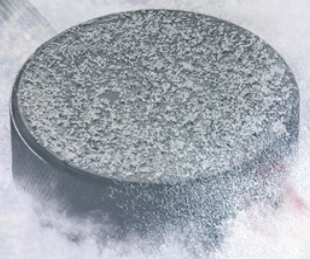


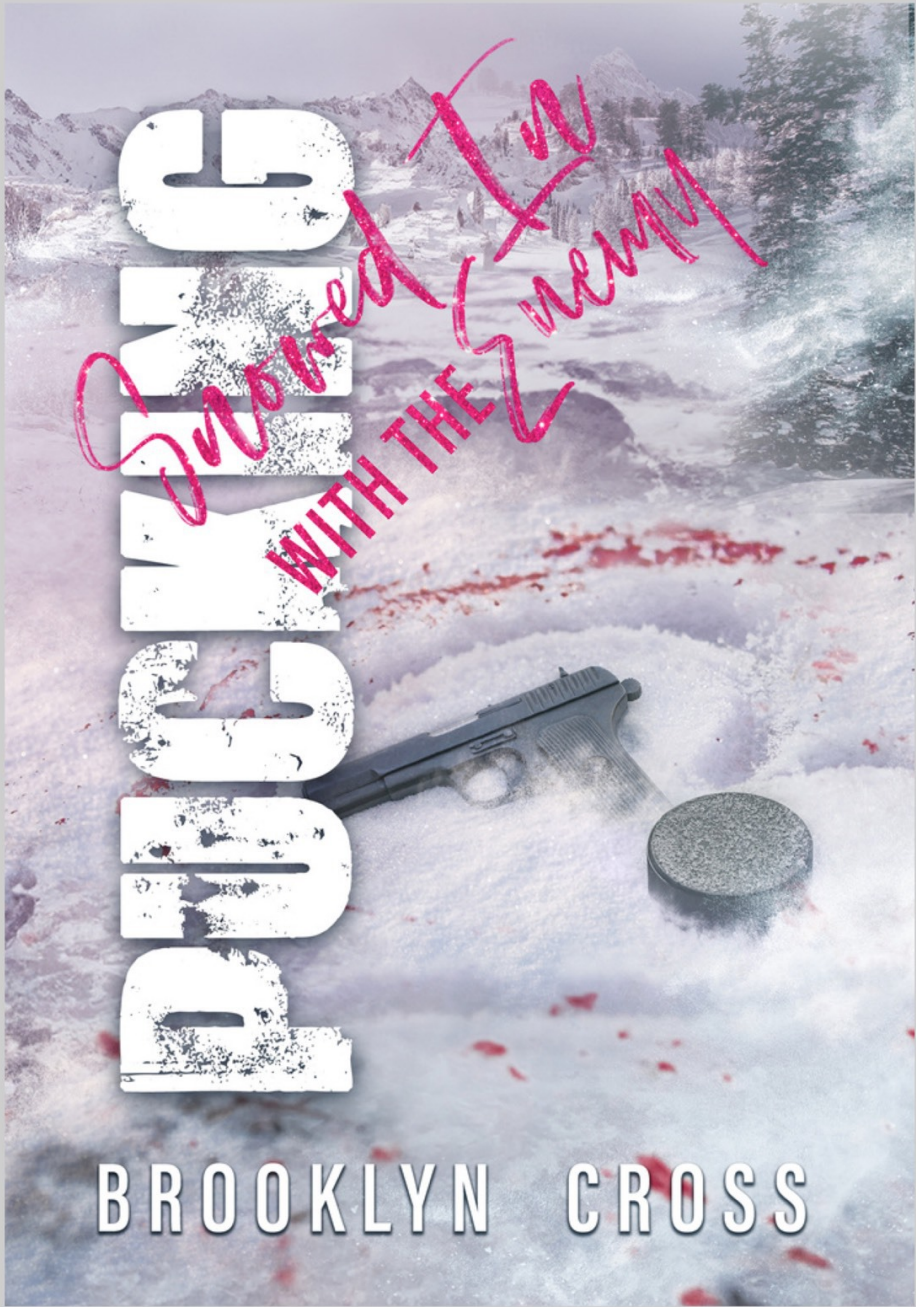
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PUCKING SNOWED IN WITH THE ENEMY

A Mafia / Hockey Romance

Written by: Brooklyn Cross

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WARNING

THIS BOOK IS HOCKEY, MAFIA ROMANCE STORY

AND IS INTENDED FOR MATURE AUDIENCES

ONLY AS DEFINED BY THE COUNTRY'S LAWS

IN WHICH YOU MADE YOUR PURCHASE

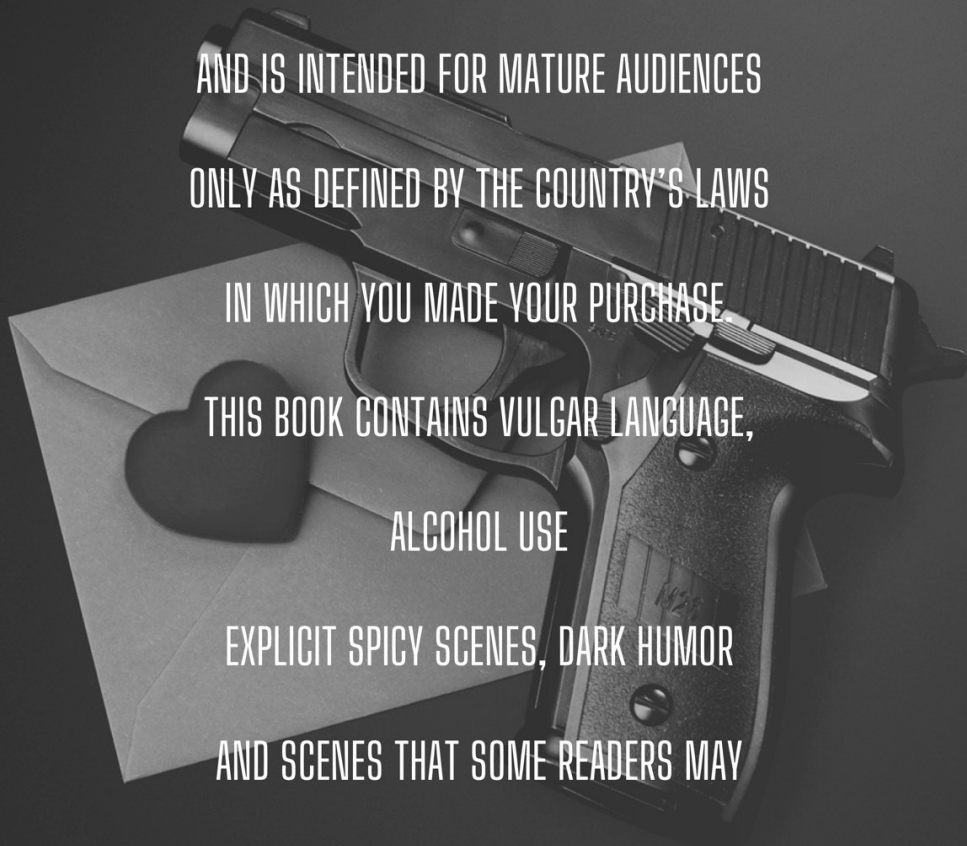
THIS BOOK CONTAINS VULGAR LANGUAGE,

ALCOHOL USE

EXPLICIT SPICY SCENES, DARK HUMOR

AND SCENES THAT SOME READERS MAY

FIND OFFENCE.





PLAYLIST

BEAUTIFUL MISTAKES - MAROON 5 & MEGAN THEE
STALLION

I REMEMBER EVERYTHING - ZACH BRYAN

GOOD VIBRATIONS - MARKY MARK AND THE FUNKY
BUNCH

S&M - RIHANNA

LOVIN ON ME - JACK HARLOW

ALWAYS REMEMBER US THIS WAY - DJ TONS

THE CROSSROADS - BONE THUGS N HARMONY

VOICES - MOTIONLESS IN WHITE

ANOTHER LIFE - MOTIONLESS IN WHITE

DON'T GO INSANE - DPR IAN

WHATTA MAN - SALT-N-PEPA & EN VOGUE

DEAD TO ME - PALAYE ROYALE

CLOSER - PALAYE ROYALE

POISON & WINE - THE CIVIL WARS

POISON - BELL BIV DEVOE

SLOW HANDS - NIALL HORAN

Esli by mne prishlos' prozhit' etu zhizn' snova, ya by nashyol
tebya ran'she.

If I were to live my life again, I'd find you sooner.

NATHANIEL MIKHAILOV

PROLOGUE

NATHANIEL

I ducked under the right hook and landed a hard jab to the ribs of my sparring partner. Moving away, I signaled for him to attack again and jumped over the leg, coming around for my knee. Landing softly in a crouch, I waited for him to complete his rotation, and before he could get his bearings, I shot up and caught him with an uppercut to the chin. The force knocked the guy clear off his feet, and he landed with a thud on the mats.

A singular clap brought my attention to the door to see my father standing there, looking very out of place in his expensive suit. I held out my hand and helped my partner to his feet.

“All of you out,” my father said, and I groaned. This couldn’t be good.

“To what do I owe the visit,” I asked dryly. It seemed a running theme at Wayward that our fathers spent more time in other countries than with their families.

“Do you make a joke, Nathaniel?”

I sighed. “No, I’m not joking.” I picked up the water bottle and drank some before toweling off my face. “The last time I saw you was six months ago, and you only call when it concerns business. So, you’re either here because you have business to attend to or you need my help.”

The Velcro closure on my wrist wrap was loud as I unwrapped it. It looked like my workout was officially over.

My father walked into the room, looking at the weight equipment like he was inspecting it for dust. “I got a call from an old friend today who wanted to give me a heads up.” I stared at him, waiting for the big reveal.

“Okay...and,” I asked when it looked like the next coming of Christ would be here sooner.

“This friend told me there is a little birdy flitting around and sticking her nose into business that she shouldn’t.”

“Birds don’t have noses,” I said, and my father glared at me.

“Always a smart mouth.”

“Smart ass. The saying is a smart ass.” He balled his hands into fists. As much as laying my father out on the mats was appealing, I let it go. “Fine, what bird, and what is she sticking her nose into?”

“Savannah Freeborn.”

“I don’t know a Savannah Freeborn.”

My father tugged at the cuffs on his suit and his face set with a smug expression, making my blood boil. We hardly got along about anything, but when he was purposely trying to get under my skin, I found it difficult to ignore him pushing my buttons.

“She is Rosales’s step daughter.”

I crossed my arms over my chest. “I know that last name but still don’t know who Savannah is,” I said. “That was the name of that guy Alex I handled.” I smirked as I thought about him screaming like a little bitch.

“Savannah is Alex’s half-sister, they share the same mother, hence the Freeborn.”

I shrugged, feeling like he was purposely dragging this on to be dramatic. It was either that or he wanted me to die in this room of old age.

“Okay, and?”

“She is looking into her brother’s death,” he said.

“Half-brother technically, and I don’t see what the problem is. I made sure that he will never be found, and you got to capitalize on him vanishing, so what’s the issue?”

“The issue is, she doesn’t believe her brother died by accident. She is looking into his case,” my father said, and I rolled my eyes as I picked up my shit. He wasn’t dead, so there was nothing for her to find. The boat accident was very believable, and so were the missing bodies. The ocean was a dangerous place.

Even after I’d proven myself over and over again, my father didn’t trust me.

“And what do I care what one little girl thinks?” I rolled out my shoulders. “You questioning my abilities again?” The anger was hard to hide in my voice, and the flare in my father’s eyes told me that he’d picked up on it, too.

“Do not disrespect me,” he growled. I was tempted to push him just to see if he would take a swing and give me an excuse to hit him back. Something I’d been dying to do for years.

“Father, I have a meeting in an hour.” I didn’t, but I wanted out of this conversation. “So, tell me why I should care or, better yet, why you care. If not, then I’m leaving.”

He swore in Russian, and I narrowed my eyes at him. “Cancel your meeting. We have one of our own to attend.” He turned around and marched for the door before he stopped and looked back at me. “Savannah Freeborn is FBI, so you better start caring and quick.”

Father marched out, and I sucked in a deep breath. “Well fuck.”

CHAPTER

ONE

NATHANIEL

I liked this hotel. Some of the older ones in this area smelled like they were wet all the time, and the odd room stunk of cat piss. Not a great combo when you wanted a hot fuck, but I wasn't one to turn down an opportunity to get laid. I just wasn't that picky. I had three rules concerning sex: I never fucked the exes of my family or friends, even if they were broken up, I never paid for it, and I never spent the night. Considering I owned four of the hottest strip clubs in all of Cali, and I happily took thirty percent of anything extra they made if they chose to make it a very happy night for the customers, it was a bit hypocritical of me. Yet, I didn't fucking care.

One of the things my father taught me when I was young was don't shit where you eat. It was a simple philosophy that I didn't really understand until I got older and made that mistake, but once was all it took for me never to do it again. It was a shame she had to die.

I tapped the top of my glass before taking a sip. Glancing up, I watched the woman I was here to see. She was talking on her phone as she grazed on a salad and polished off her third glass of wine. Color me impressed that she didn't look at all affected by the large quantity of alcohol she'd consumed.

A group of men who looked to be here on business sat at a nearby table. They were getting loud, and by the looks they were giving Ms. Savannah Freeborn, one of them was going to make a move.

I sized them up with a single look—all boardroom stiffs, rich but not playboy rich. Four of the seven guys were married, yet all but one had taken off their rings when a group of women came in. Now, the girls were sitting on their laps, and more than one of them was going to get lucky tonight.

Cheaters pissed me off. My father cheated on my mother all the time. To this day, he acted like it was his right to do whatever he wanted because it was an arranged marriage, and he never loved her. My mother was too proud to shed a tear in front of us kids, but I saw what it did to her as she looked after the five of us while he went out every night with different mistresses. I had many reasons to hate him, but that was number one on my list.

One of the guys pretending not to be married got up and walked past me to get to the bathroom, and I suddenly needed to take a piss. Downing the rest of my drink, I followed him. He hadn't even got his fly down when I grabbed the back of his head and smashed it against the wall.

“Fuck,” he yelled as blood smeared on the white tile.

Yanking the asshole back, I took his feet out from under him and shoved him face-first into the urinal.

“Get off of me, help,” the guy tried to yell, making me laugh as his lips moved against the drain.

He swung at my legs, but it was easy to tell that the fit look was all for show. He didn't have a clue how to fight. I smashed his face again into the porcelain, and he shut up as a dazed look filled his eyes. I reached into his pocket and pulled out the wedding band I'd watched him slip off, then tossed it in front of his nose.

“The next time you decide you want to fuck around on your wife, I want you to remember this moment and what a real man thinks of you,” I growled, close to his ear. “Now, hold still, or I'll slit your throat.”

Letting go of his head, I unzipped and pulled out my cock. He closed his eyes and whimpered as I pissed on the side of his face, but he did as told and didn't move.

Stuffing my dick back into my pants, I went over to the sink and washed my hands before looking at the piece of shit that hadn't moved.

"I don't think I need to tell you that if you say one word to anyone about me, I will hunt you down, and whatever family you're lucky enough to have will only see you again in a coffin."

Feeling better, I headed to the bar and found Savannah off the phone, but one of the other guys from the table had finally gotten up the nerve to go over and speak to her. She was doing the typical girl thing, smiling politely, while her eyes yelled fuck off.

This was not fucking happening. This douche bag wasn't ruining my night. I walked across the room and could see the others at the table watching from the corner of my eye.

"Thanks for the offer, but I'm not interested," Savannah said.

"Come on, don't be like that. We'll have a good time."

"I said no." Surprisingly, she hadn't pulled out a badge yet, but maybe she was hoping not to have to go that far and expose who she was.

I gripped the guy's shoulder and smirked when he looked at me. His wide, drunk grin disappeared as he stared into my eyes. He looked at the hand on his shoulder with the massive silver rings and then back at my face. I knew he would try to act tough, not wanting to look like the worm he was in front of his friends.

"I'm pretty sure she told you nicely to get the fuck away from her, friend," I said quietly.

"Who the fuck do you think you are? Telling me what to do," he said, and I could easily smell the whiskey and cigarettes on his breath like he'd bathed in both.

Leaning in close to his ear, I whispered so only he could hear. "Maybe I wasn't clear. I'll try again. Go back to your table, or I'm going to find your room, cut off your cock, put it in a blender, make you drink it, and then take your photo and

post it on social media. Don't test me. I'm crazy enough to do it."

He swallowed so loud that I could hear it, and I decided to throw him a bone. "I'll do you a solid, though. When I let go of your shoulder, laugh like I said something funny. Shake my hand and simply say, 'Sorry, man. We're all good.'" I squeezed his shoulder tighter and watched the pain flash in his eyes. "You think you can do that? Or do we have a date later?"

As he nodded, I released his shoulder and smiled wide as he laughed and smacked the bar.

"Damn...so sorry, man. We are all good. You two take care," he said, playing off the part much better than I thought he would as he wandered away.

I slowly turned to face Savannah, and she lifted a brow. Up close, she was even more beautiful than from across the bar or in my surveillance photos. Her baby blue eyes showed her intelligence and were full of questions. Her hair was the most unusual reddish blonde I'd ever seen. It even had highlights that hovered on the verge of pink but looked natural. I was pretty sure women called this dark strawberry, but what the fuck did I know. The dusting of freckles across her cheeks gave her an adorable look even though I knew she was a badass and could shoot as well as anyone in my world. The simple black dress said a lot about her personality and why she was in town. It looked smoking hot on her, and I suddenly wanted to pull it up and bend her over.

"Do I want to know what you said to him?"

Leaning on the bar, I smiled a little wider as I lifted my finger and signaled the bartender over. "I could tell you, but then I'd have to kill you," I said, and the twitch of her lip told me she at least had a sense of humor despite what she did for a living. "My name is Grigoriy," I said and held out my hand for her to shake. She was tentative, her movements slow like she thought I might bite. She wasn't wrong about that. I'd bite into her adorable ass any day. "Would you like a drink?"

"I just turned him down. What makes you think I'll say yes to you?"

“Because I don’t plan on using it to get into your dress.”

“Is that so?”

“Nope, I don’t need it,” I said and caught the blush before she looked away with a scoff.

“I’ll have whatever you’re having,” she said.

I looked at the bartender who had been serving me since I arrived. “You heard the lady, two White Russians,” I said, loving the irony of the statement. “Do you have a name?”

“Savannah.”

“Beautiful name. What brings you to town, Savannah?”

“Business,” she said as she ran her finger along the edge of her purse. I’d bet my life that she had a gun in there. “What about yourself?”

“Business,” I echoed her answer as I sat down on the stool beside her. “What kind of business are you here for?”

“Does it matter?”

“Not really, just making conversation.”

The bartender set the two drinks down, and I knew she was going to have one hell of a headache if she drank too many of these on top of the wine. But if it made her lips looser, who was I to complain? I sipped my drink and waited. Her curiosity would get the better of her. She had an inquisitive mind, and digging for answers was her thing.

“Then tell me, what type of business are you in?” She looked at the tattoos on my hands and then glanced at the one on my neck.

“Would you believe me if I told you, tattoo artist?”

“No,” she pointedly said.

I laughed. “I’m into sales now, but at one point, I planned on playing in the NHL.” Her mouth fell open. “Not the answer you were expecting?”

“Not exactly. So, what happened?”

I took another sip of my drink. “Honestly? I wasn’t good enough. But I play for my college team. I’m a D man,” I said, and she laughed.

“I bet you are. So, you’re still in college?”

“Why? Do I look old?”

“No, no, it’s just...never mind, that was bad judgment on my part. What are you taking?” She leaned her elbow on the bar, placing her head in her hand. The drinks were making her eyes glassy. I had stepped in with the douche not a moment too soon. A loose strand of hair fell across her cheek and I was compelled to reach out and tuck it behind her ear. She bit her lip and my cock stirred. Fuck her lips were delicious and I could easily picture how they would look sliding over my cock.

“I think it’s my turn to ask the next question.” I rubbed my bottom lip as I thought. “How long are you in town for?”

“Not sure yet. Depends on how quickly my business wraps up.” I knew what she was hoping to wrap up, but she wasn’t going to find the answers she was after. The question became, what should I do with her? Killing her was messy, and would be a shame when she was so gorgeous, but letting her continue to snoop around wasn’t an option either.

“Well, I better get to my room, but thank you for the drink,” she said a little while later. It was then that I realized we were the only two left in the hotel restaurant.

Savannah stood. “Oh shit,” she said, trying to take a step and falling onto my lap instead.

“If you wanted to be closer, all you had to do was ask.” I moved her long hair out of the way so I could run my nose up her neck.

“No, I’m sorry I...”

“You what?” I breathed into her ear as my hand slid around her waist. “Mmmm, you smell good, Savannah, good enough to eat,” I growled against her neck.

“I...shouldn’t be...I...this is wrong....”

“Why is that?”

Grabbing a handful of her dress, I inched it up her leg, and her breath hitched. I did it again, and she still didn't move.

“You haven't answered my question, Savannah,” I said, walking my fingers down her leg and fisting the final bit of material, allowing my hand to slip between her thighs.

“I should really go,” she said but didn't try to move away.

“You probably should. You said you have a long day tomorrow.” I slid my hand further up her leg until my fingers were able to brush what felt like silk. My bet was a thong. Her body shuddered, and she softly moaned as I rubbed her clit through the silky fabric.

“I don't do this,” she panted out.

“Do what? You don't have sex?”

“No, I....” She sucked in a deep breath as I pushed my finger past the narrow string and into her pussy.

My cock had been hard long before she landed on my lap as I pictured fucking her in every way possible, but now it was in command.

“I don't sleep with strangers,” she said in a rush.

“I'm not a stranger, not anymore. You know my name, what I do, and that I play hockey. You know what I drink and that I make you wet. That's more than enough to say you know me. You seem like you're always the good girl, Savannah. So why can't you just let loose this once and be my very bad girl? I'm itching to punish your ass until it's as red as your cheeks before I fuck you.” She wiggled on my lap, my finger pumping a little faster. “Ever been spanked before, Savannah?” She didn't say anything, but I knew she hadn't. I could tell, and it was easy to see she was intrigued. She panted a little faster, and her legs opened wider.

“Oh god, someone will see,” she said, yet leaned back into my chest.

“I hope someone does,” I said, thrusting my finger harder as I pushed the bar stool, and it spun until we were facing the

windows that looked out to the street. A few cars drove by, and a man walking his dog looked in and stumbled as he stared, but Savannah was too far gone in the building orgasm and alcohol swimming through her veins to care. “That man is going to go home and jerk himself off to thoughts of you.” I added a finger and pushed it deeper as I gripped the front of her dress and pulled it down over her nipple to tweak it between my fingers.

“Fuck, oh fuck yes....”

“Such a bad girl showing your kitty to the world. I don’t like to share my meals. You definitely need to be punished now,” I said as a few more people walked by but didn’t look inside. “Don’t you, Savannah? You want me to punish you, don’t you?”

“Fuck, I really shouldn’t,” she said, and I smirked.

Removing my hand, I pulled the front of her dress up into place and let the fabric of the skirt fall down her legs.

She looked over her shoulder at me, confusion mixing with the lust in her eyes.

“You didn’t give me the right answer.” Standing, I steadied her on her feet and then took a step back.

Her eyes traced down my body to my cock that was pushing the front of my pants out, and licked her lips.

“It was nice meeting you, Savannah. I hope you have a successful trip,” I said and turned to leave.

“Wait.” I turned around.

She opened her mouth and closed it a couple of times, but I wasn’t going to help her out. Her cheeks flamed red, and her eyes glittered with desire, but I wouldn’t take it any further until she invited me up. My oldest brother Ronan tended to take what he wanted, but I found this far more amusing. The perplexed look on her face as her mind and body warred over what to do was like a shot of vodka to my system. When Savannah finally caved to her carnal desires, it meant I held the cards, and she’d have to play by my rules. There was no greater feeling than taking an adorable saint like little Ms.

Savannah FBI, who'd never put a toe out of line her entire life, and turning her into a slut who begged for my cock.

"I...I want to be a bad girl," she whispered.

"Sorry, I didn't catch that," I said, to be a prick.

"I said, I want to be your bad girl."

"Are you sure?" I stepped in close, wrapping my arm around her waist as I looked down into her eyes. Her body pressed against mine and it took serious fucking control not to overplay my hand and show how much I wanted her. She swayed slightly on her feet, but her eyes were still just as sharp. "Because you don't look so certain."

She nodded. "I am."

"So, if I ordered you to get on your knees right now and suck my cock for everyone passing by, what would you do?" Her eyes went wide. I leaned in and growled at her. "What would you do?"

I honestly expected that this was where I would end up going home for the night. I'd been following her around all day, watching her interview people from my different businesses, with her hair pulled back tight and little notebook in hand. Her suit was perfectly pressed, and she had a firm line to her lips. Tonight, her hair was down, and she looked human, not the robot the FBI had created. Could there actually be a deviant sexual beast under the button-up?

Savannah shocked me as she lowered herself to her knees in front of me and reached for my belt. Smiling, I grabbed her hands and pulled her to her feet.

"Very good answer. What's your room number?"

CHAPTER

TWO

SAVANNAH

THREE WEEKS AGO

I pointed to the file on my boss's desk. "I'm telling you, it doesn't add up." He casually placed his hands on top of it but didn't lift the cover.

"You are out of line. I'm in a meeting. You do not just barge in, Agent Freeborn," he said, and I realized he had two people on his computer screen who were quietly staring at me.

"Give me a moment. Please excuse my agent for her passionate entrance." He hit a button that had to be mute, and I swallowed hard.

Fuck, that looked like a general and the senator of Utah, which would mean they were talking about the mass shooting from two days ago.

"Speak, agent, you have three minutes."

"There are holes in the case. When did Alex leave Canada? I can't find a plane manifest with him on it, and his car is at his home. And why was he on a yacht when he hated boats and water? A boat that just so happened to sink from a mysterious explosion. There were no survivors because everyone apparently drowned. No one remembers seeing the party boat leave from any dock, and no one knew him." I took a deep breath. "There are other things, but it doesn't make sense."

Matthews leaned back in his chair and stared at me. “Is that it?”

“What do you mean?”

“I mean, is all the evidence you compiled in here?” He lifted the file I’d painstakingly created.

“Yes.”

“I’m going to make this quick. I have known you long enough to know that you think you’re the smartest one in the room. But let me assure you that you’re not smarter than a rescue crew, a whole crime lab, and two detectives. This is not even one of our cases, and I have let you entertain yourself with this project because you lost a family member. I will not do so anymore.”

“But Director....”

“That is Executive Assistant Director to you, Field Agent Freeborn,” he said, accentuating each word. “The answer is no. We have active cases that need your attention, and I can’t spare the manpower to chase down ghosts because you have a gut feeling. So, your choices are as follows: you can either let it go, and I will give you your next assignment, or you can choose not to let it go, and you will be forced on leave.”

My mouth fell open, but I quickly snapped it shut. He looked at his watch. “You have thirty seconds to make up your mind.”

I didn’t want to go on leave and decided I could continue to investigate Alex’s death on my own time. “I will take the next case that comes in,” I said.

“Very well. Tomorrow, you will be assigned to the Arkansas case.”

Nodding, I held out my hand for the file, but Matthews picked it up, and I watched in horror as he fed it through his shredder. The whirring was loud as it ground up all my hard work. I’d spent months gathering that information and didn’t have a complete second set. I was forced to stand there and stare when I wanted to leap across the room and yank the papers out of his hand.

“I trust that you’ll no longer pester the local police and crime departments. Because if I receive one more complaint about an insubordinate agent poking around in a case that she is not assigned to, you will find yourself on leave whether you want it or not.” He leaned forward on his desk. “And I’m not sure how long that leave will last. Do I make myself clear?”

“Yes, Executive Assistant Director Matthews,” I said, each word tasting like dirt in my mouth.

“Good, now go home, and take the time to pack and get your head back in the game, Agent. We all lose people, but it is how we carry on that matters.”

Turning, I marched out and down the stairs, past all the offices, until I reached my desk. No one directly asked me what was happening, but I could feel everyone’s eyes on me as I grabbed my purse, shrugged on my jacket, and headed for the door.

The entire drive home, I kept replaying where I’d gone wrong. I could’ve listed different inconsistencies, but if I was honest with myself, nothing less than a smoking gun would deliver results.

My mother married Alex’s father when I was two, and they had Alex almost immediately. They divorced when I was sixteen, and we slowly fell out of touch. I tried to keep up with Alex, but I had my stuff, and with the move to the U.S., our visits were few, and the calls became a non-thing. For the past two years, it had only been texts and gifs for special occasions.

I was aware that part of the reason I was so obsessed with finding out what happened to Alex was guilt. All the time that I could’ve spent with my brother, and now, he was dead. The last thing he saw was dark blue water swallowing him in the night. It ate at me when I found out, and after the funeral, it poked at me until I started to look into the case for myself.

Freaking snow. The wipers squeaked as they swiped away the latest assault of fluffy flakes. The weather had been strange lately, and the steady snowfall hadn’t let up for three days.

Pulling onto my street, I groaned as I stared at the massive snow pile left over from the plow at the end of my driveway.

Shawn hadn't cleared it yet, and I had to park down the street. It shouldn't annoy me. He wouldn't be expecting me for hours yet, but with the morning I had, it did. Grabbing my briefcase and purse, I walked down the snowy sidewalk but paused when I reached my steps. There was a single set of footprints heading up the stairs, but none coming out. I didn't have to be FBI to know they were from a smaller, feminine boot.

My mind went blank, and I stood in the snow, just staring as a cold dread that matched the weather settled into my soul. We'd been engaged for a year, and I was excited to get married in two months, but all the little things that had seemed like nothing were clicking together like a puzzle, and I didn't want to put in that final piece.

Pulling out my keys, I was going to go in the front door, but it had a bell on it. Instead, I walked around to the side of the garage. We rarely locked this door, and sure enough, I was able to slip inside silently.

Music was playing, and before I made it to the bottom of the stairs, moaning reached me and slapped me in the face. I might be a sucker for punishment because even though I knew what I would find, and I could leave right now and call off the wedding, I needed to see for myself. The door to the master bedroom was open, and the rhythmical grunts and thumping of the headboard grew louder.

“Oh Shawn, yes, fuck me.”

I knew that voice, but I didn't want to believe it. Even as I stepped into the doorway and stared at the two naked people fucking on my bed, I didn't want to accept it. I pulled my gun and walked across the room without being seen. A sharp pain stabbed me in the chest as I stared at my fiancé and the woman who lived down the street. As my brain registered what was happening, my emotions systematically shut down.

There was no thought as to what I was doing at this point when I pressed the cold barrel of the gun against the side of

Shawn's head. He froze.

"Shawn, why did you..." The words died in Jess's throat as she opened her eyes and met my stare.

"Anna, this is not what it looks like," Shawn said, and I glared at the back of his head. I'd never been so angry that I felt nothing, but that was where I was right now. I could picture pulling the trigger and killing him and then Jess without batting an eyelash.

"So, you don't have your dick in our neighbor?"

"I mean...yes, but...it was an accident," he said. He looked up at me from the corner of his eye but was smart enough not to move.

"So, you tripped, and the clothes tore off your body, and you landed with your dick in her? That is really quite amazing."

"No, he means that I came over to talk. It just sort of happened, but Savannah, I swear I didn't mean to. I'm sorry." Jess tried to plead with me, her eyes filling with tears, but it didn't affect me.

"Yes, you both sounded terribly sorry." I stepped back from the bed but kept the gun trained on them. I didn't trust myself not to kill them as the numbness took complete control. "Get up," I ordered, and as Jess and Shawn looked at one another, the nerve holding the last of my sanity together snapped. "Get the fuck up, now!"

They jumped up, and Jess tried to grab the sheet and cover herself, but I wasn't having it. I flicked my eyes over their bodies and noticed that he wasn't even wearing a condom. I pointed the gun at his hands, now covering his wilted cock, and pulled the hammer back.

"How long has this been going on?"

They glanced at one another again. "Look at one another one more time, and I promise I will shoot one of you."

"Anna, please, it was a mistake, but I love you. You know I love you," Shawn said, and my finger shook, wanting to pull

the trigger so badly. This was what a crime of passion felt like. The consequences didn't matter as long as they paid. I got it, and I had to fight every instinct not to do it. Would the numbness last for my life sentence in prison?

“Answer the fucking question.”

“A couple of months,” Jess answered. She had the decency to look down and not offer more lies.

“And no condom, I see.” Shawn swallowed and looked away from me. “You said you didn't want to have kids. I guess you really meant to say you didn't want to have kids with me.”

“Anna, please, I'm sorry,” Shawn said, taking a step forward.

“Don't,” I snarled, and he stopped. “No, you're not sorry, at least not about the cheating. I'm sure you're sorry about getting caught, but you're going to be sorrier in a second. Get the fuck out.”

“What?”

“You heard me. Both of you get the fuck out right now.” They reached for their clothes, but I wasn't feeling that generous. “Leave them. Leave your fucking clothes right where they are, and get the fuck out!” I was beginning to lose it as the anger wiped away some of the numb in my chest. I was trained to handle any situation with calm poise and to think under intense pressure, and yet I was unraveling at the seams.

“But....”

Moving the gun so it faced the dresser, I fired, and the decorative vase that Shawn had gotten me as a birthday gift one year exploded. Jess screamed as they both ducked and covered their heads like that was going to help.

“That is your only warning. Get the fuck out of my house, and if you dare open your mouth and say our house, I will blow your cock off right now,” I growled at Shawn. “Out.”

They ran down the stairs, and I followed their bouncing asses. Shawn opened the front door and then looked at me.

“Anna, be reasonable. It’s a snowstorm. We could freeze.”

“I doubt you’re going to freeze running a block down the street, but here.” I grabbed his car keys off the front entrance table and whipped them over his head out into the snow.

“You don’t need to be a bitch,” Shawn said, and I raised the gun, his eyes going wide.

“Three.” I lowered the gun to point it at his hands, still covering himself, not that it would do any good. “Two.” I took a step forward.

“I found the keys, let’s go, Shawn,” Jess yelled. I hadn’t even noticed that she ran outside naked. Good on her.

The way Shawn’s lip twitched, I knew he wanted to say something. He shivered as he stepped out onto the porch, and I got a tiny bit of satisfaction. I slammed the door in his face and deadbolted it. Marching to where I’d come in, I locked that door, too, and then slowly slid down the wall until my ass hit the floor. Laying the gun down, I drew my legs up and wrapped my arms around my knees, and it was only then that I let a tear fall.

CHAPTER

THREE

SAVANNAH

PRESENT DAY

What the hell had come over me? I wasn't the girl who let herself be touched as Grigoriy had, and I certainly wasn't the type of girl who volunteered to give a blowjob in a public space or invite a strange man up to my room, and yet...here I was doing all of that.

I pictured Shawn's face when he looked at me as he fucked Jess, and it was all the fuel I needed to throw caution to the wind. The massive amounts of alcohol I'd consumed were helping me along, but I knew it had more to do with revenge—what better way to get back at my ex than to have hot sex with someone else? There was something about Grigoriy that had my blood singing, and every other part of me lit on fire. Now if I could only see him clearly through the haze of liquid courage, that would be fucking amazing.

His arm was around my waist, and I leaned into him for support as we walked to the elevator. Fuck he smelled good, and if what I could feel against my hand was any indication, he was fine.

Did I just think he was fine? What fucking year was it? And how would I know if he was fine when I could barely feel my hand?

Wow, I was more drunk than I thought. Was that going to stop me from fucking him? I looked up at the side of his face, and he turned his head and looked down into my eyes. Hell no, I wasn't turning this opportunity down. His eyes were so dark that they looked like shiny onyx stones, which matched his equally dark hair. Maybe I was going to have sex with a vampire. That would really be a fuck you to Shawn. You get the married neighbor, and I get the immortal being.

“Are you thinking dirty thoughts, Savannah,” Grigoriy asked, and all I could do was stare at his lips. Fuck yes, I was.

“Do I get a cookie if I say yes?”

His eyes glittered like I was going to be in big trouble, and I never thought I would be down for it, but here I was, itching to experience whatever he planned. At this point, he could say he wanted to fuck me with his shoe, and I would find it thrilling.

“No cookies, but I do have a belt that I'm dying to use on your naughty ass,” he said as the elevator came to a stop. It felt like it was going to catapult me through the ceiling, and I ended up wrapping my arms around him tight.

“This will be faster.” I yelped as he hauled me up into his arms, and my pussy cheered like it was a football game.

I was all for feminism. I wouldn't be able to vote or have my job and the fantastic pay I had without it, but there was something so sexy about a man who would open a damn door and haul you up into his arms when needed. Couldn't a girl want both things?

Grigoriy opened my door, but I didn't even remember giving him the key. I was far more wasted than I thought, and telling him to get out would be wise, but there was nothing that was going to stop me from experiencing whatever he was wanting to do. I was the girl who didn't party, studied my ass off, and had only dated one guy before Shawn. I really thought I would spend the rest of my life with the asswipe. So, for once, just once, my entire being craved to feel what it was like on the other side. To be wild and spontaneous and do whatever I wanted for a change, regardless of consequences.

He sat me down on the bed, and I watched him like a fucking cat would a bowl of milk. Licking every part of his body was on the menu as he peeled off the black suit jacket and tossed it on the table in the corner. This man was the epitome of danger, and I didn't need to be drunk and alone in a hotel room to figure that out.

He couldn't be any older than I was, and yet it felt like he commanded my attention. My instincts—as fuzzy and skewed as they were—said he could and would kill me if he wanted to. The rings and tattoos on his knuckles proudly announced that he had either been in prison or a gang or some other seedy organization. All my suspicions were confirmed when he pulled a gun from the back of his pants and laid it on his jacket. I should've been terrified and ordered him out of my room, but I didn't move. Not a single limb twitched.

“I'm going to do what I want to you,” he said, his hands going to his belt. “And I can promise you that at some point, you're going to scream and tell me to stop.” I licked my lips, and a shiver raced down my spine as he pulled the leather free from the loops on his pants. “But I won't.” Grigoriy gripped my chin in his hand, getting close enough so I was staring directly into his dark and dominating eyes. “You will scream for me, both in pain and in pleasure, but in the end, you won't want me to stop. When I leave this room, you will be fully satisfied.” His lip tugged up as his eyes challenged me to tell him differently.

“You're pretty cocky,” I said and sucked in a gasp as his hand gripped a fistful of my hair and pulled back, forcing me to look up at him. The heat that I'd felt running through my body before was nothing to the burning desire ripping through me now.

“I'm not cocky. I'm confident in what I can do, and I don't make idle promises. You would be wise to remember that.”

Releasing my hair, he stepped back and cracked the folded belt across his hand. The sound was apparently connected to my pussy as it clenched tight and made me moan. Little bells were ringing in my head that I should be worried, but I mentally reached out and grabbed them to shut them up. No

bells, flags, or fucking planes with sky-written messages were stopping this. I couldn't remember a single time in my entire relationship with Shawn that I was this turned-on. Grigoriy was a relative stranger. He hadn't really touched me yet, and all I could picture was pulling up my dress and begging him to fuck me. There was no logical explanation.

He smacked the belt across his palm again, and the crack made my eyes flutter shut. Was that a normal reaction?

“Such a naughty Kitten. I can see the lust swirling in your eyes.” His gaze traveled up and down my body. “But you keep yourself wound so tight that you're not sure how to even let go. Am I right?”

Any other time, I would be annoyed that he was making such grand assumptions about me that were hitting so close to home, but instead, I nodded. He dropped one end of the belt, and I watched it swing back and forth. My ass tingled with the thought of him using that on me. I wanted to feel whatever he was offering.

“Yes,” I said, and he smirked as he undid his shirt. One button at a time, he revealed the body hidden under the expensive material. My mouth fell open as the shirt parted and showed off a sexy set of abs with an Adonis V that disappeared under the waist of his pants.

“And you'll do everything that I tell you?”

“Yes.”

“Savannah, I have to say that you're shocking me.” He rolled out his shoulders, and I was sure it was for my benefit. “That doesn't happen often.”

“In all good ways, I hope,” I said, and then internally groaned at how pathetic that sounded.

“In all the most delicious ways,” he answered and licked his lip. “I'm going to devour you, and then when you can't take anymore, I'm going to start all over again,” he growled.

Drool pooled in my mouth as I soaked him in. He slipped the shirt off his shoulders and tossed it on top of the jacket. I'd never been much for tattoos, but the full sleeves traveling

along his arms, up his shoulders, across his chest, and covering his neck were filled with darkness and pain. They called to me. Peeling my eyes away, I looked up, and it felt like he was already picturing me naked. His hungry stare made me so wet and hot that I could hardly sit still. What the fuck was he doing to me?

“Get on your knees.” Sliding off the bed, I crawled the short distance to him and felt his penetrating gaze bore holes into my back. My dress was shifting up with every movement, and I knew I was fully exposed when the cool air of the room hit my ass.

“I like this look. I’ll like it even more when you visit me at my office, and I fuck you over my desk.” His voice deepened. “You can walk around the rest of the day with my come dripping down your leg, just so you know who you belong to.” I blinked, not sure that I heard him right. “You sure you don’t want to work for me?” The devil himself lifted the corner of his lip. My boss had never said anything like that, but if he looked like Grigoriy, I might’ve been tempted to say yes, fuck the rules.

Grigoriy was not the kind of man you found on a dating app, and I was going to milk what I could from tonight since I would never see him again.

“You haven’t fucked me yet. How do I know you’re any good?” I quipped back.

He chuckled, and like everything else he did, it made me squirm. “Trust me. You’ll be begging for my cock after this. I’ll have to buy you an entire skid of napkins.”

“I bet you say that to all the girls,” I said, the words slipping through my unfiltered brain.

“I have no need to. They say it to me.” He smiled, and for whatever stupid reason, a green streak of jealousy rose and gripped me.

“You didn’t like hearing that,” he said, and I cast my eyes down. Everything with Shawn was still too raw, and Grigoriy’s words were like a cheese grater running along my skin. “For

tonight, the only one I'm focused on or thinking about is you." Glancing up at him, I knew that was all I needed to hear. He was mine for tonight to live out whatever fantasies were floating around in my head, but then we would go our separate ways.

He cupped my chin, his thumb rubbing over my cheek. "The man who hurt you is an idiot, now take out my cock and suck it." Heat flashed through my body as my mind somehow raced and screeched to a halt at the same time. Had I told him I was using him as a rebound, or was I just that transparent?

Removing his hand, he replaced it with the belt, keeping my chin up. "I'm going to give you one warning, Kisa. If you don't make me come and swallow every last drop, then I'm going to lay you over that chair and use this belt on you until you're sobbing and begging me to stop. Do you understand?" I swallowed and nodded. "Don't think I won't do it. I've done far worse to people for far less."

Should I have run for the door? Probably. Instead, I reached for the button on his pants. The world, my boss, my parents' judgment, and Shawn could all fuck off.



NATHANIEL

It was a real shame that she was FBI. It was a rare thing for me to be this interested in a woman aside from the instant gratification of pleasure. The fact that she intrigued me, and I actually gave a fuck if she got off, was like an eclipse of the sun.

As drunk as Savannah was, she didn't slur her words, and her hands were steady as she pulled my pants open. I sucked in a deep breath as her cool fingers wrapped around my cock. It

had been ready to go since before I chased the asshole away from her. I couldn't help but smirk as she looked at the rings in the tip.

“Doesn't that hurt,” she asked as she touched one, moving it gently from side to side. Her eyes were wide as she licked her lips, and a spark of something new ignited inside of me. I groaned and shook my head no as the sensation shot along my shaft. “Did it hurt getting them?”

“Some, but the pain is nothing in comparison to the pleasure I feel.” She flicked out her tongue and traced the shape of the first ring as her hand slid down my aching cock. “You're going to have to do better than that if you want me to come,” I said, and her eyes turned up to mine.

My heart pounded harder, staring at her innocent face. My world was filled with many things I loved, but it was also very dark, and my heart had hardened by the time I turned twenty.

Her eyes never left mine as she slid me into her mouth, and I sucked in a ragged breath as she played with the three rings. Each one sent another shock through my body, and I gathered up her soft hair, holding it on top of her head to get a better view. I groaned, my head falling back as she sucked like her life truly depended on it. I was still going to tan her adorable ass no matter what, but giving her incentive had been a very wise decision.

“Fuck,” I growled, my grip tightening in her hair. She was good, very fucking good, and all I could envision was killing the men who had taught her with my bare hands. I could never have her again, and maybe that was why I desired her, but something about the complicated Savannah made me want to call her mine. With a guttural moan on her lips, I popped out of her mouth, but only so she could lick up and down my shaft. Her eyes were glazed, the lust taking over, and I knew she would be soaking wet. My cock kicked at the thought of getting inside of her, but I held off on the urges, wanting her to do what I asked and take the edge off first.

“Fucking hell,” I said as she sucked my balls into her hot mouth. She moaned and swirled her tongue around, and a

deadly rage grew. Had she ever been on her knees like this in front of that ex of hers? I didn't get jealous, and yet, the anger brewing within me called to kill someone and make them pay for ever touching what was mine. Ridiculous. A fucking blowjob, no matter how good, shouldn't cause such a visceral reaction.

Her hand flew up and down my shaft, and my eyebrows raised when she released my balls to spit on my cock and then resumed sucking. Someone was definitely dying.

“Yes, that's it...so fucking close.”

I didn't think Savannah could take it up another level, but she proved me wrong. The room filled with her moans and sucking, driving me crazy. She suddenly stopped right at the tip and sucked hard as her tongue played with the rings.

“Ah! Fuck, yes!” Bracing myself, I gripped her hair in both hands as I came. The pleasure paralyzed me and stole my breath away. “Fuck me, that was good,” I said as I watched her lick her lips and then the head of my cock like she really was a kitten. I really liked that name for her.

She smiled coyly at me and then laughed as she leaned back and lost her balance, falling on her ass. I grinned, watching her as she laughed until she cried. Kicking off my shoes, I finished stripping. As she wiped away the tears, I picked her up and sat her on the bed.

“I'm a mess,” she said, and her bottom lip started to tremble.

“No, you're not,” I said, tipping her head up. The guarded look I saw in all of her photos and earlier down at the bar was wiped away with the effects of the alcohol in her system. What lay underneath were the remnants of pain I was used to seeing. I quickly pushed the thought aside, there was no place for thoughts of my fucking, unfaithful father in this room. “Do you still want this, Savannah?”

I didn't typically give someone an out this far in, but I was feeling compassionate. “Yes.”

“You sure?”

“Yes. Please fuck me,” she whispered, her voice holding a deadly longing. There was a connection with her I didn’t understand, and I glanced at my clothes, knowing I should leave before I did something stupid like develop feelings. Savannah gripped my wrist and brought my hand to her cheek, leaning into the palm of my hand. “Please.”

I was going to regret this. I could feel it, but I didn’t want to say no to her, whatever the reason. “Alright, but no more tears.”

Savannah nodded and wiped her cheeks. Holding out my hands, she placed hers into mine, and I pulled her to her feet. She swayed slightly, which would’ve been disastrous in the high heels if she were on her own.

“Turn around,” I ordered. Savannah slowly turned, and I unzipped the black dress and let it pool on the ground. “You’re very sexy,” I said as she faced me, her cheeks rosy and her eyes hooded as she looked at me from under her thick lashes. “Drop your arms,” I said, and she bit her lip, a tiny bit of nervousness showing, but they fell to her side, letting me feast on her pink areolas and hard nipples. I slowly lifted her arms out to the side and loved it when she rolled out her shoulders and looked me in the eyes.

“Yes, don’t ever hide from me. If you do it again, I’ll punish you.”

“Why?”

A snarl curled my lip. “Because in the bedroom, you are mine, and that’s what I want.”

She tilted her head as she looked at me, and even through the fog of the alcohol, I could see the wheels of her intelligent mind working. “There won’t be another time.”

The simmering rage flared. I grabbed Savannah by the throat and pushed her up against the wall, her eyes wide with surprise. “I tell you when there won’t be another time, you don’t tell me.” What the fuck was I doing? “Do you understand me, Savannah?” Goosebumps rose along her skin.

“But...”

Pulling her toward me, I turned her around and pushed her face first up against the wall. “There are no butts. Do you understand that you’re mine?”

“But....” She tried again, and I lost my cool.

Yanking her thong to the side, I thrust into her pussy and growled in her ear as she cried out. “Do you feel that?”

Thrust.

“Yes,” she whimpered.

Thrust.

“This pussy is mine. Your body is mine.”

Thrust.

“I’ll tell you when we are through.”

Thrust, thrust, thrust.

“Ah...God...fuck yes,” she yelled as I picked up the pace and plunged into her as hard as I could.

I bit the side of her neck and sucked as hard as she had on my cock while our bodies slammed into the wall over and over. I could feel her pussy tightening as her breathing became incoherent panting. A hint of her perfume and shampoo invaded my senses, and I breathed deeply, drawing her into my lungs and committing the scent to memory.

Releasing her neck, I licked at the purple mark and then growled in her ear. “Answer me.”

“Yes, yes, I’m yours...ah...fuck!” Savannah yelled as she came. Her body arched back into mine, and I could feel the wetness coating my cock. Wrapping my arms around her, I picked her up and placed her on the bed, still buried deep inside of her. Forcing her legs wider and pushing her head down to the mattress, I grabbed her hips and hammered into her pussy.

Savannah grabbed a pillow, and I smirked as she buried her head to scream. Her skin was soft under my fingers, pressing into her hips. Fuck she felt incredible, and the sight of my cock slipping in and out of her as she came for the second

time made me feral. Sweat trickled down my back, and my arms strained as I continued to fuck the beautiful Savannah.

Smacking her ass intensified her yells, but she didn't move away. Pulling out, I flipped her over onto her back and admired my work as her pussy glistened before slipping into her again.

"Oh God, Grigoriy...I can't...." Her head rocked from side to side, nails digging into my shoulders as I pounded into her. I was going to make sure she never thought of another man ever again.

"You can," I said through clenched teeth as I held back my orgasm. I refused to come until she did one more time. "Come on me, Savannah, I'm ordering you to let go." Slamming my mouth down to hers, I could taste the remnants of alcohol and the sweetness of her lips. Savannah whimpered into my mouth, and I ate every single sound like a fucking meal.

Her pussy walls quivered around my cock a moment before they tightened, and I knew she was getting close again. Breaking the kiss and grabbing her legs, I lifted them onto my shoulders, the position bending her almost in half.

"Oh, fuck me!" The bed banged against the wall. The thumping was almost as loud as the slapping of our skin. "So...so...so close. Ahh!" She came again, and I could feel her soaking my cock.

Letting go of my control, I fucked her harder until I was right on the edge. Pulling out, my hand flew up and down my cock.

"Fuck yes, fuck, so good," I growled as my orgasm hit, and the jets of come sailed from my dick and landed on Savannah's neck and tits before leaving a trail on her stomach. "Fuck," I roared, the last of my release dripping from the tip.

Breathing hard, I rolled off the bed and stared down at Savannah. Her eyes were mostly closed, a wistful expression on her face. That look pulled at something in my gut, and I stomped on it and crushed it out. There could be no

connections, especially not with this woman. It would be suicide.

Wandering into the bathroom, I cleaned myself up and then ran the warm water, wetting a couple of towels. Savannah hadn't moved an inch. Her breathing was soft and steady, but she was going to have one hell of a headache in the morning. I smirked as I pictured the look on her face when she walked into the office tomorrow for her meeting with Mr. Mikhailov, and I was the one behind the desk.

Using the first towel, I wiped off all the come. Fuck, I loved seeing her painted with it. Then I used the other to wipe between her legs.

Tossing the towels in the corner of the room, I pulled on my clothes and stuffed my arms into my jacket when I felt Savannah looking at me.

“You're leaving?”

“I don't do sleepovers.” Grabbing a bottle of water from the minibar, I cracked the lid and handed it to her. “Drink up, or the hangover you're going to have will be ten times worse.”

Unable to help myself, I watched her throat work as she swallowed down half of the bottle before grabbing her head.

“Brain freeze.”

“I would wait to drink more water, or you're just going to throw it back up.” I yanked the blankets out from under her ass and covered her body.

Why I was being this nice to her, I had no fucking clue, but it felt like the right thing to do. Savannah grabbed my hand as I pulled the blankets up to her chin, her light blue eyes searching my face. What she was trying to find, I couldn't guess, but it gave me a little bit longer to stare at her without the hard wall firmly in place behind her eyes.

“Thank you,” she said, squeezing my hand before letting go.

“Sleep well, Kisa. You may like me now, but you'll hate me tomorrow.” I liked the nickname, Russian, for kitten. It

suited her. She was soft and sweet but also had claws and was hazardous in so many ways. I could picture her walking through my home like she owned it and purposely knocking over all my things.

Kissing her forehead, I gathered the rest of my belongings, including the master key I had for the hotel doors, and with a final look, I flicked off the light and stepped out of her room.

I'd studied the file I had on Savannah. Staring at the pictures of the powder puff she'd been engaged to and tried to figure out what she ever saw in him. With just a glance, I could tell he was a bottom-of-the-rung loser who would break her heart. I had combed over her finances and couldn't find a single expenditure that would land her in hot water other than the little bullet vibrator, but I doubt that was good enough for blackmail. She had top marks in all her classes, but there were no rumors that she'd gotten the grades by using her body over her brain. Savannah worked hard and never took time off. She didn't party and only had two close friends who were in Canada. She was as straight-laced as they came, and yet... there was more to her.

I rubbed my bottom lip, the taste of her still on my tongue.

What is it about you, Savannah?

CHAPTER

FOUR

SAVANNAH

The screeching noise made me cringe, and I pulled the blanket up higher and over my head, but it wouldn't go away, and neither would the painful jackhammering inside my brain. It was as if something was trying to split my head open, the sharp piercing only accentuated by the throbbing behind my eyes and the flipping of my stomach. What the hell? Was I dying? If so, could it please just happen already? And for the love of fuck stop the screeching sound.

Beep, beep, beep.

My hand shot out from under the blankets, fumbling around for the source of the noise. I smacked my hand off my phone until it shut up. Silence filled the room, and my arm fell away from the nightstand, but my fingers managed to drag the phone with it.

"Fuck," I grumbled as it hit the floor. When I dared to peek out of the covers, the room was mostly dark except for a narrow shaft of light pouring in through the drapes. The sun was up, and I was in a hotel room. I had downed a bottle of wine before the drinks at the bar with the god who gave me the best night of my life, but it all could've been a dream at this point. Other than the alcohol, that definitely happened.

Meeting. Fuck, I needed to get up because I had a meeting today. Shit, piss, fuck, damn. I didn't so much throw the blankets off and sit up as I slid out from under them. I landed on the floor on my hands and knees, which was a step up from the fetal position I'd been in a moment ago.

I sucked in a sharp breath as the rest of my body joined the ‘I’m pissed off with you band’ and ached like I’d run a marathon before wrestling a bear that beat the shit out of me. My arms shook, my legs hurt, and I felt bruised. My abs were strained, my stomach was just all sorts of a mess, and my pussy felt like a rhino had torn it apart. Fucking hot guy had definitely happened. It was either that or I’d gone on some fucked up safari that let the animals have their way with me. Okay, that was an image I didn’t need to give myself. What the hell was wrong with me?

I dared to open my eyes, knowing it would only make it worse, and yet, I did it anyway. As soon as they opened, the floor swam, and my already volatile stomach churned.

“Oh no.” Pushing through the pain, I stood and hobbled dangerously on the high heels I was still wearing and limped for the bathroom. I covered my mouth and dropped down in front of the toilet just in time to add more misery to the company as I expelled everything left in my stomach, which then tried to turn itself inside out once finished.

“Fuck,” I mumbled and flopped over, my cheek lying on the cool tile. The only time in my life when I didn’t care if the floor was clean or not. I was dying anyway, so who gave a fuck if some strange germ got in my mouth.

Okay, another thought I didn’t need. Sitting up, I undid the heels that I was never wearing again, my feet hurt so fucking bad. Pushing myself up, I turned on the shower to warm up before hobbling over to the mirror. I looked like I’d gone a round with Mike Tyson before being dragged behind a car. My mascara was reduced to two dark streaks down my cheeks. Bruises lined my body. Partial or whole fingerprints were on my hips and arms, and there was a massive hickey on the side of my neck that I wasn’t sure makeup could cover. Jesus H. He didn’t just fuck me. He railed me like an animal.

I winced as pain lanced behind my eyes, but also an image of him ordering me to come as he pounded into me, and I had to grab the sink as my body reacted to the visceral memory. Forget vampire he was like fucking a demon, and a part of me was willing to sell a piece of my soul to be able to do it again.

Despite the hangover, I'd never felt more free or alive than I had last night, but it didn't matter. Other than his name, Grigoriy, I didn't know a single thing about him, not a number, last name, or place of work. He would forever be the sexy man who fucked like a demon. I had him for a few hours and suddenly didn't care as much about Shawn and his betrayal or our canceled engagement. Heck, I didn't even care when Shawn called the cops and had me questioned, and that was before I was raked over the coals by my boss as he put me on administrative leave so I could 'get my head straight.' Apparently, threatening to shoot the cheating, lying sack of shit, and forcing him out into a snowstorm was over-the-top behavior. I wished I'd shot a body part, so all in all, it could've been a whole fuck load worse.

Again, this was not something you should share with your boss either, which was what landed me on the 'Off work til I tell you otherwise' list.

With my toothbrush in hand, I brushed my teeth vigorously before looking at the shower. It seemed so far away, but I managed to make it across the room. The water felt like a reset button on my life, and I'd never been so happy to brush my teeth.

By the time I emerged from what had to be an endless supply of hot water, I wasn't great, but I was improving and smelling better. Grabbing the lone towel off the rack, I sucked in a deep breath as I remembered Grigoriy gently cleaning my body. That single act might be able to rival everything else combined.

I dabbed away the water between my legs and could still feel the warm cloth as he cleaned my thighs and then my pussy, shockingly wiping me properly and not like he was trying to scrub off dried wax from a car.

Okay, head, get in the game.

By the time I was dressed with my hair dry and makeup on, I was ready to go back to bed and stay there for a week.

Picking my phone up off the floor, I rolled my eyes at the missed calls from my mother and Shawn. I was not dealing

with whatever they wanted to talk about. My mother had been calling non-stop and said the same thing every time. She claimed she had never liked Shawn, which wasn't true. She thought the sun rose and set out of his asshole. Then she would say she was so happy I finally got rid of him, and I would agree with her as she rambled on about how much better off I was. Although I was better off, I didn't want to rehash it. Shawn was calling because I had put all his shit in boxes and left it in the garage before changing all the locks on the house and the password on the alarm. I even paid for a security service to sit in the driveway and make sure he didn't try anything stupid as he packed up his shit and got it out of my life.

The house was mine before we got together, a gift from my stepfather when I graduated university a whole year early and was accepted to the FBI academy. If Shawn thought for a second that he was entitled to anything, then I would make a call. I didn't want to because it felt like it was below me, but I was willing to stoop that low and have my stepfather or ex-stepfather deal with Shawn. Mr. Rosales was a scary politician and businessman and connected to some shady people. I didn't want to know who or what because having to arrest your stepfather was not ideal.

Slipping on my black sunglasses and my purse, I impressed myself as I made it down the elevator, through the lobby, and into my awaiting ride without falling over or puking again.

“Where to?”

“Hailov Tower,” I said. The driver didn't ask for any further information and pulled away from the hotel. I kept my eyes closed and focused on my breathing for the whole ride. I probably should've canceled this meeting, but I'd been chasing my tail all over town trying to find the owner of the strip club where Alex was last seen, and I finally had the answer.

I was shocked when I so easily managed to book a meeting with the CEO, Mr. Nathaniel Mikhailov. From the little I'd been able to dig up on him and his family so far, they were

Russian mafia and very powerful. Just because Alex had been at a strip club owned by the mafia didn't necessarily mean anything, but no one at the club remembered Alex, and he was the type you remembered. Either because he was busy throwing money around or he would be flirting with all the girls and pissing off all the guys. I pulled out the only photo I could find on line of the CEO of the Mikhailov empire. He was a middle-aged man with salt and pepper hair with blue eyes that gave me the creeps despite his good looks.

We pulled up in front of a fancy office building covered in black mirrored glass. Wow, this was a lot fancier than I pictured. Handing over the money for the ride, I got out and sucked in a deep breath, getting control of my churning stomach.

I felt like a lame horse, hobbling across the front entrance and then up to the elevators. I already knew that Mr. Mikhailov's office was on the top floor. Of course, it was.

With a ding, the doors opened, and a handful of people got off, all of them talking on their phones and looking very serious like no one else was important. Did I look like that when I was working?

I gripped the rail in the elevator as it seemed to shoot up like a rocket and left my stomach behind.

"This is not good," I mumbled, my body breaking out in a sweat as I watched the numbers and braced myself for the sudden stop. "Oh God," I said, gripping my stomach. The woosh was worse than I imagined, and I stumbled out, grabbing the wall and focusing to keep from puking up the little bit of water I'd managed to drink before leaving.

"Are you okay?"

Turning my head, I stared at a pretty brunette sitting behind a large reception desk.

"Yes, sorry. I'm not a fan of small spaces and hate elevators," I lied as I walked over to the counter. "I have an appointment with Mr. Mikhailov. My name is Savannah."

“Very good, he is expecting you,” she turned to look up at the tall man, who I figured was a guard standing near the wall. “Can you please show Mr. Mikhailov’s guest to his office?”

The guard, who seemed like a giant, nodded and stepped away. He didn’t speak but held out his hand in the direction he wanted me to walk. My heels clicked on the shiny black floor. Looking into a few of the other offices as we passed, I could see the landscape and a hint of water in the distance. It was a great view.

Mountain man stuck out his arm, and I almost clotheslined myself on it as he came to a sudden halt.

“Mr. Mikhailov, you have a guest,” the man said, his Russian accent thick, which made all my earlier research seem more plausible.

I didn’t hear a reply, but the mountain moved out of the way, and I stepped into the room before the door closed behind me. I glanced at the door as it clicked like I’d just been locked in. What the?

The office was large with a pair of matching black couches and a fancy espresso machine that made me lick my lips, but the main focus was the large desk near the windows and the man standing looking out the glass, with his back to me.

“Mr. Mikhailov?”

Very slowly, he turned, and my heart jumped into my throat as my mouth fell open. No amount of FBI training could’ve prepared me to stare into Grigoriy’s dark eyes.

“Hello, Agent Savannah Freeborn. I understand you’ve been looking for me,” he said, and I ran through everything I said and talked about last night.

“Grigoriy, I...I don’t understand. I was to meet a Nathaniel today.”

He smirked as he walked to his desk and sat down, looking right at home behind the large, expensive piece.

“Let me re-introduce myself. My name is Nathaniel Grigoriy Mikhailov, but my friends call me Nathan.” His eyes

roamed over my body, and I shifted under his intense stare. No one had ever intimidated me like he did, and I didn't like it, not one bit. "You seem...out of sorts. Did you not find your evening satisfying? Or did you not sleep well?"

If I had my gun, I would've pulled it and shot all three of him since I was still seeing triple of everything. Fucking prick. I looked at the photo on my phone and looked at it again.

"Were you watching me? Was it your plan all along to seduce me?" He snorted and picked up the pen on his desk.

"Seduce you? I didn't need to seduce you, Savannah. You were crying for someone to wipe away the pain of your ex cheating on you," he said, his eyes flicking up to mine, and I marched toward him, my hand balling into a fist. I was going to leap across the desk and throttle him.

"Ah, ah, you don't want to be sidelined any longer than you already are. Do you?" He sat back in his fancy chair, a smug expression written in every feature. How much did he know about me, and how the hell did he find all that out so fast?

"You bastard. You've been stalking me?"

He lifted a shoulder and let it drop. "I have an aversion to people snooping into my life, and I feel that I should give the same courtesy in return. Only seems fair to me." He tapped a folder on his desk. "I do my homework. Do you do yours?"

"I swear I'm going to...."

"To what? Beg me to fuck you again?"

I sucked in a ragged breath and wondered if kicking his ass was worth losing my job over. "If you're the CEO, who is this?" I held out my phone with the image.

"First off, I'm the CMO, and that is my father Demitri Mikhailov." He smirked, his eyes filled with humor that I wanted to smack off his face. "Sloppy police work if you ask me."

He stood from his desk, and my stomach churned with embarrassment. He had seen me at my most vulnerable and

had guided me into a trap of my own making. “I do love the fire in your eyes. It’s sexy.”

He walked around the desk, but I stood my ground, glaring up at him and cursing my body as it heated. Even though I was sore, my stomach clenched tight, and my heart pounded harder. Fuck. “You’re an asshole. What you did was... despicable.”

“Despicable? Ha, I was doing nothing more than observing the person who was stalking me. I never even asked you one question about your investigation or searched your room, which I easily could’ve done. Call it stalking or whatever other word you want, but at the end of the day, you were poking into my business and personal life. How does it feel, Agent? Do you like the intrusion into your life?”

I couldn’t answer that. I was in a ‘damned if I do and damned if I don’t’ situation. I refused to give him that shred of power.

“Was any of it real? Was anything you said to me last night real,” I asked instead.

His dark eyes were more intense in the daylight, and as hard as it was to hold his stare when he arched his brow at me, I didn’t flinch.

“I didn’t lie about anything, not even my name. You didn’t ask me what my last name was, and you assumed I gave you my first name. I have nothing to lie to you about, Agent. You, on the other hand, lied your ass off to me, and yet I still gave you the ride of your life.”

My body was trembling with a rage that was like a living creature inside my chest, demanding to make him pay. I yelped as he suddenly grabbed the back of my neck. I was definitely still off my game, or I would’ve blocked him, but I never even saw him twitch. He rubbed his thumb on the side of my neck where he’d left the hickey, and I jerked my head away.

“Don’t touch me,” I growled. Nathaniel stopped rubbing but didn’t remove his hand, and the heat from his palm felt

like it was scorching my skin. I tried to pull back, but his fingers tightened, and my pulse shot through the roof. I knew he was dangerous last night, but this was not what I meant. Being trapped in an office with the son of a powerful mafia boss alone was not where my head was, but obviously, I'd been thinking with the wrong body part.

“Tell me, Savannah, are you angry because I played your game better than you?” He smirked, and I wanted to say something sharp and intelligent. But all my brain cells were too busy drooling and begging for more of last night to come up with anything worthwhile. “No? Hmm, then maybe you're angry because everything I said about your personal life is true, or is it because you finally fucked someone who could make you scream?”

I was still too hungover to punch him, and yet it didn't stop me from trying something else. Maybe I really did need anger management training, like my boss said. My knee came up for his crotch, but instead of making any contact, I was spun around, lifted in the air, and pressed face down on his desk. Nathaniel stood between my legs and pinned me to the large marble slab. My shoulder was screaming from the way he had it twisted behind my back.

He growled in my ear, and a shiver raced down my spine as my breathing quickened, but I ignored my stupid body, which didn't seem to care about our predicament.

“You're lucky, Kisa. I'm not the type of man to rape a woman. If I were another member of my family, you would be having a very different conversation, but make no mistake, I will not tolerate you coming into my office trying to assault me for any reason.”

I swallowed hard as he rubbed his cock against my ass. I could feel him as easily as I had without clothes last night. I'd been careless and caught up in my emotions. Not knowing what Nathaniel looked like before hunting him was a rookie mistake. I hated to say it, but my boss was right. I needed to get my head screwed on straight before I got myself killed. Fuck, it may already be too late.



NATHANIEL

Fuck, this girl was making me hard all over again. It had only been seven hours since I left her room, but that didn't seem to matter to my persistent cock. It stood at attention the moment she walked in. Pressed firmly up against her ass, all I could think about was ripping her pants open and burying myself deep inside of her.

“Are you going to be good, Kisa? Or are you planning to keep fighting?”

“What does that mean?”

“It's a simple question. Do I let you go, or do I come on your sexy ass before tying you up?”

She sighed under me, which pressed her ass up and into my shaft, and I bit my lip to keep from rubbing against her. I hadn't dryhumped anyone or anything since I was thirteen. I wasn't about to start again now.

“What does Kisa mean?”

“It means kitten. I like it. It suits your claws-out and hissing personality.”

“Funny. I won't try to hit you again, but I can't promise anything else.”

Placing a chaste kiss against her neck, she shuddered, and I smirked. “Remember my warning. I don't warn people twice.”

I released her arm and stepped away from her legs, making sure I was out of range before turning and walking over to the espresso machine. I could hear her moving around behind me,

and I kept track of her but never turned back to prove my point.

“Would you like an espresso? You seem like you could use one.”

“No,” she bit out.

“Don’t be irrational, Savannah. You need to put something in your stomach.” I looked over my shoulder at her and loved the wild strands of strawberry hair that were hanging around her face. “And not just my cock’s contribution, although I’d be more than happy to give you another meal right now if you like.”

She shook her head as she rolled her eyes and smoothed down the front of her suit. She looked beautiful and sophisticated, with a hint of a storm and an untamed sexual appetite that I was dying to discipline.

“There are no guarantees I’ll be able to keep it down,” she admitted. I had a feeling she was pretty out of it. She was slow and inaccurate with the knee and didn’t even respond to me grabbing her.

“Fair enough. I do know what you need.”

“Oh, this ought to be good,” she said, and my palm tingled as I envisioned placing her over my lap for the sass.

“You need grease in your stomach to sop up the alcohol. I’m assuming you haven’t eaten anything?”

“What do you care?”

“Just answer the question.”

She crossed her arms and shook her head like she was scolding herself, which I was pretty sure she was. I loved that even though I hadn’t planned on sleeping with her last night, I had. She was so unraveled at the moment, and I fed off it.

“No, I haven’t eaten, but don’t think I’m going to eat anything with you,” she said.

“Fine, then you can continue to poke your nose into my business and never get the straight answers you’re looking

for.”

Her mouth pressed into a firm line, and her eyes narrowed into thin slits. “What are you saying?”

“I’m offering to give you a full interview, off the books, but you’re free to ask any question you like. In return, you have breakfast with me. It’s the only meal I’ll get today, so I might as well eat with sexy company.”

The wheels turned behind her eyes. She was skeptical, and she should be, but I could also see the part of her that needed to have answers about everything.

“If it makes you feel any better, if I wanted you dead, you already would be.”

“Yeah, pretty sure that doesn’t make anyone feel better.”

I lifted my shoulders and casually let them drop as I pulled out my phone. “It’s still true. I could’ve poisoned your drink or choked you to death with my belt. I could’ve shot you in the head or knocked you out and had my guard bury you in some obscure place where no one would find you.”

“Are you openly admitting to you and your family being murderers?”

I looked up from my phone as I sent off a message. “I’m admitting to being a man who will do what is necessary. Regardless of what that is.”

“And you’ll answer any question I want?”

“I may not give you the answer you want, but I will answer the question.”

She took a step forward and swayed on her feet as she grabbed her head. Chancing her trying to hit me again, I went over and pulled her into my side to steady her.

“I don’t need your help.”

“Just sit down,” I said and helped her to the couch. She looked green, and I wondered if this would call for my mother’s recipe for a hangover and not just some food. “I’ll book us a place to eat.”

“I really don’t think I could,” she said. Her eyes lifted to mine. “I really don’t feel very—” She jumped from the couch and sprinted across the room like she was doing the hundred-yard dash. Grabbing my trash can, she began to throw up. I followed and pulled the loose strands of her hair out of the way, then hit the button for my secretary, who answered immediately.

“Yes, Mr. Mikhailov?”

“I need Doctor Joseph and tell him to bring an IV for fluids.”

“Understood.”

“You have a doctor on speed dial to come to your office?” She coughed and I gave the back of her neck a massage. Her body was shaking as she refused to look up at me.

“Why not?”

She shook her head. “Whatever. I don’t need a doctor. I just need my hotel room.”

“Not happening, and don’t bother arguing with me. There is a good chance you have alcohol poisoning,” I said and held out the box of tissues from my desk. She flopped down on her ass, leaning against the desk leg, her skin was pasty and pale, and her breathing was shallow.

“I really don’t want a doctor.”

“And I really don’t give a fuck what you want. You’re not dying in my building on my watch.” Her eyes rolled up at me, and if she could’ve gotten up off the floor, I was sure she would’ve punched me. If I thought last night was stupid, then forcing her to accept my help was the icing on the idiot cake.

CHAPTER

FIVE

NATHANIEL

“**W**hat the hell are you doing out there thirty-three?” Coach yelled as I circled back into my zone. “Bring it in!” Everyone skated over to the bench, where Coach looked like he could’ve done a commercial for an angry tomato. “How did you not see Michaels coming? He stripped the puck off you slower than it takes my grandmother to stand, and she’s dead. Don’t look at me like that, Michaels. You could audition for figure skating pairs the way you twinkled your toes.”

Coach threw out more insults at other players. Thank God I wasn’t the only one playing like shit today, or he would’ve been unbearable. Fucking Savannah, I couldn’t focus, and it was all her fault. I left her with my family’s doctor at the hospital and had to come to practice. It should’ve been easy to put one woman out of my mind. I managed to put killing and torturing people out of my head easily enough. Hell, I broke a million hearts and never had an issue. Why was I worried about her? This was pissing me the fuck off. I should’ve just taken her around the back of the hotel and killed her last night.

“Sorry, Coach, my head isn’t in it today.”

Playing hockey was the only time in my life where I could just be me and not worry about family shit, and here I was my mind drifting to Savannah. Hockey helped me relax. First, it was high school hockey at Wayward and now college. The guys I played with had no idea who I really was. I wore jeans to school, drove a plain truck, and left my guards at home.

Here, I was Nathan, the kid from a middle-income home who loved hockey and wasn't a mafia boss's son. It was the only time I didn't need to be in control and could leave it all out on the ice and just have fun. My father didn't believe in fun. My mother had tried to give me a good childhood and had received the wrath of my father's tongue more than once. But I loved her for it, and even now, it wasn't my father I went to for advice. It was my mother. She was far more brilliant than my father gave her any credit for and one day, he was going to regret it.

Living in California, we had three teams to choose from to cheer for, but ultimately, I fell in love with the Kings. Playing professionally was my dream, but my father had other ideas, and so did my shoulder. Despite my torn rotator cuff injury, I was still good enough to play college, which was the only reason I had stuck around here for so long.

I graduated two years ago but told my father I wanted to study law just so I could play. He reluctantly agreed only because he liked the idea of his son having a law background. However, the demands of my job within the family had doubled in the last year.

“And you thirty-three,” Coach said, yanking me out of my thoughts. “Your head better be in it by Saturday, or you're going to find your minutes reduced.”

“Shit,” I mumbled under my breath. Fucking Savannah.

I pushed in closer to the group to pay attention to the plays Coach was drawing up on this whiteboard.

Two hours later, all the guys had gone into the locker room for a shower, but I was busy getting my head clear. The lights had dimmed, but I still had time before they wanted to flood the ice and get the Zamboni out here.

My quads burned as I pushed out suicides, skating hard from one line to the next. Being in here alone calmed my mind. I loved the sound of the blades cutting into the ice and the scraping as I slid to a stop, only to start it all over again. The cool air hit my face, and the sound of my heart beating

gave me something else to focus on other than wondering what happened with Savannah after I left.

I was spent and breathing hard, wanting to lay down on the ice and stay here all night, but I still had work to do.

“You good for me to come out, Nathan?”

I lifted my hand to Tony, the building attendant. “Yeah man, just catching my breath.”

“You were really giving it out there.” He stuck his thumb toward the locker rooms as I slowly skated over. “The rest of the guys are gone.”

“Just needed to clear my head.”

“I get that. Driving my girl lets me do the same thing,” Tony said, smiling as he hooked his thumbs in his pockets.

“What kind of car?” I stepped out onto the rubber mat and snatched my towel off the bench.

Tony laughed, the sound echoing off the walls of the empty building. “Oh no, not a car. I can’t afford one of those. I mean the Zamboni. I love driving, Clarissa.” He smiled and swung his arm out wide like he was showing me something. “Out there is a wide-open world to me.”

I’d seen Tony almost every day for five years, and he never said he couldn’t afford a car. In fact, I couldn’t remember a time he complained about anything.

“Do you ever think of looking for another job? One that pays you more?”

He shrugged. “I could, but my wife needs medical care. This job has benefits, and the apartment we live in isn’t that far away, so I can get home quickly if needed.”

“I’m sorry to hear that.” I wiped the back of my neck.

Tony gripped my shoulder, the smile never faltering. “Don’t be sorry. I love my wife, and if roles were reversed, she’d take care of me. I’m blessed. Well, I better get back at it. Have a good evening, son.” Whistling, Tony turned and walked to the doors that held all the machinery, and the gears

turned in my mind. He didn't seem like the type to take a handout, but I might have a job for him. I made a mental note to put some serious thought into it.

The sound of the Zamboni firing up made me smile as I left. As tempted as I was to rub one out in the quiet shower, I had to get to Wanderlust and make sure my father's shipment was secure.

Stepping out of the locker room, I froze when I saw Savannah. She slowly lifted her head, and she looked a hundred times better than this morning.

"We're back to stalking, I see," I drawled, lifting my hockey bag higher on my shoulder.

"You promised me a meal and to answer my questions. I wasn't letting you out of that so easily."

"So, what you're saying is your visit isn't because you wanted to see me," I said and chuckled as she rolled her eyes. It was refreshing not to have a girl throwing herself at me. "Who ratted me out this time? I'll be sure to kill them," I teased, half meaning it.

"Your doctor. He said he thought you had class. Didn't take much investigating to find you after that."

"Hmm, I guess I better not kill him." Savannah pushed away from the wall and walked beside me through the halls. "You're looking better."

"I'm feeling better. Sorry about the whole throwing up in your office thing."

"I've had worse meetings," I said, and she smiled wide but quickly wiped it away like she couldn't be caught having fun.

The school was relatively quiet, but some students were still hanging around, and a few waved or yelled out a hello.

"You're popular," Savannah said and glared at a couple of girls who flirted with me as they walked past.

"Jealous?"

“You can only be jealous over something you want,” she said, and I glanced down at her, but she kept her head turned away from me. An urge to prove her wrong had me moving before my brain could come up with a good excuse not to do it. Dropping my bag with a thud, Savannah jumped as I wrapped my arm around her waist and pushed her up against the wall, my mouth dropping to hers.

She was tense for a few seconds, but I was persistent and kissed her with an unbridled need to devour her. As soon as she caved, I invaded her mouth and made sure she was panting before I broke off the kiss.

“You want me,” I whispered in her ear. “I can already picture how wet you are. Next time, I get to taste you, Kisa.” I moved away before I took her up against the wall and got myself expelled, not that I couldn’t buy my way back in, but still, not the point.

“There won’t be a next time,” Savannah said, but her flushed cheeks called her a liar.

“We’ll see. How did you get here?”

She grabbed my arm, and I looked at her hand. “Do you remember what happened the last time you touched me?”

Her lips thinned, and I could see the mixed fire burning in her eyes. She was turned on. The lust was bright in her depths, but so was hatred, and that combination was fucking hot. It made for the best sex. Wisely, she removed her hand.

“You promised me the interview.”

I snatched my large bag off the floor. “Yes, but I didn’t promise where, did I? I have work I need to do, so if you want to interview me, then keep up.” Her mouth dropped open. “I’m a busy man, so if you want the information you’re after, then it will be on my terms or not at all.”

“Has anyone ever told you that you’re a first-rate asshole,” she asked but followed me.

“Daily. It’s part of my charm,” I said, enjoying the banter far more than I should and the look in her eyes even more. “Where did you park?”

“I got a ride.”

I ground my teeth and looked around. Shit, shit, shit. I didn't want her in my vehicle, or more accurately, I wanted to lay her out in the back and fuck her. There was too much temptation with her near me.

“Where are you going? I'll meet you there,” she said as if reading my mind, and that pissed me off more for some fucked up reason.

“You'll ride with me,” I said.

“Thanks, but I'd rather not.” Reaching the truck, I tossed my hockey bag in the bed and turned to look at the very stubborn and way too alluring Savannah.

“What did I just say to you? I'm starting to think you're hard of hearing.” I would've sworn she snarled at me. My cock thickened, and through sheer willpower, I kept my hands to myself. I had already caved once, which wasn't like me. I didn't need to make it worse.

“Fine, I'll ride with you, but I should warn you that I have safety measures in place just in case my body disappears like my brother's.”

“Well, then I suggest you stay away from boats,” I said. I didn't expect the slap or the sting that followed in my cheek, but even I could admit I deserved that one.

“You're right, that was rude. Sorry,” I said and stepped in close to Savannah, forcing her to look up. It was obvious she didn't know anything about what her brother was really like or what he was into. “I will let the slap slide because I understand why you did it. But this is your last warning. You touch me again when it's not during sex or without my permission, and you will not like what I do next. Don't think your shiny badge, gun, and arrogance will keep you safe. I'm a man with very few morals and a lot of pent-up anger.”

“Are you threatening a federal agent, Mr. Mikhailov?”

“Technically, you're on leave, which makes you an agent of nothing, but even if you were officially investigating me, you don't scare me. I didn't kill your brother, although I know

you think I did, so I have nothing to hide.” I could feel the rage radiating off her. She was almost vibrating with it. “As for threatening you....” I lifted my shoulder and let it drop. “Take it however you like, but personally, I call it a warning. You don’t see me slapping you, do you, or trying to knee you? Maybe I should make a call to your boss and let him know where his rogue agent is and what you’ve tried to do to me so far. I’m sure he’d be thrilled to know how terribly you are acting.” I could see in her eyes that she wanted to hit me again. “You’d be out of a job so fast your head would spin.”

“You’re pretty sure of yourself,” she said, but the tremor of anger that had been there a moment ago was gone.

“I have no reason not to be.” I pulled out my phone, unlocked it, and held it up for her to see my call list. I knew the moment she noticed her boss’s personal cell number. “I find it beneficial to get to know everyone important in this world, and your boss and I happen to attend the same golf course from time to time.”

“Of course you do.”

“Yes, of course I do,” I mocked. “The decision is yours.”

Savannah stepped back, and I could see her sucking up the anger like she was vacuuming it into her body. She may have lost this round, but there wasn’t a doubt in my mind that she was going to give up. She was practically on death’s door this morning, and here she was, still pounding her fist at me a few hours later. I liked it, which meant I needed her to go the fuck away as fast as possible. She was a temptation I couldn’t afford to have hanging around.

“You know what? You’re right. You shouldn’t ride with me. I’m heading to my exotic club, Wanderlust. I’ll be there in an hour.” Walking away, I hopped in the driver’s side and didn’t give her another glance as I drove away. Fucking Savannah.

CHAPTER

SIX

SAVANNAH

I watched the black truck drive away and wanted to kick my own ass. Nathan had me off kilter from the moment we met. I didn't even know who he was, and he had my head spinning, and now I was overplaying my hand.

Nathan said he didn't kill Alex, and I was usually good at judging if people were lying, but I couldn't figure out if he was telling me the truth. He seemed to know exactly why I was here and what information I had, but if he had access to my boss, he could have all the details of the case. Shit. I thought Matthews seemed quick to dismiss my theories, and this was why. He either knew more than he was willing to say, or he was being paid off, but I would bet my ass there was more going on. The good news was that there was a chance Alex was alive, but I couldn't understand why the Russian Mafia and the FBI would be interested in my brother.

All I had were answers that led to more questions, and now I couldn't question him while trapped in his truck. I blew my best opportunity to get him alone again. Fuck. All because I couldn't keep my mouth shut, and I wanted to be alone with him for a whole other reason. This attraction was throwing me off.

Pulling out my phone, I dialed the car service again. They were really going to love me on this trip. As I waited for the call to connect, I stared at my tingling palm and smirked. At least he hadn't seen that one coming.



When Nathan mentioned his club, even though he said exotic, I thought he meant one of the high-end party clubs. Instead, the car pulled up outside of a strip club. The arrogance of my earlier slap was really coming back to bite me in the ass now.

“Shit.”

I wandered up the steps, not really wanting to go inside. The last time I was at a club like this, the partner assigned to me got shot. I’d only been a field agent for a month, and he died in my arms. I still played that day over again, wondering if there was anything that I could’ve done differently to save his life or make sure he didn’t end up shot in the first place. The what-ifs haunted me.

The bouncer standing outside the door looked at me but didn’t move or say anything. Was there a magic word? Did I flash some skin or hand him money? As long as I didn’t have to get on my knees.

“Are you going to let me in, or what’s the story here,” I finally gave up and asked.

“Mr. Mikhailov isn’t here yet. He said to make sure you stayed outside.”

“How do you know who I am?” I crossed my arms, annoyance flaring.

“He said keep the Fed outside until he arrived.” The bouncer looked me up and down. “You reek of Fed. I could smell your stench when you got out of the car.”

I looked down at the white blouse, black dress pants, and my long coat. What the fuck? I looked like half the women wandering around the city.

“Am I wrong,” he asked.

“No, but it’s a strip club. How much trouble could I get into? It’s not like I plan on joining the girls and taking my clothes off?” Bouncer man didn’t even smirk at my comment.

“You could if you wanted to,” he said, and his lip finally turned up. “It’s not my call. I don’t make the orders. I follow them.”

“What if I needed to go pee?” He crossed his arms, mimicking my pose, and I saw a flash of a gun under his jacket.

“That would be unfortunate for you,” he said but pointed toward the bushes. “You could go over there, but watch out for anything that bites.”

Mumbling profanities, I turned to walk away. “You’re getting a bad review from me,” I said but parked myself on the bench in a posh smoking section.

For an exotic club, this place was fancy. The building was white and could pass for a villa if it wasn’t for the roadside sign with the name of the club in neon gold and black. No car in the lot was under a hundred thousand, white lights lit all the palm trees surrounding the property, and music played outside. Looking up at the sky filled with an infinite number of glittering stars, I sucked in a deep breath. The last lingering effects of my hangover decided to remind me that I wasn’t yet a hundred percent as a sharp stabbing pain hit, making me wince. I was definitely not getting drunk again for a long ass time.

What the hell was I doing here? I could already predict how this conversation was going to go, yet I still felt like I needed to ask the questions. Why was I like this? Why couldn’t I let anything go and stop digging until I found the truth or got kicked in the teeth?

A limo pulled into the parking lot and stopped at the entrance. The guard, who couldn’t be bothered giving me the time of day, ran for the back door and opened it. I assumed this would be Nathan, but instead, a man who looked to be in his fifties or sixties got out. I knew who he was immediately. Mr.

Demetri Mikhailov, the man I thought I was meeting earlier when it turned out to be Nathan.

He glanced my way, and I could see the family resemblance immediately. How I didn't recognize it earlier could only be blamed on the alcohol. They were so similar. A woman far too young to be Nathan's mother got out and hooked her arm into his before they walked inside the building, and the car pulled away.

I glanced at my phone. Nathan was fifteen minutes late. Was he standing me up? The roar of a sports car zooming into the driveway was next. The shiny black paint job reflected like glass even in the poor light. I loved cars, and the Aston Martin DBII was one of my favorites. I was too busy drooling over the ride to notice Nathan get out of the driver's side until he opened the passenger door. An elegant brunette got out and smiled up at him.

Jealousy filled me, and I was on my feet with an all-consuming rage. I wasn't expecting these emotions and immediately looked down and counted to five to get control before daring to look up at Nathan again.

His dark and intense eyes bore holes into my soul, and my heart pounded harder. I wasn't letting this weird reaction hold me back from why I was really here, and that was to get answers.

I walked toward him and his date or girlfriend. Hell, it could be his wife for all I knew. Great, I potentially slept with a married man. My life was one big ass train wreck.

"Savannah, I see you made it," Nathan said, and it was easy to detect the hint of disappointment.

"I was on time, unlike you," I said, holding my chin high. "Maybe you need a new watch to go with your fancy car."

"Who is this," the brunette asked as she looked me up and down. I didn't play that game and stared back at her, keeping my face passive and uncaring.

"Olivia, this is Savannah. She'll be interviewing me this evening," Nathan said, and Olivia's eyes went wide.

“Does that mean I’m going to be in a magazine? Oh, how exciting.” I narrowed my eyes at her. “I better go freshen up. Are we doing it inside or out?” She squealed and my head throbbed.

“I planned on doing you in both places, but the interview will be inside,” Nathan said, and I wanted to vomit all over again.

Olivia continued to squeal excitedly and pulled out her phone. “I need to make a quick call, be right back Babes.” She winked and I rolled my eyes.

I turned to stare at Nathan.

“So, you aren’t telling her it’s not for a magazine?”

He smiled. “This is more entertaining.”

“I’m sure it is,” I said, my voice dripping with sarcasm. Why I was angry for her when she clearly hated me on status alone was beyond my comprehension, but it seemed everything he did rubbed me the wrong way. Or maybe the right way and, therefore, the wrong way. That was a conversation for my therapist.

Nathan took a step in my direction, and every inch closer he came correlated to the temperature in my body. “See, if I didn’t know better, I’d say you were jealous again. But you wouldn’t be jealous, right? You don’t get jealous. You’re an FBI agent trained to be unaffected, unemotional, and cold as ice.”

Whether he intended it to hurt or not, the last part about ice did. Shawn said that when I spoke to him about getting his shit out of the house. He said I was cold and uncaring, and he didn’t know why he proposed. I knew I shouldn’t let him or his words get to me, but they continued to float around in my brain.

“I’m not playing this game again with you,” I said.

“So, what you’re saying is that you don’t mind that I brought a date?” He looked way too good and smelled fucking fabulous. The suit he wore reminded me of exactly how he looked under it and how he kissed me earlier.

What I wanted to say was, *Yes, it is a fucking problem that she is here*, but I couldn't say that. Even if I did admit that I was attracted to Nathan, he lived in a world that I couldn't. If he was a bird, then I was a fish that lived in the ocean.

"No, why would I care? Are we going inside, or should I start asking right here?"

Nathan straightened and sucked in a deep breath, and just like that, he managed to look taller and more intimidating. "We'll go inside and get started. I have another meeting tonight."

"Is it with your father?" Nathan's brow rose a moment before he glared at me. It felt good to know something he didn't for a change.

"How do you know that," he asked, his hands flexing. I licked my lips and tried to get my brain back on track before it squirreled off to dream of incredible sex and leather belts in his hand. I looked toward the front of the club as I forced myself to dismiss the magnetic pull between us.

"He already arrived. A few minutes before you did," I said as we waited for Olivia to finish her call.

I dared to look up at him. His jaw was twitching, and the change in his attitude was palpable. There was tension in the Mikhailov family, but the question was why.

"My father is here. Was he alone?"

That seemed like an odd question, but I answered because it didn't affect me. "No, he had a girl with him. She barely looked legal."

Nathan's face darkened like the sky filling up with storm clouds. Very interesting. Olivia was back before I could ask why he was angry.

"Let's go in. I want to get this done and over with." Nathan marched away, dragging Olivia along behind him. He had no redeeming features. So why did he interest me? Was my shit guy meter so broken that it was pointing me to the next worst possible man available?

Then again, he called a personal doctor, went to the hospital with me, and made sure I was cared for before he left. I'd also done some research while I was lying around and found that Nathan had his hand in many things, including charitable organizations. I hoped it was out of the goodness of his heart and not to create a cover for something more nefarious.

The bouncer opened the door for us as we got close, and as soon as I stepped inside, the heat and music transported me to a new world. Sheers flowed along the walls, and half-naked men in leather held out trays of food and drinks. I waved them off as I followed along, feeling like a dog at his heels. A strong urge had me wanting to push Olivia aside and take his arm instead, but that was never going to happen. I hated that my libido and emotions were giving me these ridiculous ideas.

I needed to get over whatever the hell this was. He'd been like a virus, slowly taking over since last night. I wasn't adding falling for a mafia Don's son to the list of mistakes in my life.

Large pillars with white sheers created a wall in front of us, but as we pushed through, I understood the entire theme. It was dark, mysterious, sexy, and very posh. It was Nathan.

This was not your average strip club. Marble lined the floors, and tall white pillars stood floor to ceiling, creating a circle like a Roman colosseum. Between each pillar, a girl danced while suspended in the air from colorful material. I'd seen ribbon work before, but not like this and not naked. Each table was a booth that provided privacy and yet a perfect view of the dancers. The center of the floor had four men dressed like they'd stepped right out of *Gladiator*, fighting with swords. Their yells and clangs of metal were loud enough to hear over the music. I couldn't stop staring. Aside from the fact that I'd never been a strip club girl, this place was incredible.

Waitresses walked past and nodded to Nathan but didn't flirt or bat their eyes, which I wasn't expecting. I would've thought for sure they would be panting at his feet and hanging onto his legs.

Nathan stopped walking, and I came an inch from slamming into the side of his body. His eyes flicked down to me, a little smirk playing on his lips.

“Sir, would you like a drink?” One of the waitresses stopped and offered. He shook his head, no, and she turned to leave, but Olivia grabbed her arm.

“Hey, what about me?”

Nathan snatched her wrist, and she immediately let go of the server. “Don’t ever lay a hand on my staff, or you will be thrown out on your ass,” he snarled, surprising me further.

Nathan Mikhailov was a contradiction to everything I thought he would be, except for his domineering personality.

The server turned and offered Olivia a drink, but she waved her glittering nails at the tray. “No thanks, I don’t want one now.”

“I’ll have one, thank you,” I said, grabbing a drink even though I had no intention of taking a sip. I hated people who tried to humiliate others. Olivia glared at me while the server handed me a napkin and walked away.

“Oh! Kylie is here. I’m going to go join her,” Olivia said and ran off.

“I’m shocked.”

“About?”

“This is not what I was expecting.”

We walked past two guards standing at the bottom of stairs that led up to a posh VIP section with large couches and a private bar. Nathan held out his hand to one of the couches, and I paused, looking at the leather. “Do I want to know how many people you’ve had sex with on this thing? Am I going to have to sterilize myself when I stand up?”

Nathan smirked and leaned close to my ear. “I never mix my personal life and business.”

“So you never taste the....” I looked at a naked woman with a tray on her shoulder as she walked past. “Wares of your

place?”

“I live by the motto that you should never dip your cock where you do business. Besides...I’ve recently developed a taste for smartass federal agents.” His breath fanned my ear, and I suddenly wanted to strip naked. “I’ll happily take you to a back room, but never on the couch. No one gets to see you naked but me.”

Holy hell, this man was more than I bargained for, and if I had any sense, I would leave town and never come back.

CHAPTER

SEVEN

NATHANIEL

It was subtle, but I could feel the shift in Savannah like she was the evening tide. She was trying very hard not to be affected by me. She didn't even bat an eyelash at my comment. Her issue was that her pulse and skin gave her away, and I was very attuned to both.

“What do you say, Savannah? How about I take you to the office instead of doing this questioning dance?” She tilted her head slightly toward me, her lips so close for the taking. “Just say the word.”

“I'd rather chew on glass than sleep with you again. Can we get this done and over with so I can go home,” she said, her eyes snapping with a fire that seemed to burn in her all the time.

“Suit yourself,” I said, noticing the pulse in her neck and how she swallowed as I moved away. “Take a seat.” She watched me out of the corner of her eye as she sat down. Getting close enough to make her uncomfortable, I took the seat next to her. I wasn't disappointed when she sat up straight, her pen poised in the air like she forgot what she was doing with it.

“Go ahead and ask your questions?”

“Do you have to sit so close?” She glared at me, and I had no idea why this was so entertaining, but I enjoyed pushing her buttons.

Making a show of looking around at the other couches, I shrugged. “I don't have to, but it will make it harder for us to hear one another. This saves time.”

“Yes, I’m sure that is the reason.”

“Believe what you want.” I held up my hands.

She mumbled something and took a deep breath. I’d seen her do it a few times now. She used it as a calming technique, but I was going to have her hyperventilating if she kept that up.

“You said that you would answer all my questions truthfully?”

“I did.” I reached over and laid my hand on hers to lower the pen. “Off the record.” She put her pen and notepad away. “And give me your phone.”

“What?”

“I wasn’t born yesterday, Savannah. Hand it over, or you get nothing.” I held out my hand and could see her jaw working. Would she try and take a bite if I put it near her mouth?

“Fine.” Digging around in her pocket, she pulled out her phone and placed it in my hand. I snapped my fingers in the air and held the phone up. “What are you doing?”

Goran walked over, and I handed him the phone, but I kept my eyes locked on Savannah.

“Make sure there are no listening devices on this, and then do a building sweep.”

“Yes, Sir.”

“You think I managed to sneak a bug in?”

I twirled a piece of her wavy hair in my finger, and she pulled her head away. “Don’t flatter yourself. We do it every hour.”

“Can you keep your hands to yourself?”

“I could, but you don’t really want me to.” Snatching her chin, I wiped my thumb at the corner of her mouth. “Your drool is far too obvious.”

She pushed herself out of the seat, but I was quicker and pulled her down onto my lap before she got up. I was the one sucking in a deep breath as her adorable ass landed right on my cock. It was well on its way to being hard with her so close and that did the trick.

“What the hell Grig...Nathaniel, Mr. Mikhailov, or whatever you want to be called?” She growled and tried to wiggle free, which felt fucking amazing. I held her firm, so she either had to give up or start a real fight. I could tell she was contemplating it, but there were also a couple dozen armed guards. There was no doubt in my mind that she had already sized up her chances of getting out alive if she tried it, and they were not very good.

Olivia chose that moment to come into the VIP section. “What the fuck, Nathan?” She crossed her arms as she glared at me.

Savannah tried to get up again, but I wasn't letting her jump away so easily. Every logical cell in my body told me to fucking let her go and slam the door behind her, but the other side...well, the other side had different plans, and at the moment, that was the side winning out.

“Do you have a problem, Olivia?”

“What is she doing on your lap?” Olivia held her hand out toward Savannah, and I wanted to break her wrist for almost touching her.

“I would say she is sitting as we have a conversation about me taking her to the office.” Savannah's mouth dropped open at the same time Olivia's fell.

“You can't be serious,” she said, giving Savannah a disgusted look. “With her?” I kept my face neutral as Savannah rose to the challenge and wrapped her arm around my neck. I was a fucking prick, but I loved it.

“What exactly is wrong with me?”

“Please, it's obvious you don't fit in, and Nathan is just being nice,” Olivia said. I'd never heard anything so ridiculous. I didn't do nice.

“Oh, that’s funny. That’s not what he said to me last night,” she said, and I couldn’t keep the smirk off my face as I slid my hand up her leg.

Olivia looked at me, and I shrugged. “She’s telling the truth.”

With a huff and a flourish, Olivia stomped away, and Savannah turned her glare on me. “Don’t think I don’t know what you’re doing?”

“What exactly am I being blamed for now?” Wrapping my hand around the back of her neck, I rubbed at the fresh makeup she’d applied to my hickey.

“You’re trying to make her jealous.”

I snorted and shook my head. “Not even close. I could care less what she thinks or wants.”

“So, she’s not your girlfriend?”

I stopped rubbing when all the makeup was gone, and I could clearly see my mark once more. “I don’t do girlfriends. She is an occasional, half-decent time. What she would like to be is inconsequential.” I grabbed and pulled the large clip holding her hair up, and the reddish waves of soft hair fell around her face. “You are stunning, Kisa.”

“Please don’t call me nicknames, and I’d like to get off your lap now,” she said, but I shook my head.

“My place and my rules. Remember?”

“Just tell me, did you kill my brother?”

She resisted some but caved and leaned into me as I pulled her closer and buried my nose in her hair before running it up the side of her neck. Fuck, she smelled fresh and sweet with a hint of sin.

“That’s the wrong question, but I’ll answer it. No, I didn’t kill your brother,” I said, nipping at her soft skin and growling as she moaned.

It wasn’t a lie. I’d tortured the fuck out of Alex, and he was currently cowering in a cell, ready for my entertainment

from time to time, but he wasn't dead. Savannah's body softened into me just a tiny bit, but it was enough to let me know I was breaking down her walls.

A flash of blonde hair bobbing around caught my eye, and I turned my head to track the erratic movement.

I could feel Savannah's eyes on my face, and she followed my line of sight. The blonde was jumping around and whipping her hair in circles like she was at a heavy metal concert. I'd never seen her here before, and I didn't like how she was disrupting the show like she was trying to take center stage.

"That's who came with your father," Savannah said just as the blonde moved out of the way and revealed the man himself. He was sitting in one of the large chairs near the floor like he was a fucking king while the girl danced and rubbed on his lap as she performed her little show.

Standing, I placed Savannah on her feet. This was not fucking happening in my club.

"Are you okay?" She put her hand on my arm, and it was only then that I realized I was shaking. I was shocked that she was brave enough to touch me while I was this enraged. I locked eyes with hers and could see an understanding in them, compassion even. That would get her killed in my world. Just another reason to keep her firmly out of it.

"I need to take care of something. I'll be back," I said.

My father could fuck around all he wanted, and I couldn't stop him. But he was not bringing his trash into my club. His cheating was bad enough, but over my dead body, did he disrespect my mother like this in public.

My father locked eyes with me as I marched toward him, his arrogant mask in place until I pulled my gun.



SAVANNAH

Watching Nathan storm off was like seeing a bear on the attack. I could feel his anger and glimpsed the hurt in his eyes, but for whom I didn't know. Was the blonde an ex of his? I wasn't sure, but whatever had set him off about his father and the girl, someone was going to die.

I went to grab my gun and realized that I didn't have it. Matthews had taken it from me when he put me on leave. Shit. I stepped toward the stairs, and two large guards who looked like they ate rocks for a living stepped in my way.

"Mr. Mikhailov would like you to stay here," the one said. But I never saw Nathan say a word.

I could still see him from between their bodies as he drew closer to his father. Shit was going to get a whole lot worse as he lifted his suit jacket and pulled a gun.

"Holy shit."

I ran back up the stairs and stood watching, heart pounding as Nathan came to a halt in front of his father. Words were exchanged, and I almost jumped off the VIP platform and made a run for him as he lifted the gun and placed it against the young blonde woman's head.

The smile that had been in place a moment ago fell, and her eyes went wide. Nathan never even looked at her as he spoke to his father. I needed to stop this.

"I wouldn't interfere if I were you."

I spun around, and the man standing by the couch had to be family. A black suit, tattooed hands, and large rings could've placed him as a guard, but he looked exactly like a slightly older, and larger version of Nathan with amber eyes.

As he walked closer, I took a step back as two massive black dogs with piercing blue eyes stepped in front of him.

"Daisy, Bella, heel," the dogs dropped down, their heads larger than mine, on their paws. "Don't mind my girls. They're

very protective, but unless you make a threatening move, they won't hurt you."

"Great, good to know." I looked over my shoulder as Nathan's elevated voice could be heard over the music.

"Get. Out. Now," he yelled, and the blonde leaped like a rabbit and ran for the door.

"What is that all about," I asked as the man I didn't know stepped up beside me.

"That is what you call family drama." He turned to face me and held out his hand. "I'm Titus Mikhailov, Nathan's older brother, one of us anyway."

I shook his hand. "Nice to meet you."

"So, you're the FBI agent looking into our family," he said, turning his eyes back to the drama building out on the floor as Mr. Mikhailov stood and stared down his son.

Titus didn't sound angry or annoyed like Nathan. He seemed very relaxed and calm, which made me wonder even more if I had been wrong all along. I hadn't picked up on Nathan lying about killing Alex, and Titus was way too chill. Or was he? I didn't know anymore. My wires were all twisted and shorting out from being around this family and the strange feelings that simmered when Nathan was near me.

"Yes, I'm Savannah," I said and watched as Nathan put his gun away and stomped back, not looking any calmer.

I could feel his energy invading the VIP area as he got closer, and my heart hammered faster. A mix of excitement and fear swirled around in my stomach, and as soon as he rounded the corner and his eyes found mine, my heart stopped altogether. I didn't know what the fuck was wrong with me, but he was testing my morals, ethics, and boundaries more in the last forty-eight hours than anyone else had my entire life.

"Titus, what are you doing here," Nathan asked.

"I'm here for the family meeting, and you should know that father is never going to change."

“Fucking prick,” Nathan growled, and the two dogs lifted their heads and twisted them like he was speaking their language. He walked closer, and my breath caught in my chest with every footfall. When he wrapped his arm around my waist, all logical thought disappeared. “I’m going to kill him one of these days. If he does that shit again, I swear.”

Titus looked at me and then at Nathan as if to say, ‘Yo stupid, you’re promising to kill someone in front of an agent.’ He wasn’t wrong, and yet I was more curious as to why he wanted to kill his father over the girl. That was not a good sign for my moral compass.

“Can I ask why you’re so angry?”

Both men looked at me, and I needed to see the entire family photo. Were they all this sexy? Say what you want about Mr. Mikhailov, he had great genes.

“It’s family business, but if you stick around long enough, you’ll find out why,” Nathan said and smirked. It felt like he was daring me to try and leave. “I’m sorry that I need to cut our meeting short, but the other meeting I mentioned is about to start. Do you want to stay and watch the show, or would you like one of my guards to take you back to your hotel? I’ll be tied up for the rest of the night.” His hand tightened on my hip. “Although, I’d prefer to be tied up by you.”

I shook my head and tried to step away before I yelled, ‘That’s a fucking great idea,’ but just like when I was on his lap, he wouldn’t let me move away. His eyes hardened as I tried.

“I didn’t get to ask all my questions.”

“I guess that means you’ll just have to hunt me down another day,” he said as his eyebrow lifted. My teeth ground together. The last thing I wanted was to spend more time with Nathan. My inner voice called me a liar, but I wasn’t talking to that bitch.

“I guess my hotel,” I said. The idea of sitting here the rest of the night was not appealing in any way.

“Very well.” Nathan lifted his hand, and the same guard as earlier walked over and held out my cell phone that I’d completely forgotten about. Nathan took it from the guard’s hand and waited until he shook his head no before handing it over.

“Goran, see to it that Ms. Freeborn is returned to her hotel safely.”

“Yes, Sir.”

I sucked in a deep breath as he leaned close to my ear. “Until next time, Kisa,” he whispered and brushed his lips across my cheek before walking away with Titus and my scampering heart. What the fuck was going on with me?

“This way, Ms. Freeborn,” Goran said, and I followed him but couldn’t help watching where Nathan went.

A hand gripped my arm, jerking me out of my dreamy thoughts of Nathan. I looked up to stare into the eyes of Mr. Mikhailov, the head of the family.

“Stay away from my son, or I will have your job, and you’ll never work anywhere again.” His blue eyes were hard and cold, his voice thick with a Russian accent, unlike his sons. He had a commanding aura, and it was obvious he was used to being obeyed. Which rubbed me the wrong fucking way. I didn’t flinch or back down as I stared into his eyes.

“And if that is not enough, then maybe you should think about all those that you love in your life. It would be unfortunate for them to have an accident.” I may have believed Nathan when he said he didn’t kill Alex, but that didn’t exclude family. “Have nothing to say?”

“No,” I said.

He let go and walked away. I’d been ready to leave town and never come back, but now...now, I was more determined than ever to find out what really happened.

CHAPTER

EIGHT

NATHANIEL

“Why the fuck is she still breathing,” Father ranted as I stepped onto the truck dock to join him and my brothers. Arm raised, I spun around to knock my father to the floor and fuck whatever consequences came my way. No one threatened Savannah like that. I decided if she was going to die, not him. Ronan grabbed my arm before I could strike my blow.

“Easy, Bro, it’s a valid question.”

I yanked my arm away from my oldest brother and glared at him. “No, what is a valid question is why Father decided to disrespect our mother and our entire family by bringing a child to my club.” I stepped away from my father, so I wasn’t more tempted than I already was to spill his blood.

“She is seventeen, far from a child. I had your mother pregnant at seventeen,” Father said and waved his hand in annoyance.

“Father, you’re not helping,” Ronan barked out, and my father rolled his eyes like we were both idiots.

“I am still the head of this family, which makes everything you do mine, Nathaniel. And what I do in my personal time for pleasure is not for you to judge or govern.”

Clenching my fists, I stepped around Ronan, but he grabbed me before I could get any closer. “Do it again and find out what happens. I’m not playing this game with you.”

“What game is that, Nathaniel?” It was a good thing I couldn’t get to my gun. I hadn’t realized how deep the anger

and hatred had burrowed itself into my soul until he came back to town. Six months away had given me space and time to forget. My mother had been happy, singing and baking and working in the garden, but now she hid in her room and was always sad. Seeing the fucker's face every day and the tears in my mother's eyes was tearing me up inside.

Don't get married if you don't plan on being faithful.

Fuck around all you want until then, but my word was ironclad, and I would never take a woman's hand unless I planned on making her my life.

"You don't want Mom anymore, fine. Cut her loose so she can find someone who treats her the way she deserves. You constantly breaking her heart is slowly killing her, and I'm done watching it."

He smiled and gave me a once over before he punched me across the face, the rings cutting my cheek open, but I didn't budge from the hard blow. Two years ago, that strike would've landed me on my ass, not anymore. I touched the blood and glared at my father as I licked the red off my finger.

"You better watch your back, old man. You've been gone a long time, and there is a new order of things around here."

"Sledi za svaim rtom," Father growled. "Da shto ty a sebe vazamnil?"

"I don't need to watch my mouth, Father. I speak the truth," I said, leaning into his face despite Ronan's grip.

"You would be wise to remember who still controls the reins of this family. I brought you into this world, and I can take you out."

"I'd like to see you try."

"Dastatchna!" Titus stepped in between us. Daisy growled at my father while Bella stood in front of me. "We are still family!" This man wasn't my family. He was hardly around, and when he was, he caused havoc and heartache. That wasn't family, that was the enemy.

“Father, what happens between you and Mother and how you choose to live your lives is not our business, but Nathan is right. It’s disrespectful to the whole family to waltz a mistress out in public like that, especially one so young. Other families, especially those looking for a weakness, will talk, and we don’t need that attention.” Titus looked at me. “Nathan, tell Father what he wants to know about the agent.”

Fucking Titus was always acting as the referee. “Fuck you, and fuck the meeting. You three can take care of this. I’m out of here.” I pulled away from Ronan again and marched out. “And if you can’t figure out why killing an FBI agent isn’t a smart idea, then you don’t deserve to be head of the family anymore,” I said, looking over my shoulder at my father. “I’ll be in my office.”

Fuming, I marched along the maze of hallways and rooms until I reached my office. Olivia was standing outside and smiled when she saw me.

“I thought you might have left without me,” she pouted as I opened the door and walked inside. She perched herself on my desk as I sat down like she was a hood ornament on a car. I hated it. I didn’t give her permission to come in let alone touch my things with such ownership.

“I had business to take care of,” I said. “Was there something you wanted?”

Biting her lip, she slid across the desk until she was directly in front of me and spread her legs. Sliding my hand up her legs, I found that she wasn’t wearing any underwear, which would typically please me, but tonight, it didn’t do a thing.

Olivia grabbed my hand and shoved it between her legs. “See, I’m all wet for you. This is much better than that stuck-up bitch you had on your lap earlier.”

Jerking my arm back, I stood and backhanded her so hard that she fell to the floor. Taking a step around the desk, I glared down at Olivia as she held the side of her face, her eyes wide with fear. I wiped my hand off on her dress.

“Don’t ever fucking do that again, and don’t ever speak of Savannah like that again. You’re lucky I’m in a generous mood, or I would cut your fucking tongue right out of your head. Do not forget who you’re speaking to.” Pushing myself up, she crawled away from me as I squirted sanitizer in my hands. “Ivan!”

The guard down the hall walked in a second later and glanced at Olivia peeling herself off the floor.

“Take this trash outside and make sure that she never comes back here.”

“No, please don’t hurt me, please...I’m sorry,” Olivia wailed as Ivan tossed her up on his shoulder and walked out.

“Fuck this.” Grabbing my long coat, I pulled it on as I marched for the exit.

“Where the hell are you going,” Ronan asked as he came out the door that lead to the dock area.

“Out.”

“Fucker,” he mumbled, making me grin. Getting under Ronan’s skin was almost as enjoyable as pissing my father off.

As soon as the valet saw me, the attendant ran to get my car. Goran was walking along the sidewalk, smoking a cigarette.

“Hey, Goran.”

“Sorry, Sir,” he said, putting the cigarette out and jogging over.

“You didn’t have to do that.”

“Yeah, I did. Here at work, you’re my boss and not my friend. I like to keep that line in place.”

I nodded. “See, this is why I love you, man. Did you get Savannah back to the hotel?”

“Yeah, she made me do drive-thru for food, but I watched her walk inside before I drove away.”

“Good man,” I said as the valet pulled up with my car.

“You coming back tonight?”

I glanced up at the building that I'd built from the ground up despite what my father said. I was proud of all my clubs. Each had a theme and provided an exciting adventure for my customers, and made us millions of honest money.

“Naw, not tonight, and if anyone asks, tell them I'm doing rounds and had a meeting.” I slipped into the vehicle and flew out of the parking lot.

There was only one place I desired to be right now, buried between Savannah's legs. Whether she wanted me to or not, I was paying her a visit.

CHAPTER

NINE

SAVANNAH

The water beat down on my back as my mind wandered to thoughts of unbelievable abs, eyes like onyx stones, and a cock that was mouthwatering. One stupid night was all it took, and now I couldn't get him out of my mind or stop my body from feeling his touch.

Why the hell was love and life always so difficult to understand and navigate? From what to wear in the morning to my job, social life, family, and dating, nothing was easy. Turning off the taps, I stepped out of the shower and twirled my hair up into a towel, then grabbed a second piece of bleached cardboard and wrapped it around my body.

I walked out into the room as my door clicked. Shocked, I looked up as Nathan waltzed in and my stomach flipped as fear gripped me. He looked as incredible as when I left him at the club, but the long coat he'd added made him look like an assassin right out of a mobster movie. Was Nathan here to kill me? His eyes were intense as they traveled up and down my body. It was like he was scorching my skin.

"What the hell are you doing?" I held the towel tighter. "How did you even get in here?" He held up a key between his fingers.

He didn't say anything as he let the door close behind him. I was officially trapped in the room with a man who I was certain had killed dozens, even if my brother wasn't one of them, and all I had was a towel for a weapon.

He growled as he walked toward me, and I took a fighting position, forgetting about the towel and letting it fall.

“Oh, fuck. I’ll spar with you naked anytime, Kisa.”

“What the hell do you want, Nathan?”

“What do you think I want?” He shrugged out of the coat as he walked toward me. I backed up to keep space between us, but he never slowed his stride, and soon, I had nowhere to go but to stand my ground and fight.

“I don’t know. You look like you’re here to kill me.”

Nathan pulled his gun, and my heart pounded harder as I ran through all the possible ways to get out of this alive. But then he flicked the safety on and set the gun down on the table before tossing his coat on top of it.

He looked at my hard nipples and then further down my body. Even though I knew he’d seen me naked already, the self-consciousness I’d been battling for some time crept into my system. His stare felt like an evaluation.

“Take the towel off your head,” he said. I hesitated but pulled it off and went to wrap it around my body, but he grabbed my wrists and held my arms open, keeping me from closing the towel. “Fuck, I want you. What is it with you, Savannah? I don’t lose control ever, but wanting you...to be in you...to touch you...I can’t resist.”

Every word went straight between my legs and had my heart fluttering faster. Keeping my arms out, he stepped in closer, and I could feel the heat radiating off his body. This couldn’t happen. I was already struggling to push him out of my mind without going another round in bed with him.

“Nathan, we can’t do this again,” I said, my voice breathy as he pressed his body against mine.

“Says who?”

“My work for one, my ethics second, and your father is number three.”

I’d never seen darkness slide over someone’s features so quickly. “What does my father have to do with any of this?” His tone was lethal, and his hands tightened on my wrists.

“When I was leaving, he told me to stay away from you,” I said, and the sound that Nathan made was truly terrifying. With a thud, he pushed me up against the wall, and my body responded to his touch even though I tried to resist.

“No one tells you who you can be near but me.”

I couldn't tell if he was serious. He looked serious, and his words lit up my body like he was serious, but we weren't dating, and I was leaving soon. Opening my mouth to tell him exactly what I thought of his proclamation, he took advantage and dropped his mouth to mine.

The moan and shudder that traveled through my body was unstoppable as our lips touched. Raw need coursed through my veins as my nipples rubbed against Nathan's soft shirt, and his tongue teased mine as he kissed me.

“Oh fuck, Nathan...” His lips were relentless even when he broke away to leave a trail of kisses along my neck. “Please, we can't.”

“We can, and we are,” he commanded, and my legs shook. My brain said this was ludicrous, but my body was the one in control, and it craved everything he was doing and more.

“Mmmm, I do like this mark I made,” he said, and I knew he was going to make it darker as his tongue swirled over the purplish spot. I licked my lips, trying to get my voice to work past the constriction of my sandpaper throat, but part of me loved that he had marked me as his, and I hesitated a little too long. His lips latched onto the side of my neck, sucking hard. My body turned to jelly, and I wanted to puddle at his feet by the time he released my neck.

Nathan tapped the gold locket that I never took off and forgot it was there most of the time because it had become part of me.

“Do I want to know who is in the locket?” I glanced down as his finger lifted the gold piece. “It's not a lover, is it?” I shook my head no. “If it is, I will have to kill him,” he said and smirked, and I wasn't sure if he was joking or not. It was so hard to tell.

“No, it’s not a lover.” I tugged the chain out of his grasp. “But it is private.”

“I’ll let it go for now. We are all entitled to our secrets,” Nathan said, sucking my bottom lip into his mouth. “Do you still want me to go?” Yes, I yelled in my head, but no words would form. He rubbed himself against me, and I moaned, knowing precisely what was behind the fly of his pants. “Say it, Savannah, say you want me to stay.”

Whatta man, whatta man, whatta man, suddenly blared in the room, and we both looked over at the nightstand. *Whatta mighty good man!* The En Vogue and Salt-N-Pepa ringtone finished and started over. Nathan let go of me and marched for the phone.

Oh no. I leaped onto the bed to get to it first, but Nathan swiped it just before I could reach it. All communication with Shawn had been text since our breakup, so I’d forgotten to change his ringtone. The look Nathan gave me as he stared at the smiling image of Shawn and me together during a much happier time made him snarl like an animal. It was fucking hot, and under any other circumstance, I would’ve been all for it.

“Nathan, don’t,” I said, but it did no good. I watched in horror as he pressed talk and put the phone to his ear. I slipped off the bed and gripped his shirt. “Please don’t make this worse for me.”

“Hello? Savannah, are you there?” I could easily hear Shawn, and then Nathan smirked at me. It was his ‘Fuck you, I’m doing whatever the hell I want’ look. I’d known the man all of two days and knew he would.

He breathed heavily into the phone, and my mouth dropped open, something that had been happening a lot near him.

“Um...hello? Savannah, is that you? I know it’s late, but I need to speak to you.” Nathan groaned this time, and I covered my face. I didn’t know whether to laugh or cry at this point. Nathan put his finger under my chin and forced me to look up.

I let my hands fall and locked eyes with the most annoying and sexy as fuck man I'd ever met.

“Anna, Sweetie? Look, if you don't want to talk, that's fine. I'll do the talking. I'm sorry about Jess and what I said about you being cold and not wanting kids with you. I don't want to fight. Just come home, and we'll sort this out. I still love you.”

My stomach flipped, and tears stung the back of my eyes as my personal life was blurted out like that for Nathan to hear. I was extremely private and kept everything bottled up tight. The man standing in front of me wasn't even a friend let alone someone to share my deepest pain.

Nathan's eyes held mine, waiting for my reaction to that statement. I shook my head as a tear slipped free. I didn't think his intense gaze could be any more consuming, but I was wrong. I shivered and wanted to grab clothes so badly, but I stood motionless and stared into his eyes.

“Savannah is tied up at the moment,” Nathan said. He pulled the phone away from his ear and hit speaker. I could hear Shawn breathing on the other end of the line, but he didn't say anything for so long you would've thought he hung up.

“Who the fuck is this,” Shawn finally asked. I'd never heard him so mad, and it felt really fucking good that the shoe was on the other foot. Call me a Petty Betty, but I was going to enjoy this moment now that it had started.

“This is your replacement, your much better replacement,” Nathan said, and he continued to unbutton his shirt.

“What the fuck? Is this a joke?”

“No, why would it be a joke?” Nathan tossed his shirt across the room, and it landed on the chair. He then kicked off his shoes before his hand dropped to his belt. Up close, I could see the detail in the dark tattoos that covered his muscled shoulders. I couldn't get enough of him. The heat that had filled me the moment he walked through the door went wild as

he pulled the belt free with a crack that made me flinch and my pussy clench. Fuck me.

“This is bullshit. Where is Anna?”

“First off, her name is Savannah. Don’t fucking call her pet names. You lost that right when you got your dick wet in another woman. Second, Savannah is busy riding my cock right now. Did you want to leave a message?” Nathan groaned again. “Yeah, that’s it, right there, baby girl. Fuck, you’re tight,” he said, his lips turning up in a wicked grin.

I bit my lip and wanted to fan myself or open a damn window. The man was making me pant. The confusion in Shawn’s voice was epic as he stuttered over his words. I couldn’t have paid for a better piece of payback.

“Are you fucking kidding me?” Shawn sounded like the asshole I knew he could be, the condescending prick that no one else saw but me.

Nathan sat down on the bed and started bouncing, the springs softly squeaking. “Nope...ah fuck yes...no, definitely not kidding. This is what happens when you act like a little bitch. You lose the best thing in your life to someone like me. Someone who appreciates her and this tight pussy.”

“You fucking asshole, I’ll ruin you,” Shawn growled. “I’m going to get her fired. One call to her boss saying how unstable she’s become, and she will lose the only thing she actually loves.”

My stomach dropped. I was on thin ice with Matthews, and if Shawn called and spewed a bunch of lies, I was fucked. I would eventually be able to disprove it, but how long until I got my clearance back? He was such a dick. What did I see in him?

Nathan laughed, the sound sending a ripple of fear down my spine. The evil glare he gave the phone told me he was contemplating all the ways to torture and bury Shawn’s body.

“That’s the funniest thing I’ve heard all day.” Nathan’s voice dropped low and threatening. “If you do that, Shawn... well, let’s just say, be watching over your shoulder. You never

know when someone will get hit by a car, trip downstairs, go swimming and drown, or get killed in a mugging these days. It would be a shame for you if that happened. Be careful how cocky you are. You have no idea who I am or what I'm capable of. Don't call, text, or send a fucking carrier pigeon to Savannah ever again, or I can promise that you will deal with me. This is your only warning."

Nathan hit end, and I couldn't help smiling as he tossed my phone on the nightstand. "That was...shit...that was incredible. Thank you," I said, touching his cheek as I inspected the fresh cut that hadn't been there earlier. "Who hit you?"

"You don't need to thank me, and that's not important." Grabbing my waist, he pulled me to stand between his legs. I stared down into his eyes, not sure what to make of this man.

"You need to block him. He is stupid enough to try again. I know his type and off the record..." He smirked. "I will kill him, so let's consider it a condom for the stupid."

I straddled his lap and kissed him hard, trying to convey how appreciative I was for him dealing with Shawn. I knew the day was coming that he would reach out, but I hadn't been ready to deal with him and the drama swirling around us right now. Nor did I want to have the we are through for good conversation where he tried to guilt me and played on all my insecurities one last time. Besides, the little taste of his own medicine filled me with an evil joy.

Breaking the kiss, I grabbed my phone and showed Nathan as I blocked Shawn before putting it down again. He pulled my ass closer to his body, and it was easy to feel his hard cock through his pants. I wiggled on the bulge, wrapping my arms around his neck.

"Does this mean you want me to stay?" He squeezed my ass, and I moaned.

"For tonight, I'm not a federal agent," I said.

"Then, for tonight, I'm not the son of a mafia Don."

“Then I guess we are just a man and a woman enjoying one another’s company. Yes, stay,” I whispered and then yelped as he flipped us over onto the bed, his body pressing into mine.

“Everything I said was true, you know,” Nathan said and then kissed my cheek.

“About?”

“How he lost the best thing in his life. I saw the pain in your eyes. Don’t let him have that power over you. He’s not worth it.” I searched his face, and every conflicting emotion battled inside me. Choosing to try and understand this man, I cupped his cheek and laid a soft kiss on his lips. For just a flash, there was a softer look in Nathan’s dark eyes.

“I’m going to do what I didn’t get to last time. Be prepared to scream for me,” he smirked and licked a wet line down the front of my body to my nipple.

Arching up into his mouth, I gripped his hair and let my mind and all the worry go. I had never allowed myself to turn it off before, but he made me want to leave all caution at the door and throw abandon to the wind. It didn’t matter if tonight was a mistake. I was going to take what I could get before the real world demanded I put this time and Nathaniel Mikhailov in my rear-view mirror.

CHAPTER

TEN

NATHANIEL

S hawn was a dead man. I didn't give two flying fucks if Savannah blocked him. I was going to rip him into two the moment her phone rang, but then a tear fell from her eyes, and that sealed his death. No one made Savannah cry, and if my father took one step in her direction, there would be war within my family. Why I was so fucking obsessed was beyond me. She was so far outside my world that she might as well be on another planet.

Savannah moaned as I nipped a trail down her stomach, her skin like silk under my fingers. With every inch taken, she shivered, and goosebumps rose on her skin. I fucking loved her reaction and craved to see it again. I skimmed my hands down her sides, letting my thumbs brush her hard nipples, and she arched and moaned as her hands gripped the sheets.

Fuck she was a sight, and I knew that I had to watch as she made herself come one day very soon. My cock was so fucking hard that the material of my pants felt rough, but I refused to release it before I got to taste her.

“Bend your knees,” I ordered, and she slowly slid her feet up the bed until her knees were bent. Grabbing her ankles, I lifted her ass off the bed, giving me easier access to her wet pussy that I was dying to taste. Pushing out, I forced her legs wider before dropping my head and swiping my tongue along her delicate folds. I mulled her taste around in my mouth like she was a fine wine and growled. She tasted so fucking good.

“Oh fuck...” Savannah whimpered as I pushed my tongue deep into her, and that still wasn't enough. I wanted her to

come undone, sucking hard, making her gasp and squirm. When I thrust a finger into her, and every muscle tensed as I held myself back as her pussy gripped the single digit.

Oral sex was not something I ever gave. It was what I demanded to receive. I probably could've been a great Dom if it weren't for the fact that I didn't give a flying fuck about anyone else getting off. Until now. They always did, but not because I cared.

My eyes were closed when her breathing changed, getting faster and heavier, as her body twitched, and I knew she was almost there. When she grabbed my hair and pulled my face into her pussy, I groaned and sucked faster as my finger worked at rubbing her G-spot.

“Oh god...oh fuck...Nathan, yes...please don't stop.” Her fingers tightened, and I growled as she came, her body bucking up into my face as her release bathed my tongue. Fuck she tasted sweet like she'd been made just for me. I licked her completely clean and wanted to start all over again, but my needy cock was aching something fierce.

Standing, I undid my pants and pulled down the zipper, my cock pushed out, and I soaked in Savannah's lustful stare, her eyes glazed over from her release. I threw the pants across the room.

“Come here.” Savannah flipped around and crawled to me, looking like a naughty kitten. All she needed was a twitching tail and to bat at my hand. “That's it, Kisa. Come to me and beg me to fuck you.” I sucked in a sharp breath as she licked the head of my cock and played with the rings. Fuck that felt incredible. I put my arms behind my back. “Say it. Say you want it, or I won't touch you.”

She bit her lip, her blue eyes rolling up to meet mine. “What if I just tease you until you cave?”

I smirked and shook my head. “You tease too much, and I'll come on your pretty face and then leave. Is that what you want?”

Her hand wrapped around my cock as she sucked the tip into her mouth hard. I clenched my teeth, my jaw cracking with extreme pleasure, but I didn't move. Savannah ran her tongue up and down my cock like a fucking ice cream cone, testing my resolve as she sucked one of my balls into her hot mouth. She moaned, and a small drop of come spit out of my cock and landed on her neck. I wiped it off and held my finger out to her. She greedily sucked it into her mouth, stopping only when her lips touched my ring. Fitting that it was my family crest and a perfect fuck you to my father.

“That was close, Kisa. The punishment for making me come will be no sex for you. Take your pick.”

“Last time I had to make you come first,” she said.

“My rules, remember?”

The disgruntled sound she made tugged at the corner of my mouth. I loved that I was not the only one struggling. One finger at a time, she unwrapped her hand, and each one seemed to be painful to pull away.

“Yes, I want you to fuck me.”

“Then stand up.” One thing I was really starting to love about Savannah was that she didn't take more than was offered. She didn't run her hands up my body or jump on me. No, she rose to her feet and looked down at me from where she stood on the bed and waited. I fucking loved it. “You can touch me,” I said, and she cupped my cheeks and placed a soft kiss over the small cut my father had made. I couldn't say why the act had such a profound effect on me, but I lost my tightly wound control.

Wrapping my arms around her, I picked her up off the bed. She immediately locked her legs around my waist and her arms around my neck. Grabbing my cock I rubbed it between her pussy lips, and she shuddered.

“Is this what you want, Kisa?”

“Yes,” she whispered.

Biting at her lip, she opened her mouth for me, and I kissed her hard, swallowing her scream as I thrust into her.

Fuck was the only word that came to mind. There was a level of pleasure with her that I'd never experienced before, a near desperation to claim her, and the fact that deep down, I knew that could never happen made the need worse.

Pressing her back up against the wall, she yelped as her bare skin hit the cold, but she never broke the kiss and held me tighter. Her lush tits were pressed hard into my chest and felt amazing rubbing against me as I let loose and fucked her hard.

Her strangled wails got louder, and each one was a victory. Each moan was a win in a competition I hadn't known I was a part of until I met her.

"Fuck, you're so tight and wet," I groaned, breaking the kiss. I buried my head into the side of her neck and sucked on my hickey once more. I never wanted it to leave. I wanted her to have to wear makeup over it, a constant reminder to anyone who looked at her that she was mine and to back the fuck up, or I'd cut their fingers off and rip their eyes from their head.

I was so close, so fucking close. I knew I should pull out, but instead, I pounded into Savannah harder and buried myself as deep as I could get as I came.

"Fuck me, Savannah," I yelled as stream after stream released inside of her, but my cock was still aching like I hadn't come at all.

Panting hard, I pulled her away from the wall and placed her on the bed. "Get on all fours, now," I growled, and she did as I asked. I stroked my twitching cock as she backed up toward me. Gripping her hips, I slammed home. She yelled and then buried her head in the blankets.

I didn't relent for even a second as I pounded into her over and over again. She screamed my name, the sweetest sound I'd ever heard, as she came and soaked my cock, but I still didn't let up.

"Nathan, oh god...I can't take anymore...oh shit."

Leaning forward, I wrapped my hand in her long hair and pulled back until she whimpered. "Yes, you can. You will take my cock until I tell you I'm fucking done." My body flexed,

and we were soaked with sweat, but I still punished her pussy. “Rub that pussy, make it come. I won’t stop till you come all over me again.”

Leaning back enough, I got to watch as my cock slipped in and out of her as her hand went between her legs. I growled and pulled harder on her hair, making her moan and sob at the same time. The sound shot through my body, and my cock throbbed in a way I didn’t know was possible. Fuck, I was so close again.

I smacked her ass hard, my handprint pink on her fair skin. “Come on me, Kisa, come on me right now, or I’ll punish you all fucking night,” I said, smacking her again.

“Ah! Nathan, I’m...I’m coming.” Her pussy gripped my cock so hard that it made me yell as she came. I could feel everything, including the extra wetness that soaked me, and that was all I could handle.

“Fuck me! Yes,” I growled and came harder than the first time. “Fucking hell, Savannah!” I pulled out and thrust into her and held still as my cock kicked and twitched with the second release. “What the fuck are you doing to me?”

Her arms were shaking, and as soon as I unraveled my hand from her hair, she collapsed forward on the bed. I followed her, my body completely spent.

Breathing hard, I held her close and pulled the bunched-up blanket up over our bodies.

“I thought you didn’t spend the night with people,” she mumbled.

I loved her smart-ass mouth. I kissed her neck softly and pulled her tighter into my body until my cock nestled between her ass cheeks.

“I don’t, and I won’t. But I’m happy to lay here with you until you fall asleep,” I said and kissed the mark I made. “Would you like that?”

“Yes,” she said, and sighed.

Grabbing my hand, she linked it with hers and held it to her chest, and I knew I was in deep fucking trouble with this one. Sex was easy. Emotions were another beast. Sex with an agent would've been complicated, yet still simple enough. Fucking a woman who was plucking at my gut and heart was not wise. It was downright fucking stupid, especially when this could only end one way.



I really needed to go. I'd been here for a few hours, which was more time in bed with a woman than I'd ever spent. She was warm and comfortable, and it felt entirely too wonderful. Every time I got myself fixed to get out of here and moved, Savannah would tighten her hold on me. Mumbling something in her sleep that I couldn't understand, and I would tell myself only five more minutes, but I was hard again, and that was a problem only she could fix.

She wiggled her ass against me, and my traitorous cock slipped between her legs. No matter how much I ordered myself to go, I couldn't seem to pull away. Fuck it, if I didn't take her again, I was never leaving. Pulling her leg up and over mine, I rubbed the head of my cock against her and found that she was already wet like she'd been waiting for me to do this.

My heart pounded harder. "I'm going to fuck you again, Kisa," I whispered to her, and she moaned quietly. I was gentle as I pushed my hips up, and the head of my cock slid into her sex.

Fuck she was so damn hot. I had to take a deep breath to calm the wild thumping in my chest. I groaned as I teased myself by slipping just the tip of my cock in and out. The rings rubbed and sent surges of pleasure through my body. Savannah wiggled, and I pushed all the way into her and held still.

Closing my eyes, I wrapped her up tighter in my arms and slowly pulled out and pushed back in. My body screamed to

pound her hard, but I kept the pace slow and steady. Her breathing changed, and I could feel when she woke up, but she didn't say anything. Looking over her shoulder at me, I captured her lips. They were a candy I could eat every day, and I kissed her as deeply and slowly as I fucked her equally hot and wet pussy.

She sucked in a shuddering breath as I slid my hand down her body and rubbed her clit. As her breath quickened, so did my pace, but I was still gentle with her, another first for me.

“Oh...Nathan,” she whispered and came. That was all I needed to hear, and the release was just as delicious and sweet as the woman in my arms. A thrust later and I came, my cock unloading and I shuddered. Fuck, I had to get out of here.

“I have to go,” I said as our breathing returned to normal. I kissed Savannah's neck and rolled out of bed, feeling her eyes on me as I got dressed. Grabbing a bottle of water from the small fridge, I cracked the lid, drank half of it down, and set the rest on the nightstand.

“You know I still need to finish interviewing you, right,” she said as she pushed herself up. She looked like a well fucked goddess with her hair wild and skin flushed.

I smiled. “I'm counting on it,” I said and got the hell out of there before I stayed any longer. She was messing with my brain, but worse than that, emotions I didn't realize I possessed were poking up from the darkness of my soul—emotions I didn't dare have. Marching down the hall, I tried to squash them and knew that even if she left today, the effects were permanent, and I didn't know if I liked it or not.

CHAPTER

ELEVEN

SAVANNAH

I woke up to pounding on the door.

“Ms. Freeborn, I have a delivery for you.”

“Coming,” I said, jumping up and rushing around to throw on a hoodie and sleep pants before walking to the door. I looked out the peephole to make sure it was the manager, and it looked like the same guy who had checked me in, so I unlocked the door.

“Good morning, Ms. Freeborn. I trust your stay is going well?”

My body flushed red hot with that question like he knew every sordid detail.

“Yes, it’s been splendid,” I said and sucked in my bottom lip.

“Excellent. Well, I have a delivery for you.” He pointed, and I poked my head out to see six men maneuvering trollies stacked with boxes.

What the hell?

“I didn’t order anything,” I said.

“I was told to bring all this to your room,” he said.

“Oh...okay.” I stepped out of the way and let the men, one at a time, wheel the carts of boxes in and unload them until I had very little room left to move around. Had Shawn sent me all my stuff from the house? No, that couldn’t be it. He didn’t even know where I was staying. At the very end, the last man

walked in, set two covered silver trays down on the table, and walked out.

“Have a good day, Ms. Freeborn.”

“Thank you,” I said and then turned to stare at the plain white boxes, a little terrified to find out what was inside them. I decided to tackle the trays first and lifted the lid to find a killer breakfast. Fruit salad, croissants, bacon, pancakes, eggs benedict with potato hash, juice and coffee. How many people were eating with me? Popping a strawberry in my mouth, I pulled the second lid, and there was a white envelope with my name scribbled on the front.

I held it up to the sunlight streaming in the window, and it looked like a piece of paper inside. Peeling it open and pulling out the paper, a ticket and room key dropped to the ground. I bent and picked it up and read the name and location of a hockey game before unfolding the note.

Good morning, Kisa.

I hope you enjoy the breakfast. I know these are all your favorites.

If you want to continue our interview, then you will need to attend the hockey game.

Then you must suffer the night with me at Snowy Peak Resort in the penthouse suite.

If you can handle that...I will see you soon.

You should know that I'll be away on business after this weekend,

and I'm not sure when I'll be back.

The choice is yours.

N.M.

*P.S. I do hope you find my gift in
the boxes helpful.*

He certainly liked to make me chase his ass around, but I was secretly excited to see him play, and I'd never been inside a penthouse suite before. I should've been terrified that he was having me drive out to the middle of who knows where, but I really didn't get the feeling that he wanted to kill me despite the fact that I could tell that killing was second nature to him. Nathan didn't scare me like that, not anymore. My heart was an entirely different story.

I looked at the boxes and gave them a more skeptical glance than the first time. They didn't seem to be scratching or anything weird. Sitting the note down, I took a deep breath and pulled off the lid of the closest box. It was full of different colored material folded up. Grabbing one, I held it up and began to laugh as I registered what it was.

"He can't be serious." I opened the next box and the one after that, and they were all filled with cloth napkins. "Jerk," I mumbled, but you couldn't wipe the smile off my face.



Renting a car in another state was a bigger pain in the ass than I thought it was going to be. I was finally on the road and headed to a place called Big Bear. The hockey game was set for tonight, and the GPS said I still had a three-hour drive to get there.

I was singing away when my phone rang, and I stared at the unknown number.

“Hello?”

“Good, you’re on the road. It means you won’t miss the game.”

I smiled and was happy he couldn’t see my face. “I could be headed home for all you know.”

“You wouldn’t drive home. It’s a long way back to Virginia.”

“Maybe I like to drive.”

“Do you?”

I laughed. “Not really. At least not that far.” I tapped my finger on the top of the steering wheel, feeling way too much like I had on my very first date. “Yes, I’m on my way. You didn’t leave me much choice if I want to find out what really happened to my brother.”

“Do you still think I killed him?”

“No, no, I don’t. But that doesn’t mean that someone else in your family didn’t.”

He chuckled and then sighed. “Yes, I guess that is plausible. Well, you can ask all your questions after the game. I’ll make sure we stay on task, at least for as long as it takes me to get you naked again.”

Cue the heat. I flicked the air on higher in the car. “You are so fucking cocky.”

“Oooh, fuck, and cock in the same sentence coming out of your mouth is so sexy.”

I rolled my eyes, and yet...fuck, he made me feel young and carefree. I was only twenty-five, yet it felt like I’d lived three lifetimes already.

“Hey, thirty-three, get your ass over here!” I heard someone yell in the background.

“Gotta go. Coach is going to reem my ass. See you tonight, Savannah.”

The line went dead, and I swallowed the lump in my throat as butterflies soared around my body. I needed to stop the insanity, but I didn't know how. Being around Nathan was like standing in quicksand. The more I fought, the deeper I sank.

There wasn't much that I remembered of my biological father before he passed away, but one of our last conversations always stood out in my mind. He told me it didn't matter if you were loved or hated in this world just as long as you were yourself. The problem was I didn't know who I was anymore. It was as if there were two versions of myself trapped in my skin and the one wanted to run away from the life I'd worked hard to carve. The other still wanted to be an amazing FBI agent. My foot stayed firmly on the gas and my hands never wavered, answering which version of myself I was going to be. For one more night at least.

Taking a steadying breath, I turned up the music and tried not to think about what tomorrow would bring. I couldn't hide forever from all the decisions I needed to make, but for tonight, I would. One more night couldn't hurt. Right?

CHAPTER

TWELVE

NATHANIEL

Lined up on the ice for the national anthem, I looked for Savannah in the seat I'd reserved for her, but it remained empty. The disappointment was instant, but then a nagging bit of unease set in that something had happened to her on the drive here. My father wouldn't do something so stupid. Would he? Then again, it had started to snow, she could've gotten into an accident.

By the time the song was over, I'd managed to turn myself inside out with worry, but a flash of strawberry hair caught my attention as people were allowed to move again. She was holding a massive beer and a bag of popcorn, and my entire body lit up at the sight of her.

She smiled as I skated by, and all the earlier apprehension melted away. I didn't want to think about what came after this. I couldn't leave my family even if I wanted to. Our world didn't work that way. I'd already had three texts and a ranting phone call from my father demanding that she leave or he would take care of her himself.

He would have to go through me to do it, but nothing he did anymore surprised me.

I skated around to get into position for the faceoff. Even though I focused on my players and the puck, the boost I gained from Savannah being in the crowd was enormous. I felt light on my feet as we won the puck battle and passed it back and forth, finding the break to make our rush.

My center, Peters, started up the ice right down main street and then passed to me. Handling the puck cleanly, I sailed

through the corner of the opposing end with their defenseman all over me. I was just a bit quicker and didn't get bogged down in the corner, with my head on a swivel. As soon as we cleared the other side, I spotted my opening. With a quick flick of my wrist, the puck shot under the defenseman's stick for a perfect pass back to Peters. I circled back staying close to the blue line and watched as he passed Roberts the donut. Roberts weaved closer to the net and passed the puck across to Peters who lobbed it over the stick of a defenseman to get it to Gunnarson. I was getting antsy watching it go back and forth across the ice with no shot attempts. Keeping my feet moving was key so I didn't get caught flat footed if the play came back my way.

Roberts set up in front of the net to block the goalie's view as Gunnarson did a sneaky drop pass out of traffic to me. Peters had a small open patch of ice and I passed it to him. With a beautiful fake shot he deked the goalie and drilled it home, going top-shelf over the goalie's blocker.

"Yeah!" We cheered and came together with a hug before heading to the bench. I was breathing hard and pulled out my mouth guard for some water. I could see Savannah from the bench, and she was still standing and cheering. She looked fucking beautiful with her puffy white jacket and matching beanie, her cheeks pink and eyes bright with excitement. I couldn't help wondering what my life would've been like if I'd just been a little more talented and made the NHL.

I watched Callum and Tyler on television and pictured myself in their place. It could've been my ticket to a different life, one that I controlled and where my every move wasn't scrutinized. At least not by my father. Who was I kidding? He would probably demand I lose a game or some shit that I wouldn't do, and we would still end up at each other's throats.

We were up three to two when I jumped off the bench and, chased after the defenseman heading into my end and got a stick in the way before he could take a shot on goal. We flew into the corner together and ended up slamming into the boards. I knocked the puck loose, shot it around to my man,

and pushed away from the guy I was covering to follow the play to the opposing end.

The game was getting a lot more physical with the time winding down and our team in the lead. The puck was being played near the boards when Peters got a short pass. I could see the defenseman heading at him for a dirty hit and yelled watch out, but Peters was checked hard with a high stick to the jaw and went down harder. The whistle blew, and refs raced to the scene, but so did the rest of us as the scrum broke out. I grabbed the closest guy to my downed teammate and dropped my gloves. I recognized the goon-like player who had knocked Peters down, and I let out all the rage that had built up inside of me.

He got one shot off and then my fist connected with his jaw, knocking him to the ground, but I went with him and continued to punch as hard as I could, drawing blood before the refs jumped on me and pulled me off.

I glared at him as they held me back. "I'm fine. Get off of me," I ordered.

As they got up, I headed to the bin and checked my nose to see if it was bleeding. I glanced over at Savannah as I sat down with another teammate in the penalty box, and she stared at me with concern in her eyes. I mouthed, 'I'm good,' and she nodded but grabbed at her heart, which made me smirk.

Titus, Aaron, and my mother came to games, but Ronan hated hockey, my father thought it was a waste of time, and my baby sister was away at Wayward, but when she was home, she came to watch. I'd never had a girl I invited in the stands. I couldn't stop girls I was fucking from showing up, but this was different. I wanted Savannah here.

One of their players ended up in the bin as well, and I glared at the guy I had down on the ground.

"You're fucking dead if I get a hold of you again," I yelled, and he looked genuinely concerned.

"You really shoulda been a defenseman," Brunn said as he stuck a piece of cotton in his nose to stop the bleeding.

“Yeah, but I love shooting too much. Besides, this is my last year,” I said, hating that I was speaking the words out loud. It was too much to keep up with work, family drama, school, and hockey. Somethings had to go, and unfortunately, that choice was made for me years ago. Hockey and school were done after this year, so these moments felt like a last hurrah.

“For real? That sucks, man, I love having you out there with us. You’re like a goon and a winger. It’s a two-for-one.”

I laughed as I watched the seconds for the penalty tick by. The crowd was loud tonight. A sold-out game was always great, and as I stepped on the ice, I knew that I could retire happy to have someone here that I genuinely wanted to see me play.



“Y eah!”

We cheered as the puck squeezed through the goalie, going in five hole and breaking the tie. The rest of the guys jumped over the boards, and we lined up to congratulate one another.

“You coming to eat with us,” Peters asked as I stepped out of the shower.

“Not this time. I have things to do tonight.”

“By things, he means someone,” Brunn said and smirked. “Don’t think I didn’t see you staring at that sexy redhead. She is fine. You’re lucky, man.” He teased.

I wanted to say that her hair was strawberry and not red, but they would only blink at me in confusion.

“Oh yeah, How fine?” Gunnarrson chimed in.

“Like supermodel fine,” Brunn answered as he gipped my shoulder, smiling. I was torn between ripping his hand off and beating him with it for saying my girl was sexy or saying

thank you. Since Savannah was not officially mine, I nodded and went along with the teasing.

She wasn't officially mine...words I didn't like, and I was about to make it a whole lot worse.

Yanking on my clothes, I was the first one out of the locker room. Savannah was leaning against a tall pillar, and the moment I saw her, I growled low. A pair of guys walking by stared at her, but she never batted an eyelash in their direction. A good fucking thing because I would've fucked her in front of everyone, so she remembered not to do it again.

Like she could feel me coming, she turned her head and locked eyes with me and then bit her lip. I didn't wait for a hello or good game or anything else before cupping her cheeks and dropping my lips to hers.

"You make me crazy," I said against her lips.

"Well, I have no intention of you fucking me on a popcorn grease and beer-coated surface, so we better get going."

"Fuck don't give me any more ideas. That sounds delicious," I said and wrapped my arm around her waist. "So, you still hate me?"

"I'm undecided what I think about you," she said.

"That's fair. You up for dinner before we get started on the night's festivities?"

"You promised—"

"I know," I cut her off. "I plan on answering every one of your precious questions. I promise." I didn't really want to, and I was going to tell her things that would make her more of a target for my father. If he knew, he would shoot her between the eyes, maybe me as well, before he tossed both our bodies into the ocean.

"Why don't we get room service," she offered, and I hadn't heard a better idea all day.

"Sounds good. Come with me. We can grab your car from here tomorrow. It's safe. They always have security and games

or practices going on,” I said, guiding Savannah toward my truck.

“Sure, but I need my bag. I’m parked right over there.” She pointed, and as she did, I spotted a white van with two men staring at us. Even from three rows away I could pick out Fat Ricky like a sore thumb, but the other one I didn’t know. He was Italian and a long fucking way from home.

I grabbed Savannah’s arm. “Wait here,” I said and didn’t wait for her to ask why, which I knew she would. Marching across the parking lot, I locked eyes with the man I shouldn’t have an issue with, but it was pretty suspect that he was here in the middle of nowhere. I lifted the front of my jacket and showed off my piece. He put the van in drive and took off.

Their wheels squealed as they pulled out onto the main road and sped away. I watched them until I couldn’t see their taillights anymore through the falling snow.

“What the hell was that about,” Savannah asked as I walked back to where she was standing.

“Honestly, I’m not sure.”

“Things you couldn’t tell me even if you did?”

“Most likely, but I truly don’t know.” I looked around the parking lot for anything else suspicious but didn’t see anything or anyone out of the ordinary. The snow was really coming down now, and we still had a thirty-minute drive to get to the resort. “Come on, I’ll drive around to your car to be safe.”

“Is this how you always live?”

I looked over at her as I started the truck and shrugged. “Don’t you? Never fear that any of those you’re chasing will come for you one day?”

“Not really, or I hadn’t thought about it until now,” she said. “We usually catch whoever we’re hunting, or they hide from us.”

“Well, if I were you, I’d start looking over your shoulder. Just a wise piece of advice, not a threat.” Savannah grabbed

her bag, and we sat in silence on the way to the resort my family owned.

My earlier happy bubble had popped. My mind was filled with thoughts of what Fat Ricky wanted and what Savannah would do with the information I gave her. Nothing in this world was easy, and it was never free. You had to take what you wanted, and then you had to defend it with your life to keep it.

The world of people who revolved around us didn't have a fucking clue that they were always swimming with sharks. They wore suits and drove nice cars but were far deadlier than the worst man-eater. I glanced at Savannah out of the corner of my eye, and even though I knew she could take care of herself, I suddenly felt like I was dragging her down into the depths of this treacherous world. Not everyone was cut out for this life. Any day could be your last, but when you were born the son of mafia Don, your life expectancy decreased drastically. Only way around it was to become the bigger and more terrifying beast in the waters. Even then, nothing was ever for certain.

Even those like me, who were born into it and groomed from the time I could walk and talk, looked for ways to escape the jaws and sharp teeth of our families and the legacies that chased us. In the end, we were all caught and killed, and the next generation took our place. That was the reality of being born in my world, and it was why I couldn't do to Savannah what was forced upon me.

No matter how much I wanted to keep her for my own, I needed to set her free.

CHAPTER

THIRTEEN

SAVANNAH

The closer we got to the resort, the less excited I became. Each mile marker was a reminder of why I was actually here. Up until now, it had felt like a whirlwind vacation of mystery and passion, as if we'd stepped out of real life and into a novel. The bad guy won the good girl, and there were no consequences for actions, but we weren't living some fantasy. The reality was that I came here to investigate Nathan or the Mikhailov's in general. Even if what he told me made me believe him or that his family didn't kill Alex, I couldn't ignore the fact that he was mafia. Not just connected but a very powerful and ruthless mafia family that was papered all over the walls at the FBI.

His father, Demetri, and other relatives still in Russia took up six feet of wall space with suspected kills, money laundering, illegal narcotic importing, and more. What the hell did I do with that? It wasn't like I could walk Nathan into a work dinner, and the longer I stayed here, the more likely my photo would end up on the wall right beside the rest of the family, and I would find myself questioned and out the door.

"Hey," Nathan said, touching my arm and making me jump. "You okay?"

I looked at him and realized we had parked in front of a stunning resort. It was lit up in the darkness, and I could just make out the peak of a mountain as the backdrop. The snow had gotten worse, and the wipers were still going to keep the heavy white flakes off the windshield.

"Yeah, just...just thinking."

“We better get inside before it picks up.”

Nodding, we hopped out of the truck, and I grabbed my bag from the back seat before meeting Nathan around the front. He held out his hand, and it felt natural to slip mine into his and link our fingers despite the scolding I’d just given myself.

We walked through two sets of automatic doors, and as soon as the concierge spotted Nathan, he ran over. Nathan never slowed his stride and let the man catch up.

“Sir, your room is all ready, and everything is as you asked. The chef is on standby. He will make whatever you desire this evening.”

Nathan’s eyes flicked to me, and he smirked. “I’m not sure the chef is qualified to make me what I desire, but I’m sure he’ll do a fine job.”

We stopped at the elevator, and Nathan held out his palm for the room key.

“Yes, of course, Sir. Do you require anything else?”

“Champagne. The best we have, and make it two bottles with chocolate-dipped strawberries and two of all my favorites. No need for a menu tonight.”

“Of course, Sir, right away.”

The man sped off, and I looked up at Nathan. “You must come here a lot,” I said and hated that a thread of jealousy weaved its way through my body.

“You could say that. It’s my favorite place to work when I need space, and my family owns it, so they are extra nice to me.”

I shook my head. I should’ve known.

The elevator opened to a set of double doors in front of us. Nathan held the key over the pad, and with a clunk, the doors unlocked, but I was not prepared.

When he pushed the door open, I gasped at the view. The entire wall in front of us was glass and faced the mountain I’d

seen from the parking lot. A gas fireplace surrounded by a raised stone platform burned in the middle of the sitting area, while massive leather couches surrounded the fire. Everything was immaculate, and the room I'd been staying in could've fit in here fifty times over.

"Do you like it," Nathan asked as we stopped and just stared at the view.

"How could I not? No wonder this is your favorite place to work. This is...wow."

He turned to me, and the back of his knuckles grazed my cheek. "Do you want your own room tonight?"

I should say yes, but I couldn't. My teachers at Quantico would be pissed if they saw how weak I'd become.

"No," I said, and I felt him relax. I'd always been good at sensing what someone else was feeling, but with Nathan, it was exaggerated. I didn't know what to call it, but I felt his moods shift as easily as my own.

Cupping my cheek, he kissed me, and it was the most tender of moments between us. It hurt ten times as much, knowing it couldn't last.

"Come on, I'll show you the bedroom, and then we'll eat, and you can ask what you want. I want it out of the way."

"Sounds fair to me." He led me to the far end of the living room to another set of double doors that opened into the largest bedroom I'd ever been in, let alone slept in.

"What the?" Nathan looked around the room, and I was guessing he didn't keep it filled with red roses and petals on the bed.

I glanced at my phone and started to laugh. "It's Valentine's Day. I'm guessing you didn't plan this?"

"Plan it? I've never celebrated it. I couldn't have even told you it was today," he said, wandering over to one of the massive bouquets and pulled out a long-stem rose.

"The resort probably thought you were using this place for a special night."

“Oh, it’s going to be special alright.” He walked over and drew lines down my face with the delicate petals before handing me the stunning flower. It smelled so good.

“There has to be a hundred flowers in here,” I said, turning in a small circle and taking in the room that would fit my entire house back home.

It had the same massive windows as the living room, a king-size bed that could fit six people, a spacious bathroom, dresser, nightstands, a breakfast table, a desk to work, and a plush chair that faced the window with a bookshelf right beside it. I could’ve lived in just this room for the rest of my life and been happy.

“If I’d remembered it was Valentine’s, I would’ve done something more than flowers for you. I’m sorry,” he said, taking our bags and sitting them on the dresser.

“Don’t worry about it. I’m not really a Valentine’s girl anyway. Unless you want to take me to the shooting range?”

Nathan laughed. “You are certainly unique, Savannah. It’s what I enjoy most about you. You keep me on my toes.” He opened his bag and pulled out a thick file. “This is not Valentine’s talk, so I’ll leave it up to you whether we hold off on this again.”

“As much as I would like to bask in this very romantic room with you, I think we need to get it out of the way. Don’t you?”

Nathan nodded.

“Alright, let’s go,” he said and led the way back to the living room. The room door buzzed like a doorbell, and Nathan set the file down to answer it. I was so tempted to lift the corner and peek at what was inside. He brought it out here, and that meant he was going to trust me with the information, and if I looked, then I would be breaking his trust.

Two men entered with trays and a bucket of ice and champagne.

“Here,” Nathan said and handed them money before they left. Everything smelled divine.

“Food first or talk first?”

“How about food and talk?”

“Only if you promise not to throw it at me,” he teased.

“Tempting, but I wouldn’t. I don’t want to get any on the furniture,” I quipped back, making him smile.

“That I do believe,” he said, taking the lids off the food.

“This is way too much. What is it with you and mass amounts of food?” I couldn’t even decide what to try. Pasta, steak, sausages, salads, and soups. It was an endless assortment, and there was also an entire tray of desserts.

“I didn’t know what you’d feel like having.” He grabbed two plates and set them on the table near the fire, then came back and picked up some more. “Don’t worry about choosing, just try it all.”

I carried a few dishes over and sat down as he popped the cork on the champagne and poured me a glass. This felt like a fancy date and a weekend away, all wrapped into one, when it should’ve felt like an interrogation. I was coloring so far outside the lines at this point that I didn’t even know where the lines were anymore.

Nathan held up his glass, and I tentatively did the same, not sure what we were toasting.

“To enemies that become lovers.” The devilish twitch of his lip had me smiling.

“Is that what we are now?”

“It was classier than saying what I really wanted to say,” he said, and I clinked his glass.

“Fair enough.” I sipped my champagne and looked out the window, taking in the view. What would it be like to live like this all the time? To have peace and quiet and do a dream job like writing all day.

I took a bite of the salad, and it was rich and sweet tasting with a medley of almonds, greens, and strawberries.

“This is delicious,” I said.

The smile on Nathan's face slowly fell as he sighed. "Let's rip the bandage off, shall we? Let me start by asking you this...how well do you think you know your half-brother?"

"You don't have to keep saying half. I know Alex is only my half-brother," I said.

"Trust me, you may change your mind about that." He took a bite of steak. "So, what's the answer?"

I pulled over the bowl of what looked like carrot soup. "Not well, at least not since I turned sixteen and our parents split," I admitted. "But what does that have to do with anything? You said you didn't have anything to do with his death."

Nathan leaned his arms on the table. "I'm going to trust you with a number of damaging pieces of information."

"Why?"

"Because I think we both know that this meal is more than simply lovers, but I also realize the unusual predicament you're in. This is a show of faith in you, and I'm hoping you'll extend me the same courtesy when I tell you what I know."

"Why do I get the feeling I'm not going to like where this conversation is going?" I understood the undertone. He was going to tell me something he didn't have to say, but in return, he didn't want me to arrest him.

"Probably because you're not."

I took a few mouthfuls of the soup, then sat back and had to ask. "Before I agree to this, I need to know. Did you set out to make me a target that night in the hotel restaurant?"

He smiled and then laughed. "No. I don't make it a habit of sleeping with people investigating me, but it is an interesting tactic."

I glared at him. "I'm going to regret this. I know it." I pulled out my phone and showed him that I was turning it off. "Okay, what do you want to tell me?" I was ready for him to say yes, he killed my brother and that he lied to me and then

explain how he made it happen. I wasn't prepared for what he said next.

"Alex is not dead," he said, and I choked on my soup.

"What?"

"He is, however, locked up in a cell, and I haven't decided what to do with him yet. That has a lot to do with your father or ex-step-father."

"Wait, wait, back up. Alex isn't dead?" A weight lifted on my chest.

"Correct."

"So, how do I get him back?"

Nathan picked up his champagne and drank down the entire glass before pouring another. "There is nothing you can do to get me to release him."

The moment of lightheartedness I'd just felt plummeted. "There has to be something. Alex was annoying and arrogant. But mixed up with the mafia...that I don't believe."

"You really don't know anything about him, do you?"

"What the hell are you trying to say?" My hand gripped the spoon tighter.

"I'm saying that you are the federal agent, and for whatever reason, you're doing a terrible job."

My mouth fell open as the insult not only stung my pride but also brought up the words Matthews had said to me.

"Who the hell do you think you are?" I stood and leaned on the table, but Nathan didn't move. His features never changed. "I'm a damn good agent."

"I didn't say you weren't, but in this case, you started all backward." I crossed my arms. "Why didn't you look into your family first?" I bit my lip as he called me out. "Here you are halfway across the country, determined to find your brother's killer when all you had to do was spend a few minutes looking into Alex and your stepfather to find the answers you were after. Instead you have your finger pointed

at me. Is it because I'm an easier target? A bad man, one that hurts people? There are a lot of assumptions in that line of thinking."

I slowly sat down. "Fine, start at the beginning. I'll listen," I said, dejected that he was right. Even if I didn't find anything, I should've been looking into why someone would want to hurt Alex. I ran my hand through my hair. It burned my ass that Matthews might have been right, that I was too close to this and should've left it alone.

Nathan stood and grabbed the file he'd brought and set it down. "This is your stepfather, yes?"

He pulled out a photo, and I nodded.

"He is a politician, but he also has very peculiar tastes when it comes to women, or should I say, girls. That is the real reason your mother left him but was paid off not to say anything."

Nathan pulled out another photo. My stepfather was in bed with a very young girl. I covered my mouth and looked away.

"If you can't stomach that, then you'd better decide now if you want to know more because it only gets worse from here."

I stared into his eyes and didn't see anything that made me feel better. My heart pounded loud enough to count the beats as he waited for an answer. I rolled out my shoulders. I needed to know.

"Tell me."

"Alright." He picked up a piece of paper out of the pile and laid it down. "These are all of Alex's secret accounts and aliases. He has multiple depending on what he used it for, but most of them were to lure young girls."

"No way...." Not the kid I knew growing up. Nathan lifted an eyebrow, and I crossed my arms, not wanting to believe this. "I'll be quiet."

He pulled a stack of photos and, one by one, placed them down. Each of them was a girl in a compromising position for the camera, all of them smiling or showing off like these were

shots for a magazine. Some with pieces of clothing, but others fully nude.

He then pulled out a thick stack of paper. “This is all the correspondence between the girls and your brother. Each one of them sent him erotic photos and videos that he then used for blackmail to get them alone or give them to your father. I have more images and videos of his taped sessions, but I refuse to let you see them. There is some shit a family member should never have to see, and I don’t give a fuck if you are FBI.”

My mouth opened, and I shot up out of my chair and marched away. This couldn’t be happening.

“I lived with them until I was sixteen. Don’t you think I’d know if they were doing something so disgusting?”

Nathan stood and glared at me. “Savannah, you’re brilliant. So why are you so blind to what is right under your nose? You know the lengths people will go to in this world and the depth of depravity that exists.” I paced as my brain tried to comprehend this information. Could I have really missed something like this, and did my mother know? Is this why they divorced? There had to be a mistake, and yet, with just a glance, I knew that Nathan wasn’t lying. I was tempted to ask to see the videos to check for tampering.

I paced to the far end of the room and turned to find Nathan in my path. He grabbed my shoulders and forced me to look him in the eyes.

“You were young the last time you saw them, and if you had no reason to think anything like this, then I understand your confusion, but read the file. Don’t put blinders on just because you’re scared of the truth. The bit I have learned about you in our short time together is that you don’t hide from what is scary. You face it head-on.”

He was right. I could feel my heart steeling itself and my mind shutting down the emotional part of me that dealt with death, murder, and missing cases on a regular basis. I needed to look at this with impartial eyes and not as a family member.

“You’re right.” I sucked in a deep breath as Nathan led me back to the table, and I stared at all the young faces smiling up at me. How many times had I seen sex trafficking images just like these? I picked up a few of the pictures and read the information scribbled on the back. Each one had a name, age, the handle used to trap them, and a summary of the occurrence.

“There are more, but these are the ones that are still alive. Some took their own lives, and others had been murdered.”

I swallowed to push down the bile that started to rise. “I don’t understand. Your family doesn’t strike me as the vigilante type. How did you get involved in all of this?”

Nathan’s face darkened, his eyes turned hard, and I could see death and destruction in them. If he wanted to, he would find a way to tear the world apart. That look sent dread streaking down my spine.

He once more went to the file and pulled out a photo of a beautiful girl who looked to be around thirteen. She had vivid blue eyes and blonde wavy hair down to her shoulders, but the face...I looked up at Nathan and then down at the photo.

“This is my sister Kaylani. She was in one of the chatrooms with him and sent him photos.”

“Oh my god, Nathan.” I picked up the photo, my hand shaking. This had to be true. There was no way he’d put all of this together just to throw me off his trail as Alex’s murderer. At this point, I was sure he would’ve just said yes. “Is she...is she...”

“No, she’s not dead. She is a senior at an academy where they keep a very close eye on her now. She came to me crying, saying she felt stupid. I didn’t tell my father until I figured out who he was. I planned to kill him, but my father wanted to profit off of the blackmail and has been twisting the knife into your stepfather ever since.”

This was insane. I spread out all the photos, and Nathan handed over the rest of the reports from the girls after they were interviewed. Some had been charged for creating and

distributing underage images. I shook my head, that was fucking horrible. Wasn't it bad enough that they were manipulated? But to then be charged for it was disgusting. I sat down in Nathan's vacated chair as my stomach churned.

"So, you went to Canada and took him? What happened?"

"Sometimes fate works in mysterious ways. In the last year of high school I met a guy who played hockey with me, and we became tight. By some weird coincidence, he grew up in the same neighborhood as Alex and went to the same school."

My brow furrowed. "Who?"

"Callum Reeves."

"I know him. He was like the local celebrity when I was growing up. Isn't he in the NHL now for the Vancouver Grizzlies?"

"He is. He didn't know about Alex, I didn't then either. I didn't find out till last year, but I remembered the picture that sat on his desk with Callum and his buds from back home. Alex was in that photo.

I didn't tell Callum, but as it turned out, I didn't need to. He said he wanted to do a cottage weekend one day, and I pushed for him to do it over Christmas. I figured I could take Alex either on his way home or shortly after. It gave me a reason to be in Canada and in that area."

"Smart."

"Thank you. Anyway, Alex was obsessed with Callum's ex at the time, Skye."

"I knew her. We hung out a little, and she's super sweet." I held my breath as Nathan pulled more photos from the file and handed them over.

"This was a secret room he'd built inside the house." I stared at the walls filled with images of Skye. She was eating at a restaurant or walking down the hall at school. There were pictures of her sleeping in bed and others of her getting changed.

“Oh my god, that is Skye’s little sister.” I flipped them over and closed my eyes. I wanted to be sick.

“I hate to say this, but this is not even the worst of what Alex has done.”

I shook my head as guilt sat in my stomach like rocks. I hunted predators like this, and all this time, two were right under my nose, and I didn’t see them. This was taking hiding in plain sight to a whole other level. How many girls could I have helped if I had spent more time with him and my stepfather after leaving with my mother? I would have noticed a flag. Right?

Nathan held up bottles of tequila and vodka, and I pointed to the vodka. Continuing to read was pure torture, but I forced myself to do it. A headache was forming, and I rubbed my temples and sighed as Nathan massaged my shoulders and neck.

“I should have him arrested and thrown in jail for life,” I said, and Nathan’s hands stilled.

“I can’t let you do that.”

Turning in my seat, I looked up at Nathan, who was as imposing as the storm and wilderness outside.

“What are you going to do with him?”

He lifted a shoulder and let it drop. “He’ll die at some point, but I don’t know when.”

“Nathan, I’m a federal agent, and no matter what he has done, he’s still my brother. I can’t just let you murder him any more than you would let me do that to a member of your family.”

Taking his drink with him, Nathan walked over to the massive window, and his reflection was chilling.

“My father dictates when he dies, not me.” His eyes found mine in the glass. “He wants me to kill you.” I shivered, and the hairs stood on the back of my neck. “If you take this to your superiors, I will not be able to protect you, Savannah. I won’t come for you, but I can’t stop my father’s men. They

will hunt you down, and I will be punished for giving you this information.”

This was why you didn't get your dick wet where you made your money, as Nathan had put it. Complicated was the understatement of the century. Could I be okay with letting them do whatever they wanted to Alex? Could I live with myself?

“Would your decision be easier if I told you Alex has already killed one of your family members?”

My head snapped up, eyes locking with his. “What? Who?”

“One of the videos I found was...well, it was a snuff film, Savannah.” My pulse was in my throat and threatened to choke me, as I could scarcely take a breath. I couldn't remember anyone in my family dying except...*no...no, not her.*

“Please, don't say it,” I said and covered my mouth as tears that I hadn't spilled in years flooded to the surface. “No.”

Nathan turned and stared at me. “You were fourteen when you lost your eight-year-old sister. Elle drowned in the pool, and that was why Alex had an aversion to water, right?”

I stood and backed away from Nathan, not wanting to hear this. Losing my sister had driven me to become an FBI agent. I wanted to save lives, I wanted to help people, and stopping those who hurt others had seemed a perfect way to do it. Losing Elle had haunted me for years. I blamed myself for going out with friends and not being home when she drowned. I watched Alex cry, and almost two years later, my family fell apart.

“No, Nathan...” I shook my head and didn't care if I looked weak. Tears streamed down my face, and I held my hand out like that would somehow stop the words from leaving his mouth.

“She was his first, it did happen in the pool, and your step-father watched,” he said, and I broke down even though I knew what he was going to say. “They covered it up, said it

was an accident, but they kept the evidence for their own amusement. That is who your family really is.”

Falling to my knees, I gripped my locket that held the picture of my sister and me and let out all the emotions. I thought I’d dealt with them, but it was a lie. They were there all along, just waiting for the reveal and for me to find out the truth.

My mind raced back in time, and as much as I didn’t want to, I was able to pick out little moments that I took for granted as normal. Sibling quarrels, picking on one another, and the time I’d caught him leaving Elle’s room late at night. I had dismissed it because they had loved watching cartoons until late. Were they really? Every single moment was scrutinized, and each time, I didn’t have an answer, and that terrified me more.

Warm arms wrapped around me as Nathan pulled me into his chest. “I’m sorry, I had to tell you.” He kissed the top of my head as I clung to his shirt and mourned the loss of my sister all over again. “I needed you to understand the kind of monster he is. I will not let him out, and he is not worth losing your honor to save his soul from what is coming for him. Letting Alex go free into your custody puts us all in danger, and I won’t do it. I can’t do it.”

Wiping my tears, I looked up, and the compassion and conviction in Nathan’s eyes helped me pull myself together.

“I want to see him,” I said, as thoughts of death danced behind my eyes.

“I’ll think about it, but you need to agree right now that he stays with me,” Nathan said.

“I agree,” I said without hesitation and didn’t feel a single drop of guilt.

The boy I thought I knew was not who he was. The woman I thought I was just died an emotional death as surely as my heart was ripped from my chest. Nothing would ever be the same again. I would never be the same again.

CHAPTER

FOURTEEN

NATHANIEL

I helped Savannah into the shower and gave her privacy to grieve. My phone dinged while I was cleaning up the paperwork and putting it in the safe. The message was from the front desk.

FD: The two men you sent images of just walked into the lobby.

I growled. What the fuck was Fat Ricky after? We had no business together, and he was pissing all over any courtesy between our families by coming here unannounced. Not once, but now twice.

N: Put them in room 633.

FD: Will do, Sir.

Grabbing my gun, I marched for the door. Taking the elevator down, I got off on the sixth floor and let myself into the room I'd given the front desk. The rooms on either side of this one were empty for renovations. Slipping into the closet, I waited for them to arrive. My body tensed as the door beeped and then clicked.

"This is a fucking nice place. I could live here," the unknown guy said as he stepped into the room.

"I bet you wouldn't get half the ass you get now, though. Unless you plan on cuddling a bear," Fat Ricky said, coming into view.

“Fuck you, you’re the one big enough to fuck a bear. I’ll take the cougars.” They both laughed as they passed my hiding spot. I touched the slightly ajar door, and it opened without a sound.

Grabbing Fat Ricky by the hair, I yanked back hard. “Ah,” he yelled. Kicking out his legs forced him to drop to his knees with his body bent at an odd angle.

“I wouldn’t fucking try it,” I growled at the random guy as I pressed the gun to the side of Ricky’s head. Tightening my hold on him, I forced his head back so he had to look me in the eyes. “I’m only going to ask you this once, and I don’t care if you go home in a box.” He swallowed hard. “Why the fuck are you following me around? But more to the point, why the fuck are the two of you in my family’s territory without notifying us?”

“We were ordered to come and see if you had anything to do with what happened at Ellipsis, and Nikolai,” he said, and I jerked Ricky’s head harder as the unknown guy moved his arm. I knew he was thinking of going for his gun. “Marco, don’t,” Ricky said.

“Yes, I’d listen to your friend before his brains end up being the new décor for the renovation of this room.” I nodded to the chair. “Sit down.”

Marco backed away and slowly sat, keeping his hands where I could see them like a good boy.

“Why the fuck would we have anything to do with Nikolai, and why would we attack your club? We have an alliance, or I thought we did. Maybe I should call my father and let him know that Ceaser wants to go to war.”

“No, no, please. I should’ve messaged for a meeting, but I....”

“You wanted to see if any of my family met up with that piece of shit, Nikolai. So, you were spying?”

He swallowed again, his eyes wide. He was a massive man, a mountain, but anyone with a gun pressed to their head

could be reduced to a sniveling mess. I was happy to see he wasn't begging for his life. That would've been pathetic.

"Yes," he said.

"Take out your gun and lay it on the floor," I ordered. "Very fucking slowly."

He did as I asked, and Marco took his out and slid it to me as well. I kicked the guns closer to the door and then released Ricky but kept my gun trained on him as he pushed himself to his feet.

It was rare for me to be shorter than those I was dealing with, but Ricky had four inches on me. I motioned for him to sit with his buddy. As soon as his ass was on the couch, I lowered my weapon.

"We hate Nikolai. He is a slimy piece of shit, and I know that Ceaser doesn't trust us, but when it comes to Nikolai, we will never work together." I pretended to spit on the floor in disgust.

Ricky nodded. "Do you have any proof that you didn't help?"

"Do you have any proof that we did aside from the fact we are both Russian?"

"Isn't that enough?"

I barked out a laugh. "Just like how the Miceli family is Italian, so you must do business with them?" I knew that the Mancinis and the Micelis hated one another and wouldn't be caught dead working together.

"Good point."

"So, this is what is going to happen. You're going to go back to Ceaser and tell him to stop looking for reasons to start a war. We didn't attack Ellipsis. We didn't kill his wife, and we have no interest in a war unless he pushes us into it. Mark my words, if he does...we will finish it," I growled.

The two men looked at one another but didn't say anything, which was the smartest thing they'd done all night.

“You are welcome to stay and wait out the storm, but then I want you out of my resort and out of my territory. I’ll be taking your guns, and you can collect them when you check out.” I took a step, making sure not to turn my back on them. “Oh, and you two may want to work on your surveillance techniques.”

Grabbing the guns off the floor, I walked out of the room and decided to take the stairs up so they wouldn’t know what floor I was on if they came out to check. They’d assume I was on the top floor, but it was always better to make people second guess.

As soon as I was sure I wasn’t followed, I pulled out my phone and hit Ronan’s number.

“How was the game?”

“Like you care,” I said.

“You’re right, I don’t. What do you want other than to cause me more fucking drama with Father? He is still going on about how you pulled a gun on him in public.”

“Technically, I never pointed it at him and he should’ve thought of that before he brought his bitch into my club,” I said and then forced the simmering anger down. It would be way too easy to get riled up all over again, and I didn’t want to bring that around Savannah. She had enough to deal with tonight.

“He’s going to do whatever the fuck he wants, you know that,” Ronan said, and he was right, but it didn’t mean that I had to accept it. Not anymore. The man lost my respect years ago.

“I’m not arguing about this again. I said my piece. He knows where I stand. If he does it again, the girl will die. No warnings.”

Ronan swore on the other end of the line. “You’re going to drive me to drink, baby brother.”

“That was my goal.”

“Was there actually a reason for your call, or are you just feeling like being a dick tonight?”

Pulling open the door to the penthouse floor that only had my room, I stopped in the hallway and lowered my voice to be safe.

“Ceaser sent Fat Ricky and another idiot to follow us around. There could be more,” I said. I held up the two guns in my hand. “They think we had something to do with the attack on Ellipsis. I confronted him, and they are going to be heading home with their tail between their legs, but if I were you....”

“Make sure that they leave and let them know that we are watching them do it,” he finished for me.

“Exactly. Fucking Ceaser is getting on my nerves. We have a seat at the table, and he keeps disrespecting our authority. If he doesn’t knock it off, we’ll have to send him a message. One that he won’t forget anytime soon.”

“Are there any other instructions you’d like to impart?” Ronan’s sarcastic tone usually got under my skin, but for once, I didn’t care. “Are you sure you don’t want to be the next to take over the family, brother?”

“Not a fucking chance, you can have the throne, but I’ll always tell you what I think, and I don’t give a fuck if you want to hear it or not.” Unlocking the suite, I slipped inside and deadbolted the door for extra security.

“I do appreciate that. Titus tends to tell me what I want to hear, and Father is too busy ranting about everything he hates. If I get like that, please shoot me in the head,” he said, and I smiled as I locked Fat Ricky and Marco’s guns up.

“You don’t have to worry about that. You’d be so goddamn annoying that I would’ve shot you before you had to ask.”

I turned to head to the bedroom, and Savannah was standing in the hallway, staring at me. Her eyes were still a little red, hair was damp, a bottle of wine in one hand and the strawberries dipped in chocolate in the other, but that wasn’t the sweetest part. She wore one of my robes, and it was so large that it touched the floor, but she hadn’t bothered to tie it

up, and I could see a thin strip of skin. Even with the sadness swirling around her, she was stunning.

My cock went from soft to raging hard in seconds. Savannah took a swig of the wine from the bottle and licked her lips. I forgot I was on the phone and groaned in Ronan's ear.

“What the fuck? I asked you what the weather was like up there?”

“It's fucking great. I have to go.”

“Bu—” I hit end and marched for Savannah.

She was like a beacon, drawing me in, and I was not going to ignore its call. Slipping my hands in the narrow opening, I gripped her waist and soaked in her soft, warm skin like it was the sun.

“Yesli lyubov' ne bezumna, to eto ne lyubov',” I said, and I couldn't believe those words had come from my mouth, but every single one was true. Who knows what would've happened if we'd met sooner?

“It's beautiful. What does it mean,” Savannah asked.

I took in everything about her, right down to the freckles on her nose, and committed them to memory.

“It means that you are extremely beautiful,” I lied, unable to tell her what it really meant. “You are a beacon, Savannah, and all the darkness of this world will be drawn to you to make them feel whole.”

“Are you saying that you're darkness?”

She kissed my cheek, and her lips were soft, like little pillows, that made me want to close my eyes and get lost in their dream world.

“I am,” I said.

“Are you trying to say that I make you feel whole?”

“You make me feel period, and that is more than anyone else ever has.” I held her gaze, those blue eyes searching my soul, and I had to slam the door before I drowned in them.

Dropping my lips to hers, I swirled my tongue around her mouth, tasting the rich wine and the sweetness of the strawberries with chocolate.

“You’ve had a lot to take in tonight, are you okay?”

Smiling she brought the bottle of wine to my lips and I took a sip. She immediately kissed me and licked the remnants of the wine off. The woman was driving me near mad. “Yes, I will be fine.”

“You’re a strong woman Savannah, I admire that in you.” She blushed, making the freckles stand out even more. “We are officially snowed in. I got the notification that all plows have been stopped, and roads are closed until the storm passes.”

“Is that so?”

“It is, and I think we should make the most of it. What do you think,” I asked against her lips and felt them twitch upward.

“I mean...I wouldn’t want these special Valentine’s strawberries to go to waste,” she teased.

Growling, I picked her up, and she wrapped her arm around my neck. “I’m going to eat them and you.”

She’d infected my blood, and for better or worse, whatever she’d done, there was no coming back.

CHAPTER

FIFTEEN

SAVANNAH

I expected Nathan to take me into the bedroom, but instead, he walked over to the large dining room table and sat me on the edge. His kisses were voracious, and his hands were firm as they gripped my hips. This man gave my heart a workout whenever he was near me, and right now, it was beating faster than it ever had before.

My lips felt puffy and abused as he stepped back and took the bottle of wine from me. I smirked as he drank down a few large gulps before licking his lips.

“I didn’t get my dessert,” he said, his eyes staring at the wide gap in the robe.

“They brought up a wide variety for us to eat. What do you feel like eating,” I asked and held out one of the strawberries. Nathan didn’t take a bite or a little nibble like a normal person. Instead, the entire strawberry disappeared inside his mouth, and his teeth grazed my fingers as he plucked the sweetness from the leaves. “That was close,” I said.

“I like living on the edge.”

I picked up another berry and bit the end off, moaning. Nathan’s eyes grew darker, though I didn’t think it was possible. His look told me I was the only option on the menu. He opened his mouth, and I placed the rest of the strawberry on his tongue. Nathan nipped off the leaves and smirked as he walked away. What was he up to?

The lights dimmed, and rock music began to play, which was so Nathan. He didn’t strike me as the soft and soothing music type. With nervous anticipation of what he planned to

do next, I watched his reflection in the window as he walked to the table with only his pants on and what looked to be chocolate sauce.

“Can you dance,” he asked as he moved the plate of strawberries.

“What kind of dancing?”

“Something sexy and just for me.” He gripped my chin, his thumb pressing down on my bottom lip. “Only ever for me.”

I licked the tip, and he took the invite to put it in my mouth. With each suck, the tension in the room grew.

“You have turned into quite the naughty girl, Kisa.”

“Careful, I might scratch you,” I said, nipping at his thumb as he pulled it out of my mouth. Nathan laughed, and the sound was dark and as rich as the wine we were drinking. He used two fingers to slowly part the robe until it slipped from my shoulders and left me sitting naked in front of him.

“Dance for me, Kisa.” I put one foot on the floor, and he shook his head no. “On the table.”

Nathan helped me to stand, but I didn’t have a clue what to do. I had taken dance as a little girl but hadn’t practiced in years, and I never did anything sexy or provocative. I certainly hadn’t felt either of those things until I came here. Maybe my gymnastics training would work. Nathan sat, and I shivered at the sound of his belt being removed.

I glanced at my reflection in the glass, and I wasn’t graceful or flexible or sexy like the women that hung from ribbons in Nathan’s club, but I was strong and fit. I may not be able to dance, but I could do other things. Sauntering away to the far end of the table—that could easily hold twenty or more—I dropped low. My ass wiggled back and forth for him, slowly working my way back up. I smirked over my shoulder and bathed in his lustful stare.

Bending all the way backward, I went into a bridge before kicking off the table for a handstand. I couldn’t see his face, but as I spread my legs into the splits, I heard him groan. I

completed the rotation just as slowly, then stood up straight and was rewarded with the sight of Nathan stroking his cock.

I sashayed toward him, watching his muscled chest and arm flexing as he worked himself over. He was the sexiest man I'd ever seen. Nathan did something to me that I didn't think was possible, but my body sang being near him. Standing at the very edge of the table, I stared down at him as he looked up at me, and the dark desire evident in his eyes pulled me in, making me wet.

Nathan reached out and ran his hand down my leg. I was now addicted to the power I felt as he shuddered and groaned. With a wink, I flipped backward and did three complete rotations before landing and purposely going to my knees.

Nathan stood, his hands gripping the table and every muscle flexed, the low lighting accentuating the cut lines.

"Crawl to me," he ordered, his voice rough with what I now recognized as his barely contained desire.

I never took my eyes off his as I crawled to him. Pausing just out of his reach, I bit my lip and moaned as I tweaked my nipple. His lip curled up like a snarling animal.

"Give me the chocolate sauce or the wine," I said, feeling reckless as the drums and guitar of the song filled me as they filled the room.

There was only a moment of hesitation before Nathan grabbed the sauce and held it out to me. Opening the lid, I put a little on my finger and licked it off with a moan. His hard cock bobbed every time I did it, making me feel irresistible. Rising up on my knees, I tilted my head back and ran my hands all over my body before squeezing the sauce onto my breasts. I shivered, but it felt incredible on my hard, sensitive nipples. Setting the bottle aside, I ran a finger through the chocolate and sucked on it as I slipped two other fingers between my legs and into my body.

"Uh, oh god, yes." I moaned and wiggled on the table, my pussy heating up and throbbing with the need to have him

inside of me. Gathering a little more sauce to lick off, I ground my hips down on my other fingers.

“Fuck me,” Nathan growled. I squealed in surprise as he grabbed me and, with a hard jerk, dragged me closer. He held me nose to nose, his eyes demanding and in control even though I was positive he felt as out of control as I did. “I was going to try and be gentle tonight,” he said. “But you push all my fucking buttons and test me in a way that makes me fucking crazy.”

My lip pulled up with the compliment, and my head was fuzzy as it fed off this moment of forbidden desire. I touched his abs and licked my lips. That was all it took for Nathan to yank me off the table, so I was standing in front of him. He licked at the chocolate like he was starving. The hot, wet lines made me shiver in his hold. Nathan sucked a nipple into his mouth, and I cried out as my body screamed for him to do more, to take more, to take me.

Licking the last of the sauce off my breasts, he kissed me like my lips were next to be devoured before spinning me around and pushing me down on the table. My nipples screamed at the sudden cold, making my sex clench tight. Cheek pressed against the hard surface, Nathan leaned over me exactly like he had in his office, his weight and heat pressed into my body as his breath fanned my neck.

“Do you have any idea how badly I wanted to rip a hole in your pants and fuck you on my desk? That’s what you do to me,” he said and nipped at my ear before sucking on my neck. I didn’t have to look to know that he was darkening the hickey he’d made.

Spreading my legs and arms, I held on tight as he let go and stood up. I knew he was going to fuck me hard. It was going to hurt and feel incredible, and I would be a screaming mess before he was done. I wiggled against his hand as he rubbed my clit and slipped a finger into me.

“You drive me fucking insane, Savannah,” he said, lining his cock up to my wet pussy. Before I could utter a word, he thrust into me hard enough that the gigantic table screeched as

it moved slightly on the floor. I cried out as his cock hit all the right places and pushed me to my limit. Nathan groaned, his hands tightening on my hips as he picked his rhythm and fucked me hard enough that the sound of our skin slapping could be heard over the music.

“I’m going to fuck you all night and all day tomorrow, and I don’t give a fuck if you can’t walk. I’m taking my fill of you, Kitten. I’m taking it all. Every last fucking drop of your come is mine.”

“Ah!” I screamed as his pounding got faster and harder, the table moving with every stroke. The rings in his cock were rubbing all the right places and were so intense that I wanted to yell that it was too much. Then I came, and the slapping got louder, his groans more insistent as I soaked his cock, and the wetness let him slip in and out faster.

“Fuck me, fuck me, fuck, fuck, fuck!” Nathan yelled and slammed into me so hard that I screamed again, riding the wave of the orgasm he was prolonging.

After a few moments of catching my breath, he helped me stand and face him. He stared at me, but I couldn’t tell what he was trying to say as he searched my face. Instead of words, he dropped his lips to mine, and the last of the pain I’d been holding onto for weeks fell away and crumbled to dust.

Breaking away, he placed his forehead against mine, and we stood there, each of us trying to convey a message without words that we could only hope the other understood.

Smiling, I gave him a little shove in the chest. “Sit down,” I said, and he smirked as he sat back, his cock still hard and on display.

Straddling the chair, I wrapped my arms around his neck. “I want to ride you, Nathaniel Mikhailov,” I said, rubbing myself on him. “Put your cock in me now,” I ordered, and he laughed.

“Oh, I really fucking love this side of you,” he said, and I moaned as I lowered down, and he filled me once more.

Nibbling on his lower lip, I could taste the chocolate and the remnants of the red wine. The combination was as deliciously dark as him. We stared at one another, trading kisses for a long time before I started to move, and I soaked in the feel of him. This man made me see myself and think about things differently.

My body would crave his touch when I left here, but it was my heart and mind I worried about. I shouldn't give a flying fuck about someone I'd only known for a few days, and yet the connection with Nathan was stronger than I'd ever felt with anyone. Was it simply because he came into my life at a time when I needed the reminder that I was a successful, strong woman who'd lost her way?

There was no way to really know, but I would remember these last few days forever.



NATHANIEL

“I’ve never slept in a bed with a woman until you,” I said as we lay in bed hours later.

The sun was just rising, but the storm hadn't let up at all. I'd never wished to be snowed-in before, but I would be happy if we couldn't go anywhere for weeks or months, living inside this snow globe a little longer.

“Not a single one?”

“Not one.” I looked down as Savannah lifted her head from my chest.

“I can't stay here with you, as much fun as that sounds. You live in a world I don't know if I'll ever be okay with.”

“Yeah, I know, and I would look terrible in that FBI suit,” I teased as she chuckled. I tucked her hair behind her ear. “Maybe in another life, things could’ve been different.”

She smiled and kissed my chest. “I would’ve liked that. You’re not who I thought you were, Nathan. At least it’s not all that you are. Thank you for reminding me that the world is not black and white but shades of grey.”

“You still want me to give up, Alex, don’t you,” I asked, and she looked out the window before locking eyes with me.

“No, no, I don’t. But I do want to go after my stepfather. I can’t let him walk the streets knowing what he’ll continue to do to other girls. So, what do you need to let me arrest him?”

Staring at the ceiling, I thought about what my father really wanted, and that was easy access between Canada and the US for our product.

“I’ll make you a deal,” I said, and she pushed herself up onto her arm to look down at me. “I will give you everything I found on your stepfather and Alex. You can pretend Alex died and use the rest of the information to nail your stepfather with as many charges as you like.”

“And what do you get out of this?”

“I need safe passage once a month across the Canadian border. It’s what Edgar Rosales is supplying us with right now. You give me that, and I give you everything else.”

“Do I want to know what you’re taking into Canada?”

“I can’t tell you that, but that’s the deal.”

“What if I don’t take it?”

“I can’t stop what my father will do. As I told you last night, I’ll try to protect you as best I can and most likely die in the process, and I’m not saying that to guilt you. It’s just a fact. My father is a ruthless man, and he doesn’t really care about me, not the way a father should.” I ran my knuckles down her cheek, and she leaned into my touch.

“The devil, you know,” she whispered.

“Agreed, the devil, you know.”

“I’ll see what I can do. I don’t have anything to do with the border, but I may be able to hook you up in exchange for something else.”

Laughing, I grabbed her and rolled her over so I was lying between her legs. “A tough negotiator, I like it. What is it that you want?”

Savannah trailed her fingers down my shoulders and arms, making me shiver. “This one works for both of us.”

“Now I really am intrigued.”

“You give me a file on anyone who is really dirty and is also a thorn in your side. Someone you would like to get rid of, that the FBI would be interested in.”

“So you want to turn me into a snitch? Is that what you’re saying.”

“I want to turn you into a valuable asset. The truth is that no matter what, my boss would find out about passage for you on an ongoing basis, but if they were getting something in return....”

“I see where you’re going with this.”

“But I’ll be honest, they are already looking into your family. Mostly your father and relatives in Russia, but the rest of you will hit their radar soon enough as major players. Right now, they are looking to build a case, but if you’re an inside man for other groups, they’ll leave you alone.”

I covered my eyes. “There is a code in our world, one that is important for our survival and trust among families. I do value those connections and will not turn them in, but there is occasionally someone who works outside of our circle and is a thorn, as you put it. I will not guarantee a name a month or even a name a year, but if this person fits the parameters that I feel comfortable sharing their information, then I could do that.”

“Like my stepfather?”

“Exactly. Again, no guarantees about numbers, and I will never testify or wear a wire or anything else your bosses decide to cook up. I’ll hand over what I have and point them in the right direction. That’s it.” Savannah chewed her bottom lip as she thought. “Or you can let the situation with your stepfather run its course, and I will take care of him when business concludes.” Wiggling subtly back and forth with my hips, I teased her. “Better yet, why don’t we not talk business at all? Our time is short.”

I knew that I would never forget her beautiful smile or how it made me feel warm. Cupping my face, she kissed me as she wrapped her legs around my waist, and I closed my eyes and groaned as I sank into her.

No matter what, I would never be sorry that I got these days with Savannah, regardless of how she came into my life.



SAVANNAH

THREE DAYS LATER

The bed was empty when I stretched and reached for Nathan. I sat up and looked around the room. The snow had stopped late last night, and bright sunlight was streaming in the windows. I pushed my aching body up and grabbed a robe. Walking over, I stared out at the mountain, and it was the first good view of it since I had arrived. The snowy peaks were magnificent. My phone showed no new messages when I grabbed it off the desk, so I tucked it in my pocket as I went on the hunt.

“Nathan?”

The shower wasn’t on, and I ventured out into the massive sitting area and kitchen.

“Nathan?”

The suite was quiet. I figured Nathan had gone to make a call or deal with something at the front desk before I spotted the orange rose and a folded piece of paper on the table. My smile fell. I looked down at my feet and forced myself to walk even though I already knew what it would be. My stomach churned and my hand shook as I picked up the note with *Kisa* scribbled on the outside.

Savannah

I am not one for long goodbyes, and I didn't want to make this any harder for either of us.

I want to remember us in our private snow globe and not the enemies we must be.

I'll keep my promise not to contact you, and it is safest if you do the same.

I've made a deal with my father, and as long as you hold up your end of the bargain and stay away from my family, what we agreed upon will work for us both.

I made arrangements to have your car brought to the resort, and the front desk will take care of anything you

*need before you leave. Stay as long as
you like.*

*I want you to know that my time with
you has been special and meant more to
me*

than you will ever know.

I will never forget you.

Take care of yourself, Kisa.

N.M.

*P.S. I had the napkins forwarded to
your office at Quantico...joke.*

I wiped away the single tear that trickled down my cheek. How was it that someone I'd only known for a handful of days could have such a profound effect on me more so than people I'd known my whole life?

Sighing, I wrote out a text to my boss.

S: I'm ready to come back to work, and I think you were right. I was too close to my brother's case. Do we have anything that I can do outside of the country?"

I couldn't stay here. I needed to get away, at least for a few months, until I got my out-of-control feelings under control.

M: Good to hear. I may have something. We've been asked to consult.

That sounded boring, but I would take it to get out of the country.

S: When do I leave?

And just like that, I stepped out of my snow globe and said goodbye to the man who had stolen my heart forever.

Author's Note

If you loved the way this book ended, then please do not read any further. If you want more of Nathaniel and Savannah, then be sure to read the Epilogue and be on the lookout for their full-length novel (Click ~> [PROTECTIVE PHLOX](#)), which will be part of the California Made Men Series, coming Summer 2024.

EPILOGUE

NATHANIEL

FOUR YEARS LATER

P aperwork, always fucking paperwork. It felt like that was all I ever did anymore. Well, that and have meetings that led to more paperwork. Getting to kill the odd fucker was the highlight of my life these days.

I glanced at the monitors and the people partying. Heart-shaped balloons filled the club as silver and pink confetti floated around with the wind machines. God, I hated fucking Valentine's Day. I hated it more now than before my time with Savannah. Every fucking February was a reminder of what I gave up for this family. It wasn't that I didn't love them, but Savannah had felt like my future, while my family...shit, I didn't know anymore. Did they hold me back?

Everything had been simple before she arrived, but now, with each year that passed, I wanted to reach out and see how she was doing. Was she married? My hand tightened on my pen. She better not fucking be married. Did she still think of me at all, or was I the only one who thought about our time together? I thought with time the memory of her touch would fade, and that my heart would stop aching with a longing that I knew only she could fill.

Fuck.

My phone dinged, and I jerked out of my thoughts. There was a message from Aaron, a stupid gif of a dog giving me a heart. Really? At twenty-eight, my life was reduced to getting dog gifs from my cousin. I should probably just agree to the arranged marriage my father was trying to set up. This was his third attempt in four years, his persistence surprised me as much as it annoyed me. Why he cared, I had no idea. Ronan was going to marry who he wanted and take the throne, so what did it matter if I ever got married?

“Boss?”

“Hey Goran, everything good down on the floor?”

“Yeah. Can I come in?”

“You know you can. For the last time, you’re my friend, not just an employee,” I growled, annoyed that he still acted like this after all this time. I’d grown up with Goran, but he’d also taken a bullet for me. Nothing solidifies a friendship like that.

Goran stepped in and closed the door before walking closer. His face was pale, and his eyes darted around the room like he was avoiding staring me in the eyes.

“What’s wrong?” He opened his mouth and closed it again. “What the fuck is going on?” I stood from my desk, worry etching my mind.

He sighed. “Ceaser is at it again,” he said.

“Jesus fucking Christ. What is it this time? Does he think we stole his gifts out from under the tree at Christmas? Better yet, I hired the fucking Easter Bunny to shit on his lawn.”

“No, he thinks we sent the FBI after him.” My heart sped up with those three letters, but I didn’t know why he would think that. I’d only given over three names in three years, and they were all people the council was trying to get rid of, and none of them knew the information came from me.

“I don’t understand. Why does he think that?”

“Because there is a certain FBI agent, you know, that has been spotted in Italy and may or may not have had some of the

Mancini family arrested. It's speculation, I don't know if she is actively investigating them or just part of a larger team based in Italy." I licked my lips. Shit, Savannah. "But...Nathan, that's not all."

He stared at me and didn't say anything. This wasn't good. If he fucking said she was married I was going to lose my mind. I could feel the pressure building in my head, worrying over what Goran would say next. "Just spit it out already."

"Ceaser, has decided that he's not going to wait for answers, he's put a hit out on Savannah Freeborn." Fuck, fuck, fuck. "And..." Goran paused. "Stay calm Nathan." My brows knit together as he pulled out his phone. "You promise?"

"What the fuck is this? Are you going to make me pinky swear next?"

"Fuck," Goran mumbled, and handed the phone over to me. One look at the image of Savannah brought back all the emotions I'd been trying so hard to bury. She was walking across the street, her strawberry hair blowing behind her, a commanding air to the way she held herself. Fuck she was more beautiful than I remembered.

"Go to the next picture."

I swiped to the next photo, and my world came to a halt. She was standing outside of a large private school holding the hand of a young boy who looked to be about three. He had midnight black hair and Savannah's bright blue eyes, and he looked exactly like me. Oh my fucking god. I had a son. I had a son, and she didn't tell me.

"She named him Cutter Nathaniel Freeborn, but your name is on the birth certificate. Ceaser is out for blood. Your blood."

I'd never tasted rage before, but I did now as I stared at my son's face. Savannah wouldn't keep me from him one more day and there was no fucking way Ceaser or his men were getting anywhere near them."

I rose from the desk. "Goran, get me Ricardo on the phone, and get a team ready. We're flying to Italy tonight."

THANK YOU

Thank you to all those that decided to pick up this book and read it. It is only with readers continued support that Indie Authors, such as myself, are able to keep writing which is why your reviews mean so much to us. If you enjoyed this book, please consider leaving me a review.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Writing is not just a passion for me. It is a lifeline to my sanity.

I have always loved writing but suffer from severe dyslexia and short-term memory retention issues. I struggled in school while I worked every night on re-training my brain.

I was frequently treated like I would never succeed, and I found myself putting my love for writing on a shelf.

Even at the age of six, I found it easier to communicate with animals than people, which was a big reason why I was drawn to dressage horseback riding. I remained focused on my passion for riding until I had to step away from the competition world for personal reasons.

Today, my desire for writing and storytelling has been rekindled. I have published multiple books and will never let anyone or anything hold me back again.

I am a proud romance author who offers my readers morally grey heroes, a ton of spice, epic journeys, and redemption stories.

-Follow Your Dreams-

Brooklyn Cross