



A VOW OF FOREVER

She was his-
To adore, to love and to cherish.
Till death do them part.

LYLAH JAMES

**A VOW
OF FOREVER**

A Vow of Hate novella

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CHAPTER ONE

Julianna

The last time I walked down the aisle, I was left a broken mess.

The last time I spoke my vows to Killian, I was self-destructing.

He had left me at the altar, after whispering vows of hate in my ears and without a kiss to seal our union. Without even lifting my veil. In my path of martyrdom, I thought that was what I deserved. I pushed Killian to hate me... for my own selfish reasons.

To atone for my sins.

To seek redemption.

Forgiveness.

But I only ended leaving a trail of pain and destruction in my wake. I tormented Killian with my lies while blindly believing I was doing the right thing.

How the tables have turned.

Fate has a way of messing things up, oh well... *fixing* things that we are so hell bent on breaking.

Maybe it was a work of kismet, maybe it was meant all along...

I was playing with our fates, risking both our hearts in my attempt to fix our chapter.

Except our love story had already been written in stars, long before we were born. No matter how hard I tried to change it, Killian and I found our way back to each other again.

They say you never forget your first.

First love. First kiss. First touch. First *everything*.

And it was all true. We never forgot our firsts, but now, we wanted to rewrite our story.

Starting from the very beginning.

Our vows.

I never thought I'd walk down the aisle again or renew my wedding vows. Except Killian had other ideas.

His kisses woke me up. A kiss behind my ear and then his mouth trailed down lower. The back of my neck tingled at the soft touch of his lips. "Good morning," Killian said in his raspy morning voice. He was spooning me from behind, his chest against my back and when I wiggled back into him, I felt his hard length probing into the curve of my ass.

"What are you doing?" I teased.

"Kissing my wife."

I pouted even though he couldn't see my face. "You woke me up."

"I'm sorry for waking you up," he said and I could feel his smirk against my flushed skin. "But I'm not sorry for kissing you. I've got three years of missing kisses to make up for, Princess."

Was I swooning? Yes, a bit. My heart melted at the sound of adoration in his voice. I missed this side of Killian. The romantic side who treated me so delicately. Three years of hate and I finally had my old Killian back.

I let out an involuntary shudder when his strong arm curled around me and his hand drifted up to my chest. He cupped my breast, squeezing gently and a whimper escaped past my lips before I could stop myself.

"Sensitive?"

I gasped in response when he rolled my tight nipple between his fingers. "Yeah. More sensitive than they were yesterday."

My husband kissed down my spine before he rolled me on my back and settled himself between my spread thighs. He

cupped my tiny baby bump, barely protruding but it was there. Visible and slightly swollen with life. Killian grinned down at me and I found myself lost in his dark bedroom eyes, once again. God, he was rugged and handsome. His nose was slightly crooked, his eyebrows thick and his lashes long – I was most definitely envious of them. His lips full and that sneaky dimple under his rough stubble.

I got very lucky with this man.

“Why are you smiling like that?” he questioned, eyebrow raised.

“Why are you grinning like that?” I shot back.

His hands curled around my hips. “Because I get to hold you and kiss you every morning.”

“That was quite cheesy, Spencer.”

“I spent three years waking up alone and cold,” Killian muttered. “I’m not wasting any more moments, Mrs. Spencer.”

I didn’t think it was possible for my heart to be broken again, but this right there – his words and the torment in his eyes that he tried so hard to hide – it killed me.

“I’m so—”

His lips crashed against mine, silencing my heartbreak and swallowing my words. He slid his tongue across my bottom lip, teasing me. My lips parted for him and then his taste invaded my mouth. The kiss sent shivers through my nerves and it felt like every cell in my body was finally coming alive.

A tender kiss of apology.

A slow kiss of forgiveness.

A delicate kiss of mercy.

I drew in a staggered breath as a phantom fist squeezed my heart. I thought it’d be easy to move on, to start anew – but this was no fairy tale. My lies caused both of us indescribable pain and that hurt couldn’t just be forgotten. It was forever inked onto the pages of our story, a train wreck of a chapter before finding our happy ending.

“Marry me,” he rasped into my lips.

Confused, I pulled back. “What?”

*“Marry me,” Killian repeated. “Marry me **again.**”*

“Killian,” I breathed.

He grasped my left hand, lacing our fingers together before bringing the back of my hand to his mouth. His lips brushed over the engagement ring he gave me almost four years ago. “You wanted to rewrite our story, didn’t you?”

I nodded, speechlessly.

“Then we need to have a second wedding, with proper vows this time. No hate. No pretense. No lies. A real wedding, Julianna.”

“A real wedding,” I whispered.

Killian gave me a true smile. “A real wedding,” he agreed.

“I don’t want anything fancy.”

“Neither do I.”

“I want to have the wedding here, on the island,” I demanded, half-expecting him to refuse.

He leaned down and pressed his lip against my scarred cheek. My breath hitched at his touch and my scars tingled. “I agree. Tomorrow?”

“Tomorrow?” I squealed. “How-

“I’m not waiting any longer. I was going to demand today, but you’ll need to choose a dress.” The corner of his lips curled. “So, I’m settling for tomorrow and that’s it. I’m not waiting more.”

“There’s no rush, Killian. We are already married,” I tried to explain but he was shaking his head.

“On paper, yes. But our marriage is based on vows that I spoke out of anger and hatred. Those vows are now null. If we want to re-write our story, we need to start with our vows, Princess.”

When he proposed yesterday, it was nothing fancy. But it was enough for me. Enough for *us*.

And now I was getting ready to walk down the aisle. A second time. A real wedding, with true vows.

“There you go. All done,” Mirai announced, snapping me out of my thoughts. She moved beside me, so we were both facing the mirror. My makeup was minimal as I had asked; Mirai did a perfect job and my scars looked less prominent under the layers of foundation. I wasn’t exactly self-conscious about them, but my scars always reminded of *that* night.

It was an ugly, constant reminder of Gracelynn’s death.

That my sister died and I somehow survived.

That she lost her happy ending...

While I got my own.

My vision blurred before a lonely tear slid down my scarred cheek. God, I missed her. Especially *today*. I missed her easy smile and her deep laughter. I missed my sister, plain and simple.

My father’s hurt ego robbed my sister of her happily ever after. Of her unborn child and her love. How unfair it was that while he hated me; while I was always meant to be the victim of his elaborate murder plans – his real daughter turned out to be the casualty.

I thought I’d eventually become numb to the memories, to the pain of losing Gracelynn – but I was wrong. The pain never lessened. The misery never wavered. The guilt never eased. They were still heavy in my heart and my nightmares were a constant reminder of that. The anguish of that night; the despair of living with those memories; the grief of moving on without her.

“Julianna!” Mirai admonished. “You’re going to mess up your makeup.”

She dabbed my tears away, while mumbling under her breath. “No crying today, please.”

“I just—” I choked on my tears and swallowed my cry.
“Sorry, you’re right. No crying today.”

“It’s a happy day.”

My heart swelled at her tender smile. “It’s a happy day,” I agreed.

Mirai took a step back and admired me from head to toe. She clucked her tongue in approval, nodding. “I can’t lie, I love this dress better than your other one.”

My wedding dress was simple compared to the extravagant one I wore to my first wedding. Yesterday, Killian had arranged for a wedding dress designer to come to the Island with over twenty dresses option. While they all ranged from simple to extravagantly beautiful, only one captured my eyes.

My chosen dress was composed of sheer lace and layers of tulle, with tiny flowers motif along the bodice and long sleeves, adding a whimsical touch. The bodice the dress was also delicately peppered with sheer of tulle, which complemented the sexy illusion neckline. Elegant and pretty.

I hoped Killian liked this dress. We were doing the “can’t see the bride before the wedding” ritual, and while he was pissed – of course, he was – Emily and Mirai had teamed up against him and had locked him out of the bedroom.

He pounded on the door for the first hour. He cursed a few times. Then tried to sweet talk me into opening the door for him... when that didn’t work, he went back to cursing.

After a while, Killian finally gave up.

Or I thought so.

My phone pinged with a message and I rolled my eyes.

“Does he ever give up?” Mirai mumbled.

I grabbed my phone off the vanity, only to see that it was in fact Killian messaging me. A giddy smile spread across my lips. “I guess not.”

Killian: *Let me in.*

Me: *Why?*

Killian: *I want a kiss.*

It wasn't the first time Killian tried to convince me to open the door through texting. He almost succeeded a few hours ago, when he decided not to play fair by sending me dirty texts and getting me aroused.

Since I was pregnant, my libido was all time high. So I quickly figured out that his goal was to get me to come to him by having me all excited for his touch.

He almost won if it wasn't for Mirai catching me trying to sneak out of the room.

Neither Killian nor I believed in superstitions. But if we could avoid any bad luck from hereafter, I wasn't risking it.

Me: *You can kiss me at the altar.*

Killian: *I want more than a kiss. Can't do that at the altar.*

By now, I was grinning so bad my cheeks were beginning to hurt. I had been so touch deprived, so love deprived for the last four years that I was now practically swooning at every little attention. Romantic Killian was my favorite Killian.

Me: *You can do that after the wedding.*

Killian: *I fucked up.*

Me: *What do you mean?*

Killian: *I imagined you in your wedding dress, walking down the aisle to me... and then I imagined how fucking good it'd feel to rip that dress off you and eat you out like my favorite dessert. So now my dick is aching. You're killing me, Princess.*

Me: *First, it's not my fault your imagination decided to run so wild. Second, you ARE NOT ripping my dress off. I'll be mad and instead of "consummating" our marriage as you desperately want to, you'll be sleeping on the floor.*

Killian: *Let me in. Please.*

Me: *You really thought saying please was going to help your case?*

Killian: *Yes?*

He sounded so hopeful in that one-word text that I imagined him pouting as he waited for me to open the door. A giggle escaped past my lips while I quickly typed back a message.

Me: *Patience is a virtue.*

Killian: *I'm not fucking virtuous.*

Me: *I love you.*

Killian: *I love you too. Now, can I have pussy for a late lunch?*

Me: *Dinner.*

Killian: *Afternoon snack?*

Me: *Dinner.*

Killian. *Fuck.*

Mirai let out a choked cough and I dropped my phone on the vanity, before meeting her eyes through the mirror. Her cheeks were tinted pink and she was biting back a smile.

A flush sneaked up my neck and my cheeks at the knowing look she was giving me. “Were you reading my texts?”

“Nope.”

I squinted at her suspiciously. “Liar.”

“You should have agreed to the afternoon snack.”

“Afternoon snack?” Emily bustled into the room, my white veil in her hands. “Are you hungry? I can make you a snack.”

“I don’t know about Julianna but I definitely think Killian is hungry,” Mirai mumbled.

Oh my God.

I let out a silent gasp but Emily was oblivious, thank God.

Mirai took my white, lace veil from her grandmother and came back to me. “Here it is.”

“Thank you.” My smile widened. “Can you help me?”

I faced the mirror and Mirai secured the veil over my head with the gorgeous handmade leaf tiara, embellished with tiny crystals, that Emily made me – as a wedding present. It was the only sparkly thing about my wedding outfit.

I had forgone any expensive jewelleries, except for the simple pearl earrings that was my *something borrowed* from Selene. After my mother’s death, she was the only mother figure I had. And when Gracelynn was gone, Selene was my only friend until I came to the island.

The last year, Selene wasn't much in my life and I had missed her. One phone call later and after a few arrangements, she was able to make it to my second wedding.

"Where's Selene?" I asked Emily as she helped Mirai arrange my veil.

"She's doing a final check before the wedding." She met my eyes through our reflection, smiling encouragingly. "To make sure all the arrangements are done properly and then she'll get ready."

I had everything now. Everything I wanted; everything I dreamed of. A real father – Gideon. Emily and Mirai were my friends. Selene was here, with her motherly smile. My husband loved me. I was only missing...

Gracelynn.

My chest tightened and I shook my head, refusing to think about how it *hurt*.

Taking a shaky breath, I smiled at my reflection. I was finally getting a real wedding and today was a happy day. Killian made sure of it. I wasn't going to ruin it by being so *bleak* on such a joyous occasion.

An hour later, I found myself standing in front of the door that led to the back of the castle. My father's gaze flitted to mine, cocking his head to the side as he studied me closely. "You look a little nervous."

"Do you think Killian is nervous?"

He chuckled. "Not exactly. He's just impatient."

"Of course, he is," I mumbled. "As long as he doesn't leave me at the altar again."

My father scowled. "He wouldn't—"

"I'm joking," I was quick to say. "I know he wouldn't. Not this time. I'm not worried about that. Actually, I don't know

why I'm nervous. We're already legally married and we're just saying our vows again. But I think... yeah, I'm just a *little* nervous and a lot excited."

"That's expected from a bride," he acknowledged before shaking his head, his lips curling with a rueful smile. "Killian drove everyone crazy today. He hasn't been good company at all."

"He hasn't left my side since we came back from the hospital," I said defensively.

It was true, Killian had been hovering since I woke up in the hospital. The surgery might have been a success and while the bullet left a physical scar, it was nothing compared to Killian's trauma. He barely left my side since then and some nights, I'd wake up to him covered in cold sweats and lost in a nightmare where I couldn't reach him.

"The man needs to let you breathe. His overprotectiveness will eventually suffocate you."

I curled my fingers around the crook of his elbow. "I don't mind it."

"You say that now." My father scoffed.

"He lost me once and almost lost me *again*," I explained. "I think I understand why he won't let me out of his sight for too lo—"

I hesitated when I noticed his half-smile. "Why are you smiling like that?"

"I like seeing you defending him, Jules," he said slowly, with that same affectionate look in his eyes. "He loves you and I know you love him too. Hang on to that when your marriage gets hard."

My throat constricted with heavy emotions and I gave my father a slow nod.

"Are you ready?" he asked in that fatherly tone he always used with me.

"Ready," I whispered as he opened the door and we took our first step outside.

The sun was bright, in the afternoon sky and there was no music except for my own shaky breath. I curled my bare toes into the grass, feeling the slight dampness after the rain yesterday.

Oh God.

There were flowers *everywhere*.

That was the first thing I noticed and then my eyes caught him.

Killian.

He was standing at the end of the flowered aisle, under the domed gazebo that Elias had built for Arabella. He turned around and our eyes met.

Time slowed.

My heart drummed in my chest, so loudly I thought everyone could hear it.

A second passed.

I limped towards my husband. He was wearing a black suit, similar to what he always wore, and it appeared like he had been running his fingers through his hair too many times from the messy look of it.

Killian seemed completely bewildered at the sight of me walking down the aisle to him; completely and utterly *dumbstruck*. I watched as his expression changed from grumpy to awe and then adoration. The last time I had walked down the aisle, Killian hadn't even bothered to turn around and this time...

He was right; if we wanted to re-write our story – this was where we needed to begin. Our vows.

The closer I got to him, the harder my heart raced. My stomach fluttered and dipped when we were finally within an arm distance.

As if he was too impatient to wait, Killian walked down the step and came to me. "I got her," he said to my father, before curling his arm around my waist.

“You do?” my father questioned; his voice more serious than I had ever heard.

Killian’s arm tightened around me. “I got her *then*. I got her *now* and until my last breath.”

“You sound very arrogant, son.”

“I’m *confident* enough in the love I have for your daughter.” His voice deepened in a way that had a shiver zipped down my spine. “I made a mistake in the past but I’m not letting her go this time.”

“That’s what I wanted to hear.” My father finally released me and I leaned into Killian, the scent of him making me all warm and giddy.

He pressed his lips against my temple and my heart swooned. “Ranunculi, huh,” Killian remarked.

I looked down at my bouquet and nodded. “Our flowers. I specifically asked for white and pink Ranunculi.”

We walked up the steps and stood under the decorated gazebo, before the old and half-bald priest. He smiled kindly at us, taking in our embrace. “We are gathered here today—”

Killian and I turned to face each other when the priest started speaking. I could hear him but couldn’t make sense of his words over the pounding of my heart. My hands were clammy and a slight tingle ran down my spine.

My husband, without wasting another second, lifted my veil and then before I could breathe, before I could blink, his lips were on mine. Kissing me hard. Kissing me like he had been starving for me. Kissing me like he was a drowning man and needed this kiss to live, as if my lips could save him from an impending calamity. Killian swallowed my shocked gasp and kissed me harder, stealing my breath from my lungs and pouring his own down my throat.

“– the kiss is after the vows, Mr. Spencer.”

Our lips parted from each other when the priest’s voice interrupted us and my whole body flushed in embarrassment.

“I couldn’t wait,” Killian simply said, his lips still hovering over mine, so close. “You see, I’m neither a patient nor a virtuous man.”

The old man released an exasperated sigh. “Can we go ahead with the ceremony now?”

“Wait,” my husband said. He cradled my face between his big hands and gave me a simple peck on the lips and then a hard kiss, before finally pulling away. I was left breathless and aching, and Killian was smirking. “Okay, we’re ready now.”

The priest began speaking again and I tuned him out when he started talking about the meaning of marriage – the importance of the holy bond between husband and wife.

“Do you, Killian Spencer, take Julianna–”

“I want to say my own vows,” Killian interrupted.

“Right, okay. Go ahead.”

Killian’s hands tightened around mine and he laced our fingers together. A solemn look covered his face. “I’d always regret the day I spoke those hate vows to you, wishing I could take them back because I know damn well how much those words hurt you.”

I shook my head, my eyes stinging with unshed tears. “I hurt you too,” I whispered.

Killian’s lips curled with a bittersweet smile that broke my heart. “Today, I want to take you as my wife – the way I should have the first time. With proper vows,” Killian said, his voice deep and thick with rough emotions. “I promise to love you without condition, to honor you each and every day, to wipe away your tears and to make you smile harder. To make you laugh when you’re sad, to hold you when you’re hurting and to love you even when you can’t love yourself. *I choose you, Julianna.*”

There it was. The part of our story that seriously needed a re-write. The part where I never gave him a chance to choose me. In the past, I took that choice from him. Ripped it away like a fool and a merciless lover. And now, he was choosing me. Against all odds. After everything. Leaving all the pain

and lies behind – the secrets and manipulations, Killian was choosing me as his wife.

There was so much conviction in his voice when he continued to speak.

“I chose you then, and I choose you now and I choose for the rest of our lives. I choose you because you’re the strongest woman I’ve ever met. You battled everything ugly and harsh, and look at you – you came out alive and fighting, you rose from the ashes and you’re the most *beautiful* woman I’ve ever laid eyes on. I choose you because you make my heart happy. I choose you because your soul is pure. I choose you because you were made for me. I vow to put all my effort in making this marriage work and to give you the best version of me. Good days or bad days, I will give you the best of me because you don’t deserve anything less, Princess. For as long as we both shall live, I will be by your side—for better or worse, in sickness and health, for richer or poorer. You are my one and only today and every day. Do you? Do you... choose me? Do you take me as your husband?”

A strangled sound left my throat before I could stop myself. I nodded when I couldn’t find my voice. “I do,” I said quietly and then louder, more assured. “I do, Killian. I choose you.”

“Would you like to say your own vows?” The priest asked me.

“Yes,” I said. “I, Julianna Spencer, choose you Killian Spencer to be my husband and my partner through life and ever after. I vow to always honor you, to love you, to comfort you, to encourage you and to never give up on us. Whether we are at our best or our worst, I will be your wife and your best friend. I will share your hopes and your dreams. I vow to always put us first, to always choose *us*, when time gets hard. I will love you even when you make me mad. I will love you even we’re fighting, because I know at the end of the day, we will always comfort each other. I will go to battle for you. I will fight the world for you and because marriage is both ugly and beautiful, I vow to walk through the ugly and beautiful with you. For better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in

sickness and in health, until death do us part. Do you take me, as your wife?"

I was crying by the time I was done speaking my vows and Mirai's beautiful work at my makeup was probably messed up.

"Till death do us part, I do," Killian solemnly vowed.

My heart was bursting as we exchanged our rings. I slid the black gold band over his finger, finally feeling at peace. *Truly*.

We did it.

A new chapter... as we closed the old one. But it wasn't the end.

Only the beginning.

This chapter didn't use a tedious pen or a pretty ink. But every word was spilled from our tongues, as his lips met mine and while our kisses turned into paragraphs.

His heartbeat matched mine.

And it was the perfect page within our story.

CHAPTER TWO

Julianna

Our lips parted and I was dazed, my mind reeling. He swept me up in his arms and my heart raced as he carried me away, carefully. Delicately. As if he was carrying the most precious cargo in his arms. Our guests laughed and Killian? He was *grinning*.

“I’m not waiting for our reception,” he said arrogantly. “You’re getting deliciously fucked tonight, Princess. I’ve waiting long enough.”

“You only waited for twelve hours,” I shot back, but I couldn’t deny that this was indeed long enough.

“Twelve *fucking* hours.”

I rolled my eyes and my stomach fluttered again. I cupped my stomach, caressing the tiny swell of my pregnant belly. Was it the baby?

No, it was too early for that. I was barely eleven weeks along. So that fluttering was definitely butterflies in my stomach. No, it was a whole zoo. My husband had me swooning. *Again*.

Killian carried me inside and up the stairs to our room. Once we were inside, he allowed me to my feet and I stood on shaky legs as he practically tore off his suit jacket, dropping it on the floor at our feet. His black shirt came off next, joining his suit jacket on the floor.

My gaze slid over his wide, muscular chest and rippling abs. His body was a work of art; proof of hours and hours of dedication in the gym. My throat went dry at the sight of him like this, even though I had seen his bare chest countless of times. I was well acquainted with my husband’s body but every time, I *ached* for him just as the same very first time.

“Get undressed, Julianna.” There was a warning tone in his voice, as if he was hanging on thin thread and was barely containing himself.

I lifted my chin, feeling haughty and pursed my lips at him. “Or *you* could undress me.”

If he could be so arrogantly demanding, then I could be dangerously bold.

His eyes darkened and his lips curled in a sexy smirk. He unbuckled his belt as he stalked closer to me. The way he prowled forward, with such confidence, it was almost like he was hunting me. A wild, savage animal fixating on its prey.

Except, I was very much willing.

I took a step back, because the idea of him chasing me had adrenaline pumping through my veins. Though I knew I wouldn't get far with my limp, I still tried to escape him when he reached toward me.

His chest rumbled with a harsh sound; a growl when his fingers brushed against my arms but I was already taking a few steps back. Away from him.

“Julianna,” he warned slowly.

“Yes?” I responded, ever so innocently.

“Don't do this.”

“Don't do what?”

He scowled. “I need you.”

“Then, take me.”

Killian lurched forward and I barely even got a chance to squeak before his arm curled around me and he tugged me into his body. My fingers splayed over his bare chest and a laugh bubbled from my throat. “So impatient.”

“Brat,” he rasped under his breath. “I told you this once, and I'll tell you again – I know how to tame a brat, Princess.”

“Maybe tomorrow. You promised me that I'm getting deliciously fucked tonight.”

“Tonight, I need my cock inside you. Right fucking now. Need to feel your snug pussy squeezing—”

I let out a choked sound and he chuckled, his hot breath tickling the side of my face. “You’re flushed and shaking.”

“Less words, more action,” I whispered.

He turned me around, so my back was against his chest. My veil and tiara came off first. Then, his hand went to my side and he slowly unzipped my dress. “As you wish, *wife*.”

Killian’s lips grazed my bare shoulders in a soft kiss. He touched me so tenderly, it made my heart ache. I missed this.

His touch.

His kisses.

He wasn’t the cruel man I married anymore, but he was the Killian I fell in love with.

His lips moved south, kissing a careful path down my shoulder blades. My dress was backless, so he had all the access to my bare skin.

“You’re so fucking beautiful, Princess,” my husband rasped, his voice hard and gravelly.

I wished I believed his words. My face itched, the skin feeling like it had been stretched tight over my bones. “My scars—”

“You’re beautiful even with your scars,” Killian interrupted me before I could finish my sentence. As if he could read my mind. As if he knew about all my insecurities without me even having to say them out loud. “You’re goddamn breathtaking *because* of your scars.”

“Killian,” I breathed.

I let my hands fall to my sides, where I was holding my dress to my breasts. The ivory wedding gown pooled at my feet, leaving me almost fully naked.

“Julianna,” Killian groaned against my flushed skin. “I’m so fucking in love with you that I fear it’s dangerously close to obsession.”

“The feeling is mutual, *husband*.”

“Good.” His fingers slid over my bare skin, up my hips and then my arms. I shivered at his featherlight touch.

He was teasing me and so, I begged. “Touch me.”

“Where do you want me to touch you?”

Was he serious right now? “Wherever you want,” I practically pleaded.

“That’s not the answer I’m looking for, Julianna. Where do you want me to touch you? Tell me.”

My body was so hot and aching and my core pulsed between my legs, so needy for him. I couldn’t think straight. “I – my lips. Kiss me.”

“Gladly,” he said, his voice gritty with lust.

And then he was sweeping me off my feet and into his arms. I let out a squeal when he dropped me on the bed. He knelt by the bed and tugged on my legs, drawing me closer to the edge. His fingers curled around my panties and his lips twitched, before he ripped them off.

My gasp was quickly replaced by a shaky moan when Killian wedged his wide shoulders between my thighs.

Our eyes met as he slowly lowered his head to my sex, where I was dripping and *pulsing* with need.

My heart thudded so hard I thought it’d spill out of my chest. His fingers brushed over wet folds, before spreading me open. I quivered in response. He was meticulously slow, almost like he was teasing me into *feeling* him.

When his thumb finally grazed my clit, I whimpered. I was so hypersensitive and his calloused touch was driving me utterly crazy. Desire pooled in the pit of my stomach, hot and needy – as my arousal leaked out of me, coating my inner thighs and the bedsheets.

“What are you doing?” I asked breathlessly. “I asked you to kiss... my lips.”

“I am,” he simply said before lowering his mouth over my sex. The moment his lips were on my flesh, my back bowed off the bed and a moan spilled from my throat.

“Holy shit!”

His chest rumbled with a low growl and I *felt* that against my pussy. Killian had gone down on me, way too many times for me count – and I was speechless every time. I didn’t know what I liked the most. His mouth or his cock.

Right now, it was his mouth.

Maybe later, I’d be begging for his–

My stomach tightened when his tongue circled around my clit and the teeth grazed that tiny bundle of nerves.

My mind went blank as Killian took his sweet time, lapping at my sex leisurely. His tongue probed my entrance but he didn’t push inside. Instead, he licked and sucked. Not leaving any part of me untouched.

“Killian,” I choked. My fingers gripped his hair, in frantic need. Fire licked through my veins and I was hanging dangerously close over the edge of the cliff, dangling at the precipice of orgasm.

He worked my hardened nub between his lips, and then his teeth – tormenting me until it got painful and I was strung tight, my muscles tightening with the various sensations running through my body.

He sucked my clit between his lips, soothing the ache that his teeth left and I almost sobbed in response. “Killian, *please.*”

My eyes fluttered close.

My husband was killing me.

And maybe it’d be a sweet, sweet death.

But God, I needed...

I needed more.

My back arched off the bed when he shoved a finger inside me. My core pulsed and I clenched around him, instinctively. My thighs tightened around his head when he pushed a second thick digit inside me. I clamped around his fingers, desperate to keep him where he was. Desperate for him to move. For him to grant me release.

“Killian. Killian!”

My whimpers rang like desperate pleas as his tongue and fingers worked together, in simultaneously agreement at tormenting me.

I throbbed.

It hurt. It was a good hurt though.

I bit back on my lips as I grew closer to my release, feeling it in the way my body quivered. There was a sharp sting on my clit; my eyes snapped open and my lips parted with a silent scream.

I bucked against his mouth and fingers, my orgasm washing over me like a hurricane.

His tongue ravaged me, lapping at my wetness.

He groaned in response.

Killian worshipped me on his knees and I was utterly spent.

“Holy shit,” I gasped.

He lifted his head from between my thighs and our eyes met – his dark and hungry. “There’s nothing *holy* about this, Princess.”

“I – you,” I cleared my throat and swallowed down my whimper. “I said lips. To kiss my lips.”

His lips, wet and glistening from my release, twitched. “You didn’t specify.”

“You’re an impossible man.”

I released his hair and curled my hands around his shoulders, pulling him forward so that he was hovering over

me. Killian settled his hips between my thighs and I wrapped my ankles around the back of his thighs.

He brushed his lips over mine and then shoved his tongue into my mouth. My eyes closed and I chose to feel him. To feel this kiss. I could taste my own release on his tongue as he kissed me. Hard. Unrelenting. *All-consuming*.

This.

All of this.

I loathed all the time we lost because of my cruel mistakes, but when he kissed me like this, I didn't care. Because we finally found our way back together. Nothing else mattered.

I felt his hand between our bodies and then his thick member was pressing against my core. He rubbed his length up and down my folds, coating himself with my juices.

The tip of him pressed against my clit and I sucked in a shuddering breath.

Killian thrust inside, slowly, filling me completely. My core clenched around the hard intrusion and my walls stretched around the thickness of his length, to accommodate him.

He pulled out fully before shoving back inside. When my back arched off the bed, he lowered his body over mine, pressing me back into the mattress.

"Killian," I breathed. I *throbbed* between my legs, pulsing with insistent need.

My husband found his pace, each thrust dragging a desperate moan from my throat. His grunts were deep and primal, feeding to the insatiable wanton need inside me.

My hands slid to his back, my nails digging into his skin. I clawed at his back and for a moment, I didn't even care if I was leaving any marks.

Thrust. "You're killing me," he groaned. *Thrust*. "Do you hear how wet you are, Princess?" *Thrust*. "Your cunt is made for me. Made for my cock." *Thrust*. "So fucking beautiful."

With each hard stroke, his pelvis brushed against my clit and I writhed under him.

“Mine,” he grunted.

My breathing turned shallow. “*Killian.*”

He pumped inside me, once and twice. “Come. Fuck, baby. I need you with me.”

My body tightened and my lips slammed against his. *I* kissed him. I took this kiss, because it was *mine* to take.

This time, I wasn’t stealing a kiss in the dark, while he was unconscious and dreaming of my ghost. No, this time I took it because it was rightfully mine.

When I pulled back, my lips felt raw and my heart ached. But it was a good ache. I met his dark eyes, seeing the same love reflecting in the depth of his gaze.

His muscles corded; his body growing taunt and I could feel that fluttering in my stomach again. Killian pulled out fully before shoving back inside, with one hard and brutal thrust.

We found our release together, our bodies entwined, our heartbeats matching to the same rhythm. He came with a low grunt, filling me to the brim. Spent, he laid his forehead against me. We caught our breaths, as he remained buried inside me.

“Fuck,” Killian rasped, when his breathing was finally normal again. “The baby—”

“— is fine.”

“Goddamn it. You kill me, Julianna. You fucking kill me.”

My lips curled with a smile, because how could I not?

CHAPTER THREE

Killian

I dropped my jacket over my wife's shoulders as she knelt beside her sister's grave before taking a step back and giving her privacy. This was the first time we had been off the island since Simon kidnapped Julianna and she got shot. The moment she was discharged from the hospital, I swept her away, to where she would be safer.

On the island; our home.

I didn't fucking trust anyone else near my wife, except the people I personally knew and even then, I still didn't let her out of my sight.

I just can't.

I didn't trust anyone but myself to keep Julianna and our baby safe.

She spoke to the grave, quiet enough that I couldn't make out her words. She had been asking me for months to bring her here, to where her sister was buried. I refused more times than I could count, but after *pleading* with me, my resolve weakened.

Not when I saw how miserable she was every time I refused.

Not when she begged me.

Not when I saw the sorrow in her pretty grey eyes.

I was so fucking pussy whipped for Julianna and I didn't even care.

Bishop Romano might be in prison now, but I didn't trust how far and wide his influence was. Just because he was locked behind bars, it didn't mean all his operations ended. And because *I* put him there, his enmity toward me was far too great.

And my goddamn weakness?

My wife and our unborn baby.

Julianna might still be in danger...

My blood was cold in my veins as I suspiciously eyed our surroundings. I had enlisted a whole security team to follow us and to protect Julianna the moment we stepped off the island. The team was here, a few feet away from us. Watchful. Protective. And always on guard.

But still, I couldn't stay *calm*. Couldn't be at ease.

Not when my wife was wide open to possible harm. Maybe Julianna was right; I was getting too paranoid or maybe I was just couldn't risk losing her again.

Fuck no.

Not now, not ever.

She let out a choked sob and my back went ramrod hard. But she wasn't in any danger. Julianna sniffled as she ran her fingers over the cold tombstone. Over her sister's name. "I'll bring your favorite flowers next time and then I'll tell you if I'm having a boy or a girl."

She said her goodbyes to Gracelynn and then stood up, wobbling a bit before I wrapped my arm around her waist to steady her. The wind blew through her platinum blonde hair, a few stubborn strands escaping her ponytail. The red hair ribbon caught my eyes and my heart swelled in my chest.

It was the ribbon I gave her, all those years ago, as her fourth courting gift.

I'd have to fill her drawers with new hair ribbons. Of all colors and fabrics. My wife couldn't have too many hair ribbons. Nope, she'd never run out of them.

Julianna gave me the most breathtaking smile, her grey eyes glassy with unshed tears. Wide and innocent. There was heartbreak in her eyes. But her smile...

Her fucking smile told me that she was ready to move on.

She put her hand in mine, tugging me away from the grave but I dug my feet into the dirt. Julianna scrunched her nose in confusion and I shook my head. “I want some time alone with Gracelynn.”

“Why?” she questioned.

I squeezed her fingers. “I have some things I need to say to her.”

I had unfinished business left to take care of and this needed to be done in private.

Julianna gave me a suspicious look but nodded anyway. I watched as she limped away from the grave. Now that she was heavily pregnant, I’ve noticed that she moved slower and her limp was somewhat more pronounced. This was why I carry her everywhere. She complained a lot until she realized that there was no point.

Once Julianna had disappeared inside the car, I settled on the ground. Next to Gracelynn’s grave. I was silent for a long moment before I cleared my throat.

“I fucked up,” I said to the ghost of Julianna’s sister.

There was a sudden cold breeze and a shudder rolled down my spine. It was almost like she – Gracelynn – was here. Listening to me. Probably judging me. Most likely angry at me. For hurting her sister. For breaking Julianna.

“You left this world, probably thinking that I would be here for Julianna. You loved her and were fiercely protective of your sister, that I know. You thought I would protect her but I left Julianna to the wolves,” I confessed, my voice cracking. “They destroyed her and I hurt her. I hurt her in ways I can’t take back. It’s my deepest regret and I’m not sure I’ll ever forgive myself for that.”

Another cold breeze whizzed past me and this time, I was sure Gracelynn’s ghost was here. Probably passing her judgement on me and finding me lacking to be her sister’s husband. But I was here to remedy that.

“Julianna and I took our vows again; this time – it was a real wedding with a proper vow. I lifted her veil, kissed her and

carried her away from the altar,” I explained to the grave, as if I was speaking to a real person. “I tried to fix what I messed up. And I’m *trying* to be the husband that Julianna deserves. I’m not perfect but I can vow one thing. Your sister – my wife – will always be my first choice. My *only* choice,” I promised with utter conviction. “She spent three years being scared that if I knew the truth of her deception, I wouldn’t choose her. So, I’m going to spend the rest of my life making sure that she knows I will *always* choose her.”

Running my fingers over Gracelynn’s name, engraved over the tombstone, I allowed myself to finally smile. “Thank you. I like to think that you were protecting her all along while I couldn’t. But it’s okay. You can let go; I’m here to protect her now.”

With those as my final words to Gracelynn – I hoped that her soul could rest in peace now – I walked away from her grave and toward my wife.

The moment I got in the car, I wrapped my arm around Julianna and she curled into me. I let out a staggering breath, in relief. That it was over. She was safe in my arms. We were going back home.

She buried her face into my neck, her cold lips against my skin. “What did you talk about with Grace?”

“That’s between me and her, Princess.”

Her blunt teeth sank into my flesh and I hissed in response. Julianna pulled away and scowled at me, her stormy grey eyes meeting mine. “Why can’t you tell me? I’m just curious.”

I flicked her nose. “I made amends; that’s all.”

My wife pouted and crossed her arms over her chest. “Whatever.”

I rolled my eyes at the petulance in her voice and cupped her round pregnant belly. Our son kicked in response, strong and he got quite an aim. “Your mommy is pouting. How shall I fix that, huh?”

I leaned forward and licked her cheek. She gasped, lurching away from me. “Ew! Killian!”

I licked her again, just because. And this time, when Julianna tried to escape, I tugged her back into my embrace and kissed her pout. “Stop pouting, wife.”

“Stop licking me, husband.”

I chuckled and then licked her lips. She pushed against my chest with her tiny fists, though she wasn’t even trying too hard. “You’re so weird.”

“Weird because I licked your cheek? But it’s okay when I lick your cunt?”

“Killian!” she squeaked, her wide eyes going to the driver before coming back to me. Surprise played across her face, her jaw slack. “I can’t believe you just said that out loud!”

“What? That you like it when—”

She slapped a hand over my mouth, muffling the rest of my sentence. “Stop, just shut up and go back to licking my cheek.”

“Sure,” I said into her palm. Her nose twitched and then her lips curled with a barely contained smile.

And that was when I *really* kissed her.

Time stopped in a collision of senses when my lips met hers.

The kiss wasn’t just any kiss.

It was the cure.

The beginning and the end.

The epiphany – that while our fairy tale was severely flawed, it was perfect in the most imperfect way.

CHAPTER FOUR

Julianna

Four and a half years later.

Ragna let out a wet huff as I brushed her white coat. She was a little grumpy today and I was sure it had something to do with Cerberus. It appeared he wasn't giving my sassy mare enough attention. I couldn't believe that I was witnessing a lover's quarrel between horses.

Except, it wasn't all that surprising.

I thought horses were monogamous animals, but Ragna and Cerberus had been inseparable over the last few years. There was long courtship and of course, my mare played hard to get before finally giving in.

While Cerberus was arrogant and a bit wild, I got to see his emotional side a few months ago when Ragna was sick. She was taken away from Cerberus while her health was monitored closely. That was the first time I had seen a depressed stallion.

"She's beautiful," a deep voice interrupted my thoughts. I looked over my shoulders to see Gabriel striding toward me, a full smirk on his face. He came to stand beside and laid a hand over Ragna's forehead, giving my girl a little pat.

"Her mane is so long," he admired, his gaze flicking between Ragna and me. "And her white coat is shiny. You keep her well groomed."

"Thank you," I said, delightfully pleased with his praises. "How many new horses did you bring this time?"

"Two stallions. They are wild and too stubborn," he responded with his thick British accent. Gabriel had been Killian's business partner and a close friend for almost a decade. They were close, and that basically made Gabriel

family. He had a habit of rescuing horses and bringing them to Killian for training.

I dropped the brush over a stack of hay and gave Ragna a pat. “Aren’t they always?”

“Nah, these two are really difficult. I think Killian’s going to have a hard time with them.”

“He’s a horse whisperer, Gabriel,” I defended my husband haughtily. “There’s never been a horse that he can’t handle. And you’re lucky he even found the time to train them.”

But then again, Killian would never say *no* to horses.

“He’s that busy, huh?”

Killian being busy was an understatement. Now that he was officially running for President, my husband had more important things to take care of. His country.

From attending debates, to rallies and fundraisers where he gathered his supporters, Killian was dedicated through and through. I loved that about his. Loved how strong and stubborn he was. Loved how passionate he was about his job and his love for this country.

But I missed him.

Except, that didn’t matter at the moment. I was his wife and right now, our country came before my needs. Some days, I was selfish and tried to keep his bed but I blamed that on my pregnancy.

I cupped my round stomach at the thought of that. This morning Killian left bed before I woke up. I knew he did that because he thought I needed the rest, but I wished he had wakened me up.

Gabriel snapped his finger in front of my face, bringing me out of my thoughts. “I lost you there. What’s up?”

I shook my head and gave him a shaky smile, before glancing at Ragna with longing. “Oh yeah, I meant to say Killian is quite busy these days. Of course, you know that already.”

Gabriel was silent for a moment while I petted Ragna. She was quiet as she moved closer to me, bumping her head against my hand. She could *feel* my emotions and I tried not to let my misery bleed into her.

“You’re looking at your horse with such sad eyes, Jules,” Gabriel said, ever the observant one. “Why don’t you ride her?”

I itched to get on my mare but I knew I couldn’t. Not when I was pregnant and Killian made me promise that I wouldn’t ride Ragna alone. I thought he’d lose his protective instincts over the years but I was very wrong.

Killian was still the same overprotective and overbearing man I knew.

Especially now... that I was pregnant after two years of fertility issues.

A year after the birth of Cameron, I started experiencing irregularities with my menstrual cycle. It was nothing alarming at first until I went eight months with my periods and that was when I finally went for a check-up, only to find out that I had developed Polycystic ovary syndrome – which eventually made it hard for us to conceive.

We were happy with Cameron being our only child, until I got greedy. I always wanted a big family and so did Killian. And so it began. The painful process of trying for another child while struggling with infertility.

Two years of uncertainties.

Two years of IVF shots and praying for successful retrievals.

Two years of hoping for fertilized eggs only to realize the embryos would not make it through the transfer process.

Two years of hopelessness and not feeling *good enough*.

One successful transfer ended up in a miscarriage.

And that was when I finally broke down.

It was tormenting. Being so hopeful, thinking you were finally getting what you wanted the most, only for it to be ripped away from you – so cruelly.

Killian and I eventually decided to stop trying. The pain of losing our baby *killed* us and he wasn't willing to put *me* through that again.

I agreed. Until six months ago, when I had a dream.

Of a little baby girl calling me mommy. It was so *real* and till now, I could still hear her sweet voice calling out to me. It was a dream, but I swore, that was our future.

So, I convinced my husband for us to try again.

I caressed my eighteen weeks baby bump. We didn't know the gender yet, but I *knew* it was a little girl. She was so real in my dreams, with her dark hair like her father's and my grey eyes. Her soft, round cheeks and her pouty lips.

“Killian doesn't let me ride her,” I finally told Gabriel. “At least not alone. And since he's always busy, I haven't had a chance to get on Ragna for a long time.”

He'd actually blow up a blood vessel if he saw me on a horse, alone. My husband liked to that he was invincible and that he was my shield.

Except he can't protect me from everything.

Gabriel scoffed. “Well, you're not alone now. I'm here, so why don't you get on Ragna?”

“Oh no, please—”

“What? You think I'm not strong enough to *protect* you?” he asked arrogantly before flexing his big muscles over his tight black shirt, as if to show me just how “strong” he was. “Anyway, Ragna is your mare. She's pretty docile, isn't she?”

I rolled my eyes but I was very... tempted to take him up on his offer. If Gabriel was with me, I wouldn't be alone so it wasn't like I was going against what Killian wanted.

Gabriel grabbed one of the helmets off the hook and presented it to me, waiting patiently for me to make up my

mind. I glanced at Ragna's pretty face and my heart swelled. God, how could I say no to such tempting offer?

I put on the helmet and then Gabriel hoisted me onto Ragna's back. The moment I settled on the saddle, my fingers curled around her pretty mane. My chest tightened and I practically choked on my emotions.

Maybe it was the pregnancy...

"My beautiful girl," I whispered to her. Ragna neighed in response, as if she understood me.

Gabriel chuckled and I glanced at down to find him grinning at me. "Now, that's a smile I like to see."

"I missed her," I confessed out loud.

Gabriel grabbed the reins and I pressed my heels into Ragna's sides, urging her forward. "Let's go for a walk, sweet girl."

We walked out around in circles in the open field, keeping a steady pace that Gabriel could follow on foot. He stayed by my side, fingers around the rein and I felt safe enough.

"You've got a breathtaking smile that would make any man weak to their knees," he said after a few moments of silence, touching my calf to grab my attention.

My scars itched at the unexpected praise. "You're just being sweet."

Gabriel patted his chest. "I'm an honest man."

I opened my mouth to respond when I caught a movement out of the corner of my eye. My husband was stalking toward us and when he was close enough, I noticed the look of pure *rage* on his face.

"Gabriel," he snapped.

My eyes widened at his tone but his friend wasn't fazed at all. "How are the horses looking? Do you think you can handle them?"

Killian snatched the rein from Gabriel. "Leave," he ordered coldly.

“What–

He glowered at Gabriel and the poor man didn't even have a chance to say anything before Killian was leading Ragna back to the stables. Once we were inside, he pulled me off my mare and settled me on a stack of hay. This place was smaller than the one we had on the island.

But with Killian running for President, we had to leave Isle Rosa-Maria behind. So, we had officially moved to Spencer Manor in Washington D.C, bringing our horses with us.

Killian locked Ragna in her stall before finally facing me. My husband was positively livid and I internally winced. He stood to his full height, shoulders rigid and his fists clenched to his side.

“What is this all about?” I slowly asked.

His eyes flared darker. “He was flirting with you.”

“He wasn't!” I hissed, getting to my feet. “He's your friend. God, what is wrong with you?”

“What is wrong with me is that you deliberately went against what I told you when all I wanted was to *protect* you and our baby,” he said in a deceptively low voice. Killian didn't raise his voice at me; he never did – and I couldn't remember the last time he was angry at *me*.

“You're overexaggerating!” I couldn't even hide the indignation in my voice. “I was completely comfortable and safe with Ragna and Gabriel. I was in no imminent danger. You're speaking as if I am new to horses. I'm not. You taught me everything I need to know about horses. Are you saying you're not confident about your own teachings?”

“I'm not here to tempt fate, Julianna,” he said through gritted teeth.

“Neither am I!”

“The risk of you injuring yourself–”

“So what? Am I going to spend the rest of life confined–”

“Hey, is everything okay?” Gabriel interrupted, slowly walking back into the stables. His gaze flickered between Killian and I. “Is there a problem?”

Killian tensed. “I’m speaking to my *wife*,” he practically snarled at his friend.

“It’s fine,” I said, giving Gabriel a practiced smile. “We’re just talking.”

“Right. Um, okay.” He backtracked quickly.

Once he disappeared from our view, I rounded on Killian. “I know you’re worried but you need to calm for a second.”

He took a staggering breath. His eyes were still dark and furious but I could see the moment he started to calm down. The corded muscles in his neck unclenched and his jaw was not longer tight.

I moved forward, pressing my body against his. “I’m sorry, I didn’t mean to scare you. I just missed taking Ragna on a run.”

He swallowed hard before his arms curled around me. Protectively. *Finally*. “I didn’t like how close he was to you,” he rasped.

“Killian,” I started, fighting back a smile. “Are you jealous?”

He scowled. “I’m not jealous.” His voice dropped to a low growl. “You’re mine and I’m territorial. Big difference, Princess.”

It was basically the same thing but I wasn’t going to argue with him now.

“Fuck,” he swore under his breath, shaking his head. “I saw you up on Ragna and my heart fucking stopped, Julianna. I forgot how to breathe. A hundred different scenarios of you being hurt played in my head.”

I pressed my face into his chest, listening to his heartbeat. *Thud. Thud. Thud.* “You’re right. I should be careful and I was. Ragna is safe and I wasn’t alone. Don’t be mad, please.”

His arms tightened around me. “I’m not mad.”

“You are.”

“I am,” he finally responded.

I stroke his chest. “How can I pacify you?”

Killian’s finger dug in to my hips. “You don’t want me to answer that.”

My eyes flickered up to his face, taking in his harsh and raw gaze. Hungry and possessive. “Tell me,” I breathed.

His hips bucked against mine, in a silent answer. “Here? Now?”

“Here,” he rasped. “Now.”

When I didn’t refuse, he walked me back to the stack of hay. Killian unbuckled his pants and my throat went dry as I stumbled back and planted my ass on the hay. I stared up at my husband’s brutally handsome and my sex clenched.

He wrapped his hand around his semi-erected cock and jerked it. His eyes darkened when I licked my lips, suddenly craving the taste of him.

Keeping our gazes locked together, I slowly got on my knees in front of him. I was now eye-level to his groin. A better position for what I had in mind. I knew Gabriel was somewhere close and he could probably hear us and I bet that was the reason Killian wanted to fuck me – here and now.

“What are you doing, Princess?”

Holding his throbbing member in my palm, I gave him a tentative squeeze. “Making it up to you, for going against what you told me when all you wanted was to protect me.”

I watched as his length thicken and felt it pulse. While making sure he was looking at me, in my eyes, I slowly descended downward on his dick. He watched me as I took him into my mouth and licked up and down his shaft.

“Fuck,” he hissed. “*Julianna.*”

I hummed in response, before closing my lips around him, *sucking*. My cheeks hollowed and his hips bucked upward, forcing him deeper into my mouth. I felt him at the back of my throat, hitting the spot that almost made me gag.

His groans and the naughty sounds of me sucking him could be heard around the stables but that didn't stop me. "Goddamn it. Your fucking mouth – oh shit."

My head bobbed up and down, before I pulled him from my wet mouth. My tongue then licked the head of his shaft. I circled the little slit dripping with his seed with the tip of my tongue. I tasted him, his manly and bit of salty essence of him. I teased him, like he'd do to me. Slowly licking and tracing the veins along his length. Feeling each pulse before slowly slipping him back into my wet mouth.

I noticed the muscles of his thighs tightening as each thrust of his hips grew jerky. His heavy panting filled my ears. He was close...so freaking close.

I doubled my effort, wanting to drive him crazily over the edge. Killian fisted my hair, pulling me hard down his cock, deeper...harder... forcing my throat to swallow him.

Without warning, he pulled out of my mouth and grasped me by the arms. I squealed as he pushed me back into the stay of hay and flipped me onto my stomach. "Hands and knees," he ordered in a thick and barely constrained voice.

My heart thudded in my chest as I quickly got on my hands and knees. Killian crowded into my back, pressing his body against mine. He flipped my yellow dress over my hips and I felt the cold breeze on my bare skin. He pushed my panties to the side and I was already so wet for him; dripping and *aching*.

"This is going to be fast and hard, Princess."

It sounded like a threat and that was the only warning I got before he shoved inside me. I gasped at the hard invasion and then whimpered as I clenched around him.

He pulled out half-way through before sinking into me again. "Julianna," Killian grunted. "You feel so goddamn good."

This was just a quick rut in the stables. A rough fucking to get the anger out of his system. It was downright filthy. This was carnage. Desperate and passionate.

Killian pumped into me, wedging his cock deep inside with each brutal thrust. My walls clamped around his shaft every time he pulled out and I cried out every time he pounded back in. My fingers curled around the hay and I bit on my lips until I tasted blood.

“Don’t ever scare me like that,” he growled. *Thrust.*

“Yes,” I gasped.

Thrust. “You’re mine.”

A needy sound left my throat. “Yours.”

My breasts felt heavy and swollen. My nipples ached. My sex throbbed.

It felt so good. It hurt so good. And I. Needed. To. Come.

His fingers brushed against my folds as if he knew what I was thinking, what I needed. He flicked my clit and my body tightened.

Killian found his release in a powerful rush and then my orgasm hit me so hard, my eyes rolled back into my head.

I collapsed onto the straw and Killian settled on top of me a second as he caught his breath, before he pulled out of my tight sheath and rolled over. I felt a warm gush between my thighs, his seed spilling out of me.

“I made you dirty,” Killian rasped in a low voice.

His fingers brushed against the inside of my thigh, before pushing his cum back into me. My sex was so hypersensitive and my sore muscles clamped down at the intrusion.

He pressed his lips against my temple. “Are you okay?”

“Uh-huh. Perfect,” I replied deliriously. “I think you just fucked me into a coma.”

Killian chuckled and while I laid limply onto the stack of hay, he rearranged my dress for me so that I was decent again.

Then, he swept me into his arms and carried me out of the stables. I buried my face into his throat, inhaling his unique scent.

Drowsily, I heard him speaking to Gabriel but I couldn't make out their conversation. His steps lulled me into a sleep and I didn't fight against it.

I was safe in Killian's arms and I'd wouldn't choose to sleep anywhere else, except right here.

"And how are you feeling, Mrs. Spencer?" Doctor Jennings asked me as I laid down on the examination table. My previous Gynecologist, Doctor Johnson, went on her own maternity leave, so Pearl was my new doctor.

"I feel completely fine and healthy," I responded as Killian laced his fingers through mine.

Pearl kindly smiled at us. "Well, let's take a look."

She placed a cold gel on my stomach and then pressed the transducer to my swollen abdomen, moving it around while looking at her screen. "Heartbeat is strong," she observed and then her expression changed.

Worried gnawed at me and Killian leaned forward. "What's wrong?" he asked urgently. "Is there something wrong with my wife? The baby?"

"Nothing." Pearl was quick to assure us, but there was just something strange about her expression. I couldn't tell if it was bad or good. "I checked your reports and Doctor Johnson said you're having twins, right?"

Killian was silent for moment before he barked, "What?"

Pearl's gaze flickered between my husband and me. "You didn't know?" she asked in confusion.

I flinched but my husband didn't notice because he was staring our doctor as if she had grown two heads. I knew we

were having twins...

Killian didn't.

It was an innocent lie; a secret because I wasn't ready to tell him yet.

I could see that my husband was still reeling from the news because he was shaking his head. "No, that can't be right."

"You're right," Pearl agreed. "It's not correct, because there are three heartbeats here."

Shock coursed through my body. "Three?" I choked.

"Yes. You're not having twins. You're having triplets."

"Oh. My. God. Triplets..." My voice trailed off because now *I* was in shock.

Pearl moved the transducer around my stomach again and she stared intently at her screen before breaking into a smile. "Yup, triplets and all girls. You're having three daughters. Congratulations, Mr. and Mrs. Spencer."

Three daughters...

Oh God.

I was shaking and Killian still hadn't said a word. He was frozen in the spot; too still for my liking. His expression was completely blank and dread filled my chest. Killian stared at the screen, watching the three tiny bleeps.

"Killian," I said nervously, while my heart swelled with excitement. Three babies!

When he didn't react, I called out his name again. This time, he blinked slowly.

"Triplets," he whispered, so quietly I almost missed it. I clenched his hand in mine and then he did the most unexpected thing ever.

His eyes rolled back into this bed and my strong, arrogant husband *collapsed*.

I blinked. And then blinked again.

"Oh dear," Pearl gasped.

Did Killian... just pass out?

Alarmed, I sat up and stared at his limp body on the floor. The doctor checked his pulsed and then coughed, but she was probably holding back her laugh. “He hit his head on the corner of the table when he passed out. Won’t need stitches but that spot is probably going to be sore.”

“Um, o-okay,” I stuttered.

I wiped away the gel from my stomach before kneeling down at Killian’s side. I patted his cheek, once and twice and then harder. He groaned and then his eyes fluttered open, giving me a dazed look.

“Triplets,” he said, in awe.

I nodded and then giggled. “You passed out!”

Killian rubbed his temple, where he was quickly bruising and then winced. “I didn’t pass out. I was merely resting my eyes,” he announced begrudgingly. “It’s good to... rest your eyes, every once in a while. So yeah, I was doing that. My eyes. Resting. Didn’t pass out.”

This time, I threw my head back and *laughed*.

I had never seen Killian like this. He was always so composed and right now, he was absolutely not. He swore under his breath and then our gazes locked. “Three babies,” he said, his voice thick with emotions. “Three daughters.”

And then he was taking me in his arms, kissing my lips like he had been dying to taste me all along. “I fucking love you, Princess.”

Yeah, I loved him too.

More than I could ever put to words.

And that was why I lied. For now.

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