town."

"Why?"

"Because, dumbass. A fuck up of this proportion requires real flowers, like from a florist, not the kind you pick up at the grocery store because you forgot to take the trash out."



“ALL RIGHT, chin up a bit. Move your hands back about an inch and arch your back a little more for me.”

“If I arch anymore, I’m going to turn into half of a McDonald’s sign.”

Lulu’s dry comment made Ginny laugh so hard she had to put her camera down to wipe at her eyes. “Sorry, babe. Just need you to arch up real high and hold it for like thirty seconds. Then we can take a break.”

“Thank god.” Despite her protests, Lou tossed her blonde hair back, a serene, sexy smile curving her lips as she posed for the camera. Back around Christmas, Noelle had started the process of campaigning Ginny to set up what amounted to a boudoir shoot for the woman she hoped would be her future sister-in-law. Ginny had balked at first. Taking pictures of herself was a far cry from taking them for someone else, especially with the stated purpose of helping that someone else feel more comfortable in her skin.

But Noelle had, in her dogged Noelle way, worn Ginny down over time. Which was how she found herself crouched down in front of the mini studio she had set up for her own photos, snapping pictures of a nearly naked stranger.

Ginny took a few more pictures from multiple angles before giving Lou the okay to relax. “I think that’s good for now. Want to take ten and change outfits?”

“Absolutely.” Straightening up, Lou stretched her arms up to the ceiling and rolled her neck. “Man, when I asked Noelle to set this up, I had no idea how much work it would be.”

“I tried to tell you,” Noelle said from her perch on the couch. “I don’t know how Ginny does all the modeling stuff she does on top of teaching yoga classes. She’s a badass.”

“Not according to everyone,” Ginny mumbled as she dragged the ornate couch she used in most of her photos back into the ‘studio’ for the next round of pictures.

“Who?” Lou asked, her head snapping up from where she was currently in the process of stripping out of her bodysuit. “Who said you’re not a badass?”

“Nobody. Forget I said anything. Do you have any props for the next costume?”

“Yes, but we can talk about that in a minute.” Hands on her hips, apparently oblivious of her bare breasts bouncing with every movement, Lulu glared at her. “Who said you’re not a badass?”

“I really don’t want to talk about it.”

“Bullshit,” Noelle called from the couch. “If you didn’t want to talk about it, you wouldn’t have brought it up.”

Lulu tapped her nose before pointing at Noelle. “She has a point.”

“It’s nothing. Just something Rex said this morning.”

Noelle shot up on the couch, eyes glittering with excitement. “Wait. Rex spent the night?”

“Yes. Twice.”

“Scandalous. And the gossip train hasn’t gotten wind of that yet?”

“If it has, I haven’t heard about it.” And now that Noelle mentioned it, wasn’t that odd? Normally the gossip mill in Lost River worked faster than you could blink.

“Huh. Weird. Anyway, what did he say?”

“Really, Noelle, it’s nothing.”

Still half naked, Lulu placed a gentle hand on Ginny's shoulder. "Like Elle said, you wouldn't have brought it up if you didn't want to talk about it. No judgment zone, isn't that what you told me when I came in?"

"That was for bodies, not asshole boyfriends." But they had a point, and maybe it would make her feel better to share with the class. "He just made some snide remarks about my job, that's all."

"What kind of snide remarks?" Noelle asked, her eyes narrowing dangerously.

"He told me I could be successful without 'putting myself on display' for assholes online."

Twin shrieks of outrage echoed around her, and even though the volume made her wince, it did make her feel a bit better to know they shared her anger at the situation. She'd almost convinced herself she'd overreacted this morning, but judging by their response, she'd been well within her rights to kick him out.

"Of all the dirty, rotten..." Shaking her head, Lulu jammed her fists onto her hips. "I hope you read him the riot act."

"That wasn't even the worst thing he said." Echoes of the pain she'd felt that morning stabbed at her heart as her friends looked at her expectantly. "I told him what I do is art, and he said if taking half naked pictures of yourself was art, then he'd known a lot of Picassos."

Rising from her spot on the couch, Noelle crossed the living room and placed her hands on Ginny's shoulders, her expression exaggeratedly woeful. "You know what you have to do, right?"

“Make him buy me something pretty and beg my forgiveness?”

“I was thinking more along the lines of dumping his body in the swamp for the alligators to enjoy, but I suppose your way works, too.”

It made her laugh, and the laughter helped break up the heaviness that had settled in her chest after their fight. “Does your Da—does Dom know you’re this bloodthirsty?”

“Of course. How else do you think I keep him in line?” Noelle smirked. “And you can call him my Daddy. Lou knows... well, way more than she probably wants to, honestly.”

“Don’t remind me,” Lulu agreed with a theatrical shiver.

“Hey, it wasn’t *my* idea to wear a vibe in public. You can blame your brother for that little mishap.”

“That sounds like a story, but unfortunately we’re on a schedule. What costume do you have next, Lou?”

It surprised Ginny that a woman so comfortable walking around with her tits hanging out could blush at anything. But a red stain spread slowly across Lulu’s cheeks as she shifted from foot to foot. “Um, well... it’s a little unusual. You swear this is a no judgment zone?”

“On my life.”

“Okay. I’ll be right back, then.”

Grabbing the insanely organized suitcase she’d hauled in with her, Lulu headed for the bathroom. When the door closed behind her, Noelle did something very out of character—she slowly wrapped her arms around Ginny’s neck and squeezed gently.

“What’s this all about?” Ginny asked with a laugh.

“You just looked like you could use a hug.”

Emotion clogged Ginny’s throat as she returned the embrace. “Thanks. I kinda did, but I know that’s not really your thing.”

“Dom and Carly are rubbing off on me.” Pulling away, Noelle rolled her eyes then almost immediately sobered. “And it’s my thing when people matter. You matter.”

“Jesus, Noelle, are you *trying* to make me cry?” Ginny dabbed a finger at the corners of her eyes, desperately willing the tears back where they belonged.

“Maybe. Maybe you need a cry as much as you needed a hug.” Noelle’s grin flashed. “Or maybe you need to find a way to kick Rex in his metaphorical balls.”

“Couldn’t I just actually kick him in his balls?”

“Sure.” Noelle shrugged. “But then you’d have to explain to your parents why they have to bail you out of jail on an assault charge.”

“Dammit.”

Lulu’s voice interrupted their discussion on how to kick Rex’s balls, metaphorically or otherwise. “Okay, seriously, no laughing.”

As one, Ginny and Noelle turned toward her as she emerged from the bathroom dressed like the sexiest kitten Ginny had ever laid eyes on. The white lace bodysuit was nearly see-through, showcasing all her naughtiest bits. On her head were a pair of pink and white ears that matched the tail swinging from...

Well, that’s one way to attach a tail.

Deliberately widening her smile, Ginny stepped forward. “Why would we laugh? You look fucking incredible.”

“Yeah?” Some of the doubt disappeared from Lulu’s expression, but she still didn’t look quite convinced. “It’s not too much? Noelle said you were good with, you know, the kinky stuff.”

“Absolutely. I haven’t explored much myself, but I’m a big believer in inclusivity. And that includes the things that make your naughty bits tingle,” she added with a wink.

“Oh, good. I know I probably should have checked first but I was so nervous about this whole thing I barely even made it here today.”

“Well, hopefully I was able to put your mind at ease. You’re a stunning woman, Lou. Gage’s eyeballs are going to fall out of his head when he sees these photos.”

Everything about Lulu seemed to light up from within. “You think?”

“Full refund guaranteed if he doesn’t at least try to swallow his tongue twice.”

Head thrown back, Lulu let out a peal of delighted laughter. “I’ll hold you to that.”

“It’s a deal. Come on, let’s go rock your husband’s world.”

Playing with kitty Lulu was almost as fun as having a real cat. And as she worked, a plan formed in Ginny’s mind. By the time she said goodbye to her friends nearly an hour later, she knew exactly how she was going to deliver that metaphorical kick to Rex Carrington’s balls.

CHAPTER 13



He had the flowers, plus a bottle of wine that had nearly made him choke when he'd seen the price tag, and he'd even taken the time to drive all the way out to his place to shower and change clothes.

And the little brat wasn't even home.

Fuck.

Well, he wasn't going to haul the flowers and wine all over town looking for her. Juggling them both in one arm, he picked up her little ceramic frog with the flower behind what he assumed was its ear and—

No fucking key.

“Well played, princess.”

Still juggling, he pulled his phone from his pocket and hit the button to dial her number.

“What do you want?”

He could barely hear her over the sounds of whatever bar she was hiding out in. The thought of her, out somewhere without him, had something that felt almost like panic tightening around his chest. “Where the hell are you?”

“Out. Having fun.”

“Ginny.” Closing his eyes, he counted to five and prayed for patience. “Tell me where you are right now, and I won’t bend you over my bike and take my belt to your ass when I find you.”

“You’d have to find me first,” she said with a teasing laugh. “But I’ll give you a hint. I’m not in Lost River.”

Charleston, most likely. Not that it really narrowed down his options much, considering the number of pubs, bars, and other drinking establishments in the city. Intimidating her hadn’t worked, so time to try something else. “Look, princess, I don’t wanna fight. I’ve got a bottle of wine here with your name on it. Why don’t you come home and we can talk about what happened this morning.”

“Counteroffer. Leave the wine, and I’ll call you when I’m ready to talk.”

“Ginny...”

“Oh, gotta go! This is my song! Bye, Rex!”

A beeping sound alerted him the call had ended and he pulled the phone away from his ear to glare down at the screen.

Leaving the wine and roses on the deck, he jogged down the stairs and climbed back on his bike. Ginny Morgan was coming home with him tonight, even if he had to search every bar in Charleston to find her.



“GIRL, YOU HAVE STEEL FREAKING BALLS.”

Setting her phone facedown on the table, Ginny smirked at Noelle and Taylor, the former who was looking at her with something approaching hero worship while the latter looked as though she was worried her own Daddy was going to jump out of nowhere and spank *her* for just being an accomplice to Ginny's naughtiness. Carly had declined their offer for a night out as the baby was apparently refusing to let her keep anything in her stomach, and Edie had pulled her 'cranky old widow' routine and claimed she'd rather spend the evening at home with her knitting.

"He had it coming," Ginny said with a shrug. Despite her outward nonchalance, her stomach had tied itself into knots. Rex had proven he didn't have any qualms about blistering her ass if he felt she needed it, and there was no doubt he would absolutely think she needed it after that conversation. She didn't regret the things she'd said, but she was pretty sure she was going to pay for them later.

"I'm not saying he didn't," Noelle continued with a shake of her head. "But I'm still in awe of you, and I have the least strict Daddy of the bunch."

It was true. Dom was just about the most laid back man Ginny had ever met, unless he felt like his Little girl was endangering her safety. Then he could rival Ian and Matt with his devious punishments. But he seemed to make Noelle happy, which was all that mattered, right?

Turning her frosted mug in a circle on the table, Ginny studied the contents and worked up the courage to ask the burning question she'd been dying to ask for months. It seemed like the perfect time, just the three of them, off in a place nobody really knew them.

“Tell me about being Little.” The words came out of her all in one single breath, jumbled together so badly she was worried they wouldn’t catch what she’d actually said and she wasn’t sure she’d be able to work herself up to asking again.

But the pair on the other side of the table shared a long look before shifting their attention back to her. “What do you want to know?” Taylor asked.

That simple acceptance of her curiosity gave her the boost she needed to keep going. “I don’t know. Everything, I guess. Like, what do you do? Why do you do it?”

“What brought this on?” A curiosity that matched her own tinged Noelle’s voice, and though it made her stomach clench, Ginny supposed she couldn’t blame her.

“I’ve been thinking about it for a while. You guys always seem to have so much fun on your playdates, and ever since Rex said he wanted to be my Daddy...” She let the thought trail off with a shrug. “I can’t have a Daddy if I’m not Little, right?”

“Wrong.” Taylor shook her head, her blonde ponytail whipping from side to side. “Daddies aren’t just for Littles. But if you think you might be one, we’d love to have you join us on a playdate.”

“That’s just the thing. I don’t have the first freaking clue if I might be one.” Frustration welled up inside her and Ginny glowered at her mug. “That’s why I figured if I talked to you guys and it sounded like something I’d enjoy, I could at least give it a shot.”

“Okay, well.” Leaning back against her bench, Taylor tapped a finger against her chin, as if she were giving the

matter a great amount of thought. “We do lots of things. Color, make slime, play board games. Whatever we want, really.”

“So what makes that different from just hanging out?”

“That part is more of like, being in a different headspace,” Noelle said, glancing at Taylor for confirmation. When Taylor nodded, she looked back at Ginny apologetically. “Sorry, I know that’s not very helpful. It wasn’t for me, either.”

“No, I think I get it. Kind of like playing pretend?”

“Sort of... but deeper, I guess would be the way to describe it? Like, when I’m in Little space, I actually *feel* Little, I’m not just acting Little. Does that make sense?”

“Maybe.” Ginny sighed and drew a little heart in the condensation that had gathered on her glass. “But I’ve never felt like that, so I guess I’m not a Little after all.”

“Not necessarily.” Noelle shrugged. “I never really felt that way until Dom gave me a safe space where I *could* feel that way.”

“Oh.” Rolling Noelle’s revelation over in her mind, Ginny nodded slowly. “That actually makes a lot of sense. Like, Rex can be an asshole but when I’m with him I feel more like myself than I feel with anyone else. He feels...”

“Safe?” Taylor supplied softly, her blue eyes filled with understanding.

“Not for my ass,” Ginny said with a laugh. “But, yeah. He feels safe. He feels like I can trust him with the versions of myself I can’t trust anyone else with, if that makes sense.”

Noelle nodded. “It makes total sense. I feel the same way about Dom. You should come over for our next playdate.

Worst case scenario, we all hang out and have fun, even if you decide it's not your thing."

"Yes!" Eyes bright with excitement, Taylor bounced happily in her seat. "That would be amazing!"

"It's a date, then." Ginny allowed herself an exaggerated eye roll. "Hopefully Rex will have his head out of his ass by then."

"I'm sure he will." Reaching across the table, Taylor squeezed her hand. "He adores you."

Ginny snorted out a disbelieving laugh as she lifted her drink. "That's debatable."

"Is not." Mischief danced in Noelle's eyes and her mouth tilted up in a knowing smirk. "I'm pretty sure Rex has had it bad for you for *years*."

"What?" Shock had Ginny's mouth falling open. "He has not."

The look Noelle gave her clearly said she thought Ginny was being dense. "Please. A guy doesn't get that emotionally involved with a woman he doesn't secretly have a thing for."

"Emotionally involved? What the hell are you talking about?"

It was Taylor's turn to smirk, though hers was at least a bit more sympathetic. "She's talking about the fact he'd go out of his way to find you and push your buttons. It's like the grown-up equivalent of a boy pulling your pigtails to show how much he likes you."

"Well, that's stupid. Why didn't he just say something?"

Now both her friends wore the same skeptical expression. "And risk being turned down by the princess of Lost River?"

Noelle shook her head. “Please. You were always out of his league and he knew it.”

“That’s not... he *hated* me.”

Now it was Taylor giving her the ‘how dumb can you be’ look. “Honey, if he hated you, he wouldn’t have taken you home that night we got arrested. He certainly wouldn’t have kept welcoming you back to his bed.”

“He’s a man and he was getting his dick wet. That’s all he cared about.”

“Maybe once, or even twice. But how long have you guys been hooking up in secret?”

Six months. Six months of the best sex she’d ever had. And some of the sweetest moments she’d ever experienced with a man, alongside the most infuriating.

All of a sudden, the bar that had seemed so welcoming felt far too crowded. “I’ll be back. I need some air.”

Ignoring her friend’s concerned looks, she slid out of the booth and shoved her way through the crowd to the front door. There were, thankfully, only a handful of people milling around outside, probably thanks to the sudden drop in temperature now that the sun had gone down. But Ginny barely felt it as she paced the sidewalk outside the bar, running the conversation she’d just had over and over in her mind.

If the girls were right, she was the worst kind of asshole. She’d somehow been so wrapped up in her own wants and needs that she’d never picked up on Rex’s feelings for her. Worse, she’d treated him like a booty call, popping up at his house whenever it was convenient and completely ignoring him otherwise.

“Well, hello there, gorgeous.”

Pausing her frantic pacing, Ginny closed her eyes and gathered what little patience she had left before pasting on a polite smile and turning around. The man eyeing her like she was a juicy steak and he'd been living off salads for the past six months was nothing short of gorgeous. Tall, hot in a dark, broody kind of way, he was exactly the kind of guy she would have gone for a few months ago.

Now, she felt... nothing, she realized. No spark of attraction, no zing of desire. Just a passive acknowledgement of how hot he was and nothing more.

Fucking Rex Carrington.

“Hello. I was just going back in to find my friends.”

Putting on an adorably wounded look, the man pressed a hand to his chest. “Ah, a girls’ night out. My timing is, as always, awful.”

Funny, too. Dammit. “Yes. And I really should be getting back so they don’t come looking for me and lose our table.”

“I don’t suppose you’d be willing to give me your number, maybe give me a chance another night?”

Before she could let him down gently, a familiar voice spoke up behind her, sending a shiver down her spine that was part relief, part fear, part aching need. “She’s with me.”

The other man lifted a brow in clear amusement. “I’d like to hear that from her, if it’s all the same to you.”

Oh, it was tempting to lie, just to see what kind of reaction she could get from the man looming behind her. But she was already feeling guilty about the fact she’d apparently been completely fucking oblivious to how he felt about her, so she sent Mr. Broody and Gorgeous an apologetic smile. “I’m with him. Sorry.”

“Ah, my mistake, then. Perhaps our paths will cross again when you’re not so... attached.”

“Don’t count on it,” Rex growled, sliding an arm around her waist and pulling her back against him.

Lifting his hand in a salute, the other man turned on his heel and sauntered into the bar. When he had disappeared through the doors, Rex leaned down, his breath hot against her ear. “You are in *so* much trouble, princess.”

CHAPTER 14



Apparently, she wasn't done being pissed at him, because his words sent her temper spiking straight through the roof. Spinning in his arms, she drilled a finger into his chest as she glared up at him. "Don't you dare get all bossy alpha-male on me when you're the one who fucked up, Rex Carrington."

She half expected him to deny it. Or to brush it off with some snide, snarky comment.

What she didn't expect was to find herself being dragged off behind the building and pinned against a brick wall with his dark eyes boring into hers.

"Let's get something straight right now, little girl." Gathering her wrists in one hand, he pressed them against the rough brick above her head while his other hand slid up between her thighs to her suddenly soaked panties. "You are *mine*. You want to be pissed at me, fine. You want to yell at me, call me names, tell me what a fucking asshole I am, go for it. But what you will never do again is run from me. And you damn well won't run from me so you can go flirt with other men. Got it?"

Guilt twined with anger inside her, making it impossible to separate one from the other. Lifting her chin, she smirked, knowing full well it was bound to piss him off even more. But

she didn't care. Whether it was a need to test him, to see what would happen, or just plain fucking recklessness, she wasn't sure. All she knew was she couldn't stop herself. "I just figured if I'm going to be accused of putting myself on display, I might as well do it and have some fun while I'm at it."

He growled, actually fucking *growled*, a moment before his lips came crashing down on hers and his fingers shoved past the fabric covering her pussy to spear her. Pleasure rocketed through her, catching her so by surprise she screamed into the kiss.

The sound of something ripping met her ears and then she was being spun around, her palms and cheek pressed against the brick as something else entirely filled her still-spasming pussy.

One of Rex's hands gripped her hip as the other came down around her throat. Not squeezing, but firm enough for her heart to trip in her chest as fear joined the maelstrom of emotions swirling inside her.

"*Mine*," he growled in her ear. "Say it, princess. Tell Daddy who you belong to."

The part of her that was still hurt and angry from their fight wanted to tell him to fuck off. But that part was quickly being drowned out, not just by the pleasure he was forcing on her, but by the simple fact that she *was* his. She wasn't sure exactly when it had happened, but even before he'd tied her to that chair and tortured her deepest secrets from her, she'd been his. Only his.

She'd just been too fucking scared to accept it.

“You,” she whispered, closing her eyes against the fear battering at her chest. “I-I belong to you.”

“And who am I?”

“Daddy. My Daddy.”

“Good fucking girl.”

His praise sent another orgasm ripping through her, and he groaned as he slammed into her one final time. “Fuck, baby. That’s it. Squeeze every last drop from Daddy’s cock. Such a good girl for me, aren’t you, princess?”

“Y-yes, Daddy.”

They stayed locked together, with her up against the brick and him whispering filthy words of praise in her ear until he finally softened and slipped from her pussy. With a gentleness that was completely at odds with how roughly he’d just treated her, Rex turned her to face him, his lips twisting into a grimace as he lifted his fingers to brush at her cheek. “Got some scratches on your pretty face.”

“Worth it,” she assured him with a grin. “But if you feel really bad about it, you could kiss it and make it better, Daddy.”

To her never-ending shock, he did exactly that, leaning in to press his lips to her cheek. “Better?”

“Perfect,” she said, her words breathless. “Rex, about tonight...”

“I really don’t want to have this conversation in the back alley of a seedy bar, princess. Why don’t we go home and pour a glass of that insanely expensive wine I bought you and we can talk about it there.”

An emotion she wasn't quite ready to name welled in her chest. "Insanely expensive, huh?"

"Obscenely expensive. Borderline criminal."

The fact he'd gone out of his way to purchase something for her as an apology meant more than the money he'd spent. "All right. Take me home, Daddy."



IT TOOK him longer than he would have liked to arrange rides home for everyone. They'd all come in Taylor's car, which saved him the hassle of getting Ginny's car back to Lost River, but by the time he and Ginny walked back into the bar, Taylor and Noelle were well into their cups. A call to Dom had ultimately saved the day, and he'd come to collect his girlfriend and her giggling, drunken bestie.

Now he was on his way back home with Ginny on the back of his bike, her arms around his waist but not clinging to him so tight he couldn't maneuver. From that first night he'd taken her home, she'd been a pro, and even though he didn't really have anything to do with it, he always felt a surge of pride when he thought of how well she rode.

There was an extra bit of pride, and a healthy dash of possessiveness, at the thought of her on the back of his bike, her pretty pussy filled with his cum. By the time he parked in his driveway, his cock was more than ready for round two.

Unfortunately for his dick, they needed to talk. But hopefully their conversation would lead to more sex instead of

more fighting.

Or at least more fighting that led to more sex. He'd heard good things about makeup sex.

Then again, he wasn't sure anything could live up to angry, up against a brick wall in the wide-open sex, but he was certainly willing to try.

Of course, now that they were here, walking silently into his house, he couldn't think of a damn thing to say to get the conversation started. An apology, probably. God knew he owed her one, but he'd never been very good at that kind of thing.

Luckily—or unluckily, depending on how things went—Ginny didn't seem to be suffering from the same indecisiveness. The second they reached his front door, she strode straight to the middle of the living room and turned to face him, her hands folded neatly in front of her and her chin tilted up in what seemed on the surface to be defiance.

But he'd been studying her for years, and he picked up on those subtle things she probably thought nobody noticed. Like the fact her fingers were twisted together so tightly her knuckles were turning pink, or the way her bottom lip trembled just a bit before she pursed her lips to make it stop.

“I owe you an apology.” The words came out in short, clipped tones as he closed the front door, as if she were eager to get them out of her mouth because they tasted so foul.

“Is that so?”

Carrying the wine and battered-looking roses he'd grabbed from her back deck after they'd flipped a coin and decided to stay at his house for the night, he walked past her into the

kitchen, manfully swallowing a laugh when she huffed loudly behind him.

“Yes. I was pissed at you—rightfully so, I might add—but I should have waited to talk to you instead of disappearing on you.”

“Hmmm.” He didn’t have a vase for the roses, so he made do with the lemonade pitcher she’d brought over when they’d first started hooking up. It was glass, in a mix of blues and greens she’d said made her think of him. Something about the unpredictability of the ocean. While the pitcher filled with water, he pulled his pocket knife out and trimmed the stems the way the florist had told him to before untying the bouquet and carefully arranging it in the water.

With that task completed, he turned and nearly burst into laughter at the sulky look on her face. “Anything else you need to apologize for, princess?”

Her bottom lip puffed out in a pout. “I probably shouldn’t have hung up on you.”

“No, you shouldn’t have.” Closing the distance between them, he slid his arms around her waist and pulled her into him. “Can’t really say I blame you, though.”

“Oh?”

“I think we both know I’m the one who owes you an apology, princess. I said a bunch of shit I shouldn’t have this morning, and I’m sorry. Forgive me?”

“Depends.” She tilted her head to the side, and he swore he could see her mind working through the emerald green of her eyes. “Do you think you shouldn’t have said those things because you didn’t mean them, or because they pissed me off?”

“Does it matter?”

“It matters to me.”

“Fair enough.” Shifting his gaze to a spot on the wall above her head to avoid having to look into those eyes that saw way too much, he carefully weighed his words. “I didn’t mean it when I said what you do isn’t art. It is, and honestly it blows me away how fucking talented you are.”

“And the part about not putting myself on display?”

Now he forced his gaze back down, forced himself to meet her eyes. “That was the jealousy talking. It makes me a little crazy sometimes, thinking about other men jerking themselves off to pictures of you.”

“That’s not why I—”

He cut her off with a shake of his head. “I know that’s not why you do it. And I know it makes me sound like a fucking caveman. But you know what’s worse, for me, than the men who get themselves off to you?”

“What?”

“The men who don’t see how fucking perfect you are. The ones like that asshole this morning who look at you and see a woman they need to tear down instead of the absolute goddess you actually are.”

“Oh.” She let out a soft sigh. “Once again, it’s really hard to stay mad at you when you say things like that.”

“Yeah?”

“Yeah.”

“Good.” Closing his eyes, he lowered his forehead to press against hers. “I don’t wanna fight with you, princess. At least

not about shit that matters. I sorta figure we'll always be at each other's throats about one thing or another, but not about the big stuff. Forgive me for being a jealous asshole?"

"Yes..." She hesitated, clearly weighing her words. "But you're going to have to find a way to be okay with what I do, Rex. I'm not planning to give it up anytime soon, and when I do, it will be because I wanted to, not because you can't control your temper. Got it?"

"Got it."

"Good. And just so you know, I didn't go to that bar tonight to flirt with anyone."

He opened his eyes so he could see hers. Not because he thought she was lying, but just because he loved the way the green darkened when she was talking about something emotional. "I figured that out, eventually."

As he'd expected, the green of her eyes changed, ever so slightly as emotion swirled in them. "It's just important to me that you know I wouldn't do that. I know our relationship has been... unconventional, but I wouldn't hurt you on purpose like that."

"I know." It had taken him a few bad moments to get there, but he'd eventually come to that conclusion on his own. Tightening his hold on her waist, he pressed a long, slow kiss to her lips, coaxing her to open for him until she finally surrendered, melting into him with a soft hum of pleasure.

When he lifted his head again, he let his lips curl up in a smirk, deliberately breaking the tension. "Does this mean we get to have makeup sex now?"

She blinked up at him, confused, then threw her head back and let out one of those long, loud laughs he loved so much.

“Yeah, we can have makeup sex now.”

With a whoop of delight, he turned her around and sent her running with a hard smack to her ass. Giggling wildly, she took off for his bedroom and he followed, tackling her to the bed just as she reached it.

And yeah. Makeup sex was just as awesome as everyone said it was.

CHAPTER 15



Bleary-eyed from yet another night of minimal sleep, Ginny stared at the shiny new coffee maker in Rex's kitchen, willing it to finish brewing.

Rex, she'd learned during the first of their sleepovers when they'd been just fuck buddies, did not require coffee to function. He occasionally drank it, if someone else made it, but he was somehow able to simply roll out of bed and go about his day without an infusion of caffeine.

She was fairly certain he wasn't actually human. Which could present problems for their future offspring, but hey, if they got some kind of genetic superpower out of it, she supposed she couldn't complain.

But that first time she'd slept over, she'd nearly had a meltdown over the lack of options available to caffeinate the next morning. Not only had Rex driven to town in a panic to buy her the largest cup of coffee he could find, the next time she'd shown up at his house there had been a brand new coffee pot sitting on his kitchen counter.

Men, to her knowledge, didn't buy kitchen appliances for women they were only casually interested in. Another point for Noelle's theory that he'd had feelings for her long before she'd agreed to date him.

Fuck. She really was oblivious, wasn't she?

"Pretty sure you can't make that thing move any faster by glaring at it, princess."

"You don't know that. I might."

Pausing beside her, he pressed a kiss to her temple. "Well, if anybody can, it would be you."

She narrowed her eyes, focusing on the trickle of liquid slowly filling the pot. And maybe it was her imagination, but she was positive the dribble turned to a solid stream for about five seconds.

That's right, coffee pot. Bend to my will.

"God, you're pretty."

"What?" Blinking herself back to reality, she shook her head and turned to look at him. Cup of water in hand, leaned back against the counter, he was simply staring at her with a wide, sloppy grin on his face.

"I said, 'God, you're pretty'. All wrapped up in that sexy robe, your hair all mussed like that. You're just really fucking pretty in the morning."

"I... thank you." It wasn't the first time he'd called her pretty, or even beautiful. But usually it was when she was showered, dressed, and wearing at least some light makeup.

There was something disconcerting about being called pretty when she knew she looked like a swamp witch who'd just stuck her finger in an electrical socket.

"Welcome. So, plans for the day?"

"Work," she said with a laugh. "Same thing I do every day."

“Me, too. We should play hooky.”

Shooting him a look, she pulled a mug—part of the collection he’d started when he’d bought the coffee pot—from the cabinet and poured herself a cup of the steaming, fragrant, life-giving liquid. “I could get away with that, but we both know you wouldn’t do that to Matt.”

“I’m wounded.” With feigned insult, he placed a hand over his heart and sent her a pitiful look. “You think I’m so responsible I wouldn’t take a day off to spend with my best girl?”

She doctored her coffee with the creamer she kept in his fridge and sipped. Already, she could feel her body coming alive as the caffeine surged through her system. “First of all, I better be your only girl. And second of all, yes, I do think you’re that responsible.”

“It pains me to admit you’re right.” His eyes twinkled with mischief as he grinned at her. “Maybe I can talk Matt into giving me a day off next week and we can take off somewhere. Spend the day on the bike, drive down the coast. Find some little mom and pop diner and gorge ourselves on greasy food.”

“That sounds...” Like none of the dates she’d ever been on before. “Pretty perfect, actually.”

“Yeah? I’ll talk to Matt, then.”

What was it about a man who made plans that just made her heart beat a little faster? “I should get out of your hair, I guess, so you can get ready for work.”

“I have time. And a very large shower,” he added with a waggle of his eyebrows.

She opened her mouth on an instinctive denial, then forced herself to pause and think it through. Hadn't she just said she could take a day off if she wanted? There were no classes to teach today, and nothing pressing on her plate as far as she knew. So why shouldn't she take the morning and enjoy her sexy man who bought her coffee and planned dates for her?

“A shower would be great.”



IT WAS a good thing Rex had plenty of time before he had to be at work, because they took their time in the shower. After the third time he'd made her come on his hand, he finally took her. Pressed up against the wall of his shower, much the same as she had been the night before, but so much slower, tormenting her with his cock until he'd finally made her come one final time.

Wrapped in her oversized robe once again, she watched them in the mirror. Rex with his perfectly sculpted muscles and her with the curves he seemed to genuinely adore. No man had ever worshiped her body the way he had, and she was beginning to think he might have ruined her for anyone else.

Looking up from brushing his teeth, he caught her gaze in the mirror and smirked. “Whatcha thinkin’ about, princess?”

“About how good we look together.” Which wasn't entirely a lie. She had also been thinking about what a contrast they made, and how she could play on that for photos. If he'd let her, that was. “Will you take a picture with me?”

His smirk widened to a grin. “Finally ready to show me off?”

Rolling her eyes at him, she grabbed her phone from where she’d left it on the counter during their shower and held it up. “Something like that. Stand behind me, with your arms around my waist.”

“Bossy,” he muttered, but did as he was told, posing with her for what he deemed ‘More photos than any one human should be allowed to take in any given day’.

The coffee, the shower sex, Rex’s cooperation with her photo ideas, and a ride home on the back of his bike put her in an exceptionally good mood by the time he dropped her off at her home later that morning. So much so, she completely missed the car parked near the entrance to her apartment.

As a result, she nearly jumped straight out of her skin when she walked in and found someone sitting on her couch, sipping a cup of tea.

“Mom! You about gave me a heart attack. What are you doing here?”

From her spot on the couch, Kimberly Morgan looked her daughter up and down and raised a brow. “I came to visit my daughter. I didn’t realize you were working nights now.”

All of a sudden, Ginny was keenly aware of how little clothing she was wearing. The dress she’d picked out the night before had been deliberately chosen to shove Rex’s ‘putting herself on display’ comment back in his face. Which meant there was very little skin that was actually covered. Tugging at the hem of her dress, Ginny frowned. “What’s that supposed to mean?”

Her mother, looking more furious than Ginny could ever remember seeing her, set her teacup down on the coffee table with an audible click before folding her hands in her lap, her knuckles turning white as she twisted her fingers together. “It means you look like a whore, Genevieve. Here I am, trying to do damage control, doing my best to dispel these ridiculous rumors that you’re sleeping with Rex Carrington of all people, and—”

“I’m sorry.” Ginny held a hand up, cutting her mother off. “Damage control? Why on earth would my relationship with Rex need damage control?”

For a moment, her mother simply looked stunned, as if she’d just been told aliens were real and they’d taken up residence in Lost River. “The rumors are *true*?”

“Which rumors, mom?”

“The rumors about you having dinner with that boy. And Becky Sullivan said she saw him leaving your apartment the other day, but I assured her she must have been mistaken.”

Anger, and another emotion she couldn’t quite place, twisted in Ginny’s stomach. “She’s not mistaken. Rex slept over because we’re seeing each other.”

“No.”

It was Ginny’s turn to be shocked. “What do you mean, ‘No’?”

“I mean, no, you are not seeing him again. You will cut off all contact with Rex Carrington and his no good family immediately.”

“Uh, yeah, I’m not gonna do that.”

“Well.” Rising to her feet, her mother brushed imaginary lint from her skirt and straightened her shoulders. “Then you and I have nothing left to say to each other.”

For a long moment, all she could do was stare at her mother. The woman who had birthed her, raised her, loved her for nearly thirty years. The woman who had always, *always* had her back in every single thing she’d ever done.

Until now.

“Yeah. Yeah, I guess we don’t have anything to say.”

She didn’t look her mother in the eye as she made her way to the front door. Couldn’t, because the tears were already forming and she would be damned if she’d give her the satisfaction.

But instead of walking to the door, her mother paused beside her. “I suppose this is mine and your father’s fault. We indulged you too much. We supported this foolishness you call a career. Maybe if we’d done a better job of grounding you in reality, you’d realize exactly what a horrible mistake you’re making.”

The shaking came after the door shut behind her mother. But by some feat of strength, she made it to her bedroom before the sobbing started.

A part of her ached for Rex. For her friends. Just for someone to sit with her and tell her it would all be okay and her life wasn’t actually falling apart even if it felt like it was in that moment.

What the hell had gotten into her mother? Sure, she’d always cared about appearances and upholding the ‘family name’ more than Ginny felt was healthy at times, but in all of Ginny’s time on this Earth, she’d never been *cruel*. It had

always been a point of pride for Ginny that her parents weren't the rich, snobby assholes Rex liked to make them out to be.

God. Rex. She couldn't tell him. No matter what happened between them, she could never let him know how fucking awful her mother had been. If things between them got more serious, she'd just... find a way to fix it. She'd give her mom some time to calm down and get the stick out of her ass.

And if she didn't, well, Ginny would just have to find a way to yank it out for her.

CHAPTER 16



“What about roses? They’re classic.”

Carly sighed at Taylor’s suggestion. “And expensive. But pink roses would look really pretty...”

The wedding talk faded into background noise as Ginny sipped her third glass of wine for the evening. It was more than she normally indulged in when she had to drive home, but she was still reeling from her mother’s visit. If it came down to it, she knew Edie would let her crash in one of her guest bedrooms, so she let herself drown her sorrows in cheap wine and good friends.

Not that she was being a very good friend at the moment. The more Carly talked about her shotgun wedding and the baby, the blacker Ginny’s mood became.

“Oh, I almost forgot!” Carly said, waving the water bottle her Daddy had apparently insisted she bring with her around and nearly smacking Taylor in the face in her excitement. “I have an appointment at a dress shop in Charleston on Saturday. I was hoping you guys would come with me and then we could have like, a playdate after. With all the planning and everything I’m in desperate need of some Little time.”

“Dress shopping!” Taylor squealed happily. Even Noelle, who was normally not as into ‘girly things’ as the rest of them,

bounced excitedly and nodded.

Ugh. The last thing Ginny wanted to do was spend a whole day watching Carly pick out the perfect dress for her perfect wedding to her perfect man while her perfect parents looked on with pride as their babygirl walked down the aisle again.

“Ginny?” The look Carly sent her way was so full of hope, Ginny immediately felt like a total asshole for even thinking about turning her down. And for all the other nasty thoughts swimming around in her head like venomous little fish.

Were venomous fish a thing?

Not important, Ginny.

Right. Wedding. Dress shopping. Happy friend. “I’d love to.”

“Thank god.” Carly’s laughter was tinged with a mix of relief and nerves. “I can’t imagine going dress shopping without our resident fashion expert.”

“The only bad wedding dress is one you don’t love.” Unfolding herself from her chair, Ginny rose to her feet, only stumbling a little. “I’m going to get some more wine. Anybody want a refill?”

“I’ll come with you,” Edie said, hopping to her feet as well. “I could go for a few more of those little pigs in a blanket Taylor brought.”

Everyone else turned down another glass. Carly for obvious reasons, Taylor because she had apparently gotten herself in very hot water just before she’d left for Edie’s so she was being a good girl and following Ian’s one-drink limit for once, and Noelle because she was driving into Charleston to spend the night at Dom’s so she could be there when he got home from his shift at the firehouse in the morning.

Which left Ginny alone in the kitchen with Edie as she refilled her wine glass nearly to the rim.

“All right. What bug crawled up your ass today?”

“There’s nothing up my ass,” Ginny said with far more calm than she felt, lifting her glass to her lips and sipping the too-dry red wine Noelle had brought with her.

The look Edie pinned her with clearly said she didn’t buy Ginny’s response for a second. “Bullshit. You’ve been getting quieter and quieter all night, and you’re drinking like a goddamn fish. What’s up?”

“Nothing’s up. It was just a long day.”

“Uh huh. This ‘long day’ have anything to do with our resident bad boy mechanic?”

Deliberately rolling her eyes up to the ceiling, Ginny took another sip of wine. “I do have a life outside of Rex, you know. Unlike some girls, my entire existence doesn’t revolve around a man. I actually have shit going on that’s deeper than picking out flowers and napkin colors.”

“What’s that supposed to mean?”

At the sound of Carly’s voice, Ginny closed her eyes and swore under her breath. Her heart nearly broke in two when she turned and saw Carly watching her with wide, tear-filled eyes. “I didn’t mean that the way it sounded, Carly. I’m sorry.”

“How exactly did you mean it, then?”

“I…” Shit. Wine and emotions were making her head swim, and her brain couldn’t seem to conjure the right words. “I don’t know. I just had a really bad fucking day and I’m feeling sorry for myself.”

Instantly, Carly's expression shifted from hurt to concern, somehow making Ginny feel even worse than she already did. "Oh, honey. What happened?"

"It's nothing."

Eddie snorted. "If it's got you acting like a bitch to your friends then it's obviously nothing."

"Eddie!" Carly sent her a furious look. "That's not very nice."

"No, she's right." Blowing out a breath, Ginny offered up an apologetic, if somewhat shaky smile. "I was being catty and you didn't deserve that. I'm sorry, Carly, I really am. I should probably just go home so I don't ruin the rest of your wedding planning."

"Absolutely not." Arms folded, Carly glared at her, looking more intimidating than Ginny would have given her credit for. "You're going to march your butt right back in that living room and you're going to tell us what's wrong. And you're going to let us be there for you, whether you like it or not."

"I don't want to ruin—"

"You aren't ruining anything." Carly rolled her eyes. "It's called being friends. I assumed you were aware of the concept since you've listened and talked the rest of us through our bullshit, but obviously you need a refresher on how friendship works. Now, march."

Ginny glanced over at Eddie, who just shrugged. "You think I'm going to argue with a pregnant bride?"

"Traitor."

"Yup."

“Fine.” Resigned to her fate, Ginny snatched the plate Edie had piled high with appetizers from the other woman’s hand and shot them both a glare. “I’ll tell you. If for no other reason than to prove to you that it really is nothing and I’m just overreacting.”



“SHE CALLED YOU A *WHAT?*”

Ginny couldn’t decide if the pure shock in Taylor’s voice made her feel better or worse. Despite her reservations, once she’d started the story, it had all come pouring out of her, along with a fresh wave of tears. At some point, Edie had pressed a wad of tissues in her hand, which she was grateful for since the retelling had left her a swollen-eyed, snotty-nosed mess.

“You know she’s full of shit, right?” This from Noelle, who’s blazing eyes and stiff spine made her look as though she might march from the room to go track down Ginny’s mother at any second. “There was nothing wrong with what you were wearing last night.”

“I mean, it was pretty short. And I think it was less the dress and more the fact I was obviously doing the walk of shame this morning.” Pausing, Ginny frowned. “Ride of shame, I guess, since Rex drove me home.”

Not the point, Ginny.

“First of all, you have nothing to be ashamed of.” Now it was Carly looking righteously angry, her face all but glowing

with it. Or maybe that was the pregnancy hormones. Whatever it was, she looked like an avenging angel, and Ginny couldn't help but fall a little in love with her.

"My mother obviously disagrees," Ginny said with a bitter laugh.

"With all due respect, fuck your mother. I'm serious," Carly continued when Ginny shrugged. "You're in a committed relationship with a man you've already been seeing for months. A really freaking hot man who worships the ground you walk on, I might add."

"I wouldn't go that far."

"I would." There wasn't even a hint of doubt in Carly's tone. "I've watched you two go from sniping at each other to sniping at each other while you sneak little longing looks you thought nobody noticed to watching him practically following you around like a puppy. If Rex isn't head over heels in love with you, he's damn well on his way."

"Let's not go throwing around the L-word all willy-nilly." But she couldn't stop the smile tugging at her lips as she twirled her nearly empty wine glass. "He bought me a coffee pot."

Four pairs of curious eyes were riveted on her when she glanced up. "Rex doesn't drink coffee. After I spent the night the first time, I nearly had a meltdown over the lack of caffeine in his house. Next time I came over, there was a brand spanking new coffee pot on his kitchen counter, along with a bag of my favorite brand of coffee—I still have no idea how he figured that out—and an ever-growing collection of coffee mugs in the cabinet."

“See?” Triumph lit Carly’s eyes. “That’s not the kind of thing a man does for a booty call. It’s the kind of thing he does for the woman he loves.”

“Maybe.” Shaking her head, Ginny shoved thoughts of Rex and his feelings for her aside. “But that doesn’t really matter. It’s still not a good look for me to be spotted on the back of his bike wearing a sparkly pink dress that barely covers my ass.”

“Is that you talking or your mother?” Edie asked, one dark eyebrow raising as she pinned Ginny with that steady, sees-far-too-much stare of hers.

“I...” Ginny trailed off, her mind already working through the implications of Edie’s question.

From the very start of her relationship with Rex, back when they’d been frenemies with benefits, she’d been worried about someone seeing them. Over time, she’d relaxed a bit, but all that worry had come flooding back when Rex had asked her out to dinner. She’d shut him down hard until he’d tied her to a chair and basically blackmailed her into a relationship.

Now, sitting in Edie’s living room with her friends staring at her and waiting for a response, she couldn’t even remember why. Which made the answer pretty fucking clear.

“My mother,” she answered, blowing out a shaky breath. “This whole time, I thought I was worried about everyone else, but now... I think I was really worried about her. And my dad. Jesus, that’s embarrassing to admit.”

“Why?” Carly asked, genuine confusion filling her eyes.

“Because... I don’t know. Don’t you think it’s silly, to be almost thirty years old and worrying about what your mommy and daddy think of your life choices?”

“Oh, honey.” Leaning over from her chair, Edie laid a hand over Ginny’s and squeezed. “I don’t think anybody ever really outgrows the need for their parents’ approval.”

“Even you?”

Edie smiled sadly. “Trust me, honey, I understand more than most how much it hurts to have your parents turn their backs on you because of who you love.”

“I didn’t say I was in love with Rex.”

“Not the point.”

“Right.” Closing her eyes, Ginny let her head fall back against the chair as misery washed over her. “So, what do I do?”

“Well, seems to me you’ve got a decision to make,” Edie said in her typical, no-nonsense tone.

“What’s that?”

“You can either continue letting your parents’ opinions and judgments rule your life. Or...” Edie paused until Ginny lifted her head to look at her again.

“Or?”

“Or, you can tell them and the rest of the town to fuck off, and do what makes you happy. With the understanding that they may never come around, and you may be choosing Rex over your family.”

“Oh.” Ginny laughed, but it rang hollow even to her own ears. “Is that all?”

CHAPTER 17



He was a fucking junkie.

Less than twenty-four hours without having his cock inside Ginny Morgan and he was about to lose his mind. Which was how he found himself parking his bike outside her studio, ‘coincidentally’ just as one of her classes let out.

Several heads turned as he walked in, and he nodded in greeting. And tried to ignore the hushed whispers that followed him as he crossed the brightly colored space to where Ginny was rolling up her mat.

“Have I ever told you how amazing your ass looks in yoga pants?”

She popped up so fast, she lost her balance and he had to reach out to grab her. Not that it was a hardship on his part, since it gave him an excuse to pull her closer and sink into those soft curves of hers.

“Rex! What the hell? You scared the shit out of me.”

As much as their relationship had evolved over the past few months, one thing still hadn’t changed: He loved getting a rise out of Ginny Morgan. “You should really pay more attention, princess.”

Her eyes narrowed, making his cock practically leap to attention. Oh, yeah. He still loved pissing her off, at least in a playful way.

“Most people don’t make it a habit of sneaking up on me. And you still haven’t answered my question. What are you doing here?”

“I missed you.”

The simple answer immediately had her softening in his arms. “You just saw me yesterday.”

“Might as well have been a year ago.” He lowered his head for a kiss, but stopped short when she placed her hands on his chest and nudged him away.

“I have a class, Rex.”

“Class is over.” Undeterred, he grinned down at her. “And I happen to know there’s a good three hours before your next one. You have plenty of time for a break.”

Her eyes darted to the side, where he was well aware they had an audience watching them. But then, in a town the size of Lost River, they were always going to have an audience, so there didn’t seem to be much point in trying to avoid it as far as he was concerned.

It seemed his Little girl didn’t exactly agree.

“Just because I’m between classes doesn’t mean I’m free to be manhandled by you, Rex.”

“So you’re free to be manhandled as long as it’s not by me?” He kept his tone teasing, though he was feeling anything but playful.

“I didn’t mean... This is my place of business, Rex. It’s unprofessional to get groped by some guy in a leather jacket in

front of my clients.”

“Tell me, princess. Is it the leather jacket you take issue with, or the fact that people might see us together that’s got your panties in a bunch?”

Her eyes flicked to the side again, answering his question. “It’s just not the time or place, Rex.”

“Message received, princess. I’ll make sure not to embarrass you in your *place of business* again.”

He tried to ignore the hurt that flashed in her eyes. “That’s not what I meant.”

“Don’t worry about it. I’ll see you later.”

“Rex, wait.”

But he’d heard enough. Releasing her, he turned on his heel and strode back through the wide-eyed crowd and out the front door.



IT TOOK her longer than she cared to admit to come to the conclusion she’d hurt Rex’s feelings by acting so skittish in front of her students. Worse, she’d hurt him because her mother was still in her head.

And that was completely unacceptable.

So here she was, braving the noise and the man-sweat smell of Matt Crawford’s garage to apologize. Judging by the hard look he gave her when she stepped inside, her faux pas of the day had not remained a secret.

“Hi, Matty. Is Rex here?”

“It’s working hours, so yes. He’s here. What do you want?”

“That’s between us.”

Matt raised an eyebrow and Ginny just barely managed to keep herself from taking a step backward. How the hell did sweet little Carly stand up to that fierce dominance? “Last time y’all had a fight, I told him what a dick he was. I figure I owe you the same courtesy. If you’re embarrassed by him, you don’t deserve him. Simple as that.”

“I’m not embarrassed.” Rubbing at the headache brewing between her eyes, she sighed. “I’m guessing Carly didn’t tell you anything we talked about last night.”

“She told me about the wedding plans, but that’s about it. I’ve been informed more than once that Girls’ Nights are sacred and even Daddies are not allowed to know what’s talked about. What happens at Edie’s stays at Edie’s, apparently.”

Though it warmed her heart to know she could share things with her friends without worrying about whether or not they’d go blabbing to their significant others, it also meant Matt had no context for her behavior this morning. And she wasn’t exactly in the mood to explain herself. “If I told you I’ve just had a really rough couple of days and I know I fucked up, but I’m here to apologize for said fuck up, would that be enough?”

His eyes narrowed, and once again she was left feeling sorry for poor Carly. If Ginny was on the verge of squirming under his stern gaze when she knew he wouldn’t actually spank her, she could only imagine how it felt for his Little girl.

“All right,” he said after what felt like an eternity. “He’s back in the break room. Second door on your right.”

“Thanks, Matt. Oh, and congratulations on the wedding and the baby. You’re going to be an amazing dad.”

And just like that, it was as though someone had flipped a switch. Grumpy Matt disappeared, joy all but lighting him up like a Christmas tree. “Thanks, Ginny. I can’t wait.”

Feeling somewhat steadier, she picked her way through the garage to the break room, where she found Rex seated at a small round table, his fingers wrapped around the bottle of water in front of him and his head tilted back. She might have thought he was asleep if he hadn’t looked so fucking miserable.

“Go away, Matt. I have five minutes left.”

“We’re going to need more than five minutes.”

His head snapped up so fast, she vaguely worried he might have given himself whiplash. “What are you doing here?”

If she hadn’t been feeling so shitty about pushing him away earlier, she might have teased him about letting people sneak up on him. But she let it go without comment and put on an apologetic smile. “I wanted to talk to you about what happened earlier, at the studio.”

“I’m not looking to fight with you in my *place of business*.”

She winced at the emphasis he put on those last three words, but didn’t snap back since she’d more than deserved that. “I don’t want to fight, either. I came to apologize.” Clasp ing her hands in front of her, she took a deep breath. “You surprised me, and I’d had a rough night. I’m not saying

that to excuse what I said, but I need you to know I didn't mean any of that like it sounded."

"You mean the part where you basically told me you'd welcome being 'manhandled' by pretty much anyone but me?"

"It's not you, Rex, I promise. I'm just still getting used to having a relationship while everyone I know watches every move I make."

One eyebrow raising in disbelief, Rex snorted. "I'm not your first rodeo, Ginny."

"No, you're not. You're just the first one that's really mattered."

She saw the moment he softened. "You know, you make it really hard to stay mad at you when you say things like that."

Hearing her own words parroted back at her nearly made her weep with relief. "Yeah? Good."

Eyes sparkling, he shifted in his seat, facing her with his legs spread, the outline of his cock clearly visible even through his uniform pants. "Come here, princess."

Need slammed into her, hot and heady, making her stomach dance and her heart pound against her chest. "Isn't your break about over?"

"Matt can wait."

She took a step forward, but he shook his head, stopping her in her tracks. "No. On your hands and knees. I want to watch the princess of Lost River crawl to me."

Humiliation rushed over her, heating her cheeks. "Well, now you're just being petty."

“Absolutely. And enjoying every second of it.” Leaning back, he patted his thigh. “Crawl to Daddy, princess, and you can have a treat.”

“I’m not a dog,” she grumbled, even as she lowered herself to the floor.

“No, but I bet you’d make an adorable kitten.”

A memory of Lulu, dressed up like a sexy little kitten, flashed into Ginny’s mind. “I wouldn’t be opposed to that.”

“Yeah? I’ll keep that in mind. Now quit stalling and crawl, little girl.”

If she hadn’t seen the hurt in his eyes earlier, she might have told him to fuck off. The floor beneath her hands and knees was filthy, and she didn’t want to think about how many times she was going to have to wash her hands when she was done.

But then again, there was something intensely erotic about being humiliated this way. Her entire life, everyone had deferred to her. Treated her like, well, the princess of Lost River. Nobody would ever dare to put her on her knees, to make her crawl, to treat her like a naughty little girl who needed to learn her place.

Nobody but Rex.

So she crawled, and let herself be humiliated. Not just because she sort of deserved it, but because those deep, dark parts of her enjoyed it.

And, she could admit at least to herself, because it would horrify her mother to see her like this. Which was a dark thrill all its own.

When she reached him, she shifted up onto her knees and reached for his cock. But Rex smacked her hand lightly and shook his head. “Hands behind your back, princess. Good girls get to play with Daddy’s cock, but naughty girls only get to choke on it.”

There was no reason that should be so fucking hot. But it made her pussy throb all the same as she folded her arms behind her and watched as he slowly freed himself from his uniform pants. Fisting his cock in one hand, he used the other to grab hold of her ponytail, guiding her head down.

“Fuck, baby,” he groaned as her mouth enveloped him. “That feels so good. But I want to see how deep you can take me.”

It was all the warning she had before he forced her head down further. She gagged when the tip of him hit the back of her throat, but that didn’t seem to deter her Daddy. He held her there, far longer than she would have stayed on her own, and she had to gasp for air when he pulled her back up.

His dark eyes glittered down at her. “For the record, I better be the only person manhandling you, whether in public or in private.”

“You are. Only you, Daddy.”

“Good girl. Make sure you swallow, baby.”

And with that, her mouth was stuffed full of his cock again. Over and over, he used his hold on her hair to fuck her face, using her mouth for his pleasure without giving her even an ounce of mercy.

Until at last, the hot, salty taste of him filled her mouth and she swallowed him down, greedily sucking until he pulled her off him with a low hiss.

“I appreciate you coming all this way for an apology, princess.”

He cupped her face and she nuzzled her cheek against his palm. “I really am sorry I hurt your feelings. I’m trying to get better about... things.”

“I understand. And I probably owe you an apology for pushing you so hard, especially in public. Forgive me, princess?”

Just like that, the jagged edges inside her seemed to smooth out and everything clicked back into place. “Yes, Daddy.”

“Come on, princess. Let’s get you cleaned up. That floor is filthy.”

Laughing, she let herself be helped to her feet. “You’re an asshole, Rex Carrington.”

“I know. But I’m your asshole.”

CHAPTER 18



“Hmm. I’m not sure about that one. Give us a twirl.”

Up on a small white podium, Carly did as Taylor instructed, spinning in place. The giant skirt of the dress she’d donned spun around her, and Ginny had to admit it was an impressive dress.

But it wasn’t Carly’s dress.

A fact Carly obviously agreed on, judging by her heavy sigh as she turned back to the mirror. “I think it might be too much for an outdoor wedding. If we were getting married in a church, maybe. But... I don’t know.”

“If it’s not right, it’s not right,” Ginny said with a shrug. “You’ll know the right one when you see it.”

“You keep saying that but we’re on dress number five and I still haven’t seen it.”

“Five isn’t a lot when you think about how many different wedding dresses there are in the world,” Noelle said, propping her chin in her hand. “Like, realistically, you’ve probably only tried on less than one percent of the available gowns.”

“Not helpful, Noelle.”

“Very helpful!” Noelle argued. “It means you have plenty of time to find the right one!”

“Except I don’t have plenty of time because I’m getting married in like, ten days. I won’t even have time to order the right size!”

Sensing tears were on the horizon, Ginny hopped out of her chair and stepped onto the stage, draping an arm around Carly’s shoulders. “Come on. Let’s get you out of the cupcake dress and into something a little lighter.”

Carly sniffled dramatically but nodded her head and allowed Ginny to guide her over to the dressing room she’d been assigned. When they closed the door behind them, Ginny placed her hands on Carly’s shoulders and met her tearful gaze. “Big breaths, honey. We’ve got this.”

As Ginny dragged in a deep breath, Carly mimicked her. After number six, Ginny smiled and squeezed her friend’s shoulders. “Better?”

“Much, actually. Thanks.” Sighing, Carly rubbed at her temples. “Sorry I’m such a mess. Between the baby hormones and the wedding stress, it’s all just... a lot.”

Deliberately ignoring the pang of jealousy at the mention of the baby, Ginny brightened her smile. “You don’t have to apologize for anything. As far as Bridezillas go, you’re barely tipping a 2 on the scale.”

“Really?”

“Really, really. Okay.” Clapping her hands together, Ginny spun around and studied the dresses the boutique worker had pulled for Carly. “Let’s see...” She carefully inspected each one, rejecting ones that seemed too bulky or heavy.

It was the second to last dress that caught her attention. Simple, but with a high waist that would give the bride some breathing room in the event of any bloating courtesy of Carly’s

little hitchhiker, and long flowing sleeves that would offer some warmth since even on the coast of South Carolina March could be plenty cold.

“This one.” At Carly’s dubious look, Ginny held the dress out and smiled. “Just trust me.”

“You’re the expert,” Carly said, disbelief still clear in her tone.

“That I am.”

She helped Carly out of the cupcake dress and into the new one. And she knew, the second she zipped it up and stepped back, that it was the one.

“Oh, Carly. You look amazing.”

“I wanna see!”

Catching her by the shoulders before she could turn to face the much too small mirror in the dressing room, Ginny pointed Carly toward the door. “Not yet. Wait until you get back out there.”

Ginny scooted around her to open the door, then stepped aside so Carly could walk through first. A chorus of shocked gasps and happy sighs met her entrance and by the time she stepped back up onto the podium, Carly was beaming with excitement.

Then she turned to face the wall of mirrors, and Ginny watched as excitement gave way to shock and shock gave way to a kind of awe.

Jackpot.

“Oh, Ginny. You were right. You were *so* right. It’s perfect.”

“Matt is going to swallow his tongue when he sees you in this,” Ginny assured her.

“He better,” Carly said with a watery laugh. “Holy shit. I just found my wedding dress. I’m getting married!”



“TAYLOR JUST TEXTED. The girls are on their way home.” Sipping his beer, Ian tucked his phone back in his pocket and watched as Dom lined up a shot on the pool table. “We should probably head that way ourselves.”

“You’re just saying that because you don’t want to lose twenty bucks to the dude banging your sister.” Rex grinned, then grunted in pain when Matt’s elbow connected with his side. “What? It’s the truth.”

“I know, but that’s an inside thought. Jesus, you’re as bad as Noelle sometimes,” Matt said with a shake of his head.

“Noelle isn’t that bad.” Glancing up from the pool table, Dom grinned at the three skeptical looks pointed in his direction. “Okay, she doesn’t *mean* to be that bad. She just has no filter. It’s part of what I love best about her.”

“No filter, and that thing she does with her—”

Slapping his hands over his ears, miraculously without spilling beer down his face, Ian squeezed his eyes shut as if he could block Rex’s words with the sheer force of his mind. “La la la, I can’t hear you.”

Despite the roar of laughter around him, Dom made the shot and collected his twenty bucks from a glowering Ian

before the four of them made their way out to Dom's SUV.

It wasn't until they were halfway to Dom's apartment that the nerves started to kick in, and Rex found himself shifting uncomfortably in his seat. By the third time he adjusted himself, Dom looked over, clearly amused by Rex's discomfort. "Everything all right over there?"

"Yeah." No way was he going to tell a car full of Daddy Doms he had no fucking clue what a playdate entailed, or what he was supposed to do.

"Uh huh. So, no questions for the group? You're totally cool, you know exactly what to expect, and there's absolutely nothing on your mind?"

"No."

The seconds ticked by in complete silence. Whether Dom just had some aversion to the radio, or he was using it as a tactic to compel a confession, Rex wasn't sure. But if it was the latter, it worked embarrassingly well.

Asshole.

"Okay, fine. What the fuck is a playdate? What am I supposed to do? Ginny says she's not a Little. What if she hates it and—" He cut himself off before his worst fear came spilling out into the light.

"What if she hates it and decides she doesn't want a Daddy anymore?" Ian helpfully finished his sentence for him.

"Yeah. I guess."

"First of all, she doesn't have to be Little to have a Daddy." Dom's matter-of-fact tone helped to ease the nerves churning in Rex's gut, as did the grin he received from the driver's seat. "So even if she decides it's not for her, you can

still be her Daddy. And I'm sure the girls have told her that already."

"Oh. That's good to know."

"Second of all." Ian picked up the thread. "It's not that much different from when we've all hung out together in the past."

"The main difference will probably be Carly doing her best to get them all spanked together," Matt said with a laugh. "I swear she sees it as a right of passage at this point."

The thought of Ginny over his knee, kicking and crying along with her friends, nearly made him grin. But... "Not sure Ginny will go for that. She's kinda private about things."

"Really?" Ian's voice was filled with surprise. "She lives her whole life for an online audience. How is that private?"

"That's different," Dom said with a shrug. "None of my followers know I'm a Daddy, for instance, unless they know me in real life. I've never shared pictures of my family, and any funny stories I've shared I've always used code names. If you really watch Ginny's page, you'll see the same thing. It's all pretty carefully curated for her audience, and she doesn't actually share that much about her personal life. I don't think they even know she's dating someone yet."

An uncomfortable weight settled in Rex's stomach. Why would she take a picture with him if she had no intention of actually sharing it with people? "She cares too fucking much about what those assholes online think."

"She kind of has to, don't you think?" When Rex just shrugged, Dom pressed on. "Not only does she make a living caring about what people think, I'd bet she was raised to do so. Isn't her dad the mayor or something?"

“He is,” Ian confirmed. “And she grew up with money. Not *money* money, but enough for her parents to run in some pretty high-class circles.”

“There you go.” The triumphant tone in Dom’s voice clearly said he’d won the argument in his own mind.

And maybe he had. But Rex had known going into this that Ginny Morgan was very careful about her reputation, so nothing Dom had said was news to him.

It didn’t stop the itch between his shoulder blades whenever he thought about how much effort she put into maintaining that carefully crafted image. Even her ‘wild and carefree’ moments were planned in advance or served a purpose.

Like the night she’d come home with him the very first time. Not because she’d been having a moment of wild spontaneity, but because she’d made up her mind to have a baby, and he just so happened to be the perfect candidate in her mind.

Ugh.

A hand clamped down on his shoulder from the backseat, jolting Rex out of his pity spiral, and he glanced over to see Matt giving him a reassuring smile. “You got this, Rex. Just go with your gut. You know what Ginny needs better than anyone, even if you don’t think so.”

He responded with a noncommittal grunt, and the rest of the group seemed content to leave it at that until they parked and headed up to Dom’s apartment.

“Daddy! You’re home!” Jumping up from the couch, Noelle raced across the living room to throw herself into Dom’s arms the second he walked through the door.

“I am home,” he said with a laugh before dropping a kiss to her nose. “But what are the rules about running in the house, sugar plum?”

There was something... different about Noelle. Rex had seen her pout plenty of times over the years, but never with her bottom lip pushed quite so far out, or her shoulders sagging the way they were now. “No running in the house.”

“And how many spanks does running in the house get you, Little girl?”

“Five, but Daddy, I didn’t mean to! I just forgot!”

Even her voice sounded different. A bit higher, a bit younger sounding somehow.

Interesting.

“Then let’s make sure you don’t forget again.” Lifting his gaze over her head, Dom flashed an easy smile. “Y’all make yourselves at home. We’ll be back in a minute.”

With Noelle still wrapped around him and pleading her case, Dom made his way toward the back of the apartment where the bedrooms were. Ian watched them go, his expression an amusing mix between approval and pained embarrassment.

“Daddy!” Taylor called from the couch, diverting Ian’s attention. Instantly, the clouds in his eyes disappeared, and everything in him seemed to light up. “Stop glaring, your face is gonna freeze that way.”

As if by unspoken agreement, Ian and Matt moved toward the couch together, so Rex followed. Noelle and Taylor had been, as usual, snuggled up together, with Carly on Taylor’s other side, looking far less perky than Rex was used to seeing her.

Something her Daddy obviously noticed, because he scooped her up from her spot on the couch and settled her on his lap. “Maybe we should go home, babygirl. You look like you could use a nap.”

“No!” Carly’s voice pitched up to a whine, and the look she gave Matt could only be described as puppy dog eyes. “You promised we could have a playdate!”

Uh oh. Rex may have been pretty new at this Daddy thing, but he knew when a woman was on the verge of tears.

Apparently Matt did, too, because his expression turned panicked. “You’re right, I did promise. We can stay, at least for a little bit.”

With a dramatic sniff, Carly swiped at her eyes, though Rex hadn’t spotted any *actual* tears. “Thank you, Daddy.”

Turning away to hide his amusement at strict, grumpy Matt Crawford being wrapped around his pregnant fiancée’s finger, Rex met Ginny’s sparkling gaze. Clearly, he wasn’t the only one who saw the humor in Matt caving to Carly’s demands so easily.

“Hey, princess.” Stepping closer, he leaned down to kiss her. She hesitated, but only for a second before tilting her face up so he could brush his lips across hers. The fact she’d done so with their friends watching was a step in the right direction, but he couldn’t help wishing for the day she didn’t hesitate even that single second before kissing him. “Miss me?”

“Not even a little bit.”

“Brat.”

“One hundred percent.”

Nobody had ever made him laugh half as much as she did. Then again, nobody made him want to rip his hair out half as much as she did.

Like so many things in life, it was all about balance.

Settling in beside her, he draped an arm around her shoulder. And just like with the kiss, she only hesitated for a moment before snuggling into his side. Matt and Ian were looking equally cozy with their little girls, while Edie looked on with an approving sort of smile. Like a mama bird whose hatchlings had finally learned to fly.

So far, it seemed like their first playdate was a rousing success.

CHAPTER 19



She'd never been more uncomfortable in her life.

It wasn't just that her friends were acting weird, though there had been a noticeable change in their behavior pretty much from the moment they'd stepped foot into Dom's apartment, even before the 'Daddies' had shown up. But Carly and Taylor and Noelle had explained 'Little Space' to her beforehand, and she had a decent grip on what that meant even if she didn't quite understand the point.

No, the problem was with her and her alone. For once in her life, she was in a social situation for which she had exactly zero frame of reference. The other girls had promised her it was just like any other friendly get-together, but everything *felt* different—and she did not like it, one little bit.

Her mother certainly had never prepared her for this.

As soon as the thought crossed her mind, an invisible band tightened around her chest. What if her parents somehow found out about this? What if the whole *town* found out? Her mother had already basically disowned her for dating Rex, what would she do if word got out that Ginny was playing at being a Little girl for him?

"I need to use the bathroom."

She shoved up from the couch and hurried toward the bathroom, locking the door behind her and doing her damndest to pull air into lungs that suddenly felt far too tight.

A soft knock at the door had her squeezing her eyes shut and praying her voice wouldn't sound as shaky as she felt. "Just a sec!"

"Can I come in?" Noelle's voice came through the door, softer and far more gentle than Ginny was used to hearing. "I know you're not peeing in there, babe. Let me in."

Dammit. Pushing away from the door, Ginny opened it just enough for Noelle to squeeze in before she shut it again. "You're very bossy sometimes, you know that?"

"I do. So... what's up? We saw you run in here, and you looked like you'd just seen a ghost. Which seems unlikely since this is a pretty new building and Dom is the only tenant who's ever lived here." Noelle tilted her head thoughtfully. "But you know, I guess it wouldn't be hard for a ghost to get lost. Especially when all the apartments look alike."

For a long moment, all Ginny could do was stare at her. "Noelle. I mean this in the nicest possible way, but what the fuck are you talking about?"

"That was my very roundabout way of asking why you're hiding in my boyfriend's bathroom having a panic attack."

"I'm not having a panic attack."

Eyebrows raising, Noelle tilted her head to the side. "So, you're breathing just fine, and heart rate is normal? No sweaty palms or anything?"

Ginny narrowed her eyes at her smirking friend. "Shut up."

“Yeah, that’s what I thought. Take a minute and breathe, like you’re always teaching us in class. You know how to do breath work.”

Right. She did know how. She’d spent years learning how to breathe, not just for yoga, but for her own anxiety. Closing her eyes, Ginny inhaled deeply through her nose and counted to four. Held her breath for another count of four. And out for another four count.

Rinse and repeat.

The tightness around her chest finally eased, and when she could draw a lungful of air without pain, Ginny opened her eyes and forced a smile. “Thanks.”

“Welcome. So, what brought that on?”

“Me being ridiculous.” Now that the panic had passed, she was feeling more than a little embarrassed about her over reaction.

“I’ve known you to be a lot of things over the years, but never ridiculous. What’s up?”

If anybody in their group would understand how Ginny was feeling, it would be Noelle. While being Little seemed to come naturally to Taylor and Carly, Noelle had always been open about how much she’d struggled with it. For different reasons, perhaps, but then again maybe the ‘why’ didn’t matter so much. “Do you ever worry that someone will find out about the whole ‘Little’ thing and judge you for it?”

“Sometimes,” Noelle said with a shrug. “And then I remember that if anyone has a problem with how I live my life in private, that’s their issue, not mine.”

“Ugh, I wish I could be that way.”

“Why can’t you?”

She shot Noelle a hard look. “You know why.”

“Oh, right.” Fluttering her eyelids, Noelle placed a hand over her heart and continued in a high, breathless voice. “Because you’re the princess of Lost River. And you would never do *anything* to embarrass your family, like hooking up with a tattooed, motorcycle-riding bad boy.”

“Low fucking blow, Noelle.”

Grinning widely now, Noelle reached for Ginny’s hands. “Yeah, probably. But you know what?”

“What?”

“You already did that. And your mom had pretty much the worst possible reaction to it. But you survived.”

The mention of her mother was like another blow to the gut. Was that why she was suddenly so panicky over people finding out about this secret life of hers? Because the one time she’d dared to go against the grain, her mother had turned her back on her? “I guess.”

“You did. So if, on the very, very slim chance our lifestyles ended up getting outed to everyone in Lost River, you’ll survive that, too. Because you’re a hell of a lot stronger than you give yourself credit for, and at the end of the day, you’ll always have us.”

“True.” Dragging in another deep breath, she blew it out slowly. “I know I’m being ridiculous, it’s just, everything is changing and I’m not used to feeling this... uncertain about what comes next. I’ve always known exactly who I am and what I wanted and how to act. Lately, I feel like I don’t know anything and I don’t like it.”

Her expression turning somber, Noelle placed her hands on Ginny's shoulders. "Ginny. I have some very bad news for you."

"What?"

"It appears as though..." Noelle dragged in a deep breath, as if she were preparing to deliver a devastating blow. "You might be human, just like the rest of us. I know that must be difficult for you to hear."

Laughter burst out of her, and Ginny gave Noelle a playful shove. "You missed getting the scoop on that one. Rex already broke that news to me."

"Oh, good. I was worried nobody had told you before."

"Brat."

"Now who's the one who missed the big scoop?"

Noelle's sass made her laugh all over again, dissolving the last of the worry gripping her. Well, almost. "Fine. You've made your point. If, somehow, anyone finds out about all this Little stuff, I'll deal with it. But I still have no fucking clue what I'm doing out there."

"Neither did I the first time. Seriously, babe, just relax and be yourself. If you have a Little side, it will come out on its own."

"And if I don't have a Little side? What then?"

"Then I guess you're just our older, cooler friend like you've always been."

Well, that was a relief. "I guess I thought maybe you wouldn't want to hang out with me if I couldn't be 'Little'."

"Nah, you're stuck with us. Sorry, not sorry."

“Bummer.”

“Now who’s the brat?”

“I’ve never claimed I wasn’t,” Ginny shot back with a grin. Glancing at the bathroom door, she sighed. “I guess we should go back out there.”

“I promise you’re going to be fine.” Mischief danced in Noelle’s eyes. “Plus, I have something really fun planned.”

“Something really fun that’s going to get us all spanked?”

“Oh, definitely.”

The thought of being punished in front of her friends made her stomach twist, but not in an altogether unpleasant way. And if she was going to give this whole ‘Little’ thing a try, she might as well jump in the deep end, right?

“Then what are we waiting for?”



“OH MY GOD. They’re going to *kill* us.” Despite her possible impending murder, Carly was practically glowing with excitement as Noelle outlined her plan for the afternoon.

Taylor, on the other hand, looked a little green around the gills. “They are. So maybe we should just... not do that.”

Once they’d sequestered themselves in Dom’s second bedroom-slash-office which doubled as a playroom of sorts, Noelle had revealed her genius plan. Instead of using the rhinestone decorating kit to decorate the plain t-shirts Dom

had picked up for them, they were going to decorate Dom's apartment for him.

"Don't chicken out on us now!" Noelle's voice turned pleading. "Please, Taylor? It won't be nearly as much fun if we don't all do it!"

"Come on, Taylor!" Carly chimed in, clasping her hands under her chin, a move Noelle quickly mimicked, making them look a bit like a pair of cartoon characters begging for food.

Taylor glanced over at Ginny, who just shrugged and grinned. "I'm already in. Don't look at me."

"Ugh, I thought maybe you'd be the reasonable one," Taylor said with a groan. "Okay, fine, but you three owe me. Big time."

Carly cheered loudly before Noelle shushed her. "You're going to give us away before we even have a chance to do it!"

"Right, sorry." Lowering her voice, Carly grinned sheepishly. "So, how are we supposed to sneak their stuff in here?"

"You," Noelle replied with a smirk. "You're going to tell Matt you're craving mint chocolate chip ice cream. Dom hasn't eaten it since he found out how much I hate mint, so Matt will have to go out and get some for you. Then we just talk the other Daddies into going with him and leaving Edie behind to 'babysit' us."

"You don't think Edie will tattle?" Ginny asked.

Noelle sent her a withering look. "Edie may not be a Little, but do you really think she'd turn down an opportunity to torment the Daddies? Especially Matt and Ian?"

“Fair enough.” Rubbing her hands together, Ginny bounced excitedly, her blood racing at the thought of doing something ‘naughty’. “Looks like you’re up, Carly.”

“On it.” Eyes closed, Carly shook her hair back and straightened her shoulders as if she were preparing to step out onto a stage. Which she was, in a way, Ginny supposed.

Ginny watched, fascinated, as Carly’s expression transformed from excitement to misery before she even opened her eyes. And when she did, there was a sheen of tears in the blue that made her look so pitiful, Ginny was ready to offer her whatever she wanted to make her smile again.

Matt was a goner.

Pushing up from the floor, Carly made her way out to the living room. “Daddy,” she called, her tone plaintive and needy. “I need you!”

Ginny had to slap a hand over her mouth to smother a laugh at the concern in Matt’s voice when he answered. “What’s wrong, babygirl? Did you get hurt? What’s wrong?”

“I don’t think I can do this without laughing,” Ginny whispered.

Beside her, Noelle was clearly in the same boat, and even Taylor’s lips were twitching. But then Noelle cleared her throat and fixed an impressively neutral expression on her face. “Come on. We can do this.”

Ginny wasn’t so sure, but she did her best not to give anything away as they followed Carly out into the living room.

“I *need* ice cream!” Carly was saying, her tone so filled with what Ginny could only describe as woe, it nearly made Ginny lose her battle with the laughter she was desperately trying to hide.

“We’ve got ice cream,” Dom said helpfully. “What kind do you want?”

“Mint chocolate chip!”

They stepped into the living room just in time to watch Dom’s face fall, and Ginny had to cough to cover up the laugh that snuck out at seeing the normally happy-go-lucky Dom looking so defeated. “I’m afraid that’s the one kind I don’t have, honey. What about chocolate? Rocky Road? Peanut butter cup?”

“No, it has to be mint chocolate chip. Daddy, will you go get me some? Please?”

It was clear from the look on Matt’s face he was fighting an internal battle of some sort. “Maybe on the way home, baby.”

“Aw, come on, Matt,” Noelle piped up, her tone full of amusement. “You would really deny the woman carrying your child the fuel her body needs to create life? I’m ashamed of you, really.”

Dom’s eyes narrowed slightly, but the corners of his lips twitched, making Ginny wonder if he was onto them. If he was, he kept it to himself.

On the other hand, there was Matt, who shot Noelle a glare that said he clearly didn’t appreciate her interference before he turned a much gentler expression on his babygirl. “You really can’t wait an hour, Carly?”

“I mean, I guess I could,” she said with a heavy sigh. “If I really have to.”

To Ginny’s surprise, it was Rex who saved the day. “Don’t be such a stick in the mud, Crawford. If the girl wants ice cream, let’s go get her some ice cream.”

Matt rolled his eyes, but when he looked back at Carly, it was his turn to sigh. “All right. Any other ice cream requests?”

It took a solid ten minutes and multiple order changes, but eventually the Daddies were heading out the door. Dom bent down to kiss Noelle and whisper something that had her eyes going wide and a red flush coloring her cheeks.

“What are you girls up to, princess?”

Turning to face her own Daddy, Ginny plastered on a bright smile. “I don’t know what you mean.”

“Uh huh.” A teasing smile on his face, Rex bent down, much like Dom had just done with Noelle. “You know if you get in trouble with your friends, you get punished with your friends, right?”

“I know.”

“As long as you’re prepared to get that naughty little bottom of yours spanked in front of everybody, then have fun.”

He pressed a quick, hard kiss to her lips before straightening and swirling a finger in the air. “Round ‘em up, boys. We’ve got ice cream to wrangle.”

No sooner had the Daddies disappeared than a voice finally spoke up from the couch. “All right, you naughty girls. What the hell are you up to?”

CHAPTER 20



They didn't even make it to the elevator before Dom asked the obvious question. "So, what do you think our little brats are up to?"

"Up to?" Ian asked, his tone filled with confusion.

Beside him, Matt shook his head. "You've been Taylor's Daddy for almost a year and you still can't tell when she's up to no good?"

"Taylor? She didn't even do anything!"

At the doors to the elevator, they all turned to stare at him. "Jesus, man." Rex shook his head sadly. "Even I could tell they were plotting something."

"Carly asks for ice cream, and it just *happens* to be the one kind I don't keep in the house because of how much Noelle hates mint?" The look Dom sent Ian's way was a mix of amusement and pity. "It's totally a setup."

Ian scowled. "Well, what are we doing out here? I'm not going to reward Taylor with ice cream if she's doing something naughty."

"For starters, I'm not taking my chances with a pregnant babygirl who happens to be in the middle of throwing a

shotgun wedding,” Matt said. “But also, I’m curious to see what they’ve got planned.”

“Me, too.” Dom looked almost excited as the doors to the elevator opened and he stepped inside. “I like to think I’m pretty good at reading Noelle, but up to this point she’s always been pretty careful about not doing anything to get herself spanked with Carly and Taylor. I’m curious to see if that’s changed.”

“Ugh. I really do not need to see my little sister getting spanked, thank you very much.”

Dom frowned. “You know I’ve always tried to be respectful of your boundaries.”

The elevator opened again, letting them out into the chilled air of the parking garage as Ian sent Dom a wary look. “Why do I feel like there’s a ‘but’ coming?”

“*But*, Noelle is very sensitive to being left out of things. And if she’s ready to try being spanked as part of a group, it would be very hurtful to her to be singled out and taken somewhere private if everyone else is getting spanked together.”

“Rex said Ginny wouldn’t let him spank her,” Ian argued. “Noelle won’t be the only one.”

Holding up his hands in a gesture of mock surrender, Rex shook his head. “This is between you and Dom. Leave me and my princess out of it.”

“Traitor,” Ian mumbled.

“Look, all I’m saying is *if* the girls have come up with some grand plan to get themselves spanked together, I don’t want Noelle’s feelings hurt because you can’t handle seeing her get her butt slapped a few times. If you were just

uncomfortable with the idea of seeing someone else get spanked, I wouldn't push the issue. But your problem isn't with a group scene, your problem is specifically with Noelle being part of the scene. Which I get, and I respect, but I'm not going to sacrifice my Little girl's feelings to salvage yours."

They'd come to stop beside Dom's SUV, with Dom and Ian staring each other down while Matt and Rex looked on. Rex met Matt's gaze, and Matt just shook his head slightly, letting Rex know not to interfere.

After what felt like an eternity, Ian sighed, his shoulders slumping in defeat as he rubbed at the back of his neck. "Dammit. I hate that you're right. It's just fucking weird."

"I can appreciate that," Dom said, his expression turning sympathetic. "And Noelle may not actually want to be spanked as part of the group. But if that's what she wants, I don't want her to be made to feel like an outsider. Again."

"What happened at Christmas wasn't my fault."

Rex still wasn't entirely sure what had gone down at Christmas, other than Noelle and Ginny had gotten themselves sort of kidnapped by an ex-coworker of Dom's who was obsessed with Ginny. From what he did understand, Noelle had somehow gotten it in her head that the only way for Dom to prove how much he loved her was to force him to punish her.

It still didn't make any sense to Rex, but Dom and Noelle seemed happier than ever, so obviously she'd gotten what she'd needed out of the deal either way. And miraculously, nobody had been hurt, though Ginny hadn't slept well for a week afterward, which she'd forbade him from ever telling Noelle.

Dom shook his head. “No. It wasn’t. That was one hundred percent on Noelle. But she never would have been so desperate for me to prove myself if she hadn’t been feeling like the odd man out with Carly and Taylor. And there are going to be times where she feels that way regardless, and we’ll have to deal with it when that inevitably does happen. But if it’s within my power to make sure she doesn’t feel left out...”

“Yeah, yeah. I get it. I don’t like it, but I get it.”

“Thanks. Now, let’s go get that ice cream so we can see what kind of shenanigans our babygirls have gotten themselves into this time.”



“IT’S SO... SPARKLY.” Standing in the middle of Dom’s living room, Taylor turned a slow circle as she took in the decor they’d added to, well, pretty much anything Noelle said didn’t have sentimental value. Everything from floor lamps, to the toaster, even the television remote was covered in shining, jewel-colored rhinestones. It was like being seated inside a shimmering rainbow, especially with the late afternoon sun coming in the window. “Are you sure your Daddy isn’t going to be mad?”

“Nah. He’ll think it’s hilarious. Doesn’t mean he won’t spank my ass, though,” Noelle added with a giggle.

From her spot on the couch, where she’d snuggled up with Edie halfway through their impromptu home renovation project, Carly yawned. “Why are you suddenly trying to get

yourself spanked, anyway? Normally you don't want to get punished with me and Taylor."

Looking suddenly uncomfortable, Noelle shrugged. "I dunno."

Edie raised an eyebrow. "You don't know or you don't want to tell us?"

"Same thing."

"No, it's not, little girl." Edie's tone had Ginny sitting up straighter, even though she wasn't the one it was aimed at. "But that answer tells me exactly which answer is the right one. So, why don't you want to tell us?"

Noelle jerked her shoulder again. "It's stupid. I should be over it."

"Oh." Her expression somewhat stricken, Taylor crossed the room and sat beside Noelle, wrapping her arms around her shoulders. "Are you feeling left out again?"

"A little," Noelle admitted with a sigh. "I didn't think I'd ever want to be spanked with you guys, but somehow you always make it sound like so much *fun*."

"Because it is," Carly said with a giggle. "Well, not so much the spanking itself, though that is sometimes fun if we haven't been really naughty. You sure picked a doozy of a prank for your first group spanking, though."

"If you're going to do something, you might as well do it right," Noelle said, looking more like her usual mischievous self.

"Really?" Worry churned in Ginny's stomach. "I thought you said Dom wasn't going to be mad."

“He won’t be. But when he bought me the rhinestone kit, it came with a warning that I was only allowed to bedazzle ‘Daddy Approved Items’.”

“I’m guessing his entire living room and kitchen don’t fall in that category,” Ginny said dryly.

“Nope.” Noelle’s response was far too cheerful. “So yeah, we’re definitely getting spanked.”

As if on cue, the apartment door swung open and their Daddies walked in, and silence fell as four Little girls waited with baited breath to see what happened next.

“What the hell...” Dom’s steps slowed as he walked into his rainbow-colored living room. Behind him, Matt and Ian seemed to have been stuck to the floor just inside the door, their mouths hanging open.

Then there was Ginny’s Daddy. Rex took all of two steps into the apartment before he stopped, looked around—and promptly burst into laughter.

Matt and Ian shot him a disapproving glare, but it was too late. Rex’s howls filled the apartment, and within seconds, all four Littles and Edie had joined in.

“Enough!” Matt’s sharp command cut through the laughter and even Rex stood up straight, his lips still twitching and his throat working as he manfully swallowed the rest of his laughter. “I’m going to put this ice cream away, and then we are going to have a talk about what the hell possessed you girls to bedazzle Dominic’s apartment.”

Rex snorted out a laugh, then shrugged when Matt glared at him. “Look, man, you can’t toss around words like ‘bedazzle’ and expect me not to laugh.”

“You’re just as bad as they are,” Matt grumbled, stalking off into the kitchen area of Dom’s apartment.

Shaking his head, Dom moved into the center of the living room and planted his hands on his hips, his gaze zeroing in on Noelle. “You are in so much trouble, little girl.”

“But Daddy, don’t you like it?” Smiling sweetly, Noelle batted her eyes at him. “We worked really hard to make everything pretty for you!”

“I can see that, sugar plum. But what was the one rule I gave you about the rhinestones?”

“Ummm, to have fun?”

“Noelle...”

Obviously heeding the warning in her Daddy’s voice, Noelle sobered. “Um, to only put them on Daddy approved items.”

“And is anything in this room Daddy approved?”

“Well, you didn’t specifically say they *weren’t* Daddy approved. So, I figured it was kind of like Schroödinger’s cat. An item is both approved and not approved until Daddy says so.”

Behind Dom, Rex slapped a hand over his mouth, but the shaking of his shoulders gave away his mirth. The knots that had been forming in Ginny’s stomach as they’d discussed their impending punishments loosened significantly the more her Daddy laughed.

Surely if he was laughing, she couldn’t be in that much trouble. Right?

Then there was Dom himself, who simply closed his eyes and scrubbed a hand over his face at Noelle’s explanation.

“Schroëdinger’s cat, huh?”

“Yes, Daddy.”

Opening his eyes, Dom pinned her with a look that had butterflies exploding in Ginny’s tummy. “And what about your butt, sugar plum? Do you think it will be spanked or unspanked when we open that box?”

“Umm... well, see, that’s not really the point of the—”

“Spanked, Noelle Joy. It is going to be very, very spanked. Along with all your friend’s bottoms. Now, would you like to stay out here and take your punishment alongside your friends, or would you rather go somewhere private?”

Looking far more uncertain of herself than she had when they’d actually been executing the prank, Noelle nibbled at her bottom lip. “Um...” She mumbled something nobody could hear.

“What was that, sugar plum?”

Noelle sent her Daddy a pleading look, but he only raised an eyebrow in response. Dragging in a deep breath, she repeated herself, the words exploding out of her all at once. “I said I want my spanking with everyone else!”

“All right, then. You girls can get yourselves lined up along the couch, hands on the cushions and butts out. I’ll be back.”

Oh, shit. This was all suddenly very, very real. She was going to get spanked, not just in front of her friends, but in front of Matt and Ian as well.

Something of what she was feeling must have shown on her face, because in an instant, Rex was in front of her, holding out a hand to help her up off the couch. When she was

on her feet, he cupped her cheek in his hand, forcing her head back so she had no choice but to meet his gaze.

“You don’t have to do this if you don’t want to, princess. Say the word and we can head home.”

“No, we can’t.”

One dark eyebrow raised. “Who’s the Daddy in this relationship?”

“You are, but—”

“But nothing. If I say we can leave, then we can leave. End of story.”

Exasperation and amusement shoved panic out of the way, and she raised her own brow in response. “And how do you suggest we get back to Lost River? On foot?”

He blinked, then swore under his breath. “Shit. I forgot neither of us drove.”

“Right. So since we’re stuck here anyway, you might as well spank me.”

Lips twitching, he tried and failed to look stern. “Mouthy brat.”

“Always.”

“Real talk,” he said, his expression sobering. “If you aren’t comfortable with this, we can go sit in Dom’s office until they’re done.”

“I mean, it’s not exactly how I saw this afternoon going, but no way in hell I’m backing out now.”

There was a change in him, so subtle she was certain she would have missed it if she hadn’t been staring straight at him. His expression hardened, and everything about him just

seemed more... *Daddy*. “Then I suggest you go get in position with your friends, princess.”

CHAPTER 21



This was, hands down, one of the most surreal experiences of his life. And for someone who'd grown up with junkie parents who had done some seriously questionable shit in pursuit of their next fix, that was saying something.

Edie had moved to one of Dom's oversized armchairs, where she was curled up looking a bit like a queen holding court as she waited for the show to start while along the couch were four naughty bottoms, lined up and waiting for their punishment. Including Ginny's, which still surprised him a bit. He'd fully expected her to balk at something as humiliating as being punished in front of her friends, but then again maybe doing it *with* her friends made a difference. Whatever the reason, he was keeping an eye on her reactions to make sure she didn't need him to bail her out.

Moving to stand behind the girls, Matt crossed his arms. "I can't believe you girls bedazzled Dom's entire apartment."

"That's a bit of an exaggeration, Daddy," Carly piped up, her voice somewhat muffled by her position. "It was like, a quarter of the apartment at most."

Without a second of hesitation, Matt stepped forward and laid six loud smacks across one of the upturned bottoms.

Carly's squeals of startled pain echoed around the living room, her feet dancing in place, but she never moved out of position.

"Does this seem like a good time to have a smart mouth, Carly Marie?"

"No, Daddy. Sorry."

"Good girl. Unless you want all our friends to see what happens to my little girl when she gets sassy, I suggest you keep that in mind. Understood?"

"Yes, Daddy," she answered, her voice a high, embarrassed squeak.

Apparently satisfied with her response, Matt turned his glare on Edie, who raised a haughty brow in response. "Something on your mind, Matty?"

"Yeah. What happened to you keeping an eye on them?"

"I did. I kept a very close eye on things." Edie grinned, looking as pleased with herself as Rex had ever seen her. "How do you think they got the designs so perfect?"

Before Matt could respond, Dom emerged from the bedroom carrying a black duffel bag. "I was looking through my implements and realized I didn't know what was okay for Carly."

"Thanks." Taking the bag from Dom, Matt set it on the floor and unzipped it, studying the implements inside. Everything from large wooden paddles to floggers to thin wooden canes. "I've checked with a few doctors who I happen to know are in the lifestyle and right now we're staying away from the heavier paddles and stuff." With a wide, almost evil grin, he held up what looked like a ping pong paddle. "This should get our point across nicely, though. Not too heavy, but it will sting plenty."

From the couch, one of the girls whimpered, and though Rex couldn't pinpoint who it was exactly, he knew it wasn't Ginny's whimper. He'd recognize his princess's little noises anywhere.

Rising to his feet, Matt passed the paddle off to Dom. "It was your apartment they bedazzled, so it's your call."

"I think ten should be enough. Two sets of five, starting at one end and working our way down?"

Once everyone was in agreement, Dom stepped forward, tapping the paddle against his hand loud enough for the women in front of him to hear. Rex watched with growing amusement as all four of them visibly tensed at the sound. "All right, naughty girls. You will each be receiving two sets of five swats from the paddle in my hand. When we're done with your paddling, you will be removing all the rhinestones from my apartment, and there better not be a single sticky spot left when you're done. Understood?"

"But Daddy, that's gonna take forever!" Noelle whined, twisting around to pout at him over her shoulder.

"You didn't mind taking the time to put them everywhere, did you, little girl?"

"No, but that part was fun."

"Keep arguing with me, Noelle, and I'll start doubling the count for you and your friends."

It was fascinating to watch the normally laidback Dominic transform into a strict Daddy almost on the same level as Matt and Ian. Even more so because Rex had gotten the distinct impression he wasn't all that upset about the rhinestones, beyond the fact Noelle had broken a very specific rule.

And if Rex was being honest with himself, he found the whole thing rather hilarious. As long as the stones didn't cause any permanent damage, like that time some asshole had super glued rhinestones to his bike several years ago. Those had taken forever to scrape off, and he'd had to repaint the bike when he finally got them off.

He never had figured out who the culprit was.

“Any questions?” Dom asked, jolting Rex back to the present. When all four women remained silent, Dom moved into position beside Noelle who was on the far end of the lineup, placing his hand on her back as he tapped her bottom with the paddle. “Just so you know, sugar plum, I'm not mad. I am disappointed you broke a rule, but I'm not angry with you. That being said, you can consider yourself on restriction for the rest of the day. No tv, no sweets, and certainly no orgasms.”

“Daddy, no!”

Noelle's plaintive wail was interrupted by the sound of the paddle snapping against her bottom. Four more times the paddle connected with her backside, hard enough to make her squeal and dance with each swat.

With his hand still on her back, Dom leaned down to whisper something only for his Little girl's ears. Whatever it was had her sniffing pitifully and nodding her head before Dom straightened and held out the paddle to the next Daddy in line.

“Batter up, Ian.”



POOR NOELLE. A public spanking and no orgasms the rest of the day?

So much for Matt being the strictest Daddy. Yeesh.

Then again, maybe he had something equally as devious planned for Carly. Hopefully Rex wasn't taking notes. Ginny's clit was already aching just from listening to Dom lecture and spank Noelle. If Rex so much as threatened her with no orgasms, she might have to murder him.

"Do you have anything to say for yourself, Taylor Grace?" Ian's no-nonsense tone sent a shiver up Ginny's spine. He sounded even more disappointed than Dom had, and it wasn't even his house!

"I'm sorry, Daddy. We were just having fun!"

"Well, let's see how much fun you're having in a minute."

The *crack* of wood meeting flesh echoed around the room, mingling with Taylor's cries as it struck five times in quick succession.

"When you are at someone else's house, I expect you to follow their rules, Taylor. After you are finished helping Noelle clean up, you will apologize to Dom and you better make it a sincere apology if you don't want a repeat of this paddling when we get home. Understood?"

"Yes, Daddy," Taylor replied softly, her voice so sad it nearly broke Ginny's heart.

Then it was Carly's turn.

"My naughty Little girl," Matt said, his deep voice unusually hard. "You will also be apologizing to Dom once the house is put back to rights. And when we get home, you are going to sit with a plug in your naughty little bottom and write lines for me so I can be sure this lesson sinks in."

"Aw, Daddy, that's just mean!"

"You love it when I'm mean, babygirl."

With that, five crisp swats landed across Carly's ass. And maybe it was Ginny's imagination, because she knew she was next, but she could swear they were louder and harder than any of the ones that had come before.

It was shocking, honestly, that she could hear anything over the pounding of her own heart, which only grew louder as Rex took his spot behind her, his hand on the small of her back. That small touch helped to center her, but she was still very aware that she was bent over, ass in the air, about to get her very first public spanking.

"I don't really have anything to say that the others haven't covered. Ready, princess?"

"Yeah. Sure."

Two swats landed, one for the top of each thigh, and she just barely managed not to cry out at the sharp pain. "What do you call me, Ginny?"

Asshole. I call you asshole. But she wasn't quite brave enough to say that out loud, so she settled for what he wanted to hear, albeit probably more sarcastically than was wise under the circumstances. "Sorry. Yes, Daddy. I'm ready."

"Good girl."

Crack! The paddle burned, enough for her to inhale sharply, her fingers digging into the cushions of the couch. A second and third swat fell, spreading the burn across her entire ass.

But it wasn't unbearable. Far from it. If anything, the sting faded almost immediately, leaving behind an almost pleasurable warmth that only served to make the throbbing in her clit worse with each swat.

By the fifth, she was fighting the urge to squirm. Or to beg. Being spanked in front of her friends was one thing. Letting them know how turned on she was, well, that was quite another thing altogether.

When it was over, Rex leaned down, his voice a low rumble for her ears only. "You're doing such a good job, princess. You okay?"

"Yes, Daddy," she whispered back.

"That's my girl. If you take the next set as well as the first, Daddy will make sure you go to bed with your pussy nice and full of his cum. How does that sound?"

Heat flooded her face. "Rex!"

"Ah, ah, ah. Who am I, princess?"

"*Daddy,*" she whisper-yelled. "You can't say things like that!"

"Of course, I can. I'm your Daddy."

"You're a—" She caught herself at the last second before she said something that would land her in even more trouble.

"Good catch, baby." Brushing her hair from her face, he pressed a kiss to her cheek before pulling away. "Back to you, Dom."

The second set of five went more quickly, since apparently the Daddies had gotten all the lecturing out of their system. But with Rex's promise ringing in her ears, every crack of the paddle and every squeal of pain from her friends' lips had Ginny's heart pounding faster, her blood pumping hotter, and her pussy clenching with need.

Until, finally, it was her turn again. Closing her eyes, she let herself savor each burning stroke as it drove her need higher and higher.

By the time Rex pulled her into his arms for an after-panking snuggle, she felt like she might spontaneously combust.

What was worse, Rex seemed to have caught on. As she and the other girls worked at peeling the rhinestones from various surfaces around the apartment, Rex took every opportunity he had to touch her. Not where she actually *wanted* him to touch her, but just little teasing brushes of his fingers over pretty much every inch of her body otherwise. Until she was tight ball of anxious need, ready to burst at any second.

She was going to murder him.

"Fucking finally," she muttered when the last rhinestone was peeled from Dom's toaster.

"Hey, at least they were basically just stickers," Carly said cheerfully. "Coulda been a lot worse."

"True. If we'd super glued them like I did with the ones I put on Rex's bi—"

She slapped a hand over her mouth, but the damage was done. Rex, who had been hovering nearby just waiting for

another opportunity to drive her wild with more of those teasing touches, narrowed his eyes. “That was *you*?”

Hand still collapsed over her mouth, Ginny shook her head and took a step back.

“Too late, princess. Cat’s out of the bag. ‘Fess up.”

Lowering her hand, Ginny took another step backward as he closed in on her. “I can explain.”

“Yeah? I’m listening.”

A quick glance around confirmed they had a riveted audience, and she sent him a pleading look. “Can we talk about this later?” Getting spanked with her friends hadn’t been too bad. But getting her ass paddled while everyone looked on, especially when she had no delusions about him letting her off with just a handful of swats she couldn’t even feel an hour later, that was more humiliation than anyone should be expected to bear.

“Sure.” In a flash he was on her, crowding her against the counter, his voice a low growl in her ear. “We can talk about it while you’ve got Daddy’s cock buried deep in your ass. You are in *so* much trouble, princess.”

Fuck.

CHAPTER 22



He was never carpooling anywhere again. While all he wanted to do was get Ginny back to his place so he could get his retribution for her bedazzling his bike all those years ago, they had to wait for everyone else to get ready to leave.

Then there was the incredibly awkward, incredibly tense car ride with Ian and Taylor. Ginny and the girls had all tried to pile in with Noelle, the way they'd done on their way to Charleston, but Rex had shut that down quickly. No way in hell was he letting his naughty little princess out of his sight so she could lock herself away in her tower.

On the bright side, not having to focus on driving gave him plenty of time to think of an appropriately devious punishment for his Little girl.

As Ian's car rolled down the driveway, Rex laid his hand on the back of Ginny's neck, a dark thrill running through him as she tensed under his hand. "Come on, princess. We need to have a talk."

"Would it help if I said I was really, really sorry about the bike?"

"Depends. Are you sorry?"

She paused as they stepped inside the house, far too long than she should have if the answer was a simple ‘Yes’. “I don’t know.”

“Well, I have to appreciate your honesty, at least. Strip.”

Releasing his hold on her, he stepped away, crossing his arms and pinning her with a stern glare when she didn’t move. “This is not the best time to test my patience, little girl.”

“I just want to talk before you... do whatever it is you’re planning to do.”

“You’re a talented girl. Talk while you strip.”

She huffed out an annoyed breath. “Look, if you’d just *listen—*”

“I’m all ears, princess. Go ahead. Tell me why you thought it would be a good idea to super glue hundreds of tiny gems to my bike, causing me hours of work and a very expensive paint job to fix what you’d done.”

At least now she had the grace to look sheepish. “Okay, I am sorry about that. I’ll pay you back for the paint job.”

“I don’t give a fuck about the money.” Not now, anyway. Ten years ago, when he’d been fresh out of high school and still working multiple odd jobs just to try and stay afloat, it had certainly been a blow. But he’d survived, just like he’d always survived, and over the years money had become less of an issue. He would never be as flush as her, but he got by just fine.

“Stubborn ass,” she muttered, low enough he almost didn’t hear her.

Reaching for her, he tangled his fingers in those fiery locks of hers, forcing her head back. Fear flickered in her eyes,

making his blood pump harder in his veins. He never wanted her to be truly afraid of him, but that little hint of fear... Yeah. He loved that. A whole fucking lot.

“Care to repeat that, little girl?”

She tried to look haughty, but the sharp little intake of air gave her away. “No, thank you.”

Tightening his fingers in her hair, he forced her head back even further. “I don’t think you appreciate just how much trouble you’re in here, baby. You think I give a fuck that all this happened a decade ago and I have zero right to punish you for it? Because I don’t. So I suggest you drop the attitude and start doing as you’re told before I decide your ability to sit comfortably for the foreseeable future is a privilege you no longer deserve. Am I making myself perfectly fucking clear?”

The fear was still there in her impossibly green eyes. But there was desire, too, a dark need that matched his own. “Y-yes, Daddy.”

“Good girl. Now, do as you were told and strip.”

This time when he released her, she immediately reached for the hem of her sweater, pulling it up over her head. Arms crossed, he watched as she shed her clothes, carefully folding them up and placing them in a pile on his couch.

“I’m still waiting on that explanation you seemed so eager to give me a few minutes ago. So, tell me, princess. What the hell possessed you to turn my bike into a glittering abomination?”

Clad in nothing but a pair of lacy underwear that matched her eyes almost perfectly, she sighed, her breasts rising and falling with the gesture in a way that nearly made him drool.

“Do you want the real answer or the excuse I gave myself at the time?”

“Both.”

She rolled her eyes. “You were mean.”

Guilt slammed into him, making his chest ache from the impact. “Is that the real reason or just what you told yourself?”

“That’s the excuse. I’ll give you the real reason if you can tell me why you were such an asshole to me for so long.”

Fuck. This was not how he’d envisioned this scene going at all. “You really want to talk about this now, princess?”

One hand on her hip, she gave him what he thought of as her haughty princess stare. “Since we’re apparently dredging up our pasts, yes.”

“Maybe I’m just an asshole.”

“Don’t lie to me, Rex.”

“I’m not. I really am just an asshole. But that’s not why I was such a dick to you.” Goddamn, this was harder than he’d thought it would be. Then again, he’d sort of hoped that after six months of sleeping together it wouldn’t actually come up.

It had, though, and refusing to answer when she’d asked him point blank was the coward’s way out. And while he was undoubtedly an asshole, he’d never been a coward. “You pissed me off.”

“How? By existing?”

“Yes.” He nearly laughed when she narrowed her eyes, but common sense won out and he managed to keep his mirth from bubbling up to the surface. “I don’t think you really know how fucking potent you are, princess.”

“Potent? What are you talking about?”

“You walk in a room and the whole place just fills up with you. You’re gorgeous and smart and funny and so completely out of my league it killed me. It was easier, I guess, to just be pissed at you all the time instead of admitting I was in love with a woman I could never have.”

Silence fell, so complete he swore he could hear the crickets outside breathing. A hundred emotions seemed to flash across her face as he waited with his breath lodged in his throat for her to respond. “You... You’re in love with me?”

The fact that this apparently came as news to her had a laugh bursting out of him. “Jesus, woman, of course I’m in love with you. I bought you a goddamn coffee pot.”

Her eyes were still wide and slightly dazed. “I didn’t want to read too much into that.”

“Guess I have to spell it out for you.” Stepping forward, he cupped her face in his hands. “I am completely, hopelessly, stupidly in love with you, Ginny Morgan. And I have been for a long fucking time. I’m sorry I was such an asshole about it.”

“I guess I can forgive you.” Mischief sparkled in her eyes. “After all, I did bedazzle your bike.”

Surprisingly, he couldn’t even muster up a spark of anger about it anymore. “You still haven’t told me the real reason you did that.”

“You were mean. And, well, I was a little in love with you, too.”

Shock very nearly rendered him speechless. “What?”

“I tried not to be.” She let out a sharp, bitter laugh. “God knows I tried really freaking hard not to be in love with a man

who seemed to hate everything about me. But I guess I'm just wired wrong, because the meaner you were, the harder I fell. The bike was my way of getting you back for being an asshole and for making me love you. And I sort of figured you'd know it was me, or at least figure it out eventually."

"I should have. Who the hell else would pull a prank with rhinestones?"

"Noelle, apparently," she said with a quick grin before her expression grew serious again. "I really am sorry. Forgive me?"

"Already done. But I have a feeling you still need Daddy to help you get rid of all that guilt you've been carrying around for the last ten years, don't you, princess?"

Her pupils widened, all but obliterating the green as she inhaled sharply. "Yes, Daddy."



MAYBE SHE SHOULD HAVE SAID no. Should have told him to fuck right off with his offer to punish her. As he'd said already, he had zero right to do so.

But she hadn't. And even now, after she'd stripped the last stitch of clothing from her body and followed him into his bedroom, she wasn't entirely sure why.

Because you deserve it.

Okay, well, yeah. There wasn't really any denying that. She'd done her best over the years not to think too hard about what he'd had to do to repair the damage she'd done with

those stupid rhinestones. But faced with the reality of it, she could no longer deny the weight of the guilt in her stomach.

It was more than that, though. Somehow, it felt like a new beginning. A way to wash away all the hurtful words they'd slung at each other over the years. A way to move past the lingering anger and fear that had been simmering between them even after she'd come to his bed. Hell, even after she'd agreed to be his Little girl.

“Arms behind your back, princess.”

With a shaky breath, she did as she was told, moving her hands to the small of her back.

“Good girl.” His smile flashed, dark and dangerous, and she very nearly whimpered. “Since you like to make things shiny and pretty, I have something special for you.”

Stepping around her, he opened the top drawer of his dresser. It was, unfortunately for her, too tall for her to get a peek inside to see what kind of toys he had stashed in there.

Not that he made her wait very long. A few moments later, he closed the drawer again, a plug and something silver and sparkly in his hand.

“What's that?” She nodded to the something silver.

“These?” Shifting the plug to his other hand, he held up two silver clips with short chains that held three deep green stones. “These are to make your gorgeous tits even more beautiful.”

“Umm, you are not piercing my nipples, Rex.”

“No, I'm not. Although I do know a guy if you decide you want to go that route. But these.” He held up a clip and squeezed it so the jagged teeth opened. “Aren't piercings.”

Understanding dawned, followed closely by a jolt of fear that had her pussy clenching. “I’m not sure those are any better!”

“Guess we’ll have to see, won’t we? Keep those hands behind your back, little girl, or I’ll have to get mean.”

“*Get* mean?”

Chuckling softly, he bent his head, pulling her nipple into his mouth. Pleasure shot through her and she instinctively arched her back, offering her breasts up to him as he teased the little bud into a stiff, aching point.

By the time he switched to her other nipple, her breaths were coming in sharp, ragged little pants and she was on the verge of begging him to just fuck her already.

Every inch of her felt too hot, too tight when he lifted his head and smiled down at her. “Ready, princess?”

“Ready for wha—oh *fuck*, that hurts!” Pain, piercing pain bit at her breast. “What the hell, Rex?”

“Just so you know, I am keeping track of every time you forget to call me ‘Daddy’. Your bottom is going to be very red and very sore by the time you take Daddy’s cock in your tight little bottom hole.”

“It’s kind of hard to think when you—*goddammit*, Rex! I mean, Daddy!”

While she’d been ranting, he’d used her distraction against her so he could clamp her other nipple. Now both breasts ached with every breath, and she struggled to breath through the pain.

But in an odd way, it almost felt... good. Like when he played a little too hard with her nipples, only more prolonged

than the occasional pinch. In fact, with each passing second, the pain ebbed a little more, and the ache between her thighs became even more pronounced.

“Naughty little princess,” he murmured, lowering his head to brush a kiss over her lips. “Now that we’ve got those pretty nipples of yours ‘bedazzled’, time for your bottom. Bend over, baby.”

CHAPTER 23



God she looked gorgeous, all flushed with pleasure and those green jewels dangling from her perfect breasts. Even when she glared at him, she was stunning. His own naughty little goddess, begging to be worshiped.

Oh, who the hell was he kidding? The glare was half the appeal. It didn't matter that he'd finally come clean about why he'd spent so many years poking at her. He didn't think he'd ever tire of getting a rise out of Ginny Morgan.

With a soft little huff of air, she turned and bent at the waist, her forearms braced on the bed. "You could just fuck me, you know. This isn't going to get us any closer to you putting a baby in me."

"Plenty of time for that later, princess. Tonight is about teaching my Little girl a lesson."

"I'm sure I'd learn my lesson just as well without your cock in my ass."

In response, he grabbed the lube he'd left on his nightstand and spread her bottom cheeks so he could coat the winking star of her anus with the clear liquid. Ginny squeaked a bit, and he couldn't help but grin as he pushed a finger past that tight ring of muscle. "Relax for me, princess. I don't want to hurt you."

“Tell that to my tits,” she grumbled.

“You know what I mean, brat.” Shaking his head at her, he worked his finger in and out of her ass, coating her muscles with the lube before pulling his finger out and pushing a second one in alongside it.

“Oh! Daddy, no!”

There was, he had quickly learned, little he loved more than the sound of her whining and pleading. “Just relax for me, baby. You can take it if you relax.”

“I *can't*.”

“You’re going to have to. My cock is a lot bigger than just these two fingers.”

A shudder raced through her bottom, making her ass clench around his fingers and he bit back a groan. He couldn’t wait to feel her gripping his cock exactly the same way.

Little by little, he felt her relax around him. “That’s my good girl,” he crooned as he forced his fingers deeper inside her. “Just a little more and then you can have the plug.”

“I don’t want the plug!”

“But it has such a pretty green jewel on it to match your clamps. Don’t you want to look pretty for Daddy?”

He felt as well as heard her sigh. “Yes, Daddy.”

“That’s my good girl.”

Whimpering softly, she dropped her head, and he swore he could feel the humiliation rolling off her in waves. Which was just about the cutest fucking thing he could imagine, that after everything they’d done together, having a couple fingers in her ass would embarrass her so deeply.

It was too delicious of an opportunity to pass up.

“Do you like Daddy’s fingers in your tight little asshole, princess?”

“No,” she moaned, her fiery hair jerking from side to side in protest.

“Hmm. Let’s see about that.”

With his fingers still working in and out of her bottom, he slid his opposite hand up her thigh to where she was, as he’d expected, soaking fucking wet. “Tsk tsk tsk. Looks like my little girl wasn’t being completely honest with me. You’re dripping wet, baby.”

“Daddy...”

Her whine nearly made him come in his pants right then and there. Maybe it made him an asshole, but god he loved those needy little sounds. Loved knowing she’d never allow herself to be humiliated, to be used like this by any other man.

It was with more than a little reluctance that he pulled his fingers free and picked up the plug. She tensed up again a bit when he pressed the cool metal to her hole, but there wasn’t too much resistance, at least until it got to the widest bit.

“Oh, Daddy, no! It’s too big!”

“You can take it, baby. You’re going to be taking something even bigger in your bottom soon.”

“I’m sorry, I’m sorry, I’ll never ever touch your bike again, I swear! Just take it out, please!”

He paused with her bottom hole stretched around the widest part of the plug. “What’s your safeword, princess?”

“Wh-what?”

“Your safeword. What do you say to get me to stop something?”

“I, um, red. It’s red.”

“Good girl. And do you need to use your safeword right now? Is the plug really too much?”

There was a long pause before she sighed again. “No, Daddy.”

“You sure? I promise I won’t be mad if it is.”

“It’s not.” She turned her head, a strained smile tugging at her lips as she looked over her shoulder at him. “You know me. I’ll be okay, I just have to be dramatic first.”

He couldn’t help it. The laugh burst out of him, shaking his body with the force of it. “Truer words were never spoken.”

Her giggle ended on a gasp as he slid the plug home inside her. “There. A perfect fit.”

“Easy for you to say when you’re not the one with something stuck up your ass.”

“Perks of being the Daddy.” Using the wipes he’d stashed in the nightstand along with the lube, he wiped his fingers clean as he stepped back to study the sight she made. The emerald green of the plug stood out beautifully against the pale globes of her ass.

“Take a picture, it’ll last longer,” she said dryly after he’d apparently stared a bit too long.

“That’s an excellent idea, actually.” Pulling his phone from his pocket, he framed her ass on the screen and clicked the button to capture the sight of Lost River’s princess bent over and waiting for her Daddy’s discipline. “Beautiful.”

“I cannot believe you actually did that. I swear to god, if you ever show that to anyone—”

“Relax, princess. This is for my personal collection. Your ass is for my eyes only.”

“Oh. Good. Thank you.”

Stepping back up to the bed, he ran his hand over her ass, grinning down at her when she trembled at his touch. “Do I make you nervous, baby?”

“I have the jaws of death on my tits and a hunk of metal in my ass. Yes, you make me nervous.”

“Good.”

With that, he snapped his hand against her ass, drinking in her startled cry as a perfect pink handprint blossomed on her skin. Over and over, he peppered her bottom with sharp, crisp swats until every inch of her ass was a beautiful shade of rose and she was dancing on her toes to try and escape the blows.

Stepping back to admire his—haha—handiwork, he reached for the buckle on his belt. “You look so pretty in pink, baby. But I bet you’ll look even better in red.”

With that, he folded the belt over into a loop and snapped it across the fullest part of her bottom. Ginny’s gasp filled the room as she went up on her toes and an angry red welt appeared across her ass.

“Is it nice to deface other people’s property, little girl?”

“No, Daddy!”

Two more strokes of the belt had her crying out in pain. And damned if his cock didn’t jerk at the anguished sound. “Are you ever going to super glue things to someone else’s property again?”

“No, Daddy!” she squealed as he whipped the belt across her ass again.

Three more strokes, three more welts. “And are you going to touch Daddy’s bike again without permission?”

“No, Daddy!” Her voice was thick with tears, and her breaths were those sharp, shaky little pants he loved so much. “I’m sorry!”

“I know you are, princess. And I know it was a long time ago and you know better now. But there are still consequences for your actions, aren’t there, baby?”

A pitiful snuffle met his ears a second before she nodded. “Yes, Daddy.”

Pausing the punishment, he rubbed his hands over her heated skin, his fingertips brushing over the raised welts in awe. “Your poor bottom is so red now. I bet it’s really sore, isn’t it?”

“Uh huh,” she replied with another of those little snuffles that had him swallowing back a laugh.

“Do you think you’ve learned your lesson, baby?”

“Yes, Daddy. I’ll never ever do anything naughty again.”

“Don’t make promises you can’t keep, princess. I’ll settle for you leaving my bike out of your little revenge plans in the future.”

“I can probably manage that.”

“Good girl. But you know your punishment isn’t over.”

She moaned, the curtain of her hair shaking in defiance. “Daddy, no!”

Ignoring her protests, he gripped the base of the plug and tugged, watching in fascination as the muscles turned pink, then white as the metal stretched them wide again. When it was free, he set it aside and stripped down before pouring more lube on his cock and lining it up with her hole.

It took every ounce of willpower he had to go slow, to give her time to adjust as he pushed his cock past that initial bit of resistance. He watched, fascinated, as her red and welted cheeks swallowed his cock. “You’re taking me so well, baby. We’re almost there.”

“Daddy, it hurts!”

“I’m sure it does. And why are you taking Daddy’s cock in your bottom instead of your sweet little pussy?”

“Be-because I was n-naughty.”

“You were very naughty, princess. And naughty little girls don’t get Daddy’s cock in their pussies. That’s a reward for good girls.”

“I’m *sorry*,” she wailed, her bottom clenching around him as he pushed deeper.

Poor little princess. She’d sounded plenty remorseful before, but now there was no doubt in his mind she was truly sorry for what she’d done.

Taking pity on her, he leaned forward a bit, sliding his hand around the full curve of her belly down to where she was still so fucking wet for him, the heat of her well-punished bottom pressing against his abdomen.

“If you’re really sorry, then show Daddy what a good girl you can be. Come for Daddy, princess.”



HER ENTIRE BODY was a maelstrom of conflicting emotions. Pain mixed with pleasure mixed with humiliation. And, beneath it all, love.

Rex Carrington, bane of her fucking existence, was in love with her. Had been, to hear him tell it, for years. Her friends had been right.

She still wasn't entirely sure what to do with that.

But that was the least of her concerns at the moment. The most pressing issue was the thick, hard length of his cock stretching her bottom hole open with no relief in sight. She couldn't decide if it was the act itself embarrassing her... or how much she was enjoying it.

And then his fingers were on her clit, stroking and pinching and teasing until the coil of need inside her tightened to the point she thought it might snap and shatter her into a million pieces.

There was something missing, something keeping her from giving into that aching need. It wasn't until he rocked his hips gently, obviously taking great care not to hurt her, that she realized what it was.

"Daddy." Her voice was tight with that unfulfilled desire, and she had to swallow hard to get the rest of the words out. "Daddy, I need... I need..."

"What, baby?" The fingers on her clit continued stroking, sending a tremor through her body. "Tell Daddy what you

need.”

“Fuck me.” The words burst out of her, a desperate, nearly sobbing plea. “Please, Daddy.”

He rocked again, a bit harder this time, and she gasped at the rush of painful pleasure. “Where do you want Daddy to fuck you, princess?”

“In-in my bottom.”

“Like this?” With an aching slowness, he pulled his cock nearly all the way out of her—before slamming back into her with a force that had her crying out.

“Yes, Daddy!”

Again, he fucked her, and again she cried out as the pain drove her pleasure higher and higher still.

“Such a filthy little princess,” he growled, slamming his cock back into her as his fingers continued to work her clit. “Do you know how fucking hot it makes me, knowing I’m the only one who gets to see this side of you? Everyone else just sees Lost River’s golden girl. Nobody else gets to hear you beg Daddy to fuck your ass. Nobody else gets to see what a naughty, filthy little girl you are. That’s only for me. Isn’t that right, baby?”

Humiliation churned in her gut, yet somehow it only made her want more. More pain, more pleasure, more of being told what a dirty little girl she was. “Yes, Daddy,” she gasped out as he thrust home again.

“Because you’re *my* filthy little princess. My baby. My good fucking girl, who’s going to come with Daddy’s cock stretching her bottom wide. Come for Daddy, baby. Come for me.”

The hand not on her pussy slid up her stomach to her nipples. Before she realized what he was doing, he unclipped one clamp, then the other. Blinding hot pain shot through her, straight to her clit. And she broke for him. Shattered. The line between pleasure and pain ceased to exist as she surrendered herself, body and soul, to the only man capable of demanding it. The only man she'd ever wanted to give herself to so completely.

“That’s my good girl,” he crooned, still teasing waves of pleasure from her with those clever fingers as he continued fucking her most private place just like she’d asked—begged—him to.

And then he was filling her, one final time, and she whimpered at being denied the reward of her Daddy’s cum in her pussy.

They stayed there, hearts racing, breaths ragged, locked together in the most intimate way she could imagine, until he finally slipped from her.

“Come on, princess. My dirty girl needs a shower.”

She shook her head with a grunt of denial. “Can’t move.”

“And you’re welcome for that. But you’ll be pissed as hell in an hour when you wake up from your nap with your makeup a mess and your ass still full of—”

“Okay, okay, I’m going!” Face burning with embarrassment, she forced herself up, shooting him a glare when he laughed.

“You know, a normal person might stop tormenting someone after he professes his love for them,” she said with a delicate sniff as they made their way to the bathroom.

Pausing in front of his shower, he turned, one eyebrow cocked. “You’d be very sad if I stopped tormenting you, princess.”

“Not that sad.”

“Liar.”

Deliberately ignoring him, she flipped on the shower. When it had warmed up, they stepped under the spray together. And as he ran the loofah over her skin, then wiped away her makeup with the specialty cloth she’d stashed in his bathroom weeks ago, she was forced to admit she wouldn’t enjoy the tender side of him nearly as much without the prickly, aggravating side.

But that was her little secret.

CHAPTER 24



“Morning, princess.” Dressed in nothing but his uniform pants, with the top button still undone, Rex stopped to press a kiss to Ginny’s cheek as she did her best to will the process along with her mind. “Got any big plans for the day?”

Three days after she’d gotten her ass whipped for the bedazzling incident, she found herself once again at Rex’s house, willing her coffee pot to move faster. And trying not to think about how quickly and easily they’d settled into a routine. The coffee pot finally signaled it was done and she nearly wept with gratitude as she filled an oversized mug with the life-giving liquid. “Doctor’s appointment this morning, class this afternoon. I’m a bit behind on some content I promised one of my partner companies, so I should probably work on that. You?”

With an overly dramatic sigh, he opened the fridge and pulled out a carton of orange juice. “Same. Got that photo shoot with Craftsman I keep putting off. What do you think would look sexier, the screwdriver or the torque wrench?”

“Torque wrench, obviously. It’s longer, and therefore more phallic, which is oddly appealing to the male demographic.”

Sipping her coffee, she had to fight not to laugh when he turned to stare at her. “I can’t decide if I’m turned on by the

fact you know what a torque wrench is or disturbed by you describing it as phallic.”

“Both?”

He tilted his head a bit as if considering it. “Yeah. Definitely both.” Chuckling, he pulled a glass down from the cabinet beside the fridge and poured himself some orange juice. “What’re you seeing the doc for?”

“Checkup for the girly bits. Just routine stuff.” She took another sip of coffee, more to give herself time to consider whether or not she wanted to come completely clean about her appointment. This morning, she’d woken up early and snuck in another pregnancy test, since Aunt Flo still hadn’t come for a visit. It had been negative, again, but she’d scoured the internet and found dozens of stories of false negatives.

Which meant there was always a chance she’d get to the doctor and they’d run *their* tests and find out she actually was pregnant. Hope was like a living, breathing thing inside her, so big and powerful it made her ache with it. Part of her wanted to share that hope with him, to see if his face lit up the way she hoped it would at the prospect of being a father.

But if it turned out to be nothing, she didn’t want to disappoint him. There was no sense in both of them having their days ruined, so she kept her mouth shut.

“Does that mean I can’t have my way with you before I head over to the garage?” he asked, a ridiculously sexy smirk on his lips.

“That is absolutely what it means. No sex before a pelvic exam.” The pelvic exam she’d completely forgotten about last night when she’d let him fuck her not once, not twice, but

three times before they'd finally collapsed in bed. Whoops.
“So keep your hands to yourself, mister.”

Setting his glass aside, he moved closer, a mischievous gleam in his eye as he crowded her space. “And is there any medical reason I can't fuck that sassy mouth of yours before your appointment?”

“Ummm.”

“That's what I thought. On your knees, princess.”

“But, Daddy—”

His hand shot out, quick as Sir Hiss when a tasty treat was dropped in his cage, and his fingers wrapped around her hair.
“Don't make me ask again, little girl.”

There was absolutely no Earthly reason his bossy ways should get her so hot and bothered. But there was no denying the way her body flushed and her pussy throbbed as she lowered herself to her knees in front of him.

Or the way everything inside her seemed to heat at the sound of his low moan when he filled her mouth with his cock.
“Fuck, baby. That's it. You're doing such a good job for Daddy.”

His praise spurred her on and before long, her mouth was filled with the hot, salty taste of him. When she'd swallowed every last drop, Rex cupped her face with his hand, tilting her head back so he could smile down at her. “Are you going to be a good girl today, princess?”

“Depends on what the day brings,” she replied with a cheeky smile.

The stern look he tried to give her was ruined by his laughter. “Brat. Come on, you don't want to miss your

doctor's appointment or Daddy will have to spank you again."

"Oh, no." Placing the back of her hand to her forehead, she heaved a dramatic sigh. "Whatever will I do?"

His laughter echoed in her ears as he helped her to her feet and sent her off with a sharp swat to her bottom. With her body humming, she hurried to the bathroom to get ready for the day. There was no way she was going to miss her doctor's appointment, but maybe there was something she could do to earn her that spanking later.



"ALL RIGHT, Miss Ginny. Everything looks good." Pulling the latex gloves from her hands, Dr. Patricia Young tossed them in the medical waste bin and gave Ginny her usual sweet, comforting smile. With her silver hair piled on her head, she should have looked a lot older than her forty-some years, but to Ginny she'd always just looked elegant. The kind of careless elegance Ginny's own mother tried and failed to have.

Sitting up on the table after having her vagina spread open and scraped out, Ginny tried to calm the pounding of her heart. "Really? Nothing... unusual?"

Dr. Young glanced up from her tablet, one eyebrow raised in a move that reminded Ginny rather uncomfortably of Rex. "Were you expecting us to find anything unusual?"

"No. Well, yes." Laughing nervously, Ginny ran a shaky hand over her hair. "Maybe. I don't know."

“Those are all wildly different responses, Ginny,” Dr. Young said, her voice soft but firm. “What’s going on?”

She’d been rehearsing this exact conversation, or some version of it, for months. But now that it was here, her tongue seemed stuck to the roof of her mouth. “This is just between us, right? Client-patient privilege and all that?”

“Of course.”

“And you won’t judge me?”

Another of those reassuring smiles. “My job is to keep you healthy, not to judge your life choices. Though I admit you do have me curious now.”

“Okay, well...” Ginny dragged in a deep breath and braced herself to finally come clean about her extracurricular activities. “I’ve been trying to have a baby.”

Everything about the other woman seemed to light up. “That’s wonderful. I didn’t realize that was something you wanted right now.”

“I do. I stopped taking my birth control and started taking prenatal vitamins about six months ago. And I’ve been having sex, like, *so much sex*. All the time. But it doesn’t seem to be working.”

“I see.” The corners of Dr. Young’s mouth dipped down in a frown as she scanned the tablet in her hand. “And your last period was almost two months ago?”

“Yeah, that’s the weird thing. I’ve never been late before. At least, not this late.”

“Well, you’ve also been on birth control pretty much your entire adult life. That would have helped to regulate your cycle and mitigate other symptoms as well.”

Ginny's stomach seemed to tie itself into a knot. "Symptoms of what?"

"Could be any number of things. It could simply be your body adjusting to its new normal without the birth control. It could also be a hormonal imbalance of some kind."

Fear tightened the knots in her belly. "What does that mean? Can I still get pregnant?"

"There's no reason for me to believe otherwise at this time. Normally, six months is nothing to worry about when trying to conceive. But I'm going to send you for some labs just so we can check your hormones and see if there's anything we need to address."

"Right. Okay." With another shaky laugh, she pressed a hand to her stomach. "Why doesn't that make me feel any better?"

Dr. Young patted her arm, and though she knew it was meant to be comforting, Ginny felt far from comforted. "The unknown can be worse than knowing there's something wrong. Try not to stress about it too much. Keep doing what you're doing, and I'll give you a call when we get your lab results back in. Okay?"

"Okay. Sure."

It seemed as though she was moving in a fog as she made her way to the front desk, where they gave her a printout of what she needed for her labs, and then out to her car where she simply sat behind the steering wheel as her brain tried to process what had just happened.

She wasn't pregnant. There was no doubt now that the tests she'd been taking for weeks had been accurate. And with

that knowledge, the painful hope that had been beating at her chest all morning went up in flames.

Do not cry. You are not going to have a breakdown in public.

But oh, how she wanted to. She hadn't even realized how tightly she'd been clinging to that last bit of hope until it had been ripped from her. Tears burned at the backs of her eyes, and her throat ached from the effort to hold them back.

And she hadn't even begun to process the fact that there might actually be something wrong with her. That worry had been there, in the back of her mind somewhere, but she hadn't actually thought it would come to be.

What if she couldn't have a baby? What if it took years, and thousands of dollars in fertility treatments, and she still couldn't get pregnant? What was she supposed to do?

She was spiraling and she knew it. There was, as Dr. Young had said, no reason to believe she couldn't have a baby on her own.

So why couldn't she shake the feeling that everything she'd ever wanted was about to be snatched away from her at any second?

It took several minutes and more than a few sets of breathing exercises for her to stop feeling like she wasn't going to break down and cry. Moving mostly on autopilot, she put her car in drive and finally left the doctor's office parking lot.

She didn't even realize she was driving to her parents' house until she turned into the driveway. Why the hell was she here? Her mom had made it perfectly clear she didn't approve of Ginny's relationship with Rex, so there was no way in hell

she'd be anywhere close to supportive of her trying to have a baby with him.

And still, she found herself walking up the front steps of her childhood home. "Mom? Are you home?"

"There's no need to yell, Genevieve, I'm right here." Looking as perfect and put together as ever, other than the smudge of flour on her nose, her mother rounded the corner from the kitchen to the foyer. Her brows were drawn together in an expression Ginny was all too familiar with. An expression that clearly said she was unhappy with her daughter's 'inappropriate' behavior.

Closing in on thirty-years old, and it was just now hitting her how many times she'd been on the receiving end of that particular look.

"Nice to see you too, mom." Ginny resisted the urge to roll her eyes, but just barely.

Her mother slowed to a stop, several feet from where Ginny stood just inside the foyer. It was the first time in her memory her mother hadn't greeted her with a hug, even when she'd come barging in and yelling for her. She was just as likely to greet her with a scolding as well, sure, but it had always been accompanied by an embrace that told her she was loved, despite her behavior.

A lump lodged itself in Ginny's throat as they stared at each other. Those few feet might as well have been miles.

"Did you need something?" her mother asked, her tone sharp and so cold Ginny swore she could feel the temperature in the house drop by several degrees.

And *still* she ached for her mother's arms. "I had a doctor's appointment today."

Finally, a breach in the ice as worry filled her mother's eyes. "Is everything okay?"

"Yes. It was just a routine checkup. Dr. Young thinks I might have a hormonal imbalance of some kind, so she's running some tests, but she didn't seem worried."

"Why would she think that?"

In for a penny, in for a pound. "I'm late. Like, really late. I thought I might be pregnant, but I'm not, so—"

"Oh, thank god." Slapping her hand over her heart, Kimberly let out a sigh of relief. And for the first time since their fight, Ginny saw a glimmer of a smile on her face. "I don't know what we would have done if you'd gotten yourself pregnant by that boy."

If her mother had hauled off and slapped her across the face, Ginny didn't think it could have hurt as much as hearing her mother's absolute joy over something that had brought her so much pain. "I wanted to be pregnant, mom."

"What?" Shock had her mother's mouth falling open, and maybe it was petty of her, but Ginny couldn't help but enjoy knowing she'd landed a blow of her own. "Genevieve. You can't be serious."

"I am. Nothing in this world would make me happier than having a baby. Rex's baby, to be specific."

"No. Absolutely not. I won't allow it."

Throwing her head back, Ginny let out a loud laugh, though there was no real joy in the sound. "I'll be thirty in just a few months, mom. You have absolutely zero say in how I live my life." Her stomach revolted as she said the words, but she managed to keep her breakfast where it belonged.

“I’ll have your father cut you off if you don’t come to your senses.”

“Newsflash, I haven’t needed your money in years. My ‘ridiculous career’ more than pays my bills. Plus, I have the trust fund you no longer have any control over that’s been accruing interest my entire life. I could never work another day and my grandchildren would be able to live perfectly comfortable lives. You have no power over me.”

As soon as the words left her mouth, it was like a weight lifted from her shoulders. One she hadn’t even been aware of carrying until that very moment. “You have no power over me,” she repeated, in awe of her own voice. “I want you in my life. I want you in my baby’s life. But I won’t have you looking down on me, or the man I love.”

The ice had completely melted now, giving way to a fury she hadn’t known her mother was capable of burning in eyes that were practically the mirror image of her own. It was an image she knew she’d carry with her the rest of her life, the sight of her mother glaring at her with the closest thing to hatred she’d ever seen. “You don’t love him.”

“Oh, but I do, mom. I think I’ve loved him since before I even knew what the word meant. Rex Carrington is the man I want to spend the rest of my life with. He will, God willing, be the father of my child. Once you’re able to accept that, you’ll be welcome back in my life. Until then, as you said the other day, we have nothing more to say to each other.”

Turning on her heel, Ginny sailed through the front door and back down the steps to her car. And tried not to think about everything she was leaving behind her as she drove away.

CHAPTER 25



Sliding out from under Mrs. Harrison's old Ford that was older than he was, Rex swiped at his brow. "I'm not sure there's anything more we can do for this car, Matt. It's basically running on hope and a prayer at this point."

"Shit." Matt rubbed a hand over the back of his neck and sighed. "I'll start calling around, see if we can find her something decent that won't break the bank."

"You gonna give her the news or should I?"

"I'll do it. My garage, my disappointed customers to deal with."

"I don't envy you," Rex said with a grimace as he crossed the bay to grab a bottle of water from the small fridge Matt kept handy. "How are the wedding plans going?"

"Carly seems to be having fun. She originally wanted to elope, so I think anything else is just icing on the cake for her."

"Good. That's good." Sipping his water, Rex rocked back on his heels, silently debating if he actually wanted to ask Matt the question that had been on his mind all morning.

But in his usual Matt way, he took the matter out of Rex's hands as he joined him beside the fridge and grabbed his own bottle. "Something on your mind?"

“Maybe.”

Lifting the bottle to his lips, Matt raised an eyebrow, a silent *Well what are you waiting for?*

Rex was almost finished with his water by the time he'd worked up the nerve to say what he wanted to say. “When did you know it was the right time to ask her?”

“Ask Carly to marry me?”

“Yeah.”

“I knew the day she told me I was a dumbass and threw that damn list in my face when I tried to send her away.”

“Took you long enough, then.” That had been not too long after Ginny had hopped on the back of Rex's bike that first time.

Shrugging, Matt smiled as he drained his own bottle. “She deserved better than some half-assed proposal. I wanted to do it right.”

“I get that.”

“You thinking of popping the question to Ginny?”

“Don't you think it's too soon for that?”

“What I think doesn't really matter, does it? You've known the girl pretty much your entire lives. If you're ready and you think she's ready, why bother waiting?”

“I don't know if she's ready.”

“What makes you say that?”

“She still seems so skittish about people knowing about us. Hell, she still hasn't said anything on her social media or whatever it's called. Seems like if she was really serious about us, she would have mentioned it by now.”

Matt didn't immediately brush off his concerns, which made him feel slightly less crazy. He seemed to give the matter some serious consideration before shaking his head. "I don't think that's it. Some things matter too much to share them with everybody. Remember what Dom was saying the other day about how he doesn't share too much of his private life with his followers? It's probably like that."

That made him feel a little better. And made him feel like a teenage girl for being upset that she still hadn't posted anything about him in the first place. "Yeah. Maybe."

"Why don't you ask her yourself?" Matt nodded toward the entrance to the garage, and Rex turned to find Ginny stalking toward him, a fierce expression on her face and her red hair blowing in the wind like some Celtic goddess of war.

"Hey, princess. What're you doing—"

Before he could finish his question, she threw her arms around his neck and pressed her lips to his in a scorching kiss. The noise of the garage faded away as his world narrowed to just her.

Yanking away, she grabbed his hand and practically dragged him toward the side of the building. "We're borrowing your office for a bit, Matt."

"Shit," Matt swore loudly as Ginny shoved open the office door. "Clean up after yourselves! And don't get anything on my computer, I just replaced that damn keyboard!"

Ginny didn't so much as acknowledge his warnings as she slammed the door shut behind them and spun around to wrap herself around Rex again.

Drowning. He was drowning in her. Her taste, her scent, everything about her surrounded and consumed him.

But there was something wrong. He could taste it in her kiss, hints of desperation and fury that had him nudging her gently away.

“Not that I’m not thrilled by the prospect of a quickie in my boss’s office, but you wanna tell me what’s going on, princess?”

Her lips curved up in a seductive smile that nearly drove him to his knees. “Maybe I just missed you.”

“Uh huh. And there’s absolutely nothing else going on? No other reason you’re manhandling me at work?”

“I want sex. You are, currently and for the foreseeable future, the only person giving me sex. Unless you’d rather I go home and take care of the problem myself.”

Wrapping his hand around her throat, he pressed lightly as he backed her up against the giant filing cabinet. “Is there a reason you’re trying to bait me, little girl?”

“You’re beautiful when you’re angry. Anyone ever tell you that?”

It was such an absurd response, he couldn’t help but laugh. “I am so going to wear your ass out tonight. Right now, you’re going to tell me why you’re here, trying to get a rise out of me.”

“I’m not—”

“Princess.” Tightening his hold on her throat, not enough to cut off her air but enough for her to understand he wasn’t playing, he leaned in closer, deliberately dropping his voice to a growl. “Good Little girls don’t keep secrets from their Daddies. Tell me what’s going on. Now.”

“I’m not pregnant,” she blurted out, the tears shimmering on her lashes instantly making him feel like a complete and utter asshole.

“Aw, baby. Come here.” Releasing her neck, he wrapped his arms around her, pulling her in close and pressing a kiss to her hair. “It’s okay. We can keep trying.”

“I know. I’m being stupid.”

“Whoa. That is not at all what I said, little girl.” He pulled back just enough to grip her chin and tilt her face up. “There’s no rule that says you can’t be sad about this shit. Truth be told, I’m a little bummed myself.”

“Really?” Sniffing daintily, she gave him a watery smile. “I wasn’t sure. I mean, I sort of sprung this on you out of nowhere and—”

“Hey, hey, hey. That doesn’t mean I’m not all in, princess. I can’t wait for the day you tell me there’s a little bean in there, just waiting for us to spoil them rotten. Until then...” Needing to comfort, to make it all better, he lowered his lips to hers, gently coaxing her to open for him. When she did, he took and he claimed, until she surrendered with a sigh.

“Until then,” he murmured again, lifting his head, “we’ll just enjoy the process of trying. Yeah?”

“Yeah.”

“That’s my girl.” He kissed her again, slow and deep before pulling away. “All right, princess. I need to get back to work.”

The sheer disappointment on her face nearly had him laughing out loud. “Oh, but... I thought you were going to. You know. Try and put a baby in me.”

“What did I tell you last night?” When her brow furrowed, he allowed himself a small, wicked smile. “Daddy’s cum is for good girls. And you, naughty girl, are going to spend the rest of the day thinking about how much you miss Daddy’s cock in your pussy and how you won’t threaten to, what was it you said? Oh, yeah, ‘take care of the problem yourself’ if you don’t get what you want. You aren’t in charge here, princess, and it’s high time you learned it.”

“That’s so mean.”

“You have no idea how mean I can be, princess. But you’re about to find out.” Lifting his hand to her hair, he wrapped the long locks around his fist and tugged. “Here’s what’s going to happen. You’re going to go home, and you’re going to wait for Daddy to call and give you further instructions. You will not, under any circumstances, lay a single finger on that pretty little pussy of yours. If you do, I will know and I will do my best to ensure you don’t sit comfortably for a week. Am I understood?”

Need, raw and hot, turned the green of her eyes nearly black. “Yes, Daddy.”

“Good girl.” He dragged her up for a hard, claiming kiss. “Now, I really do have to get back to work. I’ll call you when I leave.”

Her bottom lip pushed out in a pout, but she nodded. “Okay.”

He sent her off with a sharp swat to her ass. And tried to shake off the feeling that there was still something she wasn’t telling him.



WAITING SUCKED.

It shouldn't have been an issue. She'd spent plenty of days horny and waiting for Rex to get off work. Despite her threats to the contrary, she hadn't really bothered with her treasure trove of toys since she'd started spending most of her evenings in his bed. But it was like he'd implanted some kind of secret hypnotic command in her brain by telling her to think about how she'd missed out on getting his cock inside her. Hours after she'd left the garage, that was still all she could think of.

When work proved to not be enough of a distraction, she packed up and headed over to Edie's shop. Maybe some girl time would distract her from the persistent ache between her thighs.

As luck would have it, Taylor and Noelle were both working as she'd hoped, and Carly was there as well, helping to stock shelves. Carly's face lit up when Ginny walked in the door, and she could feel her spirits lifting already.

"Ginny! We were just talking about you!"

Grinning, Ginny let the door swing shut behind and shook her hair back, striking a dramatic pose. "I thought my ears were burning."

"Noelle was just showing us some of the pictures you did for Lulu and—"

"With her permission," Noelle interrupted with a grin. "I swear she's ready to plaster them all over South Carolina."

“Who wouldn’t? They’re stunning.” With her biggest puppy dog eyes in place, Carly rushed over to grab Ginny’s hands. “Will you please, pretty please with sugar on top, do my maternity photos? I want some of those really pretty romantic ones, with my belly showing and everything.”

The idea of taking pictures of a happy, glowing Carly with her baby bump proudly on display made her want to weep and rage. Which, of course, made her feel guilty about the fact that she couldn’t just be happy for her friend. “That was really just a one-time thing...”

Carly’s face fell, and the guilty knots in Ginny’s stomach tightened. “Oh, but you’re so good. Will you at least think about it?”

How was she supposed to say no to that? “Okay, I’ll *think* about it. At the very least, I’ll help you find someone local you can trust. Deal?”

“Deal!” Squealing so loudly it made Dunk jump from his seat near the front window to glare at her, Carly threw her arms around Ginny’s neck. “You’re the best, really.”

I’m not. I’m a complete and total bitch. But she kept those thoughts to herself and forced a smile. “Maybe you could pass that message on to Rex for me so he doesn’t completely kill me tonight.”

“Uh oh.” Eyes dancing with excitement, Noelle rounded the counter, dragging Taylor along behind her. “What did you do? Spill.”

“It wasn’t *that* bad. I went by the garage hoping I could convince Rex to take a peek under my hood, if you know what I mean, but he was being an asshole so I told him if he didn’t

want to fuck me I'd go home and take care of the problem myself."

The silence that fell was broken only by Noelle's low whistle. "How bad did he whip your ass for that one?"

"That's the thing! He didn't. He's making me wait until he gets off work."

"Well, that's just cruel," Carly said, her voice so filled with righteous indignation that Ginny couldn't help but laugh.

"Thank you! That's what I think, too!" Pouting openly now, Ginny leaned into Taylor when she stepped up to wrap her arms around her.

"You poor thing." Taylor's voice was full of sympathy as she patted Ginny's shoulder.

"You should get him back." The excitement in Noelle's eyes had brightened to an almost maniacal gleam. "Go home, change into the sexiest outfit you have, and just start blowing his phone up with sexy pictures."

"Noelle, you're *brilliant*." It would probably get her in even more trouble, but if she was already getting her ass blistered, what was a little extra trouble?

CHAPTER 26



Back at her apartment, she took Noelle's advice and put on one of her favorite outfits, a sheer number with black snakes strategically placed to cover just enough of all the right areas of her body. Paired with black heels and some dark, sultry makeup, it was the perfect setup to drive Rex crazy.

She snapped a few pictures from different angles and selected a couple of her favorites to send him.

PRINCESS

Leaving work yet, Daddy?

Heart racing with a mix of excitement and nerves, she hit the send button. He must have been between orders, because it only took a few seconds for her phone to ping with his response.

REX

Trying to get me riled up again, princess?

Just thought you might like a reminder of what's waiting for you when you get here tonight.

Those three little bubbles popped up, and she held her breath as she waited for what seemed like an eternity for his

response.

Uh huh. I thought I made it clear earlier that you aren't in control here, little girl.

I didn't do anything wrong!

Sending me pics you know will get me hard as a fucking rock so I have to suffer like you're suffering isn't you trying to take back control, then?

Okay, well, when he put it like that...

Yes.

Sounds like they did their job.

Oh, they definitely did the trick. And now you're going to send me another one.

Is that so?

It is unless you want to go to bed without Daddy's cum in your pussy again tonight.

Heat flooded her cheeks, which seemed utterly ridiculous since it was hardly the first time he'd said something like that to her. But seeing it in text somehow made it feel even filthier than when he whispered those dirty promises in her ear.

What kind of picture?

Again with those stupid dots. Waiting, and waiting, and waiting...

When the next message came in, her stomach dropped as she read his instructions.

You're going to kneel in front of that pretty couch, with your back to the camera so Daddy can see that gorgeous ass of yours. Hands behind your head. You can move your hands to take and send me the picture, but then you will put them right back. Daddy will text you and let you know when your punishment is over.

Are you seriously putting me in time out????

Yup. Act like a bratty Little girl and that's exactly how I'm going to treat you. Send me the pic in the next five minutes or you will be going over Daddy's knee as soon as I walk in the door tonight.

Ugh, fine. If you want to be a big jerk about it.

Returning her phone to the tripod, she angled it at her couch and opened the camera app before positioning herself in front of the couch as instructed. When the timer began counting down, she laced her hands behind her head and waited for the picture to be taken so she could send it to him.

It was tempting, oh so tempting, to just send the damn picture and then do anything but kneel in front of that damn couch again. The old hardwood floors hurt her knees, and more than that, it was humiliating to have herself put in what amounted to timeout as a nearly thirty-year old woman.

But when she texted him the photo, his response had her stomach twisting into a ball of guilt as she read and reread the message.

Thank you for being such a good girl for me, princess. Timer's starting now.

Ugh. How was she supposed to defy him when he said things like that?

Huffing out a breath, she tossed the phone back on the couch and returned to her kneeling position.

If it hadn't been for her stupid floors, she probably could have held that position for a good long while. But the wood dug into her knees, and it wasn't long before she was feeling very sorry for herself indeed. More, she actually *was* starting to feel a little bad about trying to get the upper hand with him. As much as she hated to admit it, she'd known she was baiting him with that comment about taking care of her own needs if he didn't want to fuck her. She'd more than earned her punishment, so why the hell had she pushed him even further when she was already in plenty of trouble as it was?

She was never listening to Noelle again.

By the time her phone rang, her arms had started to ache, and she winced as she lowered them to answer the call. "Hi, Daddy."

"Hey, princess. Are you still in position?"

Once again, her cheeks flushed with embarrassment. "Yes, Daddy."

"Good girl. You can get up now."

More wincing as she pushed herself up from the ground. "That was really mean, you know."

"One of these days, you're going to learn you aren't in control, princess. Until then, I guess I'll just have to keep being mean."

She had a feeling that day would be a long time coming, so she changed the subject. "Are you on your way here?"

"I am. Ready for your next set of instructions?"

Oh, god. There went her heart again, racing triple time in her chest. “Yes, Daddy.”

“Good girl. Here’s what I want you to do. I want you to go to your bed and strip naked. Then I want you to take every vibrator, dildo, whatever toys you own to help you get off when you’re not in my bed, out of whatever drawer or box they’re hiding in. I expect you, and the toys, to be on your bed, waiting for me when I get there. Which should be in about ten minutes.”

Curiosity mingled with that delicious fear she always felt whenever she knew he had something devious up his sleeve. “What do you want my toys for?”

“You’ll see when I get there. Say ‘Yes, Daddy’ if you understand what I’m asking you to do.”

Jerk. “Yes, Daddy.”

“Good girl. I’ll see you in a few minutes.”

What the hell was he up to? The call ended and she was left staring at her phone, her mind once again racing with possibilities of what her devious Daddy might have in mind.

But she wasn’t about to push the envelope any further than she already had by disobeying him now, so she did as she was told and made her way to the bedroom.

It took her nearly the full ten minutes to gather all her toys and lay them out in a nice, neat row on her bed. She was still stripping down when she heard the sound of his boots on the stairs, and she almost tripped over her own feet trying to get them off and get onto the bed.

Worth it, she thought when he walked in and spotted her spread out on the bed, her legs open in invitation. “Hi, Daddy.”

“Hey, princess.” Lips curving up in a wicked smile, he raked his hungry gaze down her body. “You look good enough to eat.”

Her heart rate picked up as excitement and need flooded her system. “Is that the plan?”

“Maybe.” Shifting the box she’d just now noticed he was carrying in his hands, he set it down at the foot of the bed as his gaze scanned the row of toys. “You’ve got quite the collection here, princess.”

“I had a brief brand deal with the company who makes them last year. They sent me several fun little toys to try out so I could give my honest reviews.”

“Yeah?” Picking up a large, sparkly pink dick, he raised an eyebrow. “And what’s your review of this one?”

“Form over function. It’s pretty to look at and it gets the job done, but it wasn’t my favorite of the bunch.”

“Which one is your favorite?”

Pushing up onto her elbows, she pointed to the wand at the end of the row with the bulbous head. “That one. I know it’s small, but it packs a punch.”

“We’ll save that one for last, then.”

It took a moment for his words to register. “We?”

“Mmhmm.” Eyes glittering with a devious sort of excitement, Rex shrugged out of his leather jacket. “I’m going to use every single one of these on you tonight, until you come or you call your safeword. Then I’m going to pack them all up and take them home with me. Do you know why, princess?”

“Why?”

He rounded the bed, so slowly she nearly whimpered as he approached. Wrapping her hair around his hand, he pulled her head back. “Because by the time I’m through with you, I want to be absolutely sure you understand that from now on, your pleasure belongs to me. Nobody, not even you, is allowed to touch *my* pussy without my explicit permission.”

Fuck, that shouldn’t be so hot. But it was. The idea of being completely owned by him, her pleasure his and his alone, made every inch of her body flush with need.

She just wasn’t about to let him know that. “Is that so?”

“That is absolutely so, princess. And I hope for your sake you’re not half as stubborn as you pretend to be, or this is going to be a very, very long night for you.”

Part of her was still tempted to argue, to push. But the saner part of her prevailed. “I’ll be good, Daddy.”

“That’s my girl.” Still gripping her hair, he leaned in, capturing her lips in a hard, brutal kiss. “And when I’ve made you come with every single one of these toys, when you’re a sore, whimpering little mess, that’s when I’m going to fuck you. Nice and slow, so you can feel every inch of your Daddy’s cock claiming your sweet little pussy.”

“That doesn’t sound like much of a punishment.”

His grin flashed, full of wicked promise. “Trust me, princess. By the time we’re done here, you are going to be a very, very sorry Little girl.”

CHAPTER 27



It was adorable, really, that she didn't realize just how much trouble she was in. He could see it in her eyes, the hunger that had grown as he'd described her punishment. And the doubt that had crept in when he'd promised her she would end the night as a very sorry Little girl.

“Arms by your head, princess.”

Moving back to the end of the bed, he pulled the harness he'd bought months ago from the box and carried it back to her. Ginny's eyes went wide, a mixture of apprehension and excitement filling the dark, sparkling green. He slid the top of the device behind her neck, then frowned. “Do you have one of those hair thingies?”

Her brow raised in that haughty princess glare of hers. “Hair thingies?”

“You know. Like a rubber band but prettier. To put your hair up.”

Amusement flickered across her face. “There's a scrunchie on the bathroom sink, if that's what you're after.”

“How the fuck should I know if that's what it's called?” he muttered as he made his way to the bathroom. Picking up the green satiny hair tie from the sink, he shook his head and

turned back to the bedroom. “What a stupid name for a hair tie.”

“What’s that?”

“Nothing. Sit up a bit, princess.” He took his time, gathering her hair up and wrapping the ‘scrunchie’ around it in the best imitation he could manage of the elegantly messy way she sometimes wore it.

There was something in her eyes when he stepped back, but he couldn’t quite place it. “Problem, princess?”

“Why did you tie my hair up?”

Unbuckling the first restraint, he wrapped the leather around her wrist, securing it beside her head. There were four cuffs, two for her hands to keep them in place, and two for her thighs, to force them to stay spread.

Wouldn’t want his princess thinking she could just close her legs and end her punishment, now would he?

“Didn’t want your hair getting caught in the harness,” he said, answering her question as he moved down to her left thigh.

“Oh. That’s... sweet.” Her expression turned dubious as he unstrapped the first thigh restraint and slid it under her thigh. “There’s no way that’s going to fit.”

“Do you really think I would spend all this money on something and not make sure it’s perfect for my princess?”

“Okay, but, one size fits all doesn’t include fat girls.”

“It’s not one size fits all. It was specially made for you.”

“What do you mean it was made for me?”

“I mean, I took your measurements to a guy and he made me the harness.” Buckling the restraint, he smiled and patted her thigh. “See? Perfect fit. With a bit to spare, even.”

“Back up. How did you get my measurements?”

Rounding the bed, he repeated the process starting with her other wrist as he explained. “Well, not your measurements, exactly. I had to guess. But you posted this really sexy getup a while back, with a garter belt. I looked up what the measurements were for the size you were wearing—thanks for providing that, by the way—and I cross checked it with a couple other pieces you’ve shared and I was able to give the guy a pretty good estimate, it looks like.”

He was pretty sure if he’d told her he had a secret super power that allowed him to know a woman’s exact measurements just by looking at them, she wouldn’t look more shocked than she did in that moment. “You did all of that just so you could tie me up and keep me at your mercy?”

“Yup.” Grinning down at her, he buckled the final restraint, putting her completely, as she’d said, at his mercy. “And it was so fucking worth it.”

Perfect. It was the only word that came to mind at the sight of her with her legs locked apart like this, her pussy glistening with arousal despite knowing she was about to be punished. Or, more likely, because of that. Which made her even more fucking perfect as far as he was concerned.

Her mouth dipped down in a frown, and if he didn’t know any better, he’d say she looked downright confused as she tugged experimentally at her restraints. “Jesus, talk about ‘If he wanted to, he would’.”

“Don’t know what that means, princess, but I definitely wanted to.” Making his way down to the end of the bed, he scanned his options. The pink glittery dick was by far his favorite of the bunch, and she’d said it wasn’t insanely powerful, so he started with that one. “Ready, baby?”

“Do I have a choice?”

“Always, princess. Just say the word and this all stops. But until then...” He pressed the button to activate the vibrator and grinned. “You’re all mine.”

“Oh!” Her gasp of pleasure filled the room as he pressed the device to her clit. “God, yes. Right there.”

Like he needed a map. But if she wanted to feel a little in charge, he would allow it. At least for the time being.

He rubbed the buzzing pink cock up and down her glistening pussy until it was nice and coated with her arousal, then pushed it inside her. Her breaths were coming faster now, interspersed with little mewls of need as he teased and tormented her with the toy.

When he switched it up again, drawing the toy out and pressing it against her clit, she let out a low rumbling sort of sound that made him pause. “Did you just *growl* at me, little girl?”

“Yes! You’re being mean!”

“It’s a punishment, princess. Of course, I’m going to be mean. But if you’re in such a hurry...” He pressed the button to up the speed and pushed the toy more firmly against her clit.

“Oh, fuck! Yes, yes, just like that!”

Back bowing as much as the restraints would allow, she came with a loud cry, her entire body quaking from the force

of it. A pink flush covered her entire body, and in that moment, she looked more beautiful than he could remember.

With the vibrator still pressed against her clit, he waited for her to collapse against the bed again, her breasts rising and falling with each deep, ragged breath.

“Have I told you before how fucking gorgeous you look when you come for me, princess?”

Her smile was crooked as her eyes fluttered open. “Yeah?”

“Mmhmm. I can’t wait to watch you do it all over again.” Pressing the button again, the hot pink cock went still in his hand once more.

The soft little hum of pleasure she gave made him chuckle as he returned the pink dick to the end of the bed and picked up a purple device that looked like it had been modeled off some kind of alien penis. There was a shaft, and even a head of sorts, but there was also what looked like a set of prongs on top. For her clit, perhaps?

Only one way to find out.

Her eyes lit with anticipation at the sight of the toy. “Ohh, I love that one. It hits all the right spots at once.”

“Good to know.”

This time, he took the time to work the toy all the way into her pussy without turning it on. As he’d suspected, the little prong things settled perfectly on her clit. Ginny sighed as he pumped it in and out a few times before he finally pressed the button to set it off.

“Oh, god!” Head flailing side to side, she cried out in what sounded like panic as the device came to life inside her. “Turn it off, turn it off! It’s too much!”

“Hmm.” Thrusting the toy deeper inside her, he paused as if considering her request. “No, I don’t think I will. Daddy’s teaching you a lesson here, princess, and I’m not stopping until I’m convinced you’ve learned it.”

“I have, I have! Daddy, please!”

“What’s the lesson, princess?”

A sob burst out of her as her head shook against the pillow yet again. “I don’t know!”

“Then I guess we’re not done yet, are we?”



AGONY. She was in agony.

Sweet, delicious, torturous agony, with no end in sight.

But even as she opened her mouth to beg him to stop, the pain shifted, morphed back into pleasure, though it was pleasure so overwhelming she wondered how it wouldn’t simply shatter her into a million pieces.

Which was exactly what it felt like when the next orgasm finally crashed over her. Like she was made of broken glass, and she would shatter all over again if he touched her.

Unfortunately for her, he wasn’t done.

“Daddy, I’m sorry. I’m sorry, I won’t ever do it again. Please.”

“I know you’re sorry, princess. And I believe you when you say you won’t do it again.”

Relief washed over her. “Oh, thank god.”

From his station at the end of the bed, he looked up, one dark brow quirking up. “That doesn’t mean your punishment is over, princess.”

And just like that, relief fled, replaced by the most erotic shiver of fear she’d ever felt. “Daddy, *please*.”

“Let’s see... I want to save that one for last,” he said, completely ignoring her pleas for mercy. “Maybe this one next.”

It was one of her least favorite toys, mostly because it wasn’t nearly as powerful as the others. Long and slender, it didn’t give her the stretch she enjoyed, but right that second that seemed like more of a blessing than a curse.

Until he started to use it on her. It didn’t take her long to realize that being less powerful didn’t mean much when her entire body already felt like it was one giant raw nerve.

Pain. Pleasure. Punishment. Reward. The more he forced on her, the more blurred the lines became, until she could no longer tell one from the other. Another orgasm that seemed to rip her apart from the inside out.

Then another.

And another.

And another.

By the time he picked up the wand, her muscles were trembling and tears had long since pooled in her hair. Every inch of her felt scraped raw, every nerve exposed to the elements as she sobbed. She’d lost the ability to actually form words two orgasms ago, and her protest as he held up the wand was little more than a whimper.

“Last one, princess, and then you can have Daddy’s cock.”

She barely had the energy to shake her head as the buzzing reached her ears. And when it touched her poor abused clit, all she could do was sob as the painful pleasure racked her body.

Her entire world had long since narrowed to this room. This bed. This man, who seemed determined to leave her in ruins by the time he was done with her.

And when that final orgasm tore her apart, she might have thought what a thorough job he’d done, if she’d been capable of forming a single coherent thought at that point.

The bed dipped, and then it was him filling her. Stretching her in ways the toys hadn’t managed as he slowly, inch by torturous inch, slid his cock inside her sore, aching pussy.

“This”—he thrust forward, deeper somehow than he’d ever managed before—“is *mine*. My pussy. My woman. My Little girl. Do you understand me, Genevieve?”

“Y-yes, Daddy.” Her voice was hoarse, her throat raw from overuse thanks to all the screaming she’d done.

“That’s my good girl. Are you ready for Daddy to come inside this sweet little pussy?”

“God, yes. Please, Daddy. Please.”

She was begging, not just because every movement of his hips seemed to scrape her raw from the inside out, but because she craved him. Craved that moment he would empty himself inside her, craved the lingering feel of him between her thighs.

Even if they couldn’t have a baby like this, she would never tire of being full of him.

With one final thrust, his cock swelled inside her and he filled her. Filled her up, his cock spasming in her pussy until

every last drop had been emptied into her womb.

CHAPTER 28



She was still feeling a bit raw, emotionally and physically, when he woke her in the morning. Slowly, dreamily, as he had before in the middle of the night, until her cries of ecstasy clashed with the alarm on her phone telling her it was time to get up.

“Mmmm.” Stretching her arms over her head, Ginny smiled up at the man still hovering over her. “I wouldn’t mind that wake-up call every morning.”

“If you didn’t wake up so god-awful early every morning, I might be able to arrange that.” Returning her grin, he leaned down to brush his lips over hers. “Good morning, princess.”

“Morning.” Between the early hour and the mind-blowing orgasm, she was still feeling a bit hazy as she picked up her phone to switch the alarm off. So, it took her a moment to realize he must have woken up well before her in order to get her engine revved like that before her alarm even went off. “What are you doing up so early?”

“I have a surprise for you. Gotta get on the road, though, if we’re going to make it on time.”

Maybe her brain was still scrambled from the wake-up sex, or maybe it was the lack of caffeine, but she could only stare at

him as he rolled off her and made his way toward her bathroom. “What do you mean, get on the road?”

“Just what I said, princess. Up and at ‘em.”

Motivated more by curiosity than anything, she slid out of bed and padded after him, stepping into the bathroom just as he flipped the shower on and stuck his hand under the spray. “Rex, it is too early and I am too decaffeinated for mind games. What are you talking about?”

The grin he flashed her was so full of boyish charm, she had to blink to make sure she wasn’t imagining it. “We’re playing hooky.”

“Hooky? We can’t play hooky, Rex. We have to work.”

“Do you have any classes today?”

“Well, no, but—”

“And I took the day off.” Stepping into the shower, he cocked an eyebrow at her. “Weren’t you just saying the other day that you could take the day off if you wanted to?”

She had said that. She’d only half meant it, but she had said it. “Yes...”

“Then what’s the problem?”

There wasn’t one, not really. Other than the fact this wasn’t at all what she’d had planned for the day, and her head was spinning with all the lists of things she had to get done. “What about the wedding?”

“We’ll be back in time. Get in the shower, princess, we’re getting water all over the floor.”

Scowling, she stepped in with him, instinctively tilting her head under the spray. “One of my best friends is getting

married, Rex. Yours, too. We can't just disappear two days before the wedding."

"Why not?"

"There are things to do! There's flowers, and food, and rentals, and dresses, and—"

A hand clamped over her mouth, and it mollified her a bit to see him looking almost panicked. "All right, all right, I get it. Would it help if I let you call Carly before we leave so you can check with her to see if there's anything she needs from you in the next thirty-six hours?"

"Thirty-six hours?" Her voice rose shrilly when he pulled his hand away. "Where the hell are we going? Florida?"

"Close." The panic cleared, replaced again by that adorably boyish grin. "Atlanta."

"What could we possibly be driving all the way down to Atlanta for on a Thursday morning?"

Excitement danced in his eyes, and she would have only been a little surprised if he'd actually jumped up and down. "Opening day for the Braves. A buddy of mine has season tickets but he had a family emergency and asked me the other day if I wanted his seats. I couldn't turn him down. Turn around."

She turned, and nearly moaned as his fingers went to work on her scalp. "I've never been to a baseball game."

"Never? Oh, princess. You're in for a treat."

Now that the shock had passed, excitement was slowly stepping in to take its place. "I'm still not sure I can just take off and leave Carly and the others holding the bag with the wedding plans."

“You can call her when we get out of the shower. But I’m sure it’ll be fine.”

“We’ll see about that.”

As it turned out, he was right. “Oh my gosh! Opening Day! That sounds so fun. I’ve never been to a baseball game like that! I’ll have to get Matt to take me some time. Preferably before the little bean becomes a watermelon.”

“It does sound fun, but I don’t feel right just up and leaving so close to the wedding.”

“Please. We’re basically eloping. I have a dress and a pretty cake and the best Daddy a girl could ask for. Everything else is just window dressing.”

“Well... okay, then. I guess I’ll see you tomorrow night at Edie’s.”

“Yes! And you can tell us all about your surprise romantic getaway while we paint each other’s nails and I watch everyone else drink way too much wine.”

Even though she still wasn’t a hundred percent sure about taking off for another state so close to the big day, Ginny couldn’t help but grin at the excitement in Carly’s voice. “That sounds like the perfect bachelorette party.”

“Bachelorette party?” Rex asked with a wry smile as she ended the call.

“If you can call it that. It’s basically a glorified girls’ night.”

“Pretty sure we’re doing the same with Matt.”

She sent him a teasing smile. “Drinking too much wine and painting each other’s toes?”

“Well, duh. What else would we do for a bachelor party?”

Laughing, she shook her head as she pulled her hair up into a high ponytail. “I don’t know where this version of you has been hiding, but I like him much more than asshole Rex.”

His gaze met hers in the mirror as he stepped behind her and slid his arms around her waist, pulling her back against him. “Liar. You love the asshole version of me.”

Because he wasn’t wrong, she didn’t bother to argue as she wiggled out of his arms. “All right, I’m ready to go. Are we taking my car?”

“We can, or I’ve got my bike.”

“No offense, but the idea of spending five hours on the back of your bike, followed by however many hours on a hard stadium seat doesn’t sound like my idea of a good time.”

His smile flashed, quick and easy. “Fair enough. Want me to drive?”

Fist planted on her hip, she cocked a brow at him. “Do I want to drink coffee and play passenger princess while my big strong Daddy takes on all the responsibility of getting us to our destination? Hell, yes.”

“Good girl. Let’s go.”



GINNY ON A ROAD trip was quite possibly one of his favorite versions of her. She looked exactly like what she’d called herself, a passenger princess with her giant cup of fancy coffee

in hand, her oversized sunglasses covering her eyes, and a blanket on her lap despite his efforts to keep the interior of the car a comfortable temperature. Her SUV came equipped with something that looked like a tablet, and she was able to connect her phone to it so he could see the map, along with about a dozen other little things she spent the ride fiddling with.

Like the music, which he normally would have balked at letting anyone else choose. But damn if she wasn't just the cutest fucking thing, dancing in her seat and singing along horribly off-key to every song.

If he hadn't already been in love with her, he would have fallen hard and fast less than thirty minutes into their drive.

They stopped for lunch at a hole-in-the-wall just off the interstate that reminded him of The Honk, minus the goose decor. And for the first time, he felt like he was seeing Ginny as she was meant to be. Vibrant and animated as she shared funny stories from her childhood without checking every few seconds to see if someone was watching them, judging them. It was like the further they got from Lost River, the less weighed down she became.

As much as he enjoyed getting to see this side of her, it made his chest ache a bit to think of how much stress she was under back home. How much of a show was she constantly putting on for the residents of Lost River on a daily basis?

“Oh, Daddy! Can we go see Centennial Park? It's only like twenty minutes from the stadium.” Back in the car, she bounced excitedly in her seat as she scrolled through something on her phone. “There's World of Coke, too, but I guess we won't have time for something like that. But I really want a picture with the Olympic Rings.”

The fact that she'd called him Daddy in that happy, excited tone made him want to give her the world. But they were already running up against a tight schedule. "Twenty minutes is at least an hour and a half in Atlanta time, princess."

"Ugh, I forgot about Atlanta traffic." Her shoulders slumped in disappointment. "Never mind."

"Tell you what." Reaching across the center console, he linked his fingers with hers and brought their joined hands to his lips. "If we get up early enough in the morning, we'll go and walk around downtown a bit and get you a picture with the rings. Sound good?"

"Sounds perfect." She beamed at him from the passenger seat, and he swore his heart tried to leap right out of his chest into her perfectly manicured hands. "Thank you, Daddy."

"Anything for you, princess."

Head tilted to the side, she studied him. Thanks to the oversized sunglasses, he couldn't see her expression, but he suddenly felt a bit like a bug under a microscope.

"You really mean that, don't you?" she asked.

"Mean what?"

"That you'd do anything for me."

That 'under a microscope' feeling grew even more intense, and he just barely managed to resist the urge to shift in his seat. "Of course, I mean it. Why wouldn't I?"

"I don't know. I guess I don't really feel like I've earned it, you know? I haven't been a very good girlfriend to you."

He gave her hand a gentle squeeze. "First of all, you don't have to earn my love, Ginny Morgan. That's not how it works.

Love isn't transactional and it sure as hell isn't always perfect. Got it?"

"I'm starting to realize I may have a very skewed understanding of what love is." There was a hint of bitterness to her words, but more than that, she simply sounded... sad.

Who hurt you, baby?

Because he knew the question wouldn't be welcome, he didn't bother asking it. For now. Later, when he could hold her and comfort her through whatever it was, he'd push. "Pretty sure we all have a really fucked up understanding of what love is. Which is why you can't wait for someone to be perfect to love them. Humans are flawed beings, princess, and as I've already told you—"

"I know, I know." She scowled, but her lips twitched. "I'm human like the rest of you. Noelle told me, too, so I guess you're onto something there."

"Anything else on your mind?" Maybe the more casual, open-ended question would loosen her tongue a bit.

There was a long, tense silence before she shook her head. "No. Sorry for bringing the mood down."

"Princess, you don't have to apologize for being honest with me about your feelings."

"Thanks. But enough of that. Road trips are meant for fun." Shifting to face the windshield again, she tugged her hand free of his and picked up her phone. "Any musical requests?"

Dammit. The moment was gone, and he was once again left feeling like she was holding a large part of herself back from him.

One day, he'd find a way to crack her open. And when that day came, his princess would have no more secrets, no more of those hidden little places where she could keep things from her Daddy.

But for now... "Got any old school country on that thing?"

Her grin flashed, wide and so full of pure joy he almost wondered if he'd imagined the conversation they'd just had. "I have everything on this thing. Pick your poison, Daddy."

CHAPTER 29



Even without the stop downtown, they barely made it to their hotel with enough time to check-in, get to their room, and for Ginny to freshen up her makeup and change clothes.

The latter earned her an exasperated look from her Daddy. “You look fine. What’s wrong with what you have on?”

“These are traveling clothes. Not baseball game clothes,” she informed him, deliberately using the prim little princess voice she knew he hated as she unzipped her duffel bag and pulled out a pair of jeans.

“How do you have baseball game clothes if you’ve never been to a baseball game?”

“I have clothes for everything, Rex, you should know that by now.”

The exasperation in his gaze turned to interest as she shimmied out of her leggings. “Maybe it wouldn’t be the end of the world if we missed the first inning...” he said, taking a step closer.

“Oh, no you don’t!” With a shriek of laughter, she ducked to the side as he dived for her. “I am not going to be the reason you miss the first pitch on opening day after you talked about it the whole damn car ride here.”

His sigh was full of disappointment. “Fine. But once we get back to the hotel, your ass is mine, little girl.”

“Deal.”



THEY MADE it to the stadium just in time for that first pitch. And even though she wasn't a baseball fan, the excitement seemed to seep into her very bones as they wound their way through the crowds of people. There was *something* in the air and she figured you'd have to be dead and buried not to be affected by it.

And the people. Oh, man, the people. Some were dressed like her, in just a t-shirt and jeans, maybe the occasional cap emblazoned with the Braves' logo. But there were others, far more than she'd expected, who had gone all out. Jerseys with their favorite players names embroidered across the back, giant foam fingers with a giant #1 printed on them. Wacky hats, face paint, and so many other fun little touches she couldn't even pinpoint them all.

“You didn't tell me it was like cosplay!” she said as they approached their seats.

Rex paused on the steps and turned to look at her, his expression clearly stating he didn't appreciate the comparison. “It isn't anything like cosplay.”

“Umm, a bunch of people walking around with memorabilia all over their bodies, and some are even dressed up like their favorite characters? It's definitely like cosplay.”

“It isn’t—forget it. Our seats are down here.”

Not trusting him to not haul her off somewhere to spank her for mocking his favorite pastime, she smothered a laugh as she followed him down to their row. Where an issue she hadn’t anticipated immediately smacked her in the face.

These seats were *tiny*. And theirs were smack dab in the middle of the row. So no matter where she sat, she’d be pressed up against Rex and a complete stranger.

It wasn’t often she felt self-conscious about her weight. Despite her mother’s many flaws, she’d never been anything but supportive and positive when it came to Ginny’s looks. Even before she’d discovered the body positivity movement online, Ginny had always loved her curves.

But as Rex began doing his sideways shuffle to their seats, she froze, locked in place by a panic she hadn’t felt since the one and only time she’d flown economy. Squeezed into a middle seat, asking for a seat belt extender while her companions for the flight glared at her was one of the few times she could remember feeling bad about her size.

After that, she’d never flown anything but first class.

Rex paused mid-shuffle and looked up, his brows drawing together when he spotted her still standing on the stairs. “Coming, princess?”

She had two options: go and sit in the damn seat or make up some lame excuse to leave. But if she feigned an illness or some other issue that would require her to head back to the hotel, Rex would want to come with her. And she wasn’t about to ruin this for him, not after he’d put so much effort into surprising her with this trip.

Plastering a smile on her face, she stepped forward into the aisle, angling herself as best she could so that she wouldn't bump into anyone as they made their way to the middle of the row.

The seats on either side of theirs were already occupied, and she did her best to make herself small as she wedged herself into her seat. Hard plastic dug into the sides of her hips, and she couldn't help but wish she was anywhere else but here.

But then Rex settled into the seat beside her, his arm draped over her shoulder, and her system settled a bit. The humiliation didn't fade, at least not as much as she would have liked, but at least she wasn't alone.

And the person beside her wasn't shooting her dirty looks, so maybe it wasn't as bad as she was making it out to be in her head.

The press of Rex's lips to the side of her head distracted her from her descent into self-pity. "Thanks for playing hooky with me today, princess," he whispered with a low chuckle.

"I wasn't aware I had a choice," she returned dryly, the familiar banter helping to ease the burn of humiliation.

"Always, baby. You know that."

She turned her head, keeping her voice low so only he could hear. "Are you saying I could have safeworded my way out of this?"

"Brat," he murmured, a smile tugging at his lips as he looked out over the field.

"Always and forever."

It had been said as a joke, but if she'd known about the seating situation ahead of time, she might have used her safeword.

But then she wouldn't have been able to watch his eyes light up as the music changed and the announcer's voice filled the air. Or hear him cheer at the top of his lungs as each player ran onto the field during their introductions.

Love for him welled up inside her, seeing him so happy over a silly baseball game, and by the time they settled back into their seats after the national anthem, she was grinning right along with him.

"I never realized you were so into baseball," she said as he returned his arm to its place around her shoulders.

"Whenever my dad was having a good day, we'd go outside and play catch. Couldn't afford for me to play on a team growing up, but I went to pretty much every little league game I could and watched the Braves on TV every chance I got. If I had one of those bucket lists you and the girls wrote up, opening day for the Braves would have been right at the top."

Sometimes it was easy to forget where he'd come from. The junkie parents who had more or less ignored him, and his needs, on a regular basis. The people in town, like her parents apparently, who judged instead of helping.

Thinking of him as a little boy, sitting in front of a television screen, dreaming of being able to see it in person one day brought tears to her eyes. And she knew then she'd bear her own pain and humiliation in perfect silence time and time again if it meant he got to live out those childhood dreams as often as he possibly could.

“Play ball!”

With that, the game began, and even though she only had the most rudimentary understanding of what was happening, she still found herself getting sucked into the game. Every now and then, she had to lean in and ask Rex for clarification on what was happening, but he never seemed annoyed with all her questions. If anything, he seemed perfectly delighted to share his knowledge.

It was all almost enough to make her forget about how uncomfortable she was. Almost.

Until, when they were between innings and the teams were switching places, she looked up and saw herself on one of the giant screens hovering over the field with KISS CAM in huge letters over her and Rex’s heads.

There were no clever angles to hide the worst of her rolls. No twisting her body in a certain way to make her fat look more like sexy curves. No editing, no filters, nothing to shield her from the stark reality of how she looked squished into that stupid stadium seat.

Even worse was the fact that Rex looked nothing short of gorgeous. Relaxed and lean, with a devilishly handsome smile on his face. Beside him, she looked nothing like the beautiful, sexy woman she normally saw herself as, and it made her wish the Earth would open up and simply swallow her whole.

Rex turned to her, that same cocky, sexy smile still on his face as he leaned in. “Come on, princess. Let’s show ‘em how it’s done.”

Any other time, she would have melted at the touch of his palm to her cheek, at the feel of his lips claiming hers, soft and teasing as he coaxed her to open for him.

Not now. Not when there were thousands, maybe millions of people if they were showing this on TV—*Please god, don't let them show this on TV*— watching. Now, every muscle in her body seized up as he kissed her, and she couldn't even bring herself to kiss him back.

At least the crowd didn't seem to notice, judging by the cheers that exploded all around them as Rex kissed her, so sweetly and thoroughly she hated herself for not being able to enjoy even a second of it.

After what felt like forever, the cheers died down and Rex pulled away, frowning slightly and looking about as pleased with the kiss as she had been. "Something wrong, princess?"

"Nope. I do need to use the bathroom, though."

His eyes narrowed slightly, and for a breathless moment she worried he was going to push the issue. But apparently her fake smile did the job, because he nodded. "Need me to come with you?"

"Lord, no. The line for the ladies' room is probably a mile long. I don't want you to miss the game."

"All right."

Nothing about his voice or his body language said he was upset about her reaction to the kiss. But she still felt the need to lean in and press a kiss to his rough, stubble-covered cheek. "I'll be back in a jiff. Want me to grab you a beer or something?"

He smiled, and some of the tightness around her chest eased. "Wouldn't say no to a beer."

"One beer, coming up."

Pushing up out of the chair, she nearly sighed out loud at the relief of no longer having the hard plastic chair arms pressed into her legs. She took her time on her way to the bathroom, and fleetingly wished for a place she could go and stretch a bit. As she walked, the pain and humiliation faded a bit, and she started to feel a little annoyed with herself that she'd let her own embarrassment ruin what should have been a fun, sweet moment between her and her Daddy.

To make it up to him, at least a little, she added an order of nachos to his beer and carried them back down to their seats with a grin. "Thought you might be hungry," she said as she handed him the nachos and the beer.

"Thanks, princess." His eyebrow quirked up as she settled back into her seat. "You missed a really great play."

"Is that what all the yelling was about?" she asked with a laugh. "Sorry I missed it. Just needed to stretch my legs a bit."

"I hear that. I'd sell my soul for a bit of extra legroom."

Well, if Rex of all people was feeling squished, maybe she shouldn't feel all that embarrassed after all. "For real."

He held the nacho tray out to her, and she hated that she hesitated even for a second. It had been years since she'd felt self-conscious about being a fat girl enjoying food in public, and she was going to be damned if she allowed her own insecurities to ruin even one more thing about this trip.

So she picked up a chip, slathered it in enough cheese to have Rex glaring at her, and pushed all those nasty little thoughts about what the people around them must be thinking out of her head for good.

CHAPTER 30



He was a fucking idiot.

He'd been sure, so goddamn sure that getting her out of Lost River would be good for both of them. Especially when he'd seen the way she'd relaxed during their drive down here. But the second they had an audience, she reverted back to being embarrassed by him.

What the hell was he supposed to do with that?

Nothing, at least not right that second, he reminded himself as the Braves scored another run and the crowd went wild, Ginny included. The boulder sitting on his chest lightened a bit at the sight of her, laughing and cheering as the men on the field rounded the bases.

And then she looked at him, her smile lighting up her entire face, and he mentally kicked himself for being such a baby about her freezing up during their kiss. They were here, enjoying a really great game together, and she was clearly having a blast.

Mission accomplished.

Or at least he tried to tell himself that as he returned his focus to the game.

By the time the last pitch was thrown, he'd mostly forgotten about the kiss and her reaction to it. As they made their way back out of the stadium, his arm around her shoulders and hers around his waist, he decided life didn't get much better than a ballgame, greasy food, and the woman he loved by his side.

"That was fun! We should do it every year," she said, tilting her head back to look up at him, a bright, happy smile on her lips.

"I wish. But there's no way I could afford the tickets."

She rolled her eyes, and his palm physically itched to connect with her ass. "For someone who spent his life making snarky comments about my family's wealth, you seem to forget about it a lot."

An itch settled between his shoulder blades, and he just managed to stop himself from trying to physically shake it off. Yeah, he knew she was rich, but that didn't mean he expected her to spend money on him. He hadn't worked his way up from nothing just to have her step in and throw her family's money around. "I didn't forget."

"Is this some macho man thing?" she asked, and despite the teasing tone of the question, the itch between his shoulder blades grew. "Like, you're the dude so you have to pay for everything?"

"You say that like it's a bad thing."

"It is when you're missing out on things just because you don't want me to pay for them."

She was right. But knowing she was right just made him feel like an idiot, which wasn't a feeling he was very comfortable with. "Just drop it, princess."

“Not a chance.”

Spotting a little alcove off to the side, he nudged her that direction, pinning her against the wall once they were more or less out of sight of the crowds. “I think someone has forgotten who the Daddy is in this relationship, little girl.”

Even in the dark, he could see her eyes go wide. “I didn’t forget,” she said, parroting his own words back at him.

“Then is there a reason you’re pushing my buttons, princess?”

“I wasn’t! I was just pointing out how ridiculous—”

“And you’ve made your point. If you want me to dig deep into why your money makes me uncomfortable, that’s going to have to wait for a time when we’re not surrounded by thousands of people. Understood?”

“I’m sorry. I wasn’t thinking about it that way.” Her voice was softer, filled with genuine remorse. “I’ll drop it.”

“Thanks. And for the record, it has nothing to do with me being the man and you being the woman. I’m not some wannabe alpha male on a power trip.”

“Promise?”

“Promise.” Leaning down, he kissed her, and tried not to compare the way she melted into him to the way she’d stiffened when he’d done the exact same thing on the Kiss Cam. “C’mon. Let’s get back to the hotel so Daddy can remind you what happens when you don’t listen, naughty girl.”

“I wasn’t *that* naughty,” she grumbled as they stepped out of the alcove and back into the thinning swarms of people.

“Who decides that, princess?”

Sighing dramatically, she pressed closer to him. “You do.”

“That’s right. And who am I?”

By now they were out in the open again, making their way to her car. The crowd around them had mostly dispersed, and despite there being nobody close enough to hear, her cheeks still lit up as she mumbled her response.

“What was that, baby? I couldn’t hear you.”

She glared up at him. “You’re a big jerk is who you are.”

“Maybe.” At her car, he opened the passenger door and helped her in. “But I’m the big jerk who controls whether you come at all tonight, so you should probably be a little nicer to me, princess.”

He had the pleasure of closing the door on her shocked gasp before jogging around to the driver’s side. And maybe it did make him a big jerk, but her outrage went a long way toward clearing away the last of the hurt and anger he was carrying with him from their failed kiss.



DESPITE HER BRAIN telling her over and over she wasn’t really in trouble, her heart didn’t seem to be getting the memo. The closer they got to the hotel, the harder it pounded against her rib cage. By the time he opened the door to their room, it felt like her heart might actually beat right out of her chest.

“Naughty little princess,” he said as he shut the door behind him, a wicked smile curving his lips. “What am I going to do with you, hmmm?”

Any other time, she'd have a bratty, sassy response ready to go. But she was still feeling guilty about how she'd reacted to that kiss, so she said the first thing that came to mind. "Whatever you want, Daddy."

Heat flashed in his eyes. "And if I want to put you on your knees so you can choke on Daddy's cock until your pretty makeup is completely ruined?"

The need that had been building ever since he'd called her a naughty girl back at the stadium ratcheted even higher. "Do it."

"What if I want to spank that gorgeous ass of yours until you're sobbing and begging me for mercy, and then fuck your tight little bottom hole hard and fast?"

"Whatever you want. I'm yours."

That seemed to stop him in his tracks. Emotion clouded the dark brown of his eyes and he lifted his hands to cup her face. "Say it again."

"Whatev—"

"Not that. The other part."

"Oh. I'm yours." Lifting her hands, she wrapped her fingers around his wrists, and poured everything she felt for him, all the things she couldn't name into her next words. "I'm yours, Rex Carrington, until the last star goes out in the night sky. I love you."

"Ginny..." Trailing off, he lowered his lips to hers, claiming them with such tenderness it brought tears to her eyes.

"You know what I want to do to you, princess?" he asked when they finally broke apart.

Again, her heart went racing. “What?”

Releasing her face, he reached for the hem of her shirt, dragging it over her head and tossing it aside. “I want to strip you naked.” Next went her shoes, and she nearly gasped out loud when he knelt at her feet to remove them. “And I want to lay you on the bed.” Then her jeans, slowly, achingly slowly down her legs to pool at her feet. “I want to kiss every fucking inch of your body. I want to worship you like the perfect goddess of a woman you are. And when you’re a needy, whiny mess, begging me to let you come, I want to make love to you. I’ve fucked you plenty of times, but I don’t think I’ve ever made love to you. Not the way you deserve.”

Oh, god. Not only was her skin on fire, desperate for his touch, but her heart had practically melted into a puddle right at his feet. “Yes, please.”

“Good girl,” he said with a chuckle as he rose to unhook her bra, sliding the straps down her arms and tugging the fabric free so her breasts fell free. “I think I’ll start with these.”

Cupping one breast in each hand, he brushed his thumbs across her nipples, sending a flash of pleasure to her core. “I love your breasts, princess. I love how heavy they feel in my palm. I love how soft your skin is. I love thinking about how full they’ll be when you’re ready to nurse our child. And I really fucking love how you react when I do this.”

Her shocked cry rang out in the room when he pinched her nipples, making him grin. “Oh, yeah. That’s definitely one of my favorite things.”

Hearing him mention their child brought with it a rush of grief. She needed to tell him, soon, about what Dr. Young had said.

But not tonight. Tonight was just for them. “What else do you love?”

He made a soft humming sound in his throat as he backed her toward the bed. When she fell backward, he knelt again, this time reaching for the green and black lace of her underwear. “I love your ass, and the way it turns pink under my hand when you’ve been naughty.” Again with that aching slowness, he tugged her panties down her hips, over her thighs, his fingers deliberately trailing over her skin and leaving little fires of need in their wake as he dragged them from her body. “I love your thighs. I love all the little dimples in them. I could get lost in them, I could live there forever and die a happy man. And I love the way they tremble when you have them wrapped around me and the pleasure is more than you think you can take. But you always take it for me because you’re my good little princess. Aren’t you, Ginny?”

“Yes, Daddy,” she whispered, her voice all but deserting her as his praise and love washed over her. Never in her life had she felt so seen, so *adored*.

And when she was finally naked, he leaned in, eyes closing as he inhaled deeply through his nose. “I love the way you smell when you’re wet for me. And I love the way you taste even more.”

Nudging her thighs open, he lowered his head and dragged his tongue from the bottom of her pussy straight up to her clit, and every inch of her trembled with need. Eyes blazing now, he looked up at her and smirked. “Delicious.”

With that, he bowed his head again, like the supplicant he claimed to be. And worshiped.

Worshiped with his tongue, swirling clever little circles around her clit, pausing only to repeat that same journey from

the bottom of her pussy to the top. Worshiped with his fingers, sliding between her soaked lips, stretching her open and stroking that hidden bundle of nerves deep inside her. Worshiped ever so gently with his teeth, clamping down around her swollen clit and sucking so that her back arched up off the bed and her cries of need shattered the silence of the room around them.

“Daddy, please.” Head thrashing from side to side as the unimaginable pleasure flooded her, she became exactly what he’d expected of her. A needy, whiny, begging mess of the woman she had been when they’d started. “Please, oh, god, please. I need... I need...”

But just as she was trembling on the edge of what she so desperately craved, he stopped. A sob burst from her as he rose to his feet and that aching pleasure ebbed, leaving her with a painful need only he could fill.

“Shhh, baby,” he crooned as he stripped and knelt between her thighs. “Daddy’s right here.”

The thick head of his cock pressed between her lips, stretching her open in ways his fingers hadn’t managed, and she sobbed again. “Daddy. Please.”

“Just a little longer, princess. Can you wait just a little bit longer for Daddy?”

Even as she shook her head, she knew she would. She would wait, she would beg, she would do and give whatever he demanded. He’d stripped her bare, in more ways than just the physical, and she was helpless to deny him.

When he finally filled her completely, every inch of his cock deep inside her, she nearly wept with relief.

“Look at me, baby.”

She forced her eyes open, forced herself to look into those brown eyes swirling with emotions she couldn't even begin to name. And everything in her cried out for him.

“Who do you belong to, Ginny?”

“You,” she whispered, her throat tight with the love that welled up inside her as he began to move, making love to her just as he'd promised with slow, easy strokes.

“And I'm yours.” The brown of his eyes seemed to turn black with a fierceness that sent a shiver up her spine. “You have me, baby. All of me. My whole fucking heart. I've never given even a piece of it to anybody else. Just you. Only you. It's always been you, Ginny.”

Tears trickled out of her eyes and down into her hair as her heart clenched painfully at the words he didn't say. *You have my heart. Try not to break it.*

“Yes, Daddy.” Her voice was stronger now, because it mattered, so much more than accepting she was his. She was accepting responsibility for the heart of a man who didn't love easily.

It was a gift, and she would damn sure treat it with more care than she had so far.

They moved together, her whimpers and cries of pleasure mingling with his murmured words of praise and love. Until finally, they tumbled over the cliff together, her body clenching and trembling around his as he filled her one final time, pouring every ounce of himself, body and soul, into her.

CHAPTER 31



Downtown Atlanta was more fun than he'd expected it to be. As was playing photographer when Ginny wanted to pose in front of the Olympic rings and World of Coke, even if he had apparently needed a mini class on framing the photos correctly and a dozen other things he would never use again. Or at least not until she decided to draft him for more pictures.

But watching her face light up with awe at the sight of the rings was well worth it. He'd have to bring her back for World of Coke and the aquarium, especially since she'd nearly cried when he'd reminded her they needed to get back to Lost River and didn't have time to go visit the whale sharks.

For the first time in their relationship, he really *felt* like a Daddy. Indulging the Little girl who peeked out every time she squealed with excitement over something new, playfully pulling her out of her sulk when they had to pass up an attraction. There was a connection they'd never had back home, and it was so fucking tempting to just skip out on the wedding and stay a few extra days so they could enjoy it.

But as much as she pouted about being told 'No' to staying longer, he knew deep down she'd never forgive him if he let her miss the bachelorette party or the wedding. So he put his

foot down when she begged for one more hour, then added a stop at Starbucks to their trip home to make her smile again.

Even though she was her usual chatty self as they drove home, he swore he could see the carefree Little girl disappearing and the princess of Lost River taking her place with every mile they drove away from Atlanta.

By the time he parked her car in front of her apartment, he'd made up his mind to talk to the other Daddies and see what he could do to get her Little to come out and play more when they were at home. Even if he could afford to take the time off work, taking a trip to Atlanta every weekend to give her 'Little' time wasn't exactly in his budget. And god knew it wouldn't work with her social calendar.

So, he'd have to find other ways to help her relax and let her Little out here at home.

But that was for later, after they'd done their duty by their friends. For now, he'd have to settle for carrying her bags for her, despite her rolling her eyes when he ignored her protests and hauled them up the back steps to her apartment.

"This was fun," she said when he dropped her keys back in her outstretched hand. "I didn't even realize how much I needed to just get away for a bit. So... thanks."

"Any time, princess." Sliding his arms around her waist, he pulled her in for a long, slow kiss. "I need to get going. Be a good girl tonight and don't let the others talk you into anything crazy."

Her grin flashed, full of mischief, and his heart skipped a beat in his chest. "I don't know what you're talking about. We're just going to hang out at Edie's, drink some wine, and make sure Carly doesn't get cold feet."

“Uh huh. Just remember, once the wedding is over, you’ll have to answer to Daddy for any shenanigans.”

The laugh burst out of her, so loud and full of delight he couldn’t help but grin in response. “Oh my god, did you really just say *shenanigans*? What are you, a seventy-year-old man?”

“I’m the man who’s going to blister your ass if you keep it up.”

“Are you sure?” Turning, she unlocked her door and pushed it open, her eyes still dancing with amusement. “You’d have to catch me first. Where’s your walker, grandpa?”

“Get your ass in the house before I decide it needs to be nice and red before you leave for that party.”

Head tossed back with laughter, she stepped inside. “I’m going, I’m going. I’ll see you in the morning. Grandpa.”

Shrieking as he lunged at her, she slammed the door and he heard the telltale *snick* of the lock clicking into place. “You can’t hide from me forever, princess. After the wedding, your ass is mine.”

Shaking his head at her antics, he jogged back down the stairs to his bike and headed home to get ready for his own pre-wedding drink-a-thon.



OVERNIGHT AND GARMENT bags in hand, Ginny made her way up Edie’s front steps, her heart lighter than it had been in weeks. Possibly months.

Years, maybe, if she delved deep enough.

The door swung open, revealing a beaming Carly before Ginny even made it to the porch. “You’re here, you’re here! Everyone else is already in the living room.”

“Sorry. We were in Atlanta longer than we expected.”

Squealing excitedly, Carly took the bag with Ginny’s dress in it and bounced in place. “I can’t wait to hear all about your romantic getaway. Did you have *so* much fun?”

“Let her get in the house before you start peppering her with questions, child.” Despite the slight note of scolding in her tone, Edie was smiling as she reached for Ginny’s duffel bag. “I’ll run this upstairs while you get settled in with the girls.”

“Oh, you don’t have to do that,” Ginny protested, but there wasn’t much heart in it since she really did want to go see her friends.

Edie rolled her eyes. “I know I don’t have to, but I’m going to. So stop arguing and go.”

“Okay. Thanks, Edie!”

When she relinquished her bag, Carly handed the other one over to Edie as well and grabbed a hold of Ginny’s hand, practically dragging her toward the living room. “Come *on*.”

“I’m coming, I’m coming,” Ginny assured her with a laugh.

“I bet that’s what you were saying last night.” Noelle greeted them with a smirk as they stepped into the living room. “Heard you and Rex had a sexy little getaway to Atlanta. Last time one of us did that, she came back engaged and knocked up.”

Ignoring the pang of grief at the ‘knocked up’ comment, Ginny curled up in her usual seat and grinned. “Not engaged, not pregnant. But we still had a lovely trip.”

“Lovely,” Noelle said with a snort. “Come on, give us the dirty deets.”

A glass of wine appeared in front of Ginny and she glanced up to find Taylor smiling down at her. “Thought you might need this for the interrogation.”

“Thanks.” Taking the wine, Ginny sipped as Taylor settled back between Carly and Noelle, all three now looking at her expectantly. “It’s really not that interesting, I promise. We drove down to Atlanta, went to the game, and this morning we did a bit of sightseeing before we came home. End of story.”

Carly’s eyes narrowed. “I feel like you’re leaving a lot of in-between things out there, missy.”

“Not really,” Ginny said with a shrug as she lifted the wine glass back to her lips. “Unless you mean the part where he stripped me naked and made me come so hard I saw stars while he told me in excruciating detail exactly what he loved about every single part of my body.”

Squeals filled the room just as Edie was walking back in. “Sounds like I missed the fun parts,” she said, settling into her seat with her own glass of ruby red wine.

“Ginny was just telling us about her trip with Rex. And the really awesome sex they had,” Noelle said with a wiggle of her shoulders. “Tell us the rest.”

“That was pretty much it, as far as the sexy times go. This morning was... different.”

“Different, how?” Taylor asked, looking suddenly concerned.

“Not bad,” Ginny clarified. “Just different. And I don’t even know how to explain *how* it was different. It was just like being away from Lost River meant I could worry less about what people thought of me. I’ve never felt so... free, I guess. Rex was so sweet, too. No matter how excitable I was, or how much I pouted when he said no, he was just so steady and supportive and—”

“He was a Daddy.” Carly gave a single, sharp nod. “That’s what it sounds like to me, anyway.”

Noelle and Taylor nodded their agreement and Ginny smiled. “Maybe. Whatever it was, I had a really great time. I wish I could feel like that every day. Like I could just be myself without having to worry about what anybody thought or if it would embarrass my family.”

“Oh, honey.” Hopping up from the couch, Taylor rushed over to Ginny’s chair and wrapped her arms around her shoulders. “I didn’t know you felt that way!”

“I didn’t either, honestly. Not until Rex started talking about us going on dates and stuff. And then the stuff with my mom just made it all worse. I used to think I was this bad bitch who didn’t care what everyone thought. But I guess not.”

“It’s easy not to care when you’re not really rocking the boat.” Edie shrugged when Ginny’s eyes narrowed. “It’s the truth. Name one thing you did before Rex that would have really caused waves.”

“People talked about the whole influencer thing,” Ginny said. “Nobody really thought that was a career until I proved them wrong.”

“Oh, yes, because daughters of rich men never have unusual careers.” Rolling her eyes, Edie swiped her hand

through the air, as if she was swiping left on a dating profile. “Next.”

Ginny scowled down at her wine. “Guess you’ll probably say the same thing about the yoga studio.”

“Yup.” The smirk on Edie’s face shifted to a sympathetic smile. “I don’t mean that to sound dismissive or to diminish what you’ve done because I know you’ve busted your ass for both of those things. But the waves that you have made in your life have always been very carefully planned waves. And Rex wasn’t something you planned for.”

“No. He wasn’t.” Dreamed of, ached for, yes. But she’d never actually planned on a future with him.

Did that make her predictable? Worse, did it make her someone who was willing to sacrifice her own happiness to make other people comfortable? She’d spent years in online spaces speaking out against fat women making themselves small just to suit everyone else. Had she been doing exactly that in her own hometown this entire time?

It wasn’t just humbling to realize that might be the case. It was humiliating. And it made her feel like the worst kind of hypocrite, that she couldn’t even live by her own advice.

But all that could wait until after the wedding. Shaking off the dark cloud forming over her head, Ginny pasted on a bright smile. “Anyway. Tonight’s about Carly. What’s the plan for your last night as a bachelorette?”

Excitement glittered in Carly’s eyes. “Well... I do have *one* thing left on my bucket list.”

“Uh oh,” Taylor muttered while Noelle cheered beside her. “No offense, Carly, but the last time we helped someone with their bucket list we all got in huge trouble.”

“Not all of us,” Ginny said with a grin. “I had a *great* night.”

“Yeah, but only because you and Noelle didn’t have Daddies yet. You really think Rex is gonna let you off the hook if you get yourself arrested?”

“Fair point. But I don’t remember anything illegal on Carly’s list,” Ginny said with a dismissive wave. “What’s the last thing on your list, Carly?”

Carly’s expression turned almost maniacal with glee. “Skinny dipping.”

Beside her, Noelle and Taylor groaned, and Edie was already shaking her head. “Absolutely not,” Edie said, her tone firmer than Ginny had ever heard it. “It is way too cold for you to go jumping in the water, especially naked, when you’ve got a little bun in the oven.”

“Aw.” Carly’s expression immediately fell, and Ginny’s heart broke a little at how sad she looked. “But it’s the last thing on my list! Well, the last thing is to just be happy, but I don’t think I could get any happier than marrying Matt. I know it’s silly, but I kind of want to cross this last thing off so I can start my next set of adventures with him, you know?”

One look at Edie and Ginny could tell she was already starting to crumble. “What if Carly just put her feet in the water?” Ginny asked, her mind racing to come up with an alternative that would satisfy everyone. “Surely that wouldn’t be such a shock to the system. And it’s been relatively warm the past few days, so it might not even be that bad. But if it is too cold, she won’t go in past her knees. How’s that sound?”

The hope on Carly’s face was almost painful to see as she turned to Edie. “*Please*, Edie? I promise to be super duper

careful.”

Ginny could see the moment Edie caved. “All right. But I reserve the right to yank your ass out if I decide it’s too cold. Understood?”

Squealing, Carly practically flew across the room to throw her arms around Edie’s neck. “Thank you, thank you, thank you!”

“Yeah, well, don’t expect me to save you when your Daddies find out about this,” Edie said darkly. But there was a smile curving her lips as she wrapped her arms around Carly and squeezed.

From the couch, Taylor sighed and even Noelle was looking dubious. “All right,” Taylor said, pushing to her feet. “Let’s go get naked.”

CHAPTER 32



“What do you think the girls are up to?”

Swirling the truly excellent whiskey Dom had brought as a gift, Rex grinned at Ian’s question. “Is it too much to hope for naked pillow fights?”

Ian started to smile, then pulled a face. “It is when one of them is my sister.”

“Spoilsport.”

“No pillow fights.” Lips turned down in a fierce frown, Matt shook his head. “Carly is supposed to be taking it easy tonight. All the excitement of planning this wedding has really worn her down.”

“Uh huh.” Dom lifted his whiskey glass, a knowing smirk playing on his lips. “Because our Little girls are perfectly behaved angels who always do what they’re told.”

Matt scowled. “Shit. Maybe we should go check on them.”

“Leave them alone. They can’t possibly get in that much trouble at Edie’s.” Rolling his eyes, Rex poured another shot of whiskey in Matt’s glass. Maybe if he got good and drunk, he’d stop worrying so much.

Right. And maybe pigs would fly.

“They were at Edie’s when they hatched that plan to drive into Charleston and put a rock through that asshole’s window,” Ian reminded him darkly.

Dom grinned. “Well, my car is here, so if Noelle decides I need to be taught a lesson they’ll have to come to us.”

“Forget about the girls.” Rex waved his hand in the air, symbolically swatting away their worries. “We’re supposed to be making sure Matt enjoys his last night as a bachelor. So, what do you wanna do, Matty?”

“I want to make sure my babygirl is taking care of herself,” Matt grumbled before swallowing down the rest of his whiskey and holding his glass out for another shot. “But apparently that isn’t allowed.”

“Nope. No girls allowed, like that fort we had as kids.” Ian grinned. “Remember how pissed Noelle and Taylor were about that?”

That pulled a reluctant sort of laugh from Matt. “God, I thought Noelle was going to storm the castle.”

“She didn’t?” Surprise filled Dom’s tone. “Sounds like something she would do.”

“No.” With a surprisingly proud grin, Ian leaned back in his chair. “Even better. She went and talked my dad into building them a fort of their own in our backyard. And since Matt and I didn’t have any adult help, hers was by far superior. Mom even went and bought them bean bag chairs and she kept that thing stocked with snacks that Matt and I weren’t allowed to touch. I think it was her way of scolding us without actually getting in the middle of it.”

“My little girl is a genius,” Dom said, raising his glass in a toast. “Can y’all keep a secret?”

After a chorus of assurances they could, Dom reached in his pocket and pulled out his phone. He swiped up a few times before turning it to face them. “I’m having this made for her. I don’t know how I’m going to ask her yet, but I want it to be soon.”

Rex didn’t know a lot about jewelry, but the fiery red ruby seemed to fit Noelle to a T. “Congrats, man.”

Taking the phone from Dom’s hand, Ian frowned down at the screen, then lifted his gaze back up to Dom’s. “You really want to marry her?”

Without flinching, Dom nodded. “I really fucking do, man.”

“She’s going to keep you on your toes ‘til the day you die, you know that, right?”

“God, I hope so.”

“Okay.” Swallowing hard, Ian returned his gaze to the screen in his hand. “Holy shit. My baby sister is getting married.”

“That’s assuming she says yes.” Looking uncharacteristically unsure of himself, Dom took the phone from Ian and stared down at the screen. “I’m about ninety-nine percent sure she will but Noelle can be... unpredictable.”

“She’ll say yes.” Ian clapped a hand on Dom’s shoulder and squeezed. “I know I haven’t been the most supportive of your relationship, but real talk? You make Noelle happier than I’ve ever seen her. And it’s not just that she’s happier. She’s more confident. You’re good for her, even if it makes me itch a little to think too hard about why you’re so good for her.”

“Aw, man. Come here.”

Before anyone knew what was happening, Dom was hauling Ian out of his chair and wrapping him up in a bear hug. In an even more shocking move, Ian returned the embrace with more enthusiasm than Rex would have suspected.

“I’m going to take good care of her.” Pulling away, Dom swiped at his eyes. “But if you could do me a favor and just not tell her that you gave your blessing until after the wedding, I’d appreciate it. I wouldn’t put it past her to call everything off if she thinks you actually approve.”

“Deal,” Ian agreed with a laugh, his own eyes suspiciously wet.

“This calls for more whiskey!” Matt raised his empty glass, and Rex dutifully poured everyone another finger each.

Holding up his tumbler, Dom threw an arm around Ian’s shoulders. “To our babygirls and the mischief they get into. May they never stop giving us reasons to turn their naughty bottoms red.”

“Hear, hear,” Matt and Rex cheered, drowning out Ian’s groan.

As he sipped his drink, Rex grinned at the men he considered his closest friends. And hoped his princess was having half as much fun at her own party.



“HOLY FUCK, IT’S FREEZING!” Jumping back out of the lake at the edge of Edie’s property, Ginny danced on her toes and

rubbed her hands up and down her arms. “Are you sure you want to do this, Carly?”

“Yes.” Despite the worry in her eyes, Carly gave a decisive nod. “I want to do all the things on my bucket list. And then I want to make another list just for me and Matt. But I can’t do that until I finish the first list.”

“I see we’re just making up rules as we go along,” Edie grumbled.

“All rules are made up,” Noelle said with a shrug. “Someone, somewhere, just decided something one day and boom. New rule.”

Edie narrowed her eyes but didn’t argue. “All right. If we’re going to do this, let’s get it over with so we can go back inside where it’s warm.”

Having offered herself up to check exactly how cold the water was first, Ginny had already stripped down to her underwear. As the other girls slowly peeled out of their clothes—Carly noticeably slower than everyone else despite it being her idea—Ginny unhooked her bra and wiggled out of her panties before inching her way back toward the water.

The cold wasn’t any less shocking the second time around, and she couldn’t stop the squeal that escaped as she waded deeper into the lake. “*Fuck!* You couldn’t have gotten married in like, June when it would be nice and warm?”

“Nope. If I learned one thing in my life, it’s to not wait when something good comes your way. You grab a hold of it with both hands and you never fucking let go.”

When her voice went thick with tears, Taylor immediately rushed to her side, completely ignoring the fact they were both completely naked as she wrapped Carly up in a hug. “We

understand. Besides, nobody wants to fuss with planning a wedding while they're super pregnant. Matt would lose his mind trying to keep you calm."

Carly giggled. "That might have made it worth the hassle, actually. But I'm glad we're getting it out of the way. Speaking of getting things out of the way, let's get in the water so we can get out and go back inside like Edie said."

"Oh, *now* she wants to listen to me," Edie teased.

By now, Ginny was hip deep in the water. "It's not as bad once you get used to it!"

Rolling her eyes, Noelle dipped her toe in the water. "Liar. I can see your lips turning blue from here."

"No, really! It's cold but it's not horrible." Dragging in a deep breath and holding it, Ginny dropped beneath the water. The shock of the cold only lasted a second, and she was able to hold her breath long enough for it to almost feel comfortable by the time she popped her head back above the water. "See?"

Her friends still didn't look convinced, but Noelle squared her shoulders and marched straight into the water, only wincing a little as she joined Ginny.

"How is it?" Taylor called from her spot huddled beside Carly.

"It's fucking freezing," Noelle called back with a laugh. "But it's getting better."

"Okay. I'm coming in." With one last quick hug for Carly, Taylor took a deep breath and inched forward into the lake. And immediately jumped back with a squeal as soon as her toes hit the water. "I changed my mind! You two are crazy!"

“C’mon, Tay! I promise it gets better!”

Stepping up beside her, Carly took Taylor’s hand. “We’ll go in together.”

Hand in hand, they waded into the lake with plenty of wincing and squealing as the freezing water lapped at their calves.

“That’s far enough, Carly-girl,” Edie said as she joined them. “If I let you go any further, Matty will have all our hides. I’m not sure he won’t as it is.”

“Yeah, right. I’m pretty sure Matt is more afraid of you than you are of him,” Ginny said with a grin as she treaded water. She’d gone far enough into the lake now that her toes no longer touched the bottom.

Even in the dark, she could see the wicked gleam of Edie’s smile. “Good. That’s the way I like it.”

With that, Edie dove forward without hesitation, disappearing under the completely black surface of the water.

“Where’d she go?” Carly asked, sounding worried as she craned her neck to try and see where their fearless leader had gone.

“I don’t—Ack!” Ginny barely had time to draw in a breath as a hand wrapped around her ankle and yanked her under the water. She came up sputtering and gasping for air, shoving her hair out of her face as she glared at a grinning Edie who was treading water deliberately out of reach.

“Told y’all this was a dangerous plan.”

“It wasn’t dangerous until you tried to *drown me*! What the hell, Edie?” Cupping her hand, Ginny sent a wave of water in Edie’s direction.

Shrieking, Edie threw her hands up to block the spray, then lowered her shield, a wicked glint in her eye. “Oh, you are so going to pay for that, Ginny Morgan.”

And they were off. Even Taylor and Carly joined in, laughing and shrieking with indignation as all five women waged aquatic war on one another.

“Wait, wait, wait!” Ginny held her hands up in the time-honored ‘time out’ gesture, and the splashing ceased. “Why are we fighting each other when we could be fighting Ms. Bossy Pants McDowell?”

“Oh!” Carly’s face lit up. “That’s a good point!”

“Don’t you dare, girls,” Edie warned, but it was difficult to be intimidated by a woman who currently looked a bit like a drowned rat. “Or I will tell every single one of your Daddies about this!”

“Please.” Noelle rolled her eyes. “They’re going to find out one way or another.”

“Not if we don’t tell them!” Taylor’s voice rose to a squeak. “Ian will kill me!”

“Oh, honey.” With a sympathetic smile, Carly wrapped an arm around Taylor’s shoulders. “They were always going to find out. It’s just a matter of when. You didn’t really think we were getting out of this without getting our butts roasted, did you?”

“Yes! Yes, I did think that!”

“Bless your heart,” Ginny said, not unsympathetically. “It’s so sweet you think we could get away with anything. Someone is bound to spill the beans, and if I’m honest, my money was on you cracking first.”

The other women nodded and chorused their agreement. Taylor scowled and crossed her arms with an irritated huff. “I’m not a tattle tale.”

“Of course not,” Noelle said soothingly. “You just have a guilty conscience. You had the same problem when we were kids. One look from my mom and you’d just word-vomit every naughty thing we’d done since the last time we’d gotten in trouble.”

“Rude. Not inaccurate, but still. Rude.”

“All right, girls. Leave poor Taylor alone. It’s about time we went back up to the house anyway.” Edie had, apparently, been sneaking closer and closer to the bank where Taylor and Carly stood during their conversation, and she now stood half in-half out of the water. “We need to get Carly warmed up before that baby comes out looking like the son of Jack Frost.”

Ginny glanced at her partners in crime, who all grinned and nodded. As one, they all moved closer to Edie, who narrowed her eyes dangerously at them as they approached. “Girls, if you splash me, I swear to god—”

Whatever threat she’d planned to make was cut off by the massive wave of water that crashed over her all at once.

“Run!” Ginny screamed before diving under the water to make a swim for the shore.

There was more splashing and more shrieks of laughter as they all snatched up their clothes and made a beeline for the farm. Edie wasn’t far behind, but like any good horror movie villain, she took her time gathering her clothes and slowly stalking them as they ran like hell for the safety of the house.

“Where’d she go?” Panting wildly, clutching her clothes to her chest, Carly peeked out the front window, scanning the

lawn for any sight of Edie.

“I don’t know. She was behind us somewhere,” Noelle said, joining Carly at the window.

“Do you think she’s going to spank us?” There was a hint of excitement under the worry in Taylor’s voice. “Is she *allowed* to spank us?”

“Your butts are safe for now.”

They all jumped at the sound of Edie’s calm, cool voice behind them. Smirking, she ran a hand through her short cap of hair, somehow mussing it and fixing it at the same time. “Not getting spanking rights from your Daddies was obviously an oversight on my part. One I will be rectifying as soon as possible. In the meantime, you can all march your naughty little bottoms up to bed. It’s late and we all need a good night’s sleep for tomorrow.”

“Yes, ma’am,” they all chorused before hurrying up the stairs. Despite her claims to the contrary, none of them were quite convinced she wouldn’t change her mind and decide to get the switch she was always threatening everyone with if they pushed her too far.

They said their goodnights in the hallway before heading to their individual rooms. Ginny changed into her pajamas before sliding under the covers and picking up her phone. The notifications she hadn’t checked in hours told her she had a text from Rex and she grinned.

REX

Hope you’re having fun, princess. Miss you.

It was a simple message. No big flowery words of romance and longing. And still, she fell asleep with a grin on her face

and her phone clutched to her chest as she dreamed it was her own bad boy Daddy standing at the end of the aisle, waiting patiently for her on their wedding day just the way he had their entire lives.

CHAPTER 33



Weddings were chaos.

It was the only word Rex could think to describe the way everyone was rushing around, setting up chairs and tables and some giant tent thing Edie had rented. Over the past few hours, he'd been drafted into moving tables, figuring out how the fuck the stupid tent thing was supposed to be attached to the ground, carrying plates and silverware out to the tent, stringing Christmas lights inside said tent, and a dozen other little things that apparently had to be done before they could even get dressed.

And in all of that, he'd only gotten a short hello and a quick, distracted kiss from his princess.

"Ginny and I are going to Vegas," he grumbled as he set out another chair alongside the makeshift aisle in Edie's backyard. "Y'all can come if you want, but we're not doing all this nonsense."

Beside him, Matt snorted. "Good luck with that. You really think Ginny is going to miss a chance to buy herself a big fancy dress?"

Pausing, Rex scowled at his grinning friend. "Dammit. No."

“Look on the bright side,” Ian said, plopping a chair down beside the one Rex had just put in place. “Her parents will probably spring for people to do the grunt work. You’ll just have to rent a tux and show up.”

“There is that.” Still, it seemed like a lot of fuss for one day. But despite his grumbling, he knew damn well that if Ginny wanted the big fancy party and the poofy cupcake dress, he’d do it. A day of chaos wasn’t much in the grand scheme of things if it made his princess happy.

It took another hour to get everything set up to Edie’s exacting standards—apparently Carly was locked away somewhere getting ready and Edie was the dragon at the gate guarding her from any undo stress—but eventually the stage was set and the guests were starting to arrive. Including Carly’s parents, fresh off a plane from Nebraska.

“All right, boys.” Pulling her phone from the pocket of her faded jeans, Edie checked the time and grimaced. “You’ve got about thirty minutes to get into your wedding clothes and get back down here.”

It took Rex less than half that, other than the tie he never had gotten the hang of wearing the few times he’d ever worn a suit before this. He was just about to give up when the door to the bedroom he’d been directed to opened and Ginny walked in, looking like a literal princess in a dark green dress that swept the floor, with poofy sleeves that left her shoulders and the tops of her breasts bare. Her hair spilled in careful curls around her face and down her back, pinned up at the side by flowers that matched her dress.

She stopped short in the doorway, her lips curving up in an appreciative smile as she met his gaze in the reflection of the

full-length mirror he was camped out in front of as he fussed with his tie. “You clean up well, Carrington.”

“Don’t look so bad yourself, princess.”

“Thanks. Need help?”

It was a simple question, asked without any hint of judgment in her tone as she stepped up behind him. But his stomach twisted all the same.

She belongs with someone who knows how to tie a fucking tie.

“Sure.”

“I used to help my dad with this all the time,” she said conversationally as he turned so she could pick up the ends of the tie. “The residents of Lost River would be scandalized to know their mayor doesn’t know how to tie his own tie.”

Tilting his chin, he tried not to wince as she tugged at the material around his neck. “Why doesn’t your mom do it?”

“She did, but when I was a little girl, maybe about ten or so, they were getting ready for some big charity thing. And I just remember begging him to let me tie it for him. Took me about a dozen tries to get it right, but after that it was kind of our little ritual.” With a final tug, she settled the knot at the base of his throat and stepped back, her smile beaming as her gaze traveled over him. “I miss it, sometimes. But I suppose now I have you.”

Pulling at the tie to loosen the loop around his neck, he turned back to the mirror. “I’m not exactly the charity gala type.”

“Good,” she said with a laugh. “They’re horribly boring, and while I’m certain they do some good, I prefer more hands-

on methods of giving back to the community.”

Knowing she wouldn't expect him to get fancied up on a regular basis helped, but he still felt a bit like an imposter in the suit as they made their way downstairs. Even more so when Noelle and Taylor's eyes widened and Ian shot him a teasing grin.

“Lost River has a new member of the royal family, I see,” Ian said, sweeping his arm in front of him for a mock bow. “Your majesty.”

Taylor drove an elbow into his side, her brows drawing together in a scowl. “Don't be mean.”

“Technically, he would be ‘Your Royal Highness’,” Ginny said dryly. “My parents would be ‘Your Majesty’. If you're going to mock us, Ian Grady, at least have the decency to do it right.”

Still grinning, Ian straightened and rubbed at the spot on his side where Taylor's elbow had connected. “I'll be sure to get it right next time. Now, if you'll all excuse us, my Little girl apparently needs a lesson on keeping her elbows to herself.”

“No, Daddy, I'm sorry!”

Noelle looped her arm through Taylor's, anchoring her in place as Ian tugged on Taylor's other arm. “Don't be such a stick in the mud, Ian. The wedding is about to start.”

Before Ian could do more than glower at his little sister, Dom laid a hand on the back of her neck. “Let her go, sugar plum.”

“But—”

“Now, Noelle, unless you'd like a trip upstairs as well.”

Pouting, Noelle released her hold on Taylor. Ian shot Dom a grateful look, then dragged Taylor upstairs, her apologetic protests trailing behind them.

“I just don’t see why he has to be such an asshole,” Noelle muttered, crossing her arms.

“Because he was born an asshole.” Rex winked when Noelle looked up at him, and a reluctant smile curved her lips.

“Don’t encourage her,” Dom said with a mock glare for his Little girl, who responded by sticking her tongue out at him. Chuckling, Dom leaned down to whisper something in her ear that had Noelle’s cheeks reddening and her eyes going wide.

“No, Daddy. I’ll behave.”

“Good girl. Come on, let’s go find our seats.”

Taking Noelle’s arm, Dom led the way outside and Ginny leaned into Rex, dropping her voice to a loud whisper. “What do you think he threatened her with?”

“Probably a trip upstairs with Taylor,” Rex whispered back.

“Hmm. Maybe. But Dom’s much more creative than Ian. And apparently there was an incident with a vibrator in public once. Do you think he made her wear one today?”

“Is that so?” He deliberately drew the question out, making her stiffen beside him as they walked. “I’ll have to ask him where he got that from. I’d enjoy watching you squirm, trying to get relief while making sure not to draw any attention to how wet and needy your little pussy is beneath that pretty dress of yours.”

“You wouldn’t dare.”

“Oh, princess. You should know better than to dare a man like me.” Glancing to the side, he steered her into a small half-bathroom just before they reached the back door.

“Rex, what are you—”

Her outraged question cut off with a squeak as he spun her around to face the mirror. Meeting her burning gaze in the reflection, he gathered her dress up, pulling the material over her hips and exposing her pretty lace panties to him. “I may not have a vibe handy, but I know how to make my girl squirm. Hands on the sink, princess. And don’t move them unless you’d rather have Daddy’s cum in your ass instead of your pretty pussy.”

She glared at him in the mirror, but did as she was told, gripping the sides of the sink as he bent her forward.

They didn’t have much time, so he tugged her panties to her knees and freed his already stiff cock from his pants. But even without the foreplay, she was slick and ready for him when he slid inside her.

“Daddy’s going to fill you right up, princess. And then you’re going to sit there, surrounded by all our friends and family, with my cum filling up your panties, wondering if anybody can tell. If they can smell me on you. If they can tell what a filthy, needy little princess you are when you squirm in your seat, wishing you could slip away and take the edge off just a little until you can get Daddy’s cock in your pussy again.”

Eyes wide, she bit down on her lip, cutting off her whimper. Covering one of her hands with his own, he wrapped the other around her throat, pulling her head back as he pounded into her hot, wet sheath. “You’re so fucking tight,

baby. Daddy loves the way your sweet little pussy feels on his cock. You ready for Daddy's cum, princess?"

"Y-yes, Daddy," she gasped out, her throat working beneath his palm for every breath.

"Beg me, princess. Beg Daddy to give you his cum."

Even then, when he was balls deep inside her with his hand around her throat, she struggled to submit. He watched it play out on her face, defiance and need warring for dominance.

Until, finally, her need won out. "Please, Daddy," she whispered. "Please give me your cum. I need you... I need you to fill my pussy, Daddy, please. Please. Please."

It probably made him a bit of an asshole, but hearing the princess of Lost River beg for his cum sent him spinning out over the edge. With one last thrust he filled her, his balls drawing up as he emptied them deep inside her.

"Such a good girl for Daddy," he praised softly, pressing a kiss to her hair as their eyes locked in the reflection again. "If you're a very good girl the rest of the day, Daddy will let you come all over his cock next time."

"You're an asshole, Rex Carrington."

"I know. But I'm your asshole."



IT WORKED, damn him.

As they sat on Edie's transformed lawn, waiting for the ceremony to start, all she could think about was the wetness in her panties that was a combination of her own arousal and his cum. Oh, and the fact that her entire body felt like it was on fire and her clit was throbbing with every fucking heartbeat.

Asshole.

Yeah, but I'm your asshole.

She fought back the urge to grin as his words came back to her. Because it shouldn't make her so damn giddy for him to say he was hers in that amused, growly voice of his.

Her situation wasn't helped at all by the arm he had draped around her shoulders, or the fingers that kept brushing across her bare skin.

From now on, only long-sleeved dresses. No exposed flesh.

Relief washed over her when Matt took his place at the end of the aisle, looking more nervous than she could ever remember. The sooner the wedding started, the sooner she could put some distance between her and Rex's hands.

Watching Matt fidget up there in front of God and everybody, she couldn't help but smile. Would Rex be that nervous if they ever tied the knot? Or would he simply accept it as his due, the way he seemed to have done with their entire relationship so far?

A few minutes later, the music started, and the audience rose to their feet. Tears stung Ginny's eyes as Carly stepped onto the runner, one hand holding a bouquet of fresh pink roses, the other on the arm of an older man who looked more out of place in a suit and tie than Rex had. But he was positively beaming when he looked down at his daughter,

whose gaze was locked on the man waiting for her at the end of the aisle, her own blinding smile on her face.

Pulling out the handkerchief she'd secreted away in one of the hidden pockets of her dress, Ginny dabbed at her eyes. As she was stuffing the piece of cloth back in her pocket, her gaze connected with someone standing directly across the aisle.

Her mother.

Though her expression was as pleasant and polite as ever, Ginny could see the fury burning in her eyes, and her stomach sank. Either Carly hadn't told Matt about Ginny's falling out with her parents, or they hadn't wanted to risk offending her parents by not inviting them.

It didn't matter. Today was about celebrating true love. And she would be damned if she let her selfish, petty, narrow-minded mother ruin Carly's big day. So she firmly turned away from her mother's angry gaze, lifted her chin, and watched two people she loved vow to love each other 'til death did them part.

CHAPTER 34



Watching someone he'd known nearly his entire life stand up in front of their entire town and pledge to love one woman for the rest of his days was... surreal was the only word Rex could think of to describe it. And if his eyes got a little watery, it was just because it was March in South Carolina, the time of year when all the trees collectively decided to attempt mass murder by pollen.

That was his story and he was sticking to it.

Beside him, Ginny sniffled and dabbed at her eyes with a handkerchief. Because of course the princess of Lost River carried a handkerchief for special occasions.

Adorable.

When the vows were made and the rings were exchanged, Matt took full advantage of the pastor's blessing to kiss his bride, bending Carly backwards as he kissed her a hell of a lot longer than necessary to 'seal the deal'. The crowd around them went wild, and he even spotted Mrs. Peters jumping up and down, cheering on her daughter while Mr. Peters tugged uncomfortably at the collar of his shirt.

"She looks so happy," Ginny said with a sigh as they rose to their feet to follow the rest of the guests over to the food tent.

“So does Matty.” Sliding his arm around her waist, he tried not to notice when she stiffened at his touch. She didn’t pull away or scold him, so he figured that was progress of some sort.

But by the time they actually made their way over to the tent, *he* was ready to be away from all the curious looks and whispers. While their first date hadn’t made much of a splash, apparently showing up at a wedding together was a whole other ballgame.

“You’re scowling,” Ginny murmured under her breath, her elbow digging lightly into his side.

“Maybe I wouldn’t be scowling if everyone would stop fucking staring.”

Turning slightly, she raised a brow in that haughty way she had that drove him mad. “None of these people have ever seen you in anything but jeans and a leather jacket. Of course, they’re going to stare. And you know what?”

“What?”

A slow, seductive smile spread across her face as she leaned in, tilting her face back. “Let them. Kiss me, Daddy. Let’s give ‘em something to talk about.”

How the hell was he supposed to resist temptation like that? Sliding his arms around her waist, he jerked her forward, drinking in her gasp of surprise just before he slanted his lips across hers.

For a moment, the rest of the world fell away. He forgot all about the stares and the whispers. Forgot about everything that wasn’t the soft bundle of woman in his arms.

They broke apart much sooner than he would have liked, but he didn’t let her go. Lowering his head, he put his lips next

to her ear and whispered, “Good girl.”

She shivered, and even though he’d just been inside her before the ceremony had started, his cock twitched at the feel of his woman trembling in his arms.

“We should get out of here,” he said, running a hand down her back for the sole purpose of feeling her quake again.

“It’s too early.” But it was clear from the pout on her face that she wanted out of there just as much as he did. “We’ll find Matt and Carly, say our congratulations, and head out. Deal?”

“Deal.”

Before they could execute their plan, however, an older, sharper version of his princess stepped in their way. The polite smile she wore didn’t remotely match the look in her eyes, eyes that would have matched Ginny’s if they hadn’t been so full of hatred, and he instinctively tightened his grip on his girl.

“Genevieve. A word, please.” Mrs. Morgan’s gaze flicked to Rex then away again, as if he weren’t important enough for her to even worry about. “In private.”

Rex opened his mouth to tell her to fuck off, but Ginny placed a hand on his chest. “I’ll be right back. And then we can get out of here.”

Rising up, she pressed a kiss to his cheek then swept after her mother.

“Go after her.”

It was the urgent tone in Edie’s voice as much as the words that had him turning. Decker out in a surprisingly well-fitted suit the same shade as the wine Ginny preferred, Edie’s brows

were drawn together with worry as she watched mother and daughter cross the lawn toward her house.

“She’ll be pissed if I barge in,” he said, more for his own benefit than anyone else’s. Even without Edie’s urging, his own instincts were pushing him to chase after them.

Edie shot him a dark look. “I’ve seen that look on Kimberly Morgan’s face before. Something’s wrong. You don’t have to charge in guns blazing, but Ginny needs you.”

His feet were moving before Edie even finished giving her orders. Slower than he would have liked, because Ginny really would kill him if he made a scene and drew attention to whatever was going on with her and her mother. By the time he made it up to the house, his heart was pounding so hard he could barely make out Mrs. Morgan’s words as he approached the kitchen.

“It’s an embarrassment to the family, Genevieve. If you want to whore yourself out to that good for nothing Rex Carrington behind closed doors, that’s fine. But throwing yourself at him in the middle of a wedding reception? What were you thinking?”

He froze inside the back door. Just like that, he was five, twelve, sixteen years old again, trying to pretend someone in town hadn’t just ‘accidentally’ let him hear what they really thought of him and his family. Pain, dull from years of use but pain all the same, stabbed at his chest as he tried to steady his breathing.

“Oh, for fuck’s sake, mother. I was not *throwing* myself at him. He kissed me, that’s all.”

“Watch your tone when you speak to me, young lady. I won’t stand for this defiance much longer. I already told you

once to stay away from that boy. I won't tell you again."

It didn't surprise him that the Morgans had warned Ginny away from him. They would hardly be the first set of parents in Lost River who had metaphorically—and in some cases, literally—locked their doors to keep him away from their daughters. But Ginny had never mentioned anything about her parents disapproving of their relationship.

Was that the real reason she'd started sleeping with him? Was she going through some kind of delayed teenage rebellion?

"And as I already told you the other day, you don't have a say in how I live my life. When you're ready to apologize and stop being such a tyrant, you know where to find me."

"Genevieve Morgan, don't you walk away from me! This conversation isn't over!"

It was all the warning he got before Ginny turned the corner and crashed right into him. Jerking back, she glared up at him, but her eyes slowly went wide as recognition hit.

Grabbing her arm to steady her, he pinned her with a bland stare. "Going somewhere, princess?"



SHIT, shit, shit!

The last thing she'd ever wanted was for Rex to hear the horrible things her mother had to say about him and their relationship. Panic fluttered in her chest, blocking the air from

filling her lungs. “What are you doing up here? I told you I’d be right back.”

“I was worried about you.” His gaze flicked up, locking on something behind her. “Mrs. Morgan. You look lovely this afternoon.”

“Rex.” Her mother’s voice was strained. “You look... tidy.”

Ginny spun around, fully prepared to tell her mother to fuck off. But before she could get the words out, Rex spoke, his voice as smooth and lethal as a snake.

“Clean up well, don’t I? Shame the same can’t be said for you.”

For the rest of her life, Ginny would remember the look of pure shock on her mother’s face. Her mother, with her perfectly sculpted hair, her immaculate makeup, and her neatly tailored suit, being told by Lost River’s resident bad boy that she didn’t *clean up well*. “Excuse me?”

“See, the thing about motor oil and dirt is, you can wash all that shit off. But someone like you, the grime is stuck to your soul. There’s not enough showers in the world that can rinse that off. Come on, princess.”

A hysterical laugh bubbled up in Ginny’s throat as Rex grabbed her hand and hauled her toward the back door. “Bye, mom! See you around!”

The back door slammed behind them and Ginny let out an explosive breath. “Holy shit! I can’t believe you said that to her. You’re my hero.”

“Flattery won’t save your ass, princess.”

Confused, she tugged at the arm he still held in his iron grip. “What? What are you—Rex, slow down, I’m gonna fall!”

He’d been moving so fast she could barely keep up, especially in the high, skinny heels she was wearing. Luckily, he slowed immediately, glancing back with an apologetic grunt. “Sorry.”

“It’s okay. But why aren’t we going back to the reception?”

“Not really in much of a party mood. And we need to talk.”

We need to talk. The four most dreaded words in the English language. “I’m sorry about my mom. She... well, I don’t know what her problem is, actually. But I’m sorry you had to hear that.”

He stopped at the passenger side of her SUV and turned, holding his hand out. “Keys.”

“What about your bike?”

“I’ll come back for it. Keys, Ginny, unless you’d really like to give your mom a reason to hate me.”

“What’s that supposed to mean?”

With an actual, literal growl, he stepped closer, his voice low and menacing. “It means if you don’t give me your keys right now, I’m going to bend you over the hood of your car and show all of Lost River how I deal with naughty, defiant Little girls.”

Indignation warred with excitement as she opened her clutch and pulled out her keys. “Just for the record, I don’t actually believe you’d spank me in front of everyone.”

Taking the keys, he opened the door and nudged her inside, a smirk tugging at the corner of his lips. “Believed me enough to hand over your keys.”

The door shut in her face before she could argue. Not that she really *could* argue since he had a point.

Knowing that didn’t stop her from glaring at him as he climbed inside her car, though. “I don’t understand why you’re acting like I did something wrong. I’m just as pissed at my mother as you are.”

“You really think I give a fuck what your mother thinks about me?”

She frowned, her mind scrambling to make sense of his cryptic behavior. “If you don’t care, why are you so mad?”

Glancing up at the rearview mirror, Rex put the car in reverse and carefully wove his way through the other vehicles cluttering Edie’s driveway. “This isn’t the first fight you two have had about me.”

It wasn’t posed as a question, but she felt compelled to answer nonetheless. “No, it’s not.”

“How many times has this come up? Before today?”

Her stomach twisted itself into a giant knot at his question. This was exactly what she’d been trying to avoid. “Twice. But it doesn’t matter.”

“It fucking matters to me.”

Letting out a short, frustrated scream, she threw her hands in the air as he navigated the car back out onto the main road. “You just said you didn’t care what my mom thinks!”

“I don’t. I care about you keeping shit from me, because apparently you don’t fucking trust me enough to actually let

me in on the shit that matters.”

The puzzle pieces finally clicked and for several long seconds, she could only stare at him. “That’s not... I wasn’t...”

Words failed her. Because no matter how she tried to justify it or explain it, that’s exactly what she’d done. “It’s not like that,” she finally said, her words strangled thanks to the tears clogging her throat.

“Yeah? How about when you were going to let me knock you up because you assumed I’d be willing to just walk away from my own fucking child. Was it like that?”

Panic tightened around her chest. “I thought we were past that.”

“I tried to be. I tried really fucking hard, because I love you so goddamn much I can’t stand the thought of losing you. But from where I’m standing it seems like you’ve been willing to let me share your bed, but not your life.”

Jesus. How had she fucked this up so badly? “That’s not what I was trying to do.”

“You keep saying that, but you’re not telling me what you *were* trying to do.”

“It’s... complicated.”

Glancing over at her, he turned the car onto his driveway. “Well, if you need some more time to think about your answer, you can go put your nose in the corner in the living room until you’re ready to tell me the truth. Because one way or another, little girl, after tonight you won’t ever want to keep secrets from your Daddy again.”

CHAPTER 35



“You should have some pajamas in my dresser,” Rex said as they stepped inside. “Go wash your face, change, then meet me in the living room.”

Gathering her courage, she turned, her hands clasped tightly in front of her. “Can’t we talk about this? Please?”

“Absolutely. Once you’ve done what I told you to.”

His expression looked as though it had been carved out of stone, and she knew it was pointless to argue. But she couldn’t seem to help herself. “I don’t want to change. I want to talk.”

Before she could process what was happening, his arm was around her waist, bending her in half as heavy swats rained down all over her ass. Her shocked squeals peppered the air as she danced in place to try and escape the punishing blows, but he never missed a swat.

When he finally released her, she popped back up, rubbing at her heated bottom and sniffing back the tears stinging her eyes. “That was mean!”

“I can get a whole lot meaner if I need to, princess. Which I can promise you do not want, considering how much trouble you’re already in. So march your naughty little butt into the bedroom before I decide it’s not hot enough.”

“Fine. I’m going. Big bully,” she muttered to herself as she stomped toward his bedroom.

But the words rang hollow, even to her. Somewhere along the lines, her good intentions had gotten twisted. Regardless of what she’d meant to do by keeping her fights with her mother to herself, she’d hurt him in the process.

Again.

So yeah, maybe she deserved a spanking and whatever else he had planned for her. With that in mind, she stripped out of her wedding attire and made her way to the bathroom to scrub her face.

Staring at her naked, paler than usual face in the mirror, she dragged in a deep breath, doing her best to calm the raging storm of emotions in her chest. “Here we go.”

Dressed in a pair of comfy cotton pajamas, she made her way out to the living room, where he was seated on the couch. She hesitated when she spotted the heavy wooden hairbrush and legal pad sitting beside each other on the coffee table.

Rex looked up when she stopped, one dark eyebrow lifting toward his hairline. “Are you ready to talk, or do you need some time to think?”

Since ‘time to think’ was apparently code for standing in the corner like a naughty child, she shook her head. “I’m ready to talk.”

“All right.” He pointed to the couch beside him. “Sit.”

“Are you going to spank me with that?” she blurted out as soon as her butt hit the couch.

“Unless you can come up with a damn good reason why you’ve been keeping things from me, yes. So.” Settling back

against the arm of the couch, he pinned her with a dark, unreadable stare. “Convince me you don’t deserve to have your bottom blistered with that hairbrush.”

Twisting her fingers together in her lap, she lowered her gaze, tears once more burning in her eyes. “I thought I was protecting you.”

“Protecting me from what, princess? Your mom?”

“Yes. Well, sort of. I was so sure she’d come around and see what a great guy you were before you had to hear any of the awful things she said about you.” *And about me.*

He sighed, and when she risked a peek up at his expression, it had softened considerably. “I don’t need you to protect me, princess.”

“I know. But I’m not going to apologize for wanting to.”

“All right.”

Some of the knots in her stomach loosened and she risked a tiny smile in his direction. “So... am I still getting spanked?”

“Oh, you’re definitely getting spanked. How hard depends on the rest of this conversation. Tell me about the first fight.”

“Do we really have to do this?” She was well aware she was whining, but she was past caring.

“You could always go stand in the corner with your pants around your ankles if you need time to think it over.”

“Ugh, fine.” Flopping back against the couch cushions, she crossed her arms and glared at the items on the coffee table. “It was the morning after you came and got me from that bar in Charleston. She was waiting for me in my apartment. Apparently, she’d been telling everyone that we absolutely were *not* dating, so she was pretty pissed when I assured her

we were. And that I wasn't going to stop seeing you just because she said so."

"Good girl," he said in that low, gravelly tone that made her insides clench. "Did she say anything else?"

She didn't want to tell him. Telling the girls had been hard enough, and she wasn't really looking forward to reliving that conversation yet again. But the whole reason she was in trouble right now was for keeping things from him, so it didn't seem wise to hold anything back.

"She..." Her breath hitched, and she swallowed hard, determined to keep her composure. "She told me I looked like a whore."

The string of words that came from Rex's mouth would have made a sailor blush. And possibly seek forgiveness just for overhearing them.

But they also eased some of the hurt and grief Ginny hadn't even realized she'd still been carrying with her. "Tell me how you really feel," she said dryly, shooting him a wry smile when he finished.

"I feel like I don't want you around her. I know that's not realistic, but I'd be perfectly happy if you never talked to that stuck-up bitch again."

"No, it's not realistic. And even with all of that, I'm desperately hoping she comes around because I love her, even if she is a bitch. But thank you for wanting to protect me."

"Always." Reaching out, he cupped her cheek, his gaze burning with a fierceness that had her stomach quivering. "Everything I do is for you, princess. I hope you know that."

"I'm starting to see that, yeah."

“Good.” His thumb brushed across her cheekbone, and she nuzzled against his hand. “You said there were two fights. What about the second?”

She couldn’t tell him about that without telling him about the doctor. “I... can I have a hug, first?”

“Of course, princess. Come here.”

If she could have curled up in his lap like a kitten, she would have. But she settled for curling up next to him with his arms wrapped around her, holding her so tight she finally felt like she wouldn’t simply shatter at the first wrong touch.

And she stayed there, with him rocking her gently and pressing the occasional kiss to the top of her head, soaking in his love and support until the words finally came. “It was after I went to the doctor the other day.”

“When you found out you weren’t pregnant?”

“Yeah. There was more to it, though.”

A beat of silence, then a simple, “Tell me about it.”

“The short version is, the doctor doesn’t think there’s anything to worry about just yet. But she’s running some tests to see if I have something going on because I’m not pregnant, but I also haven’t had a period in almost three months.”

“What kind of something?”

“She’s not really sure. That’s what the tests are for.”

“Okay.” He pressed another kiss to her head and she closed her eyes, letting his strength steady her. “I’m not happy you kept all that from me, little girl.”

“I know. I’m sorry. I just didn’t want you to worry.”

“Uh huh. And you don’t think maybe you were trying to keep some distance between us because you still weren’t sure I was going to stick?”

Wincing, she pressed her face into his chest. “Maybe. I’m sorry.”

“We’ll talk about it in a minute. But how does your mom fit in to all this?”

“I, well, had a bit of a meltdown after the doctor. My brain just kind of went into overdrive, worrying about what I would do if I couldn’t get pregnant, or if there was something seriously wrong with me, that kind of thing. And I guess I just wanted my mom to tell me it would all be okay because the next thing I knew, I was at my parents’ house.”

“I’m guessing she wasn’t exactly supportive.”

“God, no,” she said with a humorless laugh. “She basically told me if I had a baby with you, my parents would have nothing to do with me anymore. She even threatened to have my dad cut me off.”

Rex’s chest rumbled with laughter. “Like you need their money.”

“Right? I—Wait.” Pushing away from him, she narrowed her eyes at his amused expression. “How do you know I don’t need their money?”

“Baby, you’re the most successful, business savvy person I know. I have no doubt that if they cut you off tomorrow, you’d find a way to make it work without ever missing a beat.”

Of all the praise he’d ever given her, it was that simple, unwavering belief in her that nearly brought her to tears.

And pissed her right the fuck off.

“If you’re so sure I’d be fine on my own, why are you always giving me so much shit about my parents’ money?”

He at least had the grace to look sheepish. “Because I knew it got under your skin. And, as we’ve already discussed, I have some issues of my own to work on. There’s always been a part of me that resented how much you had growing up.”

“Well, for your information, I haven’t relied on my parents’ money for years. I have investment accounts my dad pays into every month, but even if he cut me off tomorrow, well... let’s just say neither us or our children or even our children’s children would have to work a day in our lives to live very comfortably.”

She watched, amused, as a dozen emotions played across his face. “Yeah. Gonna have to work on getting used to that. Jesus Christ.”

“Yes, you are. Because I’m done making myself small to make other people comfortable, Rex. And that includes you. So whatever you have to do to make yourself okay with my money, do it. Therapy would probably be a good start.”

“I’m not going to a shrink.”

Lifting a hand to his face, she met his brooding gaze. “If you won’t go for you, go for me. Hell, go with me. You’re my endgame, Rex Carrington, and I don’t want to spend the rest of our lives fighting about money or ripping open each other’s wounds on a regular basis. Please, Daddy?”

She saw the moment his resistance crumbled. “Goddammit. You know I’d do anything for you, princess.”

“Even go to therapy?”

His jaw tightened, and for a moment she thought he was going to shoot her down. “Before I agree to anything, there’s something else I want to ask you about. Since we’re clearing the air and everything.”

Unease twisted in her gut, but she forced a smile. “What is it?”

“The other night, at the game. When we kissed for the Kiss Cam... why did you freeze up on me?”

Embarrassment heated her cheeks as she squirmed in his hold. “I was hoping you didn’t notice that.”

“I did. And I’ll be honest, I couldn’t help but feel like it was one more time you were embarrassed to be seen with me.”

“No!” Pushing up on her knees, she shook her head. “No, it wasn’t you at all. It was me. I was embarrassed of me.”

A frown tugged at the corners of his lips. “What do you mean?”

“You have to promise not to get mad.”

“Ginny...”

“I’m serious, Daddy. Promise me.”

The look he sent her said he wasn’t happy about that particular condition, but he nodded. “I promise.”

“Okay.” *No more secrets* she reminded herself as she dragged in a deep breath for courage. “Well, I don’t know if you noticed, but those seats in the stadium aren’t exactly built for people like me.”

“What do you mean?”

“I mean, I felt fat. And not in the good, happy way I usually use that word. I felt like I was taking up too much

space and I was already embarrassed and then when I saw the way I looked on the Kiss Cam I just... froze.”

“Aw, princess. Come here.”

Sighing, she snuggled back into his arms. “I’m sorry. I know it’s silly and I’m sorry I hurt your feelings. Again. It’s not often I feel self-conscious about my weight, and I guess it just took me by surprise.”

“I can understand that. But for what it’s worth, I thought you looked beautiful on camera.”

“I didn’t feel beautiful.”

He pressed a kiss to the top of her head. “I understand. Thank you for telling me.”

“Welcome. And you’ll go to therapy with me?”

“Yes, princess, I’ll go to therapy with you.”

“Good,” she said cheerfully. “I’ll make us an appointment first thing Monday morning.” Because if she didn’t, he’d just keep finding ways to put it off.

“Jesus. All right.”

“Thank you. Seriously. I know none of this is easy for you.”

“That’s where you’re wrong, princess. Loving you is as natural and easy as breathing. The rest of it is just static that needs a bit of tuning. But this?” Taking her hand, he placed it over his heart. “This is as easy as it comes.”

“Rex...” Words failed her, and everyone always said actions spoke louder anyway. So she leaned in, pressing her lips to his and pouring everything she felt but couldn’t say into the kiss.

The world around them fell away, and for a few sweet, blessed moments, it was just the two of them and the love they shared. It was, as he had said, all just noise anyway. This, what they had between them, what they'd always had even when they'd both been too stubborn to admit it, was all that really mattered in the end.

When the kiss ended, Rex pressed his forehead to hers, and she had to close her eyes against the tears of pure joy threatening to break free. "I love you, Ginny Morgan. So much I can't fucking breathe sometimes just looking at you."

"Ditto."

Their laughter broke some of the tension, and the swat he landed to her hip eased it even more. "And because I'm hopelessly, madly, ridiculously in love with you, I'm going to make sure you never keep secrets like this from your Daddy again."

"What if I pinky swear?" She held up a fist with her little finger sticking out. "No more secrets."

Smirking, Rex hooked his pinky with hers and held tight. "I'll be holding you to that. But it's not going to get you out of getting that naughty bottom of yours thoroughly roasted. Stand up, princess."

CHAPTER 36



It was difficult not to laugh when the woman you loved, a woman you knew damn well was smart as a fucking whip and fully capable of running a small empire, was standing in front of you pouting like a Little girl as she waited for you to spank her.

But while he might not have been nearly as smart or savvy as his princess, he knew enough not to let the chuckle bubbling in his chest burst free. Swallowing it down, he pinned her with a serious look as he reached for the waistband of her pajamas.

“It’s you and me now, princess. Which means you come to me with the heavy shit. No more keeping things to yourself for any reason. Got it?”

Her pout deepened. “What if I’m planning a surprise party for you?”

“Keep being sassy and you’ll be swallowing Daddy’s cum instead of taking it in your pretty pussy after your spanking.”

Pink colored her cheeks and she shifted from foot to foot as he tugged her pajamas down. “Sorry.”

Once her pajamas and panties were both down around her knees, he shifted on the couch so she could bend over his left

thigh. “Come here, princess.”

Inhaling deeply, like she was steeling herself for what came next, she knelt on the floor, her ass high over his knee and her torso resting on the cushion beside him. And because he needed a minute himself to prepare for what was certainly about to be the harshest punishment he’d ever dished out, he rubbed his hand over the perfect, smooth globes of her ass.

“You’re going to get a good warm up with my hand, then the hairbrush. Once I’m convinced you’ve really learned your lesson, you’re going to sit on your sore, bare bottom and write lines for me.”

“Oh, Daddy no, not writing lines,” she whined, sounding so pitiful it would have been easy to believe he’d threatened her with no orgasms for a week.

“Yes, princess, lines. I want to make sure this lesson really sinks in.”

“It already has! I’m sorry!”

“I’m sure you are, baby. But you matter too fucking much for me to let you risk our relationship because you don’t think you can lean on me when shit gets hard.”

And didn’t that fucking sting? Knowing she was willing to trust him with her body, with giving her a child, even with some piece of her heart, but not her pain? Maybe therapy wasn’t a bad idea after all, because god knew they needed to get this shit figured out if they were going to make it.

For now, he’d have to settle for blistering her ass good and proper so she was never even tempted to keep such big, painful secrets from him again.

With one last squeeze for her gorgeous ass, he raised his hand and snapped it against her bare skin. For once, he didn’t

pause to admire the way his handprint bloomed on the pale canvas. He didn't pause for even a second before landing the next swat on the opposite cheek.

The change-up didn't go unnoticed by his princess, who immediately started wiggling over his knee, already attempting to escape her punishment. But he simply wrapped an arm around her waist to hold her in place as he continued peppering her ass with the sharp, stinging swats.

"Do I have your attention, Ginny?" he asked as he moved lower, targeting her sensitive sit-spots.

Squealing at the change, she drummed her toes on the floor, her bottom bouncing and clenching beneath his palm. "Yes, Daddy!"

"Good. Because if I have to repeat this lesson, we will do this every night for a week. Am I clear, little girl?"

"Yes, Daddy, I'm sorry!" Her voice lifted on a plaintive wail as she issued another apology.

Pausing the punishment, he rubbed his hand over her reddened skin, and she sagged with relief over his knee. "I know you're sorry, baby. But this is one of those times when 'sorry' isn't enough. I need to know you understand why this is such a big fucking deal to me and I want to be very, very sure that it won't happen again."

"I know." Her voice was quiet now, tinged with true remorse at the edges of her words. "I didn't mean to hurt you."

"I'm not spanking you because my feelings are hurt, princess."

"You're not?"

“No, baby. I’m spanking you because you hurt our relationship. How would you feel if something big happened to me, something that completely upended my whole worldview and my relationship with two people I love very deeply, and I didn’t tell you about it?”

To her credit, she didn’t answer him right away or brush off his words. “I’d feel like... like you’re not all in. Like you don’t trust me to be there for you when it matters.”

“And do you think two people can have a relationship that lasts when one of them is holding back like that?”

“No, Daddy.”

“Definitely no. So you tell me, princess. With all that in mind, do you really think your spanking should be over?”

Another long pause as she seemed to consider his words before she sighed. “No, Daddy.”

“Good girl. Hand Daddy the brush so we can finish up.”



REACHING over to the coffee table to grab that stupid brush when her ass was already on fire was hands down one of the hardest things she’d ever had to do. But she was going to do it because he was right. She’d deliberately held part of herself back because she hadn’t trusted him to stick around when things got hard.

No more.

So taking a deep breath, she grabbed the handle of the brush—fuck that thing was heavy—and held it behind her for him to take.

“Thank you, princess. I’m not going to give you a count, because I want you to focus on why you’re getting your naughty bottom paddled, not when it’s going to be over. Understood?”

“Yes, Daddy,” she managed to whisper past the tightness in her throat. The urge to apologize, again, welled up inside her, but she swallowed it down. He’d made it clear he wasn’t looking for apologies. He was looking for proof she’d learned her lesson, and she was determined to give it to him.

The first crack of wood against her bare skin stole her breath. It felt like millions of little bees stinging her flesh all at the same time, in the same spot, and she was suddenly very, very certain she would do whatever it took to avoid another punishment with that evil fucking brush.

She only made it about three swats in before the begging started. “Daddy, I’m sorry, please stop!”

“I’ll stop when I’m sure you’ve learned your lesson, princess.”

“I *have*,” she wailed, throwing her hand back to protect her poor bottom from further attack.

But Daddy simply grabbed her wrist and pinned her arm to her side as he continued lighting her ass on fire with the brush. Each swat layered burning pain over burning pain, and by the time he started to lecture it felt like her entire ass had been lit on fire.

“We’re a team, Ginny. I get why it’s hard for you to believe that, but I’m not your parents. I’m not going to cut you

out the second you do something I don't like. I'm not going to turn my back on you just because shit got hard. You might end up sitting on a red-hot bottom if you push me too far, but you're stuck with me, princess, and it's time for you to accept that."

Tears burned in her eyes and it felt like something was lodged in the base of her throat. But even though the urge to simply break down and sob was rising, it was like the block in her throat was keeping the tears from coming. "I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I'm *sorry!*"

"I don't want you to be sorry, baby. I want you to trust me."

It was his words more than the searing pain of the brush landing on the sensitive under curve of her ass that broke the dam. Whatever was stuck in her throat broke apart, and she let out a long, sorrowful wail as she collapsed over his knee.

She was so lost in her own misery, she wasn't sure how much longer he continued paddling her. But it couldn't have been very long because she'd only let out a few sobbing breaths before she was being gently guided up from his knee and into his arms once again.

"Shhh. It's all over, princess. You took your spanking like such a big girl and Daddy's so proud of you."

If she'd thought she couldn't possibly cry harder than she already was, she was wrong. His words rang in her ears as she burrowed into his embrace, the sobs racking her body as she clung to him for dear life.

And through it all, he simply held her. Rocked her as she cried out years of hurt and pain and worry. Years of wondering why she was never quite enough, and yet somehow too much

all at the same time. Years of choosing her words and actions so fucking carefully so she didn't upset anyone. Things that had become so much a part of her she'd stopped noticing them until he'd pushed her out of her little bubble.

Done. She was done with making herself palatable to her parents, to this fucking town. If they couldn't love her at her worst, then they didn't deserve her. Maybe it would just be her and Rex in the end, like he'd said, living in his little house on the edge of town.

But that would be more than enough.

Eventually the tears slowed, and she was able to let out a final shuddering breath as she eased herself from his arms and wiped at her eyes. "I really a-am sorry I kept all that stuff from you. I won't ever keep secrets from you again, I promise."

Her Daddy's lips twitched as he brushed the hair from her face. "Baby, if there's one thing I've learned from my friends, it's that Little girls are always going to try and hide things from their Daddies. But as long as you're coming to me with the stuff that hurts you, or hurts our relationship, I'll be happy."

Squirming slightly, she lowered her gaze and plucked at the hem of her pajama shirt. "So... it's okay if I don't tell you *everything*?"

"I didn't say that, princess. Is there something you still haven't told me?"

"Nothing big. But maybe something naughty."

"What is it?"

An internal battle waged between wanting to be completely open and honest with him and wanting to protect her friends. But in the end, she wanted there to be nothing

between them but honesty. “Well, Carly wanted to finish her bucket list before she and Matt got married. And last night she just had one thing left on her list.”

“And what was that?”

“Skinny dipping.”

There was a heartbeat of silence before her Daddy threw his head back and let out a howl of laughter. “You went skinny dipping last night? That water had to be freezing!”

“It was at first, but it wasn’t so bad once you got used to it.” She risked a peek up at him, relief washing over him when she found him shaking his head and grinning. “Am I in trouble?”

“Nah. I’m just sad I missed seeing you wet and naked in the moonlight.”

Returning his grin, she snuggled up against him. “Maybe we can sneak out to Edie’s one night and do it again. When it gets warmer.”

“Definitely once it gets warmer.”

“And you’re not going to tell the other Daddies?”

“There’s probably some kind of code that says I should but nah. I’m sure your friends will tell on themselves eventually.”

“Thanks.”

“All right, princess. Let’s get your lines out of the way so we can enjoy the rest of our evening. I’m thinking pizza and ice cream for dinner. I’ll even let you pick a movie.”

Sitting up with a groan, she pouted as he leaned over to pick up the legal pad and pen he’d left on the coffee table. “Do I really have to write lines?”

“Yup.” Holding the pad on his lap, he scribbled something at the top of the page before handing it to her.

She almost couldn't read it with the tears once again blurring her eyes. “Daddy loves me and will always be there for me, no matter what.”

“A hundred times, princess. And unless you need to potty, your butt better stay on that couch until they're all done.”

“Yes, Daddy,” she said with a sigh. But it was mostly for show. How could she be sad when she had the best man in the whole world on her side?

She finished the lines faster than she'd expected, and although her hand was cramping pretty bad by the time she finished, her heart was lighter than ever. They spent the rest of the evening exactly as he'd said, curled up on the couch watching the objectively terrible disaster movies she loved so much and gorging themselves on pizza and ice cream.

And when Little Ginny had been taken care of, he took her to bed, where he spent hours taking care of her Big Girl side, worshiping her body with every part of his own until she thought she might actually die from the onslaught of pleasure he forced on her.

By the time she finally drifted off to sleep in the wee hours of the morning, she could hardly remember why she'd ever wanted to keep anything a secret from him in the first place.

CHAPTER 37



Ginny was going to kill him.

Not only that, he was fairly certain he was being a huge fucking hypocrite by letting her think he was just going into work early instead of being honest with her about his actual destination.

But in his defense, he hadn't actually been sure he was going to go through with it until he was striding through the halls of the large, imposing house behind a woman wearing an honest to god maid's uniform.

Rich people. Jesus.

The woman paused in front of a door that was as large and imposing as the rest of the house and rapped her knuckles on the dark wood.

"Come in," a voice called from inside.

"Mr. Morgan? There's a young man here to see you."

"Who is it?"

"Rex Carrington. Sir," Rex added as he stepped up beside the housekeeper.

From behind his desk, Patrick Morgan's eyebrows disappeared into his hairline. "Ah... come in, Rex. Esme,

would you mind bringing us some lemonade?”

“Of course.” Esme flicked another curious glance Rex’s way before hurrying from the room and pulling the door shut behind her.

Mr. Morgan waved to one of the oversized armchairs on the other side of his desk. “Have a seat, Rex. What can I do for you?”

Rex only hesitated a moment before striding forward and dropping into one of the chairs. “I wanted to talk to you about Ginny.”

Whatever reaction he’d expected, it wasn’t for the mayor’s face to light up like a fucking Christmas tree at the mention of his daughter’s name. “I wasn’t expecting this moment to come so soon. I was under the impression you two had only just started dating.”

“Ah... yes, sir, that’s correct.” *If you don’t count the six months your daughter spent secretly trying to get me to knock her up.*

“Well, I suppose when you know, you know. And it’s not like you two were strangers before now, anyway.”

What the actual fuck was he talking about? “No, we weren’t.”

“Let me just ask you one thing before you proceed.” Folding his hands on top of the desk, Mr. Morgan leaned in, his expression suddenly serious despite the excitement dancing in his eyes. “Do you love my daughter?”

“Yes.” At least that part was easy and straightforward. “Sometimes it feels like I’ve loved her my whole life.”

“And you’ll do everything in your power to make her happy?”

“That’s the plan.”

“Perfect. That’s all I needed to hear.” Beaming again, Mr. Morgan sat back in his chair and pulled open a drawer. “You have my blessing, though it might take you a minute to convince her. Ginny’s always been a bit stubborn about doing things her own way, so it’s probably best if you don’t tell her you were here. Let her think it was her idea and you’re much more likely to get her to agree.”

Head spinning, Rex watched as the other man pulled a sleek black box from the drawer and popped it open, revealing a neat row of thick cigars. “Mr. Morgan, I—”

“Please, call me Patrick.”

What was *happening*? “Patrick. What exactly do you think I’m here for?”

Patrick paused, his hand hovering over the cigars. “You came to ask my permission to marry my daughter.”

It was said so matter-of-factly, and without a hint of the disdain he’d felt from Ginny’s mother, that Rex could only stare. “I... not exactly.”

“Oh.” Closing the box, Patrick nudged it off to the side, his expression closing off. “Then why are you here?”

“Don’t get me wrong, sir, I want to marry your daughter. If she’ll have me, that is. But no, that’s not why I’m here.” The speech he’d had prepared, basically telling Patrick Morgan he was an idiot for punishing his beautiful, successful daughter just because of who she’d fallen in love with, no longer sounded appropriate. “Sir, has your wife mentioned anything about Ginny’s relationship with me?”

Patrick grimaced. "I'm aware she isn't a fan. But she'll come around."

"I'm not so sure about that. And even if she does, with all due respect, she owes your daughter a huge apology." Rex laid it out for him, everything Ginny had told him and what he'd witnessed himself at the wedding. By the time he finished, every trace of good humor had fled from Patrick Morgan's face.

"Where is Ginny now?"

"Either at the studio or her apartment." Rex allowed himself a small smirk. "You should know your daughter well enough to know she's not going to let a little thing like her mother disowning her interrupt her workday."

Leaning back in his seat once more, Patrick scrubbed a hand over his face. "I suppose she gets that from me. When you do marry her, do me a favor and see that she doesn't overdo it, would you? Make sure she remembers to have fun."

"I will, sir."

"As for her mother... Kimberly and I will be having a very long conversation about her behavior tonight. You and Ginny both can expect an apology from her by tomorrow at the latest."

"I'm not worried about me. But Ginny deserves better."

Looking far more somber than he had when the conversation had started, Patrick rose to his feet and held out his hand. "You deserve better, too, Rex. I'm aware the town hasn't always been kind to you, through no fault of your own. I've watched you grow up into a fine, hard-working young man. And I'll be proud to call you my son when the time comes."

Jesus. If he didn't get out of there, he was going to end up bawling like a baby on the floor of the mayor's office. "Thank you, sir."

"Thank you for bringing all this to my attention. Why don't you and Ginny come over this weekend and we'll all have dinner, get to know each other a little better. Perhaps that will help unruffle some of my wife's feathers."

"If Ginny's ready for that, I'd be honored. But I'll leave it up to her."

Patrick smiled and gave Rex's hand one final squeeze. "You're a good man, Rex. My Ginny is lucky to have you."

"No, sir. I'm the lucky one."



BETWEEN THEIR IMPROMPTU trip to Atlanta, the wedding, her come to Jesus spanking, and finding a kink friendly therapist she felt could be trusted with the nature of her relationship with Rex, Ginny's email was overflowing by the time she opened it on Monday. It took her nearly to lunch time just to clear out what was obviously junk and reply to a handful of 'absolutely cannot wait a second longer' messages.

So the knock on her back door was both a welcome distraction and an irritating interruption. Stretching out the kinks in her back from sitting so long, she stood and made her way over to the door.

And nearly dropped her jaw onto the floor at the sight of her father on the other side of the glass.

“Dad? What are you doing here?” Wariness crept in, stopping her hand as she reached for the handle to let him in. “Did mom send you?”

“No, sweetheart. Quite the opposite, I assure you. May I come in?”

Still wary, but willing to give him the benefit of the doubt, she pushed open the door to let him in. “Do you, ah, want a drink?”

“I won’t be long.” Stepping inside her apartment, he looked around, his gaze traveling over every inch of the space so thoroughly she could only hope she hadn’t left out any incriminating evidence of her and Rex’s exploits. “I’m just realizing I haven’t really been by since you bought the place. It looks good.” Turning, he gave her the same assessing look he’d given the apartment. “As do you. Love looks good on you.”

Tears burned in her eyes and her throat. “Thanks. It feels really good.”

“Rex came to see me this morning. He told me about the falling out you had with your mother. I owe you an apology, sweetheart. If I’d had any idea what she was saying to you...” Looking stricken, her father lifted his hands in a helpless gesture. “All I can say is I’m sorry. You didn’t deserve the things she said to you.”

Relief, so strong and fierce it made her knees weak, flooded her. Throwing her arms around his neck, she let out a sob as he held her. “Thank you. I needed to hear that.”

“You can count on an apology from your mother as well, once I get to the bottom of her behavior.”

There was something in her father's tone that reminded her of the way Rex spoke when she'd been naughty. But she absolutely, positively, was *not* going down that particular rabbit hole with her parents. No, thank you.

Pulling away from his embrace, she wiped at her eyes. "She owes Rex an apology, too. I know you guys don't like him, but that's no excuse for—"

"I never said I didn't like Rex," her father interrupted. "If anything, I feel guilty we didn't do more to protect him as a child. And not just from his parents, but the town as a whole. I'm not unaware of what he went through, all because of his good for nothing parents. It wasn't fair then and it isn't fair now to hold him responsible for their behavior."

"Oh." Well, that took the wind right out of her sails. "I... thank you. That means a lot. I'll make sure he knows."

"I already told him. And I told him I'll be happy to call him my son when the time comes."

"I don't know if that will be any time soon," Ginny said with a laugh, though her heart tripped in her chest at the idea of marrying Rex. Maybe it wouldn't be a bad idea to just get it done. After all, if they were married, he couldn't begrudge her spending money on him whenever she felt like it.

Hmmm.

"Well, whenever it happens, you two have my blessing. And I'll ensure you have your mother's as well."

A lump formed in her throat, and she had to blink back more tears as she smiled at him. "Thanks, dad."

"No problem, sweetheart." His watch beeped and he glanced down at it with a sigh. "I have a meeting to get to, but

I told Rex we'd love to have you two over for dinner this weekend."

"Really? What did Rex say?"

"He said he'd be happy to come, but ultimately it was your call. We'll iron out the details after I straighten things out with your mother."

"Ah... okay. Sure. Sounds good."

"It's settled, then." He turned to go, then stopped with his hand on the storm door handle and turned back, a wistful smile on his face. "He's a good man, Ginny. I hope he gives you all the happiness you deserve."

"He does. More than I deserve, if I'm being honest."

When the door closed behind him, she turned a circle in her living room, taking in the home she'd made for herself. Everything she'd accomplished, all by herself.

But she wasn't alone anymore. Even if her mother refused to come around, she had her father.

And she had Rex.

Completely ignoring the pile of emails waiting for her, she strode into her bedroom and yanked open her closet.

She had some packing to do.

CHAPTER 38



Brutal. That was the only word he could think of to describe the day he'd had. With Matt off on his honeymoon, he and Jack had more than their fair share of work. Plus, the paperwork Matt usually handled made Rex's head ache just thinking about it.

He'd be glad when their fearless leader returned.

But seeing Ginny's SUV in his driveway instantly had the stress of the day draining away. Even more so when he stepped inside and inhaled the unmistakable scent of a home-cooked meal.

He found her in the kitchen, wearing nothing but an apron and a pair of impossibly high heels. "Something smells good enough to eat."

She turned away from the stove, a flirty smile on her lips. "I should hope so, since it's our dinner."

Stepping into the kitchen, he slowly stalked her, the need for her an itch he never could quite scratch under his skin as he closed the distance between them. Excitement, and that little hint of fear he loved, flickered in her eyes as she backed up into the counter. Placing his hands on either side of her, caging her in, he closed his eyes and dragged in a deliberately deep breath. "I wasn't talking about dinner, princess."

“Oh.”

“Turn around.”

Like the good girl she was, Ginny turned and braced her hands on the counter. “The potatoes are going to burn.”

“Then I’ll eat burnt potatoes.” Dropping to his knees behind her, he paid homage to every inch of her perfectly thick thighs, trailing kisses from the backs of her knees to just below her already dripping pussy. He worshiped every last bit of her until her legs trembled and she was begging him to taste her.

And taste her, he did. With long, slow slicks, savoring the tang of her arousal as he drove her wild with need. Touching, tasting, teasing, until she was sobbing out her pleas for mercy.

So mercy he gave her, sliding his fingers inside her and pushing her over the cliff, her screams of pleasure echoing around his kitchen. When every last ounce of pleasure had been drained from her body, and she was slumped over the kitchen counter with a blissful smile on her face, he pressed one final kiss to the curve of her ass and pushed to his feet.

“I should cook more often, if that’s my reward,” she said, her words slightly slurred.

“No complaints from me. I’m going to go grab a shower.”

“Mmm. Okay, Daddy.”

With the taste of her still lingering on his tongue, he made his way to his bedroom and opened a drawer to grab some fresh clothes.

Then stopped in his tracks, his brain trying to process what he was seeing.

Over the past few months, he’d taken to buying her some things here and there to keep at his house, in the hopes she’d

start to feel at home. But the pile of silk and lace in his underwear drawer was more than he could have bought her in a lifetime.

Closing that drawer, he reached for the next one, his heart pounding at the sight of her leggings stacked neatly alongside his sweats. Another drawer, another set of clothing.

He repeated the process in the closet, which was now far more crowded than it had ever been in the ten years he'd been renting this house.

Bypassing the shower, he walked back out to the kitchen where she was busy pulling a sheet of roasted potatoes from the oven. "Ginny."

"Hmm?" The smile on her face held a hint of mischief as she placed the potatoes on top of the stove and turned to face him. "Is something wrong, Daddy?"

"What are you playing at, little girl?"

The playful smile dropped into an adorable pout. "I'm not playing at anything. I'm moving in."

In a flash, he was across the room, her squeal of surprise filling his ears as he wrapped his arms around her waist and spun her in a circle. "You better not be fucking with me, Ginny Morgan, or I swear you won't sit right for a month."

One perfectly arched brow raised in a look that clearly said he was being ridiculous. "You really think I would have gone through all the trouble of hauling half my wardrobe over here just to fuck with you?"

"I wouldn't put it past—wait. *Half* your wardrobe?" Jesus Christ.

“Yes. I’m thinking we could turn that second bedroom into a closet-slash-office of sorts. I’ll keep the apartment above the studio, and I’ll continue using that for my photography. Because no offense, but the lighting in this place sucks.”

“None taken. But...” He trailed off, words failing him as his brain scrambled to make sense of everything she’d just said. But there was really only one point he cared about. “You’re really moving in? Here? With me?”

“Well, I’m certainly not moving all the way out here to live with anyone else,” she said dryly. Despite her sarcastic retort, he caught the hint of worry in her eyes. “Is that okay?”

“Baby, there is nothing in this world I want more than to wake up next to you every single day for the rest of my life. Here, at your apartment, somewhere else entirely, I don’t care. As long as you’re there.”

“Good. Because you’re stuck with me, Rex Carrington.”

“Thank god.” Tangling his hands in her hair, he yanked her against him, crashing his lips against hers, branding her as his as she surrendered to the kiss.

“Bedroom. Now,” he growled, turning her around and landing a sharp swat to her ass when she didn’t move.

“What about dinner?”

“Dinner can wait. I want to fuck you in *our* bed. Go.”

When he swatted her again, she hurried off toward the bedroom with an indignant squeak and a glare. He took a moment to make sure all the appliances were turned off so they didn’t burn the house down before following her into the bedroom.

“Apron off. Leave the shoes.”

“Someone’s feeling bossy tonight,” she grumbled, but excitement glittered in her eyes as she reached behind her to untie the apron.

“Impatient is the word you’re looking for, princess.” As she dropped the apron to the floor, he tugged his uniform shirt over his head and tossed it in the general direction of the clothes hamper. “On the bed, hands on the headboard.”

“I hope you’re going to pick those up later,” she said primly as she followed his instructions, laying flat on her back with her palms pressed against the wood of his headboard. “I’m not moving in just so I can pick up after you.”

Kicking off his shoes, he reached for the button on his pants and grinned. “What if I bought you one of those cute little French maid costumes?”

“Not even then. If we need a maid, I’ll hire someone.”

That made him pause as he knelt on the bed. “I don’t want a stranger coming into our house and touching our shit. Weirds me out.”

“Pick up after yourself and I won’t have to hire someone.”

“You win, princess. I’ll pick up my damn clothes. Now, shush, before I decide you need something else to do with that sassy mouth of yours.”

Her giggle was cut off by a sharp gasp as he bent and pulled one of her nipples into his mouth. As he had in the kitchen, he worshiped every inch of her gorgeous body, from her breasts down to her perfectly painted toes and back up again. With tongue and teeth, he explored her, until he was satisfied he knew every dip, every crevice, every spot that made her sigh with pleasure or whimper with pain even better than he knew his own body.

And when she was once again a trembling, whimpering, whining mess beneath him, only then did he slide his cock into her welcoming heat.

Lowering onto his elbows, he pressed his forehead to hers as he moved inside her. “My beautiful princess,” he murmured, his chest aching with the sheer force of the love he felt for her.

“Daddy...” His name was little more than a sigh as she raised her hips to meet his thrusts. “Daddy, please.”

“What do you want, princess?” He let a teasing note enter his voice as he pushed harder, deeper inside her. “Do you want Daddy’s cum inside your sweet little pussy?”

“Yes, Daddy, please. Please.”

“That’s my good girl. Beg me, princess. Beg Daddy to fill you up with his cum.”

And so she did, her pleas and whimpers filling the air around him as he fucked her, slow, deliberate strokes that had her head thrashing back and forth on the pillow even as her hands stayed glued to the headboard.

“Come with me, baby. Milk Daddy’s cock with that tight little pussy to make sure you get every last drop of Daddy’s cum inside you.”

When he filled her that final time, she cried out, arching up as her muscles contracted around him, as if her very being couldn’t help but obey his commands. Pleasure, deeper and more intense than he’d ever known, flooded him with each squeeze of her pussy around his cock.

“Good girl,” he ground out as he collapsed next to her. “You can move your hands now, princess. You did such a good job for Daddy.”

With a soft little hum of pleasure, she rolled onto her side, snuggling into him. “Best moving day ever.”

“Same,” he said with a chuckle. “Is there anything else you need from your apartment?”

“Maybe. Most of it can stay, though. I’m, ah, thinking of expanding my business a bit so I’ll need the furniture.”

There was an uncharacteristic note of uncertainty in her voice that had him frowning. “Expand how?”

“Remember that photo shoot I did for Dom’s sister?”

“Yeah.”

“Well, she loved it so much, she’s been pretty much begging me to let her pass my info along to her friends. And Carly wants a maternity shoot.”

“I think that sounds great.”

“Yeah?” Pulling away, she smiled up at him, still looking a bit uncertain. “I’m not really trained to do that kind of thing. But Lulu was really happy with her pictures.”

“Princess, I have no doubt you’ll be wildly successful at whatever you put your mind to.”

Emotion swam in her eyes. “I don’t think you know how much that means to me.”

“Well, it’s the truth. You could tell me you were planning to fly to the moon and I’d be tying your ass to a chair so you couldn’t find a way to do it.”

Throwing her head back, she let out a long, loud laugh. “You’re ridiculous, but I love you.”

“I love you, too, princess.”

“Mmm. You must love me, if you braved my mother’s wrath to go tell my parents to get their heads out of their asses.”

“Lucky for me, she wasn’t home.” Lifting a hand to her face, he brushed away a stray lock of her fiery hair. “I’m not so sure I would have been as brave if she had been.”

“Fair enough.” Her expression turned serious. “But thank you. Seriously. My dad came by the apartment to apologize. I don’t think he had any idea my mom was acting the way she was.”

“That was the impression I got. He’s a good man.”

“Funny. He said the same about you.”

It wasn’t any less weird to hear it from her than it had been hearing it from the man himself that morning. “Just looking out for my princess.”

“I know. Thank you.”

“Whatever you need, baby. Daddy’s got you.”

“Good. Because I have a follow-up with the doctor tomorrow to go over the test results. I know you can’t really get away right now, with Matt being out of town, but—”

“I’ll make it work. What time do we need to leave?”

Relief flashed over her face. “You really don’t have to come.”

“Princess, if you want to argue with me about this, you’re going to be arguing over my knee while you get your bottom paddled. What time?”

“Nine. But only if you’re absolutely sure.”

“I’m absolutely sure my little girl needs to stop arguing with her Daddy.”

She rolled her eyes, but a ghost of a smile tugged at her lips. “Yes, Daddy.”

“Good girl. I’ll call Jack, let him know what’s up. He should be able to handle things for a couple of hours.”

“Thank you. Seriously. I know it’s probably going to be nothing, but...”

“Hey.” Cupping her face, he nudged her chin up until her worried gaze met his. “Whatever it is, or isn’t, we’ll face it together. Yeah?”

“Yeah.” She blew out a shaky breath. “Together. You and me.”

“Always, princess.”

EPILOGUE



Sunrise always came far too early, but even more so on a Monday morning when the days before had been packed full of wedding festivities and drama.

Rolling onto her back, Edie stared up at the peeling popcorn paint on her ceiling. One more thing for her To-Do list, which seemed to grow longer every day between the old farmhouse and her animals. There were days, like today when all she wanted to do was roll over and go back to sleep, that she missed Ken so much it made her chest ache to the point she couldn't breathe.

But giving into the old grief wasn't going to get the chores done, so she forced herself up and out of the bed with a groan as she stretched her tired muscles. As much as she was used to being pretty active during the day, she was fairly confident setting up and breaking down an entire outdoor wedding in less than forty-eight hours was enough to leave anybody sore when it was all said and done.

Not that she regretted a second of it. Just the thought of how radiant Carly had looked, beaming up at Matty as they'd pledged their lives to each other forever and ever, amen, brought a smile to Edie's face as she tugged on her favorite faded old jeans. Those two were made for each other, and she

was happy to have done her part to send them off in wedded bliss.

She had a feeling it wouldn't be too much longer before the rest of her little chickadees followed suit. Though she'd never had children of her own, at this point she considered the girls as much her own as if she'd birthed them herself. The day Carly had come rattling into Lost River in that piece of scrap metal she called a car had been the day all their lives had begun to change, for the better.

Especially Edie's.

She'd never told any of them, but before Carly, before her girls had become *her girls*, there had been days she'd dreamed about doing exactly what Carly had done: packing her truck with whatever she could fit and just driving until she found somewhere new to settle down. Somewhere she could simply be, without being so tied to this town and the memories it held. Somewhere that didn't have ghosts everywhere she looked, including her own damn home.

But in the end, it had been the ghosts as much as the living who had held her here. And if sometimes those thoughts of freedom still flitted through her mind, at least now she had thoughts of her girls to chase them away.

It was those thoughts now, the memories they'd made together the past few months, that eased the band of grief around her chest as she made her way down the stairs to the kitchen for a cup of desperately needed coffee before she went out to feed the animals. Luna, her sweet baby cow, needed a visit from Dr. Johannsen, and the puppies she'd taken in a few weeks back were due to be fixed before she could go about finding them forever homes. Oh, and she needed to talk to Noelle about—

“Morning, sugar.”

Stopping dead in her tracks, Edie stared at the woman sitting at her battered old kitchen table, a mischievous smile tilting her lips as she sipped from Edie’s favorite mug.

Another ghost, though this one still had a heartbeat. Her hair was different, almost as short as Edie’s, the pale blonde tinted with pink at the ends. But even if she’d shaved her head and dyed her skin blue, Edie would have recognized her anywhere.

And not just because her face was plastered all over the tabloids on a weekly basis. But because her face was burned into Edie’s memories, was etched into her very soul.

It was the face of the only woman Edie McDowell had ever loved... and the only person she’d ever allowed to break her heart.

“What the fuck are you doing here, Jesse?”

THE LOVE of Edie’s life has returned to Lost River—but she’s not alone. Read their story in the final book in the Lost River Series, [Their Forever Daddy](#).

THE END

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Sassy heroines? Check. Strict, dominant heroes? Check. Pages and pages of spice, kink, and happily ever afters? Oh, yeah. Triple check.

Stella Moore is a USA Today Bestselling author of irresistibly sassy romances with a little something for everyone. From everyday heroes to men who rule the criminal underworld, Stella just straight up loves a good love story. Especially if it involves a naughty heroine going over someone's knee a time or two. You'll also find lovers of all shapes, sizes, and ethnicities in Stella's books because she believes everyone deserves their own happily ever after.

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