

*Big & Hefty*  
**TRUCKER**

CASSI HART

# Big Hefty Trucker

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A Big Burly Romance

*Cassi Hart*

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*Dedicated to letting chance play its part, you never know when you just  
surrender how things will play out. Cheers!*

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*Cassi H   nt*

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# *Chapter 1*

*Kat*

Working nights at a convenience store means that I see all sorts of people. Even if the shifts tend to be quiet because of the late hour, there's always someone who needs to refuel either the car or themselves. While the people who come in are usually cranky, I've never had one pull a gun on me.

There's a first time for everything, I guess.

Having a man pull a gun on me was just something I hoped to never have a first time for.

The night hadn't started out feeling like this would happen, but I'm sure that's how most people feel about days that go wrong like this. I came in to work my shift after a long day of classes for the business degree my parents are making me get. I clocked in and started on my usual routine. As soon as we hit our usual lull, sometime around eight in the evening, my coworker Jim told me he was going to take his meal. I settled in at the register, knowing that he'd take way longer than the thirty minutes allotted to him, and pulled up my latest project on my phone to skim through for edits.

That was over an hour ago. Now I have a man with a gun standing across the counter from me, and I have no idea what's about to happen. I don't want to know what's about to happen.

Thoughts run through my mind. I'm not even supposed to be here working. My parents explicitly forbade it. I'm supposed to be focusing on getting my degree at a fancy college so that I can start working at the

business my father is CEO of. Ironically, the convenience store I'm working at is part of the chain he runs. I'm supposed to inherit it some day and take over running it. Working here was something I did under the table for spare cash, something to support myself with so that I could write in what little spare time I have left. It's only because I'm here that I'm now looking down the barrel of a gun.

If this man shoots me, I'll never finish my novel. All I've ever wanted is to become a romance novelist. I've spent my nights here working on it on my phone in between restocking shelves and helping customers. If I die, I'll never finish it. I'll never find out if I've got what it takes to reach my dreams.

The man glares down at me. "Hands where I can see them!"

If I do die, I guess that means my younger twin sister will get the chance to run the company, like she's wanted to do for as long as either of us can remember. That's the only good thing that would happen. She'll have a chance to follow her dreams.

My heart starts to race and adrenaline surges through my body. I put my hands up, my phone still in one of them as I start to shake with fear. I can't make myself meet eyes with this stranger, can't make myself make a single noise.

"Drop the phone," he orders me. I open my hand and my phone clatters to the floor. Some small part of me hopes it didn't break on impact, but the screaming of my fight or flight instinct drowns it out. I don't know if I'll make it out of this in one piece—who gives a shit about my phone?

I know night shifts can be dangerous, but that's why we always have at least two people working. Of course this would happen while Jim's out doing god knows what. Just my luck.

"W-what do you want? Money in the r-register?" I stammer, my heart



fluttering in my chest like a bird in a cage.

The man's face twists into an ugly smirk. "Oh, I want money alright." His eyes trace up and down my body, which makes my stomach instantly queasy. "You'll fetch me a pretty penny."

Oh god. He wants me? What on earth does he want me for? The theft training we have to take after getting hired never told us what to do if the robber wants us and not the money in the register. Possibilities crowd my head. Does he want to traffic me? Hold me for a ransom? If I cooperate, I may never see anyone I love ever again. But if I don't, I'm dead. Or worse.

"Start moving," he says, gesturing to the entry we use to get behind the counter. "Keep your hands where I can see them."

My whole body starts to shake. I don't know what to do. There's nothing I can think of that doesn't end with me shot or shoved in the trunk of a car.

"P-please," I whimper. "We have money in the register. I can unlock it for you—"

"Shut up!" my kidnapper barks. "Move it, bitch!"

I flinch and start to inch over to the entrance at the other side of the counter.

No one knows where I am. I live alone in an apartment my parents pay for, so it's not like a roommate is expecting to see me tomorrow. My first class isn't until the afternoon tomorrow, so it'll be hours before I show up as absent. All the money my family has can't buy back that time for me if I'm dead before they can throw it at investigators to find me.

I should never have started working here. Past me never should have felt rebellious. I could be at home, writing. I could be hanging out with

friends, or studying in the campus library. Instead, I'm here at a job I got just to prove to myself that I could do something without my parents' permission. My stupid stubborn streak always gets me in trouble and here I am, in the deepest trouble I've ever been because of it.

My brain starts to search desperately for options. The man with the gun is way bigger than me. I don't know anything about guns or how to disarm someone. This was never something that seemed like it would be a problem for someone like me ... But then again, heiresses don't typically work at gas station convenience stores.

"I have money!" I tell him urgently as I inch forward as slowly as I can. "My family has money, way more than whatever you'd sell me for!"

"Sure they do," he scoffs. "Wouldn't be working here if they did."

My face burns with embarrassment. I'm not like my parents. I'm not like my sister. I don't want money or prestige or power, or whatever it is that keeps them in their tower running the company. I just want to live a normal life, writing novels and staying the hell out of the boardroom.

Just as I get to the entrance out onto the main floor of the store, I try one last time.

"Please," I plead with the man, my hands still up as I look at him with tears in my eyes. "Please, don't hurt me."

At the same moment I ask, I see something move out of the corner of my eye, behind my kidnapper. I make myself ignore it, instead urging myself to stare at the man with the gun. Something flickers in his eyes, almost like he's having second thoughts, before it fades and he goes back to looking brutish and menacing.

Suddenly, over the roar of my blood rushing through my ears, I hear a

new voice. It's low and rough, but warm, even inviting. It's the exact opposite of the way my kidnapper sounds. "Hey, everything alright?" the voice asks.

The man with a gun swings his body to face the man who spoke, but he looks shocked at what he finds. I don't blame him. Even standing ten or fifteen feet away like he is, the guy interrupting my attempted kidnapping is massive, broad and built like a wall. I can't help noticing that he's handsome, with thick hair and dark eyes and the kind of body writers like me dream of when they talk about their male leads. He scowls down at the man, making him look small and frail in comparison. In one of his hands is a large, steaming cup of coffee. His hand makes it look small, but that's just because he's so big. In the other hand is the plastic lid. When he sees that he's now got a gun pointed at him, his brow furrows.

What happens next is a blur.

My rescuer throws his cup at the man with the gun. Instantly, the man screams as suddenly, he's covered in molten hot brewed coffee. I've never been more thankful for how hot the machines keep everything. Before the kidnapper can regain his composure, my rescuer is on him. There's struggling and scuffling noises, grunts as punches hit flesh, maybe even the crunch of something being broken. In seconds, it's all over. I barely registered what happened.

My would-be kidnapper is now sprawled out on the linoleum floor of the convenience store in a puddle of coffee, groaning as he registers whatever pain he's in. And above him looms my rescuer, the gun now in his hands and aimed down at the kidnapper.

Before I can say something, the massive man looks at me with those intense, dark eyes of his. My head swims as our eyes meet. He breaks eye

contact to trace his eyes up and down my figure, but it doesn't feel gross like it did with the guy now on the floor. It feels good, almost protective.

I watch as his handsome face softens. And then he tells me to call 911.

## Chapter 2

### *Finn*

I've been in a subpar mood all day. Some days are just like that. Nothing's gone wrong, per se, but it's not like shit's going right either. I'm just tired, I tell myself. I've been working overtime, picking up new routes to make extra cash, and it's just tiring me out more than I expected. That's gotta be it.

Of course, it's been like this for a while. It might be a new route tonight, but the long hours aren't unusual for me. I've been working as a trucker for over a decade. It's a lot of miles on the road, but the work has been consistent for me, and when you have bills to pay, consistency trumps everything else. I don't regret getting into this job for that reason.

These overtime routes though ... They're wearing me out more than I'd like. I'm not as young as I used to be. I'm not even old, but I haven't been able to work as tirelessly as I could when I was in my twenties. I'm thirty-three now, so I should know better than to push myself like I did back when I first started. But, well ... My mom's new medication isn't covered by our insurance, so me working overtime is the only option we have.

She's been doing so much better on this new prescription, too. I'm so proud of her for giving it a try. Her health has long been a struggle—every patient with her constellation of symptoms is different and finding a medication that helps her is incredibly hard. For a while, lots of meds actually made her symptoms worse. We had to make do with a complex treatment plan that involved multiple doctors and therapists. Finally, one of them

recommended this new medicine, and watching her finally gain a little more independence for herself has been amazing.

It's always just been me and my mom. My abusive father walked out on us when I was ten. We did okay for several years. She was doing well then because my dad was no longer making our lives hell. She had the occasional episode, but they were mild compared to what would come later. When I started at college, everything seemed to be going well, but then I got a call that she was having one of her episodes. I dropped out without a second thought to move back home and help take care of her. Trucking came a few years later, when I turned twenty-one, and I haven't looked back.

I regret none of it. Do I wish I could have kept studying for a degree? Kind of. I went to college because I love reading and learning, but I can read in my spare time. I can still learn whatever I want, even if it's not going towards a degree. Taking care of my family—my mom—will always be more important than draining resources on an expensive piece of paper.

When I roll into the gas station in the evening, it's only because I can't keep driving without some sort of caffeine in my system. I only have a few more hours' worth of local stops to make, but I can't get through them without stopping for a moment to myself. After a coffee, and maybe a snack, I'll be good as new.

The convenience store attached to the gas station is quiet when I walk in. It's clean and well stocked, but it's just an odd time of the day. I'm sure the night shift at this place is dead like this most of the time. My eyes flit to the main check-out counter, and what I see there makes my breath catch.

Standing behind the register is a pretty young woman, typing away at something on her phone. She's staring so intently at the screen of her phone that she didn't even notice me walk in. Long brown hair pulled up into a bun,

a plush bottom lip she's biting as she types, and a soft, curvy figure obscured by the garish uniform she probably has to wear every time she works. She looks nothing like the kind of people I'm used to seeing in these stores.

To her, I'm probably just another customer. No use getting hung up on how pretty she looks. I make myself look away. I just need to get my coffee and get back on the road.

I sigh to myself. Like a guy like me would ever catch the eye of a girl like her. She's youthful and beautiful and I'm just a big man driving trucks to make ends meet. I'm sure she's got plenty of young, handsome suitors clamoring for her attention. I'm just a random stranger.

I make my way to the back corner where a sign tells me the coffee is. After a quick scan, I find the biggest cup they have and fill it with coffee from the urn labeled "light roast." It's steaming like crazy, even though I'm sure it's not the freshest, so I take a lid, but don't put it on the cup yet. The liquid is so hot I almost can't hold the cup, so keeping the lid off will help it cool off faster.

I lift the cup to my nose, inhaling the bittersweet scent as I scan the store for something to eat. Am I even hungry? Hard to say. I can't think of much else aside from drinking this coffee and the girl that'll be ringing me up whenever I head over to pay.

As I walk back around the corner towards the front counter, a chill runs down my spine.

The beautiful young woman behind the counter is no longer on her phone. She has her hands up as she looks at a man standing in front of her. Fear is making her bright eyes glint strangely, the healthy blush she had before gone, leaving her white as a sheet. The man is hunched forward, dressed in all black. As I get closer, I can hear him barking orders at her. She

whimpers something back, but he doesn't relent.

The situation feels wrong. Something dark and strange stirs within me, growling angrily at the way the pretty stranger is looking at the man in front of her. It urges me forward, telling me to step in, to protect her. To make this man pay for making her feel scared or threatened or whatever it is she's feeling.

Carefully, I begin to approach. Once I'm close enough to act but still well out of arm's reach, I break the tense silence between the girl and the man.

"Hey, everything alright?" I ask as I look at the girl's frightened expression.

As her eyes rise to look at me, the man facing her rounds on me and I finally see what had her looking scared shitless.

The guy has a gun.

I act instantly, instinct taking over as I spring forward. The hot coffee in my hand provides the perfect distraction as I throw it at the gunman's head. Scalding hot splashes onto his face and hands and sinks into his clothes, and he screams and swears as his guard drops. I surge forward, wrapping a hand around the wrist of his gun hand while throwing all of my weight into a punch to his face. I feel something crunch as my fist meets his head. The force knocks him back and loosens his grip on the gun, which means I can wrest it from his hands. Another thrown elbow and the man falls to the floor, face bleeding and starting to swell.

I plant a booted foot on his chest and apply pressure. He groans and wheezes underneath me, but doesn't say anything. He's so dazed that he doesn't even react when I point the muzzle of his own gun down at him.



I'm not usually thankful for my size. I'm a big dude but it's just a part of my life, rather than something I think about. But as I stare down at this ugly piece of shit, I'm suddenly thankful that I've got probably seventy-five pounds on him. I could break his ribs just by stepping on him. For a moment, I think about doing it, just to prove that I can. Breaking a man's ribs for threatening my woman? It seems more than fair.

I look up at the pretty little woman standing behind the register, her eyes wide with awe and relief. I look her up and down. No bleeding. No bullet holes. I mean, I would have heard it if he'd shot her, but I can't help the urge to make sure she's unharmed. I take care of what's mine.

Fuck.

We don't even know each other. I'm just a random person that happened to be in the right place at the right time and stepped in. She's not mine, so why did I just call her that?

I push the thought away. There are more important things to worry about right now.

"Call 911. Tell them there's been an armed altercation," I say to her.

She nods and scrambles to the store phone on the wall behind her, picking up the receiver with shaking hands as she punches in 911. As she gives information to the dispatcher on the other side of the line, she keeps looking at me, those soft, bright eyes of hers lingering on me more than once.

The feeling of them on my body makes it heat. Maybe before this she wouldn't have given me a second look, but she's looking now, that's for sure. She sees someone who stood up for her, someone who can protect her from the things that can threaten or endanger her. It's all I can do to keep my head on straight. I have to focus, at least until law enforcement gets here.

This shit isn't done until the scum under my boot is in cuffs and behind bars. After that, we can look at each other all we want.

## Chapter 3

*Kat*

It's all I can do to keep myself together when law enforcement finally shows up.

The tense minutes spent waiting for them passed by at a snail's pace, but when I try to think about them, they're a blur. All I remember is the watchful gaze of my rescuer, his intense, dark eyes practically boring into me as he held down the attacker like he was nothing.

Even now, as I watch a police officer cuff the gunman and haul him up from the floor, I can feel his eyes on me. I'm not sure if it's because of the adrenaline or his gaze, but I'm trembling as I fidget in my spot.

What am I supposed to do with my evening now? Am I going to be expected to keep working? Do I need to call my manager? Where's my still-missing coworker, Jim? Is he hurt?

Before I can wonder any further, I look up to see Jim, standing in the doorway to the store, his face pale with shock as he looks around at the chaos. A cop gives him a sideways look as he starts asking the man who rescued me questions.

"What the hell happened?" Jim cries as he rushes into the store.

My rescuer bristles as my coworker gets close to me, and he steps in his path. "Who the fuck are you?" he demands.

If possible, Jim looks even more pale now, standing in the shadow of the huge, handsome stranger. "I-I work here."

“Where were you?” my rescuer spits at him. Jim stands stock-still, silent as the grave. I’m not sure he’s breathing. Not even the cops around are stepping in to stop the yelling. “Do you make a habit of disappearing like that? If I hadn’t been here, she could have been hurt.”

Jim’s eyes flit to me, but before he can say anything, I say, “I’m fine.” My voice is shaking, but I can’t make it stop. “You should probably call management.”

My coworker nods as he inches away from my knight in shining armor, only to be stopped by a cop with questions. They walk out back into the cool evening air, leaving me with the stranger and a few other officers.

My knees feel weak, my legs like jelly. Goodness, I just want to sit down. Maybe cry.

Before I can think about it further, I feel a hand at the small of my back. When I look up, all I see is that intense look again as the handsome stranger stares down at me.

“Are you alright?” he asks softly. His hand is warm and gentle against me, and it’s all I can do not to lean into the touch, into the warmth of his body as he stands close by.

I make myself nod up at him instead, but he gives me a rueful smile.

“It’s okay if you’re not, you know. That was a scary thing to go through.”

This time when I nod at him, I’m also fighting back tears. Immediately, I feel a hand on my cheek, brushing them away.

“It’s okay, baby,” he purrs. “Feel what you need to feel.”

Something about this man’s touch feels so comforting in a way I’ve never felt before. I don’t know him at all, but he put his life on the line to

save me. He can't be that bad if he stepped into the line of fire for me like that. It makes me want to learn more about him, to know what sort of person does that for a complete stranger.

“What’s your name?” I ask softly.

The smile he gives me when I ask my question is disarming. I thought he was attractive before, when he was brutal and unforgiving and protective. But that man has nothing on the man looking down at me now. “My name’s Finn,” he says. “What’s yours?”

“Kat,” I breathe, shocked that this man would even look at me twice, let alone gift me with a smile like that.

“I’m sorry you had to go through all this tonight, Kat,” Finn says, his voice low and rough, but still soft and comforting in a way I’d never expect. The shock of tonight’s events aren’t the only things turning my knees to jelly. “Do you think you can give the police a statement?”

I take a deep breath and nod. “Can I sit down while I do it? My legs are trying to give out on me.”

Before I can protest, Finn is wrapping his arms around me. He lifts me up gently, and in my surprise, my hands scramble for a hold on his arms. Wow, his muscles are thick. They’re rock hard under my fingers, and yet he lifts me onto the counter next to the register like I weigh nothing. My head swims, but it’s not because I got lifted. It’s because he lifted me.

He sets me down like I’m something precious and delicate, and I can feel my cheeks heat as his hands linger on my body, as if he doesn’t want to let me go. I don’t even get the chance to squeak out a “thank you” before he’s nodding at someone behind me. A police officer appears at our side and starts to ask questions.

The questions the officer asks are standard, so they're easy to answer as my mind drifts elsewhere. The entire time, Finn is right there next to me. His hands don't leave me once, as if he knows his touch is the only thing keeping me grounded as I slowly process what happened and tell the officer the facts as best I can. Every once in a while, he lifts a hand to run it through his thick hair, and I get a whiff of his amazing smell. Something like pine and woodsmoke, with a spicy undertone I can't get enough of. I find myself fighting the urge to lean more into him, to pay attention to the questions the police are asking me.

And yet, I know in my heart that if Finn wasn't here, comforting me as I talk about having a gun pointed at my head and getting threatened with kidnapping, I wouldn't be able to get through this. I'm upset enough as it is that I'm shocked I haven't cried more. And even then, I know I'd feel stupid and useless for it. With Finn's warm, strong body next to me, grounding me, I'm able to get through the interview with only a few tears and some well-timed deep breaths.

I'm not sure what I would have done if he hadn't been here tonight. For the attempted kidnapping, or for the aftershocks of it all. Hell, I'm not sure how I'm going to get through the next few days without him. Am I supposed to go back to business as usual after all this?

Just as the officer asking me questions thanks me for giving a statement, Jim walks back into the store, this time with our store manager, Paul. He looks disheveled, like he got out of bed for this. Considering I know he was supposed to come for the early bird shift tomorrow, he probably did.

"Kat," he cries as soon as he sees me, rushing over to the counter where I'm sitting. I feel Finn stiffen at my side. "Are you alright?"

"I'm fine," I tell him. I look up at my handsome rescuer and smile.

“Thanks to Finn, everything turned out okay.”

Paul glances at Finn and his eyes widen as he looks him up and down. He quickly pulls himself together and starts telling me the plan for the store. “I’m going to hang around here and help the police with security camera footage. Corporate wants us to close for the next forty-eight hours, and they want me to draft a new schedule so that we have more people around for evenings, at least for the next few weeks. You’ll still be able to keep your night shifts, I know that’s all your schedule allows for, but we’ll make sure there’s more staff around for everyone’s safety. Are you okay with taking a few days off while I get that sorted out?”

I nod at him, glad for the time away. I feel like if I step foot in the store in the next three days, I’ll disintegrate and have a panic attack or something. Every few minutes, the events of earlier tonight come back to me and it’s all I can do to keep it together in front of Paul and Jim. Maybe if it was just Finn, I’d let it all out, but it’s not. I feel like I have to keep a functioning façade up in front of my boss and my coworker.

“Great,” Paul says, clapping his hands together. “You can go ahead and go home then. Jim and I will get everything sorted out here. Do you want someone to walk you out to your car?”

I flinch, thinking about the flickering floodlight at the back of the store that shines on the spaces where employees are supposed to park. It only works half the time, and it gets so dark back there behind the building. My heart seizes as I think about walking back there alone. What if my failed kidnapper has someone working with him?

What if that person is waiting to finish what he started?

“I’m sure Jim would be more than willing to—”

“It’s okay, baby,” I hear Finn say, bringing me back to reality. Jim

sputters at being interrupted, but falls silent when my handsome rescuer gives him a menacing look. “I’ll walk you to your car.”

Relief washes over me. I force myself to take a deep breath, my entire body trembling as I let it out and look up at him. His face is soft and open once more, the warning expression he just gave Jim gone as if it was never there at all. My chest fills with warmth as he brushes a thumb across my skin.

“That would be great,” I murmur to him.



## *Chapter 4*

*Finn*

This is not how I pictured my night going.

Don't take that as a complaint, because I'm not complaining. Yeah, I might be behind on my deliveries now, but that's nothing a call to my manager won't fix. He likes me. He knows that I care about my job and doing it well. If I tell him I prevented an armed kidnapping during a stop I took for a break, he'll give me a pass for the evening and find someone to finish the route tomorrow. As I wait for Kat to gather her things from the store's back room, I make a mental note to give him a call as soon as I'm back at my truck.

Kat, I muse to myself ... The little woman who now has my heart and soul by the balls.

Yeah, definitely not how I pictured my night going.

I mean, what self-respecting man wouldn't be affected by such a beautiful, precious thing leaning into my every touch? As soon as I have the thought, however, that dark, strange thing in the back of my mind growls. I realize that my statement isn't quite right and that it doesn't quite hit upon how I feel. What I really think is this: no man with an ounce of self-respect would ever think of laying their hands on Kat, actually. Not if they value keeping their limbs attached.

That same dark part of my mind is what pushed me to say I'd walk her out to her car. I don't give a fuck if I'm a practical stranger to her, I don't

trust Kat's coworker. That Jim guy? Fucking waste of space. He wasn't there when the gunman first appeared, and from her statement, it sounds like he'd been gone for much longer than he was supposed to be. She said something about his shift meal and how he always takes more time than he's supposed to, and given what happened to her tonight, I have a hard time calling it a coincidence.

Maybe I'm seeing the worst in a piece of shit like him, but it's hard not to when his negligence threatened Kat's life. Not that a scrawny scrub like him would be able to stop someone armed with a pistol, but they'd be less likely to try something like that.

In the end, it doesn't matter much, because I was there.

I was able to step in and put a stop to whatever the gunman's plan was.

And more importantly, I was able to be around for Kat as she gave her statement to the police. She did so well, telling them everything she knew and what she remembered about the altercation. I know she was nervous; she was trembling like a leaf until I helped her sit on the counter.

Lust pools deep in my belly at the memory of her body against mine. The memory of how her hands had found my arms immediately as I lifted her makes my skin tingle with heat. Already, I find myself longing for her touch again. Her leaning into mine isn't enough. I want her to feel like she can touch me too. I know I'll lean into it just like she leaned into my own touches.

Fuck. This woman is addicting. I can't afford a distraction, both literally and figuratively, but something tells me that I'm not going to be able to let Kat go after tonight.

I can only hope and pray she feels the same way.

When Kat emerges from the back room, she has a little more color in her cheeks, as if time out of the spotlight of other peoples' attention did her good. She's pulled on a thin zip-up hoodie over her uniform shirt, and she's replaced the non-slip work shoes with more comfortable looking slip-ons. Over her shoulder is a well-loved backpack, which I take from her as soon as she's close enough. Her eyes widen as she watches me swing it over my own shoulder.

"Ready to go?" I ask her.

She nods up at me shyly as her cheeks flush a mouthwatering shade of pink.

Do other parts of her flush like that?

I push the thought away as she leads me out the front door, past the chatting police officers, her boss, and a put-out looking Jim. He pales and looks away when I glare at him, muttering nothing more than a "Have a good night, Kat" as we walk past him and out the door.

"Good night," my ass, I think darkly as I follow Kat around the building. Best part of that interaction is that I don't think she even heard him—he sounded like he may have been too quiet for her to. She didn't seem to notice him at all.

Good. She's too good to have to deal with the likes of him.

Honestly, she's probably too good for me too, which means I'm even more thankful that she's let me give her so much attention tonight.

As we approach her parked car, a newer model in a make that seems rather luxurious for someone who works in a convenience store, I realize it's dark. I keep expecting a floodlight or streetlamp to turn on as we move, but there's nothing.

Suddenly, I'm even more glad that I walked her to her car.

"Is there supposed to be a light out here?" I ask her as she digs through her pockets for her keys.

"Yeah," she sighs softly. "But it only works half the time."

Something about that makes me prickle. Maybe I need to stop back inside before going back to my truck to tell that manager of hers that it needs to be fixed. The light from the moon isn't enough to allow people to look for potential threats. That should be a priority, given what's happened tonight.

Kat deserves to feel safe wherever she goes.

The lights of her car flash and I hear the door locks click as she unlocks the vehicle. She looks at the car for a long moment before looking up at me.

"Thank you," she says. "For everything, tonight."

"Anyone would have done the same."

The look she gives me tells me she doesn't think so. As much as it breaks my heart, it also makes me want to assure her that someone would have ... Even then, it doesn't matter because I was there. And I will now always be there for her.

She breaks away from my gaze to turn and open up the door to the car's back seat. She takes her bag from me and bends to place it carefully in the back seat. My heart about stops.

The black jeans she's wearing, probably to match the uniform polo she has to wear, fit her ass like a glove. They're so tight it's almost like she was poured into them. The moonlight throws every dip and curve she has into relief. Instantly, I'm hard in my jeans, aching to touch her, to show her she's worth protecting and keeping safe and that I'm the man who'll do it.

I'm the only man who can give her what she deserves.

I suppress the urge to take her ass cheeks in my palms as she straightens whatever she needs to straighten in the back of her car. Almost as soon as she started, she's done. Kat pulls herself back up to standing and turns to me. Fuck, I hope she doesn't look down. A young woman like her shouldn't have to deal with a guy like me losing it over her body. She'd never actually be into a man like me.

Unfortunately for me, those wide eyes of hers get curious. She looks me up and down, and just as she's about to say something, she bites her lip instead. Her eyes are trained on the erection throbbing behind my fly.

Fuck.

"I, um—"

"Please, baby," I growl. I can barely contain myself. She's had such a long night, I don't want to make it longer for her ... "You should get in the car and get home where it's safe."

"I'm serious when I say thank you," she says softly, her eyes finally trailing up to meet mine. If I didn't know better, I'd think she was beginning to turn a little pink again. She bites that lip of hers, her eyes dark with curiosity. "I-Is there a way you want me to thank you?"

Shit. Fuck.

"Little girl, don't offer things you don't want to give."

Kat's pretty brow furrows as she gives me an irritated look. "I'm perfectly capable of deciding what I want to share with a person."

There's no fucking way. There's no way a sweet thing like her wants a man like me. "Kat, you don't want me like that—"

“And what if I do?” she says angrily, her small hands clenching into fists at her sides as she stares up at me with a petulant glint in her eyes. “I have enough people telling me what I do and don’t want in my life, I don’t need it from you too!”

My head swims as every muscle in my body quivers with need. She’s got spark, and she’s not afraid to let me see it. I didn’t think I could have even stronger feelings for her but here we are.

“Then what do you want, baby?” I ask her, my voice rough with lust. “I need to hear you say it.”

“You. I want you, and I want to forget all the bad things that happened tonight.”

She doesn’t need to say a single thing anymore.

In an instant, I’m on her, pressing her against the car’s door frame as I capture her lips with mine. Her soft body fits perfectly against mine, filling my palms as I pull her close. Her mouth fights mine for dominance, and she whimpers and eases up when she realizes she doesn’t have to fight me like she must have to fight other things in her life.

Her hands come up to gather handfuls of my shirt, pulling me still closer. It’s all the permission I need to buck my hips against her, let her feel how hard she’s made me with that body and those eyes and that little bit of spark she has.

It’s been so fucking long since I was last intimate with a woman, and fuck, I don’t think I’ll ever be able to find someone as sweet as this. No one has ever felt this right before.

“Turn around,” I say against her mouth. “I want to see that ass of yours again.”

Breathlessly, she complies, turning and bending over. I palm at her ass with my hands, watching as her flesh jiggles just a little under the fabric of her jeans.

My hands drift forward around her hips to the button and zipper. Her hands brush against mine to help, and suddenly, I'm able to peel away her pants and underwear to reveal inch after inch of creamy pale skin. She whines as I carefully slip her jeans down to her knees, brushing my fingertips against her thighs.

"F-Finn," she stammers. "What are you going to do to me?"

"You said you want to feel good, right?" I ask her as I settle on my knees, just behind her. Her pussy glistens in front of me, perfectly positioned and already wet and ready to be eaten or fucked. It's all I can do to keep myself from leaning forward and inhaling her sweet scent. "Let me make you feel good."

"Please," Kat breathes, glancing at me over her shoulder with flushed cheeks.

That's all the permission I need to start fucking her with my tongue. I spread her ass cheeks with my hands as I bury my face into her flushed cunt, letting her juices coat my face. Almost immediately, she starts to make soft, needful noises, bucking her hips into my face. I suck and lick at her clit before delving my tongue within her, dragging it through her folds to help her chase her high.

Fuck me, her pussy is everything I've dreamed of, yearned for. Nothing compares to this feeling, to making my woman feel good.

"O-oh, Finn," she cries, pressing back onto my tongue.

"Let me hear how good I'm making you feel," I growl as I nip at her

flesh. “Let everyone in that fucking store know how good I’m eating you out.”

“Shit,” she swears as I pull away to start pressing a finger inside her. Her walls grip my digit tightly, hot and wet as I start to thrust it within. “Finn, I think I’m going to—”

“Gonna come for me, little girl?” She’s so responsive to my touch. I wouldn’t believe her words if I couldn’t feel how tight and wet she was. She’s already beginning to pulse around my finger, it’s just a matter of time before she shatters against my tongue.

“Mmmhm,” she moans. When she starts bucking back on my face in earnest, I hold her still with my free hand, laving my tongue over her folds until suddenly, she starts to fall apart.

With a soft sob, she gushes all over my face, coating me in her release as she comes with my mouth on her clit. Her pussy grips around my finger as it pulses in time with her heartbeat. Her legs shake, her ass quivers. Fresh heat trickles down my spine like syrup as I greedily watch her come, my own body shaking with the urge to sink into her heat. It seems like her orgasm goes on forever, and I watch in awe as it slowly subsides. Nothing will ever beat being able to make her feel like this, make her cry my name.

It’s only when she pulls away and turns around, eyes hooded as she looks at my crotch, that I realize she’s not the only one spent.

“How do you want me?” she murmurs, trying to kick her pants off and pull me into the back of the car. “Finn, please—”

“Slow down, baby,” I smile at her. “I, um ... I already came.”

Her eyes widen as what I said registers. I’m as surprised as she is. I’ve never come untouched like that before, but if it was going to happen, I’m



glad it happened as I was going down on her. It was fucking perfect. “What?”

“I already came while making you feel good,” I explain as I start to pull her pants back up her legs. Watching her soft skin disappear is more painful than I care to admit. “And besides, this was all about you.”

“Are you sure?” Kat asks. Her hair, just barely still in the messy bun she’s had it in all night, falls into her face as she looks at me, still on my knees on the ground beside her car. I push it behind her ear before running a thumb over her cheekbone.

“I’m positive,” I smile. “You need to get home.”

She nods before leaning forward to kiss me. I hope she tastes herself on my lips. I’ve never had anything sweeter on my tongue.

“Thank you, Finn,” she says with a soft smile, her eyes bright and beautiful in the moonlight. “Thank you for everything.”

My heart soars as I watch her settle into the driver’s seat and start her car. With a little wave, she pulls out and takes off into the night, disappearing in the soft hum of traffic.

I sigh to myself as I start back to my truck. I have to figure out how to get cleaned up before I do anything else tonight, but that’s the least of my worries.

This little woman has me wrapped around her little finger and she doesn’t even know it.

## Chapter 5

*Kat*

It's hard to escape what happened that evening at work when I dream about it every night.

Every dream starts the same, with the frightening realization that I'm in danger and there's no one there to save me. And then suddenly the dream changes, and the danger is destroyed by the appearance of a handsome stranger—my handsome stranger—bursting in to save the day. And if that big, strong savior happens to look a lot like Finn? I'm certainly not complaining.

Because after the stranger saves me, he takes me back to his stronghold and makes love to me. It's just like what happened in my car, but better because I get the chance to touch him, to feel his skin against the palm of my hands.

And then I wake up. The dream disappears, and I'm just a college student again, not a damsel in distress making her man feel good.

My man, I scoff to myself. As if a man like Finn would ever let me call him mine.

It's been a week since we met, and I haven't been able to get him out of my head. Every night, he visits me in my dreams, and while it's amazing, it's not enough. It doesn't compare to how warm he felt standing next to me, how strong he was, lifting me to the counter.

And his tongue ...

Every time I think about it, I feel like I need to go take a cold shower. Nothing has ever made me feel that good, not even the romance novels I read when I need inspiration for my own novel. It's hard to be a virgin and love romance books like I do because it sometimes feels like I'll never get to experience what the characters have. It's even harder to write them, because I have nothing to go off of when it comes to writing about relationships. I've never had one before.

Honestly, I've never really wanted one before now. All of the guys I knew in high school were just focused on getting their dicks wet, and none of the men I know in my college classes really do anything for me. It might seem sad, but I've never really been concerned about it. I settled for the relationships I read about in books and let them remind me that it was worth it to wait for someone who made me feel amazing.

And well, I think I've found the someone. Finn not only made me feel good, but he made me feel safe and protected.

Already, the feelings he's stirred in me are beginning to affect my day-to-day life. It's been almost impossible to focus on my business classes because I'm busy thinking about him and his mouth and his hands and his intense, protective gaze. More than that, I think our encounter has managed to change how I write for the better.

Before he stepped in and saved me last week, I'd been struggling with a love scene in my novel. As soon as I looked at it a day or two later, the words just started flowing. My characters finally started to feel real, and the action on the page was hot, if I do say so myself. The chemistry finally makes sense, and I don't feel like I'm being held back by writer's block. The story just feels right.

If only the rest of my life could feel like that.

Because my boss hasn't gotten back to me with an updated schedule, I've had the past week off of work. It's irritating because I want the hours, but at the same time, I'm okay with some space from the store. What happened was scary, and I'm not sure how I'll react to standing behind the counter again.

So instead of stocking shelves, I'm at my parent's house for dinner.

It's going as well as can be expected. My dad got pulled into his home office for a call, so my mom, my sister, and I are sitting in the dining room, waiting for him to finish as we pick at our food.

As usual, the atmosphere is a little tense. My parents are very particular, and it frustrates my mom that my dad would step out to do work when both me and Camilla are around for a meal. Camilla and I make eye contact across the table as my mom sighs. Yeah, we seem to say to each other, this sucks.

Nothing seems to make either of our parents happy, least of all each other.

I can hear my dad a room or two over, talking with someone in the human resources department about an incident they had at one of the convenience stores owned by the company. Instantly, I know they're talking about the armed altercation that happened involving me.

My blood runs cold. On the one hand, I'm surprised that they're still talking about it after a week. On the other, I can't help wondering if my name has come up. I was the employee involved in the incident, after all.

When I first got the job, I figured my dad would never find out that his own daughter was working as a clerk at one of his stores. There are so many locations and so many employees that I figured I'd blend right in and get lost in the sea of names. It's not like "Katherine Greene" is a common name, but

on a list, it's not going to stick out. Now I'm not so sure. I don't know what he'll do if he finds out I'm working after being explicitly forbidden from doing so. I'm already pursuing a degree I have no interest in to be able to inherit a company I don't care about. They've already taken away my dreams, what more could my parents possibly take from me?

Camilla gives me a strange look, as if she can feel my rising tension. She's always been good at reading people, and she's especially good at reading me because, well, we're twins. She's known me my entire life.

She'd be so much better at running a business than I would be, and that's one of the reasons why. She can read people and see to the heart of the issue and then she always has ideas to fix it. It's awful that our parents are so hung up on me taking over the company when I know for a fact that she wants to do it more than anything. Do they even realize she's taking a lot of the same classes as I am?

When I glance at my mother, who's staring off into space and taking a sip of her wine as she waits for my father to come back, I decide that no, they don't. They've never cared about anything but appearances, let alone what my sister and I want.

The evening ends up remaining tense, even after my father returns from his phone call. Cam and I spend most of our time giving each other looks over the table as we struggle through small talk about our classes and whatever else we might be doing. It's boring, but there's not much either of us can do to escape until finally I'm the one that cracks.

I give each of my parents a hug and tell them I have to get back to my apartment so I can finish studying for a quiz I have tomorrow, which is a total lie, but it gets me out the door. Cam says something similar, and suddenly, we're both walking to our cars so that I can go to my apartment and she can

make her way back to the dorms. She's a Resident Advisor because it looks good on a resume, and she's supposed to be on call as soon as she gets back.

"You seem different," she says, not bothering to beat around the bush. I love that she's so direct with me. It keeps me from trying to hide things I don't need to hide. "Good different, but different."

I bite my lip as I unlock my car. "Something happened," I tell her. "I might have met someone."

Her eyes widen. "Seriously? Where?"

"Work," I shrug. "It's been a week, and I can't get him out of my head."

Her smile turns sly. My heart flutters as she starts to tease me. "Always a romantic. Have you written about him yet?"

"N-no," I stammer as I feel my cheeks flare with heat. "Not yet."

"Well, let me know when you're ready for me to meet him," she says as she clambers into her car. "But if you end up writing about him instead, you know I'm always happy to read about one of your hunky romantic leads."

"Thanks, Cam," I tell her. "I'll let you know how it goes, if it goes at all."

"You're a catch, sis. I'm sure he feels the same way."

Her words are still with me as I make my way home. It's distracting, to be honest. I haven't seen Finn in a week but he's all I can think about. We hadn't exchanged phone numbers or anything, but it had felt like our connection was real. And yet, it's not like either of us took the steps to keep in touch ...

Was any of it as real as it felt?

Because I'm lost in my thoughts, I miss one of my turns, and suddenly it feels like I'm going to work. This is one of the routes I take to get to the convenience store, so of course it feels like it, but it feels surreal. I haven't driven this way in a week, but the turns are automatic.

Screw it. Stopping by the store, even if I'm supposed to be taking it easy, won't hurt anyone. It'll give me the chance to see how I feel about being in the store after being threatened at gun point. Testing myself and my stress level is good preparation for whenever I start working again.

And ... some part of me is desperately hoping that I'll run into my handsome rescuer while I'm there.

It was luck that brought him into my life a week ago.

Maybe fate will make sure he's there again tonight.

## *Chapter 6*

*Finn*

It's been a week.

A week since my life changed before my very eyes, a week since I met the woman who would have me by the heart without even knowing it. A week since I got my hands on her, made her come apart with my tongue.

It's been a week since I last saw Kat, and I'm really not sure how I haven't lost my shit about it yet.

Even my mom, so often consumed with her own thoughts and how they haunt her, has noticed something's up. She's started to tease me for looking like I'm on a different planet when we sit down for our morning cups of coffee. When she finally asked this morning what could possibly have me so spaced out, I couldn't make myself lie. I told her that I'd met someone.

I haven't seen her smile like that in years.

Even when I'd told her that it wouldn't amount to anything, that a girl like Kat would never actually settle for a man like me, she remained undeterred.

"Son, sometimes it's not about if they love you back. Sometimes it's okay to let yourself love someone," she told me. Shortly after, she gave me a



kiss on the cheek goodbye before moving to the living room to fold laundry while watching one of her shows.

And now I'm here, sitting in my truck. It's evening now, the darkness settling over everything like a blanket. I've memorized the overtime route by now in the same way I've memorized the way to the location of the store Kat works at: repetition.

Every night since we met, I've stopped at her convenience store.

And every night, I've been disappointed.

I know that someone had mentioned giving her a few days off at some point, but I didn't think it would be a whole week. Is it possible that she asked for more time? Is it possible she moved locations?

... Is it possible that something happened to her?

The thought darkens my mind as I climb down out of the driver's seat and make my way to the store front. Already I can see that Kat isn't working. Instead, it's the short, grubby-looking coworker that had disappeared before she was attacked. Joe, I think? Tim? Fuck if I know. As I walk back to the coffee station, I notice that there's an older woman in a uniform stocking snacks and there's a gangly teenager I recognize from the previous evening mopping up the greasy floor.

At least they managed to increase the staff during evenings, I grumble to myself as I fill the largest cup they have with molten black coffee. But still no Kat.

John or whatever doesn't say anything to me as he rings me up for my coffee and a candy bar. I know he recognizes me though, because his hands shake as he gives me my change. His eyes don't meet mine once. Good. Even though wasting my time wiping the floor with a guy like him is below me, I'm glad

he's scared of me. He deserves to feel fear in the same way that Kat had to feel it all alone because he was gone when the gunman showed up.

I say nothing as I turn to leave and step back out into the cool night air. Disappointment makes my stomach twist as I walk to my truck. Even though I've stopped expecting to see her when I stop here, that doesn't keep me from hoping. It hurts a little more each time.

I don't know why I'm so hung up on Kat. Except I know that's a lie, because I can list exactly why I want her. The way her body fit against mine, the way she told me off for telling her that she wouldn't want someone like me, the way she tasted and lingered on my tongue. I just ... I'm not sure why the universe gave her to me, just to take her away like this.

Fate's a bitch, I swear under my breath as I stop to dig around my pocket for my keys. Fate's a rotten, conniving—

“Finn?”

The sound of a soft voice makes me freeze on the spot.

“I'm sorry, maybe I've got the wrong person.”

I finally make myself turn to see the source of the voice. It can't be ...

But it is.

Fuck. She looks absolutely stunning. Even the most intimate of my memories doesn't do her justice. Her brown hair is falling in soft waves down past her shoulders, her cheeks kissed rosy by the cool night air. Even in the dim light, her eyes are shining up at me as a smile plays on her lips.

“Kat,” I say, at a loss for words. She's here. She's real.

Her smile widens. “I was hoping I'd see you here.”

“I could say the same,” I say, shocked by how rough my voice sounds.

Did she come here just to find me? I can barely focus on my own question. Already my body's growing hot and tense, as if getting ready to pounce on this little woman. All she has to do is say the word.

I watch as her smile falls. She pushes a strand of her hair behind her ear as she says, "Yeah, I'm sorry about that. I should have asked for your number, but I figured I'd see you again during my next shift. But ... well ..."

"You haven't been scheduled, have you?" That dark thing that lurks in my mind, the predatory animal desperate to claim Kat, growls. Why aren't they giving her shifts? What happens if she can't pay her bills? Are they punishing her for something that isn't her fault?

"No," she sighs. "I'm not sure why. I texted my boss a few days ago saying that I'm ready to work again, but maybe there's no room on the current schedule."

"Maybe ... Are you low on cash? Do you need help?"

Kat's eyes are the size of dinner plates as she gives me a long, lingering look. She shakes her head to herself before she gives me an answer.

"No. I'm okay. The pay just goes into my savings."

I nod as I take a sip of my coffee. The scalding liquid on my tongue is nothing compared to the memory of how hot her flesh was against my lips. God, seeing her again is just making the want I've felt all week soar to new heights.

For a moment, we stand there in the parking lot of the gas station, looking at each other. The road noise and urban sound fades away, and it's just us. She looks so small, so delicate, and yet she stands tall and proud as she meets my eyes. I might be big, bigger than most, a bit scary looking, but it's like she wants to show me that she's not afraid.

My mother's words from earlier come back to me. It's okay to let yourself love someone.

This woman has changed my life, and she doesn't even know it. I thought maybe it wasn't meant to be, that we wouldn't ever end up seeing each other again, and yet, she's here. Maybe it's okay if I let myself believe I might have a chance at something with her. That searing moment in the back of her car isn't enough for me. I want her. I want all of her. I want to show her what it's like to be mine.

"Hey," I finally ask, breaking the companionable silence between us. "Are you free to grab coffee sometime?"

Kat's eyes light up, and my heart soars. "I'd love that."

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Exchanging information is easy, as is finding the time to do something together. I've never been more thankful for the day off. She knows a good coffee shop close to her apartment, so I'll stop by her place to pick her up after she gets home from her last class of the day.

She sends me a good night text as I'm getting ready for bed. I'm so shocked at the notification I just stare at my phone with my toothbrush in my mouth, dripping toothpaste on my shirt. I don't even remember getting to bed—the rest of the night is a blur. I blink, and suddenly, I'm standing outside her apartment the next day, trying to convince myself to knock on the door.

All the confidence I felt last night is gone. I spent the night wondering how the hell a woman like Kat found her way to me. I have to stop asking myself the damn question but fuck, it just doesn't feel real.

Just as I raise my hand to rap my knuckles on the wood, the door swings open to reveal Kat. She has her phone pressed to her ear, but her smile

is warm and welcoming as she beckons me into her apartment.

She holds a hand over the phone's mouthpiece. "I'm so sorry," she says, looking up at me through her dark lashes. "My parents literally just called me. As soon as I'm done, we'll go. You okay with waiting?"

"Of course," I tell her softly. "Take your time, sweetheart."

The pet name slips out before I can stop it, but when I see her cheeks flush that mouthwatering shade of pink, I can't find it in me to regret it one bit. She shyly nods before leading me into her living room and telling me to make myself comfortable.

Her apartment is small, maybe a little spare, but it's comfortable. I know she lives alone, but I still think it's surprising. She's a college student and she works at a convenience store, so I don't think she's rolling in money. Most students can't afford a place of their own. Maybe she's got a scholarship to help pay for everything.

There are piles of textbooks and papers on the coffee table. I start to look over them as I wait for Kat to finish her phone call. Immediately, a thick stack of printer paper bound together with a binder clip catches my attention.

I've never seen so much red scribbled on a manuscript like this. When I was in college, I was ruthless with editing my papers, but this is intense. But when I pick it up and start to page through it, I realize it's not an academic paper. It's a story. A long one, too—the last page is number 135, but it doesn't look like it's complete. In the blank space on the last page, there are bullet points listed in a neat scrawl using the same red ink found on every single other page.

FMC picks fight with MMC. MMC asks her what she wants. FMC says "you" and MMC orders her to bend over.

Alright. I knew it was a story of some kind, just because of the formatting and the lack of footnotes, but what kind of story is this little girl of mine writing? I keep reading her notes.

MMC pushes her skirt up to find her hot and wanting. He buries his face in her pussy and starts to eat her out. He makes her come twice before she pulls him down to the bed. They fuck. Still need positions and dialogue. Research losing virginity. Research period appropriate clothing for men. What does underwear look like for him? Did they even wear underwear then??

Oh. That kind of book.

While I'm impressed by her notes—making lists like this tells me she's detail oriented and dedicated to making this story work—some of them confuse me. Why would she need to research losing virginity? That seems like it'd be self-explanatory, doesn't it?

Unless ...

"I'm so sorry about that," Kat suddenly says as she marches back into the room. Her mouth is set in a straight line and her brows are furrowed. "My parents just insist on talking and talking and it's impossible to get off the phone with them sometimes. Are you ready to—"

She stops mid-step when she sees me standing there with her manuscript in my hands. Her eyes widen with horror and her face reddens with embarrassment. She bites that god damned lip of hers as she stands there, staring at the story as I flip it closed and set it carefully back on the table.

"Please tell me you didn't read that."

I raise an eyebrow at her. Is she ashamed of what she's written?

“Oh god,” she moans, burying her face in her hands. “Noooo, this is so embarrassing.”

I can't help smirking as she begins to babble at me.

“It's just a story, okay? I really love romance and I know it's cheesy, but it's always been really comforting for me, you know? I love reading about people who fall in love because it's like, yeah, that could happen to me, I want that! But also my favorite authors sometimes go years without publishing something so I started writing them but I've never TOLD anyone about it before and now you know and no one is supposed to know, not even —”

“Baby, it's okay. Relax,” I say, stepping forward and placing my hands gently on her shoulders. She falls silent and looks up at me, her eyes tracing over my torso and lingering on my lips before meeting my gaze.

“I'm sorry,” she grimaces. “It's embarrassing.”

“It shouldn't be. My mom loves romance novels,” I shrug. “It's good to enjoy things, Kat.”

“I know, but ...” She trails off, closing her eyes with a frustrated huff. “How much of it did you read?”

“Just the notes you made for yourself at the end.”

I didn't think it was possible for her to get redder, but somehow, it is. I almost start to worry, but before I can ask her if she's okay, she sits down on the couch, grabs a pillow, and groans into it. The sound makes all of the blood in my body start rushing to my cock. Well, shit. This is a terrible time to get aroused, but my dick doesn't seem to get that.

“I'm sorry,” I say, gently placing a hand on her knee. Her dress only just covers them while she's sitting and thank god for it. Touching her skin

directly would only make me harder. “I shouldn’t have looked at it.”

“It’s not that, it’s—”

When her reasoning doesn’t come, I try to help her along. “It’s what, baby?”

She can’t even look me in the face as she finally crumples under the weight of her own shame.

“I’m a virgin!”



## Chapter 7

*Kat*

Honestly, I thought getting threatened at gunpoint was my worst nightmare, but I have to say, this is up there. Is it worse than having my life held in the balance? No. But it's closer than I expected. Like way closer. I'm wondering if it would have been better if I'd never missed my turn last night. If I'd just come straight home instead of seeing if I'd run into Finn at the store.

The way he's just sitting there beside me, silent as the grave?

The fucking worst.

Writing romance novels is my dream, but it's hard to write them when sex—one of the most important parts of a good, steamy romance—is something I've never gotten to experience. I feel bad enough that I've used the moment we had at my car as inspiration. That he's so shocked about the fact that I'm a virgin? Icing on top whatever this terrible cake of a day is.

First, I made a fool of myself in front of my entire microeconomics class by getting called on to answer a question and totally screwing up my answer. Then I came home to get ready for my coffee date with Finn, only to get wrangled into a conversation with my parents about my grades. I don't even know how they got a hold of them (in fact, I'm pretty sure it's illegal

unless I sign a release of some sort), but somehow they did. Trying to have that conversation quietly while the most attractive man I've ever met is in the next room over was almost impossible.

And now this.

It doesn't matter if Finn's already made me see stars with that mouth of his. I just declared my virginity to him, so now he knows that I'm just some young, inexperienced girl not worth taking seriously. Another one of my worst nightmares, if I'm being honest.

How am I supposed to face him now? He's in my apartment, sitting right next to me! Truly, there's no escape, but all I want to do is disappear. I can't. Not with him still here, not with his hand warm and stiff on my knee. I guess that was supposed to be comforting, but now it just reminds me of the fact that I've humiliated myself in front of him.

"Baby," Finn says. His voice is low and rough. "Look at me."

I shake my head, holding the throw pillow I'd screamed in close to my chest. I can't even look at him now. I don't want to see the disappointment in his eyes. When I don't respond, his grip on my knee tightens.

"Little girl, look at me," he growls.

The expression on Finn's face when I finally make myself look up is startling. I've never had someone look at me like this before. His dark eyes are hooded, his lips parted as he breathes heavily. His cheeks have just the barest hint of a flush. He looks ... hungry.

My heart begins to pound in my chest as he searches my face. "Do you think being a virgin is something to be embarrassed about?"

"I-I mean ..." I didn't expect him to jump straight for the punch like that. Fine, I can be honest if he doesn't want to beat around the bush. "I want

to write romance novels, but I don't know anything about sex. I want to go on a date with you, but how am I supposed to keep you interested if I don't know how to do that?"

Finn takes a sharp breath in through his nose and licks his lips. It's all I can do to keep from staring at his mouth as his tongue flashes into view. The hand on my knee disappears and suddenly, it wraps around one of mine. I watch in shock as he takes my hand and presses it to the front of his jeans. My stomach twists with desire.

He's rock hard, his erection pressing into his fly so firmly I wonder if it hurts. Judging by the soft hiss he lets out as I run my fingers over his bulge, it might.

I can't believe I didn't notice it before now. Burying my head in a pillow will do that, I guess.

"Are you still worried about keeping me interested?" he groans. His hips buck into my hand as he holds it against his cock. "Because you shouldn't be."

Curious, I try to wrap my hand around him through his jeans. "Does it hurt?"

Finn sucks in a breath. "Only because you make me harder than I've ever fucking been in my life."

I try to pull my hand away, surprised at his revelation, but his grip around my wrist is strong.

"You did this to me, Kat," he explains, dropping his voice as he brushes his lips against my ear. "You've ruined me for anyone else and all I did was fuck you with my tongue. Am I the only one to have ever tasted that pussy of yours?"

“Yes,” I breathe. I feel delirious with need. Feeling him like this through his clothes isn’t enough. I want to feel his skin against mine. “It’s just you, only you.”

Finn groans as he starts to pepper my jawline with kisses. “I don’t give a shit if you’re a virgin, little girl. I just care that I’m the only man to have you.”

“Want you to have me,” I whimper, chasing his mouth with mine. I need him. I need him to know I want him more than I’ve ever wanted something in my life. More than writing, more than dumping my finance degree for a literature one, more than independence from my parents. “Want to be your little girl, only yours. Please—”

Abruptly, Finn pulls away. Before I can whine in protest, he’s pulling me up into his arms and suddenly, he throws me over his shoulder.

“Bedroom?” he growls as his fingertips dimple into the sensitive skin of my thighs.

“First door on the left in the hallway.”

In the blink of an eye, he finds the bedroom. My body bounces on the mattress as he tosses me onto the bed. Instead of crawling over me immediately, however, he steps back and takes me in. His gaze feels like a caress as he looks up and down my body, from my legs to the cardigan falling off my shoulder and revealing bare skin.

Just his look has me squirming with need ... What will it be like when he finally gets his hands on me?

“Fuck. Look at you, all soft and pretty for me ...”

I watch eagerly as he starts to unbutton his shirt. Inch upon inch of muscle is revealed as he goes, until suddenly he tosses the shirt aside. Each

and every one of his muscles is defined and flexes as he moves. No wonder he was able to take down the gunman in the store.

He's not just tall and broad—he's built like a fortress.

"Like what you see?" he smirks at me as he stalks toward the bed.

I nod wordlessly. I can write all I want about attractive men, but now that Finn's here, I'm at a loss to describe what I'm seeing.

He takes my lips with his. Heat ignites in my belly. He slips his tongue against the seam of my mouth, and I open to him with a soft whimper. As he devours me, his hands slip up my legs and under my dress.

He groans when his fingertips brush against the edge of my panties. "Did you put something pretty on for me, little girl?"

"Yes," I gasp. His hands slip under the lace and palm my ass. When he dips a hand down to brush a finger against my slit, I moan. My hips buck into the touch involuntarily. More. I need more. I fight whining for him, but Finn just chuckles at my struggle.

"Gonna make this pussy mine," he murmurs as he nips at the pulse point on my neck. When he drops his head to suck wetly at my nipple through my dress, my back arches to present my breasts to him. With deft fingers, he pulls his hands out of my panties and moves to the zipper at the back of my dress. I shrug my cardigan off and help him pull my dress over my head.

Finn's eyes, already dark with possessive need, grow impossibly intense as he looks me over. Any self-consciousness I was feeling is kissed away by his mouth as he sucks little marks into my skin, trailing down to my mound as he presses me back on the bed.

When he finally drags his tongue against my clit, I scream.

He groans as he starts to lap at my wetness, his grip around my thighs tightening as he pulls me closer. Every touch and stroke fuels the fire he kindled with me a week ago, which hasn't managed to go out. Giving myself to him then was easy. Having him here and now just feels natural, like it was always meant to be.

“Taste so good, so wet,” he pants as he licks and sucks.

Liquid heat simmers low in my abdomen, making every nerve prickle with anticipation. Does he mean it? Will he really give that part of himself to me? Because I want it, just like I want to give myself to him. I want to give him everything I can.

I trust him with my life. That's what landed us here in the first place, after all.

Just like last time, he presses a finger to my center, carefully stroking it against my walls. Quickly, he finds a spot within me that has me seeing stars. I push my hips toward him, almost as if I'm trying to fuck myself on his face, his finger.

“Finn,” I cry out, “P-please.”

He chuckles darkly, meeting my eyes over my writhing body. “Want more, baby? Want me to prep you for my cock?”

I nod at him, and he wastes no time pressing a second finger into me. The stretch makes me whine and pant with desire. I can feel my walls flutter around his digits to accommodate them, and yet somehow, it's still not enough. I can't help whining, the sound almost inhuman. I've never made noises like this for anyone, and I don't want to make them for anyone else. Ever.

Abruptly, Finn pulls away. I prop myself up on my elbows, about to

ask him why he stopped, but what I see stops me.

Oh god.

I watch as Finn starts to unzip the fly of his pants and hooks his thumbs into the waistband of his underwear to push his clothes down. His cock springs out, hard and heavy with his arousal. My mind goes blank as my mouth starts to water with anticipation.

I'm about to have that inside me.

"Ready to take my cock, little girl?" Finn purrs. He crawls onto the bed, though he looks more like a predator stalking his prey as he does so. I part my legs for him and he settles between them with ease, groaning as his length brushes against my hot sex. "Gonna take it slow, don't want to hurt you."

I nod up at him as I pull him down for a kiss. "I trust you," I murmur. "You'd never hurt me."

And then he begins to press forward, slowly seating his length within me. I arch my back as his cock drags against sensitive parts of me I didn't even know I had. It feels like my body is on fire in the best way as my pussy wraps tightly around him.

He groans as our hips meet, swearing under his breath.

"How are you so perfect?" he murmurs. He gives a little thrust, as if seeing what I can take. When I moan, he hisses. "Hot and wet and fucking perfect for me."

"Fuck me," I pant, craving more.

The sound of skin slapping against skin accents the creaking of the bed as he starts to fuck his length into me. Every movement of his hips has me clenching down, the spring of my arousal getting wound tighter and tighter

with each thrust.

“I’m not going to last, Kat. You feel too good,” he says as he pulls my hips to meet his. My body begins to pull tight, my peak already within reach. I’m right at the cusp, all I have to do is let myself fall into the abyss of pleasure he’s pushing me toward.

“Finn, I-I’m gonna—”

“Do it, baby. Cream yourself all over my cock.”

My vision goes white. Molten pleasure surges through my veins as I lose myself to my orgasm. I can hear Finn panting as he fucks me through it, his skin electric against mine as he holds me and praises me for coming for him. I can barely hear him over the sounds I’m making, but soon he comes back into focus, just in time for me to watch him peak.

His muscles go tight as his hips stutter into mine. His length twitches as he spills into me, filling me with his release.

The sudden silence makes my ears ring. The only thing interrupting it is the sound of us breathing heavily as we come down from our highs. Finn bites his lip as he looks down at me, his eyes still blown dark with lust.

“You okay, baby?” he asks. Carefully, he pulls out of me and settles beside me before pulling my spent body into his arms.

“I’m perfect,” I smile softly at him.

My eyes already feel heavy. After orgasming like that, I could use a nap, and I can think of nowhere better than his arms for it. My heart swells as he reaches to pull a blanket over the two of us, and I take the gesture as an invitation to snuggle into his chest. His arms wrap around me as he tangles his legs with mine. A kiss pressed to my temple. A sigh into my hair.

Yeah. This is perfect.



He's perfect.

## *Chapter 8*

### *Finn*

It's only once I wake up next to Kat that I realize that what happened between us is real. It wasn't something my head made up. It wasn't a dream or a fit of madness. It's as real as she is, sleeping soundly in my arms.

We hadn't meant to fall asleep right after sex, but like so many of the things between us, it just happened. Yeah, maybe it could have been fate, but I don't think that had anything to do with how safe we made each other feel in that moment. One minute, I was making sure she was okay, and the next, we were both beginning to drift off. We just didn't fight it.

The warmth of her next to me makes it hard to think about getting up. But someone's phone is buzzing, and I think that's what woke me up. I'm not sure if it's hers or mine, but if it's mine, it's probably my mom, and I shouldn't miss it.

"Baby," I murmur to her, pushing a strand of hair out of her face. "It's time to wake up."

The pouting face Kat makes is adorable, and it almost works, but I won't be deterred.

"One of our phones is ringing, and we should get up,"

She finally opens one of her eyes and gives me the best glare she has. My heart soars. “Do we have to?”

“If you still want to go out for coffee, yes.”

“Ugh,” she sighs. “Fine. You know my weakness so well.”

“And I look forward to figuring each and every one of them out so I can use the knowledge for good,” I smile down at her as she shoots me an adorable mock glare.

“Said every villain ever,” she quips as she throws off the covers. “Let’s see who’s responsible for interrupting my nap.”

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Like all phone calls from my mother, it starts as a basic check in. She wants to know if my date is going well, even though I never told her it was a date, just coffee with a new friend. And then she starts asking about whether she should get dinner and if I’ll be home for it, and it all goes downhill from there.

I can’t complain. Her call and questions mean she’s having a good day, and I tell Kat as much when we start to pull our clothes on after getting cleaned up.

“My mom has mental health problems,” I explain. “I tend to get a lot of calls, even on her good days.”

Kat’s face is open and filled with empathy as she listens to me. There’s not an ounce of judgment on her face and it stirs something in my gut. Maybe it’s too soon, but I think I might be falling in love with this girl. It’s not a familiar feeling for me, feeling like this for someone else. But there’s no mistaking it. There’s nothing else I could call these blooming feelings.

“Does she have a lot of bad days?” Kat asks. She’s leaning forward as

she sits on the edge of her bed, fully engaged in the conversation. There's no reluctance in her body language; she actually wants to know more.

I watch her eyes linger on my fingers as I finish buttoning up my shirt before she meets my gaze. "Not currently. She's on a new medication. It's expensive and insurance doesn't pay for it, but we're making due. I've picked up overtime and it's worth it to be able to see her thriving like this."

"That's amazing," she says. "I bet you're close."

"We are."

She sighs wistfully. "I wish I was close to my family like that. I have a twin sister, and we're close enough, I guess. But nothing like that."

Kat's face falls a little, but I take one of her hands and pull her to stand. She bites her lip and reaches up to straighten my collar, avoiding my eyes.

"It's okay if you're not close with them," I tell her. "Everyone's circumstances are different."

"I know, it just makes me feel a little lonely sometimes."

My heart pangs in my chest as I watch her face fall.

"Well ..." I take her face in my hands and softly kiss her forehead. "You don't have to feel like that any longer. You have me."

Just as she's about to respond, there's a loud knock at her apartment door.

Kat's brow furrows.

"Were you expecting someone?" I ask.

She shakes her head. "No. Maybe ... Maybe it's a neighbor or something?"

The next knock is even louder. “Katherine Annabelle Greene, open this door this instant!” shouts an angry voice.

Kat’s face pales until she’s white as a sheet. “Oh god.”

“Who is it?” I hiss, pulling her close. My protective instincts jump into overdrive instantly.

She darts from my embrace and makes her way out of the bedroom. “My dad,” she calls over her shoulder.

It’s my turn to let my brows furrow. I get that she just said they’re not close, but this reaction seems more scared than familial. I stalk behind her, trying to ignore the uneasy feeling settling in my stomach.

The angry banging continues until she manages to get to the door and throw the deadbolt to open it. Behind it stands a man in a suit, red in the face with fury as he stares down Kat. Over his shoulder, I can see a well-dressed older woman who has hair the same shade of brown as my girl. Her expression is dour, but much more reserved than the man Kat referred to as her father. I bet she’s her mother. Great. Both parents. And neither of them look happy to see their daughter, so I’m sure seeing me is going to make them very pleasant to deal with.

Before she has the chance to greet them, Kat’s parents are storming into her apartment.

“When were you going to tell us that you’re failing your microeconomics class?” her father shouts. Kat steps back and immediately shrinks into herself. Her eyes are glassy as she looks at her feet. As he begins to berate her, I see her mother glance my way and look me up and down with a stern expression.

It’s all I can do to stand in front of Kat and make her father step back

—the way he’s speaking to her is fucking unacceptable. But I didn’t make it this far in my line of work with all my teeth still in my head for nothing. I know how to pick my battles and how to wait until the right time to pick them. I plant myself behind her instead and place a hand on her shoulder. When she wants me to take these people she calls parents on, I’ll do it. Until then, I don’t want to make a scene if she doesn’t want me to.

I trust her to lean on me when she needs to.

“I’m o-only halfway through the s-semester,” Kat stammers. “There’s s-still time for me to raise it.”

“From a failing grade to a C, maybe,” her mother scoffs. “How many times do we have to tell you that it’s important you succeed?”

“I know it’s important!”

“Do you?” her father bellows. “Because I don’t think you do! You think I don’t know you’ve been working at one of our corporate locations?”

Kat stills, tears beginning to gather on her lashes. She shakes like a leaf underneath my hands. I don’t have time to process what the man means when he says she’s working at one of their “corporate locations” because he continues.

“You’ve been flaunting our authority for years, but this is a new low. How dare you go behind my back and do something I have explicitly forbid!”

“D-Dad—”

“No, Katherine,” her mother stops her. “Listen to your father for once.”

I can’t take it anymore. “How about you listen to your daughter instead?” I growl.

The room abruptly falls silent. Kat's father looks up at me, surprised, as if I haven't been here the whole time. Her mother's look is appraising in the same way my own dad's looks used to be. She's trying to decide if I'm a threat or if I'll be silenced easily.

Hatred courses through my bloodstream.

"Who the hell are you?" Kat's father barks.

"The man who saved your daughter in that altercation at that corporate location of yours," I spit at him. My hand flexes into a fist as my body pulls tight, ready to pounce. This asshole is her father? The man crushing my girl's dreams?

The man's face practically glows with rage. "It was you? You're the prick who stopped the kidnapping?"

Something feels off about his tone. I straighten up to my full height, towering over every other person in the room. The man takes a step back when I say, "Yes, I am."

"You're the one who ruined it. You ruined the plan," he splutters.

Suddenly, the harsh look on Kat's mother's face falters. "What plan?"

"I paid someone off to go into the store and threaten a kidnapping." The tone with which he delivers this bombshell is dismissive, as if we're not supposed to be offended by the fact that he paid some random guy to threaten his daughter at gunpoint.

"What?" Kat says, incredulous at the revelation. "You paid someone to come into the store and threaten me?"

"I couldn't have Human Resources getting involved," her father explains as if it's obvious to everyone but his daughter. "If they knew my own daughter, the heiress to the company, was working as a clerk, I would

never be taken seriously again! You could have made the whole family look like a laughingstock.”

“That wasn’t my intention at all—”

“Then what was it?”

“I just wanted to do something for me, okay?” Kat cries as angry tears start to stream down her cheeks. I fight the urge to pull her into my arms. She needs this moment. She deserves to tell them how she feels. “My whole life you’ve told me that I have a duty to the family, to the company. I’ve worked on a degree I hate, I’ve given up my dreams for this stupid company. All just to make you happy. I’m sorry I wanted to have a chance to do something independently, but I’m not sorry I wanted to learn more about the stores you want me to own someday.”

“Members of the Greene family don’t work as clerks, Katherine,” her father scoffs.

“I don’t think we should act like we’re above it,” she hisses at him. My heart swells with pride at her words. “You’ve never given a shit about the people who represent the company to the world, and you’ve never given a shit about me either. Everything’s always about appearances for you!”

“Katherine Greene, you speak to your father with the respect he is owed,” her mother scolds, but Kat’s not having any of it.

“No. No, I don’t think I will.” My girl pulls herself up tall as she continues. “I’m done. I’m done with this family. I’m done with this company. I’m done with this degree I never wanted. Make Camilla do it. God knows you’ve ignored her too. She’d be great for the company, and a far better CEO than you’ve ever been, not that you’ve ever cared about giving either of us a chance at being happy.”



Her father is vibrating with indignation at being spoken to as he deserves. Suddenly, he lunges at his daughter, but before he can lay a finger on her, I've got my hands the lapels of his suit hoisting him up to slam him into the wall beside the apartment's front door. I watch with relish as he winces. The anger in his face falters, and for the first time since he walked in here, he looks scared. Good. He should be.

If he thinks his anger is the biggest emotion in the room, he's got another thing coming to him.

"Listen, cupcake," I say to him, letting my voice drop to its lowest, most menacing tone. "You lay a fucking finger on your daughter, and I take your fucking arm off. How's that for an HR disaster?"

Kat's father's eyes widen. He says nothing as he sputters in my grip, trying to wiggle free. His struggle barely even registers next to the ease with which I grappled him in the first place. Lifting this piece of shit is nothing. I've got his feet dangling six inches above the ground without breaking a sweat.

His disinclination for answering me won't stand, though. I lift him away from the wall just to slam him back on it again, and this time, the fucker audibly whimpers. I growl, "Am I understood?"

"Y-yes!" he mumbles haltingly. "I understand!"

"Excellent." Without warning, I release him. The man crumples to the floor in a quivering heap. Not even his wife steps forward to help him up. She's too busy standing like a deer in the headlights at the door. I step back to Kat's side, and she takes my hand without taking her wide, shocked gaze off her father.

The room watches as he brings himself to standing, looking wrinkles and shaken. He makes a show of dusting himself off before leveling a cold

gaze at his daughter. He doesn't move closer, and he certainly doesn't even try looking me in the eye.

“Fine. Just fucking fine,” he starts, his voice eerily calm compared to how it was mere moments before. “You're done? So are we. You're cut off. Say goodbye to this apartment, your car, your credit cards, and your college classes. You're no longer a part of this family.”

He starts to make his way to the door, holding it open for his wife as she quietly follows him.

“Oh, and you're fired from the store,” he says with a bitter laugh. “I made sure that that boss of yours kept you off the schedule, but now I can tell him he can start the separation process.”

The door slams closed before she can say anything else.

For several seconds, Kat stares at the door, rooted to the spot. Her pretty face is twisted with anger, but it takes nothing away from her beauty. Not when she has a determined glint in her eye like she does right now.

She turns to me. “I'm sorry, I have to cancel coffee.”

“Kat—”

She blows a raspberry and raises her eyes to the ceiling, as if fighting back more tears. It seems her confidence is beginning to slip already. “I have to start packing, I guess—”

I can't let her think she's in this alone. I can't let her go through this alone. “Kat, baby—”

“And I've got to check how much money I've got in that secret account,” she says. She starts to walk for the coffee table “I need to start a list —”

“Kat!” I call out, stopping her mid-step. I take her hand in mine and kiss her palm as our eyes meet.

“Please, Finn, I have to get started on ... well, everything,” she says, her bottom lip quivering. Fresh tears begin to trail down her cheeks. I pull her close and start to wipe them away as they fall.

“I know, baby,” I tell her. An idea strikes me. “I want to help you. Get started packing. I’m going to call my mom and tell her to make a little extra for dinner. You’re coming to stay with us.”

She starts to shake her head. “Oh, Finn, I can’t impose on you like that.”

“It’s not imposing at all,” I assure her. “It’s never imposing if it’s you.”

“But—”

“Sweetheart,” I say softly. “Please let me help you. I don’t know how serious your parents are, but I know how serious you are. And I know how serious I am about you,” I explain. Her eyes widen. “My mom and I, we’ve been through hell together. We know how to get through hard times.”

Kat snuffles as her face breaks with emotion. “Why are you being so kind to me like this?”

“Because I have feelings for you that I’ve never felt for another person. Let me love you, Kat. Let me show you what it’s like to be in a family that cares about each other.”

Suddenly, Kat’s in my arms, wrapping herself around me as she steals kisses from me. “God, I thought I was going crazy, feeling like I felt.”

My heart stops. “What?”

“I feel the same way,” she exclaims, a wide, bright smile stretching

across her face. It takes my breath away. “I thought that maybe it was too soon to call it love, but ...”

“It’s not,” I rush out, hooking my hands beneath her thighs as she wraps her legs around my waist. “You sure you want a poor trucker like me, though?”

“I don’t want anyone else. I love you, Finn.”

Every single positive emotion my brain is capable of feeling explodes behind my eyelids as I kiss her deeply, savoring the weight of her body in my arms.

“I love you too, little girl. Let’s get you packed up and out of here.”

# *Epilogue*

*Kat*

Nine Years Later ...

Nothing beats the feeling of finishing a chapter and knowing you've nailed it. I press save on my manuscript and stand up from my desk chair to stretch. Now that I'm at a stopping point, I can take a break and check on my youngest. He's a toddler still, not yet old enough to start at preschool or anything, but he's a little more independent than his older sister, so I can leave him alone for a little longer than I could with her.

I pad down the hallway, listening to how the floor creaks. Each sound is familiar, and I can't help smiling. I've long gotten used to the little old house my husband and his mother have lived in for decades, but I've come to love it as our family grows into it.

My son isn't in the nursery where I expect him to be, and he's not downstairs in the living room in front of the TV either. My brow furrows, but my concern disappears when I hear a bright giggle coming from outside. I peek out the lace curtains to see my son running through the grass as my mother-in-law watches him. She's on her knees, covered in dirt up to her elbows as she pulls weeds from her flower beds. A big smile stretches across her face.

She's been doing incredibly well over the past several years. Between her medication and group therapy, she's better than ever, according to Finn. A few springs ago, she started planting flowers in the yard again. Over the years, her garden has grown bigger and bigger, as have her smiles.

But nothing makes her smile as widely as her grandchildren.

When I moved in so abruptly, I was sure she was going to take the intrusion on her space poorly. That didn't happen at all. There were some growing pains, of course, but Finn and his mother were so welcoming and patient that it was like I was already family. It was easier than expected, having my parents disown me like they did, and it was made that much easier by being able to fall asleep in Finn's arms every night.

Now that I know my little son's not getting himself into trouble, I get myself a glass of water and go back up to my computer. Instead of pulling up my manuscript, I decide to check in with my social media.

They never tell you how time consuming it can be to go viral.

A year ago, one of my romance novels went viral in book reviewing circles and exploded to the top of multiple bestselling lists. I was shocked at all the sudden praise and attention, but when I saw how many readers loved my stories and connected with them, I felt inspired. Some people might get intimidated by success like that, but it just inspires me to keep telling stories that people resonate with.

Managing my social media followings though? That's a whole different ballgame. It's tiring trying to promote myself all the time when I'd rather spend my time actually writing.

A voice breaks me from my reverie. "Judging by the frown on your face, you're on Instagram again, aren't you?"

I look up to see Finn standing in the doorway to my office, looking delectable in his official business shirt complete with the company logo embroidered on the pocket. Instead of driving trucks, these days he's working as a part of management for the trucking company he works for. The hours are more stable, which means he's able to spend more time at home with the kids. He even helps me proofread my stories. Sometimes I still can't believe we stumbled into each other's lives, but I wouldn't change it for the world.

"Is it that obvious?" I joke to him as I rise from my desk to give him a welcome-home kiss. "You're home early."

"Milly's school let out early today, remember?" he smirks down at me as he wraps his arms around my waist. Milly's our oldest. First grade becomes her, and she blows my mind every day with her kindness and optimism. "She's outside playing."

"Right! I'm so sorry, I totally forgot," I say, already beating myself up for forgetting. Undeterred, he starts to pepper kisses along my jaw, his grip on me tightening as he pulls me closer. "Got wrapped up in the latest chapter."

"That's okay, baby. We decided earlier this week that I'd pick her up, remember?" he says into my skin, the stubble on his face making my skin prickle with excitement. "How's the latest novel going?"

"Slowly but surely," I gasp as his hands palm at my ass through my leggings. "Think I nailed the latest chapter though."

"Mm, I'm glad."

"They're about to have sex for the first time in the next chapter, though." I sigh as my husband slips his hands beneath my clothes. He's a step ahead of me already, but I'm not complaining. I was having the same thought. "I'm not really feeling inspired for it, though. I'm not sure how I

want the chemistry to play on the page?”

“Does my little girl need a bit of help feeling inspired?” he purrs. Finn looks down at me with those dark eyes of his, his gaze heating me from the inside out.

“Please,” I murmur to him as I reach up to start unbuttoning his work shirt. “I just can’t seem to figure it out.”

In the blink of an eye, he pushes me further into my home office, kicking the door shut behind him. Before I know it, I’m bent over my own desk. Anticipation pools low in my abdomen. I can already feel myself growing wet with anticipation.

“Fuck, this ass. Perfection,” my husband groans. He runs a hand over one cheek before giving it a light smack, just to watch my flesh jiggle. I whimper at the spank, pressing my ass into his crotch to convey to him what I want. “So impatient.”

“You said you’d inspire me,” I whine. “You can’t keep me waiting like this.”

Strong hands grip my hips before hooking their thumbs into the waistband of my leggings. He slides them down my legs, letting his knuckles brush against my skin to tease me. Shit, he always knows exactly how to get me riled up. It’s infuriating, but infuriatingly sexy as well. No one knows me like Finn does.

“This inspiring enough for you?” he rasps.

Suddenly, I feel him licking me from my clit to my entrance. He does it again, letting his tongue dip into my wet folds to fuck into me before doing it all again. My legs start to shake as he spreads my legs, helping me step out of my leggings and underwear as he eats my pussy like a starved man. I bite



back a moan.

“Thought so.” I can hear the smirk in his voice even as he lets me coat his face in my juices.

“Please, Finn,” I keened as I grip the edge of my desk. “Please just fuck me. I need you inside of me.”

That’s all the permission he needs to lift away. Goosebumps rise on my skin as I listen to him unbuckle his belt and lower his fly. In one smooth thrust, his thick, hard cock is fully sheathed inside me.

“Fuck,” I moan, savoring the stretch. “See? Was that so hard?”

“Greedy little wife.” His lips brush against my ear as he threads his arms around me to hold me in place. He starts to move his hips into mine, slowly but steadily. “Just needed a cock to keep you happy, hm?”

I whimper as he picks up the pace, fucking into me hard enough to jostle the things on my desk. The edges of my vision start to blur as already, he has the blaze of my orgasm building. He threads a hand into my hair at the roots and pulls, just enough to heighten the pleasure and make me look up at the window.

“See our kids out there, playing?” he growls. “What do you think, should we give them a sibling? Breed this little cunt with another baby?”

My heart soars as my body tightens around his cock. Pleasure is building at an intense speed, hurtling towards a peak I didn’t realize was so close.

“There’s already one on the way,” I pant, barely keeping my wits about me through the haze of lust clouding my head. Well, there goes the surprise. I wanted to tell him this weekend over breakfast in bed but now’s as good a time as any.

Finn's hips stutter to a stop, leaving him hot and heavy and still inside me. The sudden stop makes me buck my hips, but he holds me still.

"You're pregnant?" he murmurs.

"Yes. Around eight weeks, I think."

Finn starts to hammer his hips into me harder than ever, holding me close as he grunts in my ear. "Naughty little girl, keeping a secret from me like that."

I can't help smiling. "Was gonna tell you this weekend, but you feel so fucking good."

His length pounds into me, stroking against the walls of my cunt and making me wetter and wetter. My release is so close, I just have to let myself fall over the edge. I can feel myself coming before I can hold it off.

"That's it, baby girl, come all over me," Finn pants as he fucks me through my orgasm. "I'm right behind you."

When he comes, his whole body shakes as his hips slap against mine one final time. The groan he lets out makes my heart sing. I made him feel like that. We made each other feel like that.

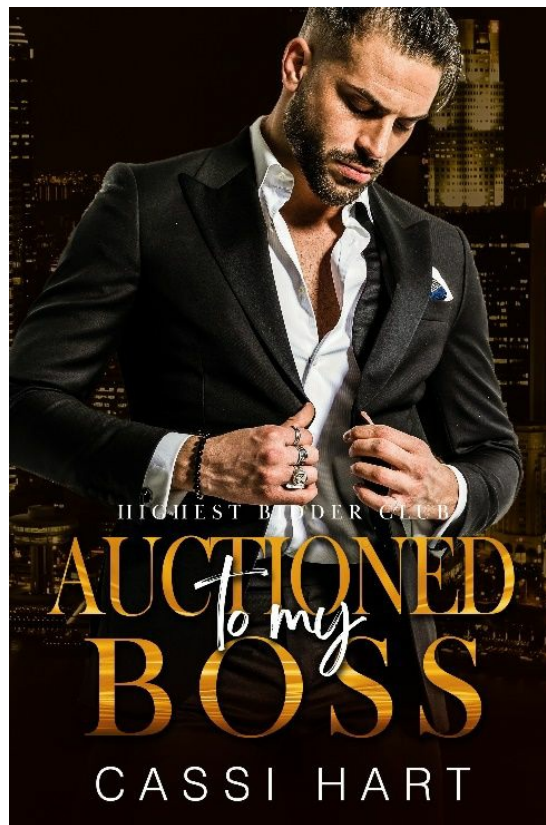
He kisses the sensitive spot at the nape of my neck before he helps me stand, pulling me up off my desk and into his arms like it's the easiest thing in the world.

"I love you so much, Kat," he says, his dark eyes soft as he brushes a stray strand of hair from my face. "I'm so fucking proud of you and our little family."

"Not as little as it used to be," I reply. I take his hand and place it over my belly. "I love you, too."

~The End

*Up Next...*



*Sloane*

When did my life come to this?

Everything was going so right. I had a great internship, a promising future.

But one little mistake sent my world spinning. Now, at the risk of becoming homeless, I'm left with just one option; auction my V-card to the highest bidder. And if that isn't bad enough, when I'm pushed onto the stage, my boss is in attendance—his eyes fixed on me.

*Easton*

I am not supposed to be here.

When one of my best clients insists I visit his club; I have no choice but to accept. I expect a night of poker—not an auction. My instincts are screaming at me to get out of here; until I see *her* walk out onto the stage. Sloane, the intern I've wanted since I met her. Curvy and perfect, she now looks afraid as

men offer outrageous bids. But there's no reason for her to fear; she's not leaving with anyone other than me.

She may think I'll only own her for one night—but she's going to be mine. Forever.

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### The Kingpin's Obsession

*Alice*

**I saw something I shouldn't have, and my life is in danger.**

The police won't listen, and I have no choice but to seek help at Benedetti's, a bar known for its criminal clientele. But I'm barely inside the door before a dark eyed devil drags me back out and demands to know why I'm there. I shouldn't trust him, but I don't have a choice when he's the only one willing to help me.

*Too late*, I learn who he really is, and now I'm left to wonder... when this is all over, will he save my life only to break my heart?





## *About the Author*

Cassi lives to write brazen OTT, insta-love, short stories, about possessive alphas and the women they love. Stories that will leave you satisfied, and maybe blushing a little. Cassi loves pedicures, being pampered in any way possible, her darling golden Princess, amazing coffee, and traveling too anywhere warm.



*Cassi H*  *rt*