



Ashes of Sin

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Category: Erotic, Romance, Billionaire Romance, Adult, Dark

Description: I was his toy to do with as he pleased. And he did, while my mother watched. My saving grace was the day he sent me to boarding school. Years later, my mother died leaving me with family money my controlling father couldn't touch. It bought me my freedom. I did the rest, becoming powerful in my own right, hungry for revenge.

Now he's remarrying a woman half his age and I'm going to take her from him. Just as he took my innocence.

It was a sound plan until I locked her away, and she refused to obey me. The moment Kyra lifted her chin defiantly, and I stared down into her icy blue eyes, lust plowed through me.

Sadly for her, no one can break down my walls.

But I will break her. Then toss her back.

The Dark Alliance is a dark enemies to lovers, dark romance series by international bestselling author Juliette N. Banks. If you love broken heroes seeking revenge, dark tropes, kidnapping and spicy page-turning romances with a happy ever after, then you'll love this group of powerful and wealthy men.

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CHAPTER ONE

MADDOX

The phoenix, while mythical, builds a nest before it dies and sets itself on fire. Then rises from the ashes, symbolizing hope, life, and good over evil.

I'm neither immortal nor fucking mythical.

I gave up believing in a savior well before my balls dropped, and nothing in my thirty-one years has changed my mind.

In fact, I'm about to become the very thing I once hated.

A monster.

Like my father.

Nature or nurture? It's an age-old question.

One I have zero need to answer because I won't be spawning any devils from my DNA.

I toss back the scotch in the bottom of my crystal glass and take in the mega-million-dollar view from my luxury Manhattan penthouse. Raindrops hit the floor-to-ceiling

windows and slide down the glass, distracting me from the world beyond. It feels macabre standing here in the dark, but it suits my mood.

I don't know if I'm even capable of true joy.

My mind flicks back to my years at Phillips Academy—a boarding school for rich kids. Or should I say rich, unwanted kids. A place that likely saved what was left of my life.

Or rather, soul.

It's where I met my "brothers": Parker, Zayne, Travis, and Killian. We saved one another.

If you can call it that.

We might all be rich as fuck, but underneath our confidence, power, and—when alone—our ridiculous banter, lies five splintered souls.

It's how we connected and it's what bonds us.

That and the fight club we started when we were fifteen. It caused an underground movement that attracted the rich, the poor, and the broken—all needing to smash the fuck out of someone to feel alive.

To feel power.

To take back what was taken.

Never works, of course, but it feels fucking great to bleed and ache instead of feeling numb.

Or to try to house the fury inside.

So, the Alliance Fight Club was formed.

Don't go mistaking us for some kind of Robin Hoods. We weren't saving anyone. We just wanted to fight. Because back then we couldn't fight our fathers—the men who caused irrevocable harm to each and every one of us.

“Remember the code,” Parker said after the first night of the Alliance Club fights in the dark streets behind Phillips Academy. “Strength in silence: revenge is a patient man's game. We act in the shadows and never reveal our hand too soon.”

We haven't.

We each graduated and have built empires, making us powerful and influential.

I had a helping hand, not from my father, but because my mother died while I was at Phillips. Whether she died of natural causes is still something I wonder about, but she stood by and let my father do what he did, so my cold, shattered heart simply hardened when I was told, and I focused on the multi-six-figure inheritance she left me.

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One my father couldn't touch.

He'd done enough touching of things that didn't belong to him during my life.

Including me.

Every fucking inch of me.

It started from as early as I can remember until the day I left for the academy. I know the moment Pierce Sterling decided to send me away. It was the moment I found my voice and spoke back to my father in front of his fucked-up, child-abusing friends.

He didn't like it.

I've wondered many times what would have become of me if I'd stayed living at home.

Would he have broken me completely?

Would I have killed him?

I certainly imagined it with every dirty kick and punch in those dark streets while we were running the Alliance Fight Club.

Some nights, I hated myself for it.

Other nights, I itched to go home and follow through with it.

“You want to spend your life in jail?” Parker would ask me. “Because that’s not revenge. That’s letting him win.”

“I won’t get caught.” I hissed back.

“Maddox.” Killian had a way of saying my name and getting through to me when the others didn’t. His deep voice, even back then, snapped me out of it.

Let me be clear, it’s not like we shook our ten-year-old hands the first day we met and openly declared my father fucked me up the ass, how about you? Also, which is your favorite, Batman or Superman?

Over time, trust formed between us, and we witnessed one another drift off into the abyss—the dark, safe, and lonely space in our minds—and brought one another out.

We shared what we felt safe to, but none of us required a lot of words.

We knew what the results of abuse looked like, simply by looking in the mirror.

The teachers were unaware—or didn’t want to know—and so it was our friendship that got us through the rest of our childhood.

That and the Alliance.

We were the children of wealthy and powerful men who paid an insane amount of money to send us away, to free them from their sins.

The sick fucks.

My stomach turns as flashes of my childhood return, and I push them back with the full force of my willpower.

It does no good to think about it.

I've studied enough psychology books to know what harm it's caused. The guilt and shame I carry is normal and all that bullshit.

I don't remember a time when Pierce—as I now call him—wasn't torturing or abusing me.

The truth is, he broke me, but not completely. I know I'm not a whole man. I'm not someone capable of love, and I accept that.

How could I be?

When I was learning to walk, he would use a whip. Not that I remember. I had to ask my mother what the thin scars on my legs and thighs were.

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“You just wouldn’t do as you were told, Maddox. Your father is not a patient man.”
Mom told me.

I had a visceral reaction in that moment, as if my body remembered, not my mind.

Fucking asshole.

Then it all came flooding back. Pierce telling me it was important to train my body—I was fucking six —and after dinner, at least three or four nights a week, he’d take me to our gymnasium and force me to run on the treadmill at insane levels until my legs were shaking and I almost collapsed.

Or force me to lift weights way too heavy for a little boy.

If I failed to lift them, he’d let the heavy bar fall on my chest, crushing me.

Bruising me.

Humiliating me.

Scaring me.

I’d have chosen those nights over the others any day of the week, but I didn’t have a choice.

Not when Pierce led me upstairs to my bedroom and locked the door.

And my mother ignored my pleas and screams.

As the fates would have it, the boys and I all ended up at Brown University after that, sharing apartments throughout our education.

Word spread about the Alliance Fight Club and after some pressure we started them up again. The cops arrived one night, and after paying them off the first time, they left us alone.

I don't know the reason half the people turned up. We did send a girl away, stating no one was going to punch her. Correction: I told her and ended up with a broken nose.

"Still not hitting you, sweetheart, so turnaround and walk away," I said, holding my nose as blood dripped from it.

"Bunch of pussies!" she hissed.

"I'll eat your pussy baby, but I ain't punching you." Parker shrugged. He lived to regret that statement when she kneed him in the balls. Jury is still out if he can have kids.

Our code was just for the five of us. Me, Zayne, Parker, Travis, and Killian.

We fought.

We studied.

And we each planned out our long-term strategies for revenge.

Which sounds easier than it actually is. You need to understand your enemy to effectively destroy them. I had to learn who my father was and what his motivations

were. I was a child when I left, and clearly, we weren't close.

That took careful research.

All the while, I turned the six-figure inheritance from my mother into a billion-dollar tech business supplying security equipment to private security companies and the government.

Not just our own.

The rain eases and I pull my phone out of my pocket, staring once again at the news article that even shocked me.

Pierce Sterling to marry Fox & Co. heiress.

Kyra Fox.

She's breathtakingly beautiful, extremely rich, and has just become an unwitting pawn in my game of revenge.

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Letting out a long sigh, I walk to the oak side cabinet and pour another two fingers of Macallan, then toss it back.

She might be innocent, but so was I. It's only because of my grandparent's rock-solid trust structure that I'm standing here today, a powerful man.

I remember the day I learned my father had attempted to blackmail my lawyer into paying my inheritance into his account.

I never would have seen a dollar if he'd been successful.

"That motherfucker!" I hissed, reading the email from my lawyer.

"Ring the cops. Have him arrested, Maddox." Parker encouraged me when we were eighteen.

I shook my head.

"It won't stick. You know that as well as I do. He'll have high-powered officials in his pocket."

"He's right," Zayne said. "Our fathers would do the same thing."

"Fuck. It's just not right." Parker tossed a stone into the bushes as we walked along a path.

"One day," I said, zipping up my jacket. "One day, I'm going to be a powerful man

and kill him.”

“Dude really?” Travis asked, while Killian lifted his brow.

“Maddox,” he warned under his breath.

I ignored him.

Killian knows more than anyone how unstable that I am deep down. I supposed someone was bound to see the real devil within me, eventually.

Like father, like fucking son.

“Don’t know how yet. But I’m going to turn my inheritance into billions,” I declared.

“Then I’m going to destroy him little by little until he takes his last breath.”

I meant every word.

I just didn’t know how.

I knew the path would be shown to me if I waited long enough. God knows I was getting impatient. At thirty-one, I’ve waited long enough.

I didn’t know it was going to come in the form of a twenty-two-year-old, blue-eyed brunette who was marrying my father.

But whatever.

I’m willing to do whatever it takes.

I could tear down his company and destroy everything he’s built. That’s way too

easy.

I want to humiliate him.

I want to crush his spirit and make him beg for my forgiveness.

I drop my crystal glass on the silver tray and roll up the sleeves of my black shirt, exposing my tattoos, thick forearms, and Audemars Piguet timepiece. Propping my hands on my hips, I glance around my penthouse.

It's time.

I may not be a phoenix, but when I die, my ashes will contain all the sins of my father.

And those of mine as I exact my revenge.

CHAPTER TWO

KYRA

I feel like I'm just a prop in this wedding as I stare at all the sample fabrics the wedding planners have laid out on the table.

In some ways, I am.

I'm the bride in this charade, as I call it, but I may as well just be a table ornament.

All my life I knew I'd be married to a man of my parents choosing. But never did I think he'd be thirty-something years older than me. Or a man who watches me like a predator. Like I'm a juicy steak dinner being prepared for him.

Which I am.

Ugh.

Pierce Sterling—CEO of Sterling Enterprises.

Aka old gross dude.

Not that I've said that out loud. I've been raised to be compliant and do what I'm told.

My father is the CEO of Fox & Co., and I'm grateful for the life his success has granted us. I'm proud of what he's achieved.

But in this day and age, I do not understand why a marriage to a business partner is necessary. I have harbored a hope that I might love, or at least strongly like, the man they chose for me.

It's not like there is a lack of nice men in the circles my father socializes in.

Well, it's too late now. The announcement has been made, and the world thinks I am marrying Pierce Sterling.

I am.

My stomach lurches again.

I've tried to speak to my mother about it, but she said we can't change what has been agreed upon between the two men.

What about what I want?

It never factored into the decision. I stood in front of my father, tears pouring down my face, as he announced my fate to me six short weeks ago. Thankfully, he chose to tell me in private as I almost collapsed to the ground.

My pleading eyes shot to my mother, who looked away.

"Mom?" I reached out and grabbed the back of the chair to steady myself as we stood in Dad's office.

"Kyra, contain yourself. You know this is your duty. We've made no secret that one

day you would marry to protect this family.”

Protect?

I don't know what that means anymore.

We have more money than ninety-five percent of the population and rub shoulders with people who are extremely powerful.

“I thought it might be to someone my own age.” I wiped the tears from my cheek.
“Or at least close.”

Dad's eyes dipped momentarily. It was the first time I'd seen a hint that he might be regretful. But it soon vanished.

“Yes. Well, no.” He'd lifted his eyes, and they had hardened once more. “This marriage must take place. There are no more discussion to be had.”

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As the shock began to fade, anger replaced it.

“No. I won’t do this.” I’d stepped back, as if I could run away from this.

But the reality was, I couldn’t.

I’d been homeschooled, and my education was limited. The focus, as if I was some eighteenth-century daughter, was on cooking, keeping a household, and other similar duties.

At twenty-two, I had no work experience. No degree. No tangible skills to earn money.

I had no money.

Everything was paid for by my father or supplied for me.

The feeling of being controlled and trapped made me feel like I couldn’t breathe some days. Perhaps that’s why I’ve suffered from asthma all my life.

My chest tightened as I’d kept walking backward and my mother reached for me.

“Kyra. Relax. Come on, calm down.”

My hand flew to my chest as I felt an attack coming on. My lungs tried to pull in gasps of air. The world around me turned into chaos as my mother screamed for our staff to bring an inhaler and my father cursed, rounding his large oak desk.

“Breathe Kyra. For god’s sakes. You cannot act out like this every time you don’t like a decision I make.” He growled.

Act out?

Our housekeeper had run into the room and dropped to the floor, pushing the plastic device to my mouth.

I grappled with it and pressed down, sucking in the medicine. Then again.

My lungs had worked hard, my chest beating like crazy as I struggled to accept the changes about to take place.

I was getting married.

To a man older than my father.

Not quite a child bride, but it was close enough and still revolting.

“Take care of this, Sally,” Dad said, and my mother assured him she would.

Now, two weeks on, all I feel is numb. I’ve cried a million tears and screamed into my pillow.

I tried to come up with a plan to run away and hit a dozen brick walls. I’ve even sought out people to help me get out of this situation.

“Just marry him and then get divorced,” Penny, my best friend, advised. “Make him think you’re into him, get your hands on his money, and then leave.”

As if it’s that simple.

I had a feeling the prenuptial agreement I signed gave away any lingering rights I had left. Of course, when I asked for time to review it, I was chastised.

In front of my future husband.

Who wasted no time showing me exactly how things were going to be when I married him.

“Do you plan to be difficult while we are married, Kyra? I hope not. Derek? I thought you had this covered,” Pierce said, shooting a dark look toward my father.

“She won’t,” my father had replied firmly, glaring at me.

“I can’t sign something I haven’t read. I have rights,” I whispered, glancing at my mother for support.

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I don't know why I bothered. She's never spoken up for me before. Deep down, I was still hoping she would.

In private, she has explained how essential it is I do as my father tells me. That he knows what is best for our family and the future of Fox & Co.

“Who you marry is important, darling. Your grandparents worked hard to create the fortune that we enjoy, and your father continues to ensure the Fox name is held in high esteem,” Mom said.

My father inherited the nationwide accounting firm from my grandfather, and during the early 2000s, it began to thrive, becoming a Fortune 500 company. Our name is on skyscrapers in New York and on buildings in Los Angeles, Chicago, Atlanta, and Orlando.

I'm good with numbers. I think I would've contributed far more by working in the business. If I was a boy, would they have educated me more?

It saddens me to think so, but I know I'm right.

I asked my father a few years ago, and he slapped me. I took it as a yes.

The bruise was visible for a week.

“You're lucky you're homeschooled. I wouldn't want to explain that to anyone.” Dad growled as I held my palm against my cheek. “Never ask me that again.”

I didn't need to.

I had my answer.

The teen years were the hardest. I barely socialized, and who I hung out with was closely monitored. I met Penny at ballet class, which I'd fought to attend when I was little.

I'd fortunately excelled at it, and when I overheard my mother saying to my father that the other moms were all talking about how talented I was, he muttered that I could keep going.

Penny and I hit it off immediately and each year got closer and closer. She was one of my only true friends. Her family is also wealthy, so I suppose my father approved of her.

Unlike me, she has an optimistic view of life.

She's kept me sane more times than I can count.

"What if I don't get access to money and end up stuck married to him forever?" I'd asked her, curling my feet under my bottom on the sofa.

Penny frowned. "That's illegal. You can't force someone to stay married to you."

I had a feeling Pierce Sterling could.

The only benefit being that I would outlive him. By decades.

"Anyway, pretending I like him would involve sex. And..." I had swallowed down my revolt.

Even Penny had cringed.

“Just close your eyes and pretend you’re shopping or something.”

Dropping my head into my hands, I’d moaned. “It’s rape. I don’t want to marry him.”

That’s when she had hugged me.

“I wish I could do something.”

“Help me run away.” I’d lifted my face, pleading pathetically. “What about Chad’s place in the Hamptons? I could go there and hide for a few weeks.”

Chad was her cousin.

“I’m not sure...”

“Please ask him, Penny.” I’d begged.

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“Wouldn’t that be breaking some law?” Penny had asked.

“No. How? I’m an adult. I can say no to my own wedding.” I think. “All he needs to do is pick me up. I’ll sneak out and then figure out the next steps.”

She pressed her lips together. “Pierce is a powerful man, Kyra. Chad might not agree. And how are you going to pay for things?”

“I’ll get a job.” I could cook. I’d work in a diner if I had to.

“Kyra, I don’t know...”

“Just ask him. Please.” I grabbed her arm.

That was last week, and she still hasn’t come back to me.

Chad is five years older than us and lives by himself. I know he has space, and if I take some of my jewelry, I could pawn it for cash. I’ve even considered taking some of my mother’s.

I have to do something.

“Well, I think I have enough information for now.” The wedding planner closes her laptop and collects the samples in front of her.

“Wonderful.” My mother pushes her chair out and stands.

I do the same.

Then Pierce follows, adjusting his blue tie as he walks around the table to join me.

A creepy shiver runs through my body.

My father slowly pushes his chair out, watching us, and nods at Pierce. “Sally, let’s walk them out.”

Mom smiles and leads the wedding planner out of the room, with my father trailing behind them.

What is happening?

Next second, I find out. Pierce moves fast, dipping his mouth to my neck, leaving a wet kiss.

As my stomach lurches, I jump and grab his arm. “Oh, my god!”

He tugs me against his body. I feel his hard manhood and almost gag.

“It was about time I got to touch you.” Pierce growls. “I will grant you these last few weeks but just know, Kyra, that on our wedding night, I will be deep inside your virginal pussy. Fucking it.”

Um, what?

“And you’ll enjoy it.” He adds as his hand presses between my legs.

Shaking, I only just keep from telling him he’s wrong on both counts. I will not enjoy it. And I’m not a virgin.

“Tell me, Kyra, will you suck my cock and swallow my come?”

Never.

I turn my face away. “Please, Mr. Sterling.”

“You will call me Pierce. You are my fiancé, soon to be my wife.”

We were just over a week away from the wedding. My nightmare.

Suddenly, I can’t stop the flow of my words.

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“What do you expect of me? We have nothing in common. You’re decades older than me. How is this going to work?” I try to pull out of his arms, but he holds me firmly. Then laughs, sticking his tongue in my ear.

Ugh, gross.

“Whatever I want. You’ll attend events with me, show the world you’re a happy and dutiful wife, and let me fuck you whenever I want.”

My eyes dip to the floor as my heart sinks. This is worse than I thought. Pierce is cruel and doesn’t see me as a young woman with my life ahead of me. In his eyes, and in my parents’ viewpoint, I am his to maneuver and use for his benefit.

“You can’t force me. I have rights,” I argue.

His teeth bare as he grabs my chin and forces his lips to mine.

“Keep up this attitude and I might even demand you give me more children from this cunt of yours.”

He has children?

As my eyes widen, Pierce releases me, drags his fingers over my breast, fondling my cotton covered nipple until it hardens.

“Good. Your body already reacts to me. You will enjoy our fucking. Whether you want to or not.”

God, please save me from this torture.

Tears fight for dominance against the nausea rising in the back of my throat, but Pierce simply smirks and walks away.

When I'm alone, I let out a short, guttural noise as I fall back down into the chair. I cannot marry this man my parents are forcing on me. I think I'd rather die.

Little do I know, I'm about to meet his son.

CHAPTER THREE

MADDOX

I wipe my mouth on the napkin and lean back in my seat. "So, are we going to ignore the elephant in the room or can we just get right to the fucking topic?"

I know they're dying to bring it up.

So why haven't they?

Killian lifts his brows as he slices a piece of bacon in half on his plate. He doesn't bother glancing at me.

Parker sips his coffee, watching me with zero expression. Yeah, he's an excellent poker player.

Just not as good as me.

Zayne and Travis frown.

I can't understand why they are pussyfooting around the news. It might not be on the front page of The New York Times, but I know they all saw the announcement of my father's upcoming nuptials to Kyra Fox.

"So, Pierce is getting married. And to a woman more than half his age. Are we surprised?" Killian replies after swallowing his bacon.

He has a point.

I lift my coffee cup and swallow the last of it down while I hold his stare. "No."

"So, there's no elephant," Parker says, silencing his phone when it starts buzzing. "You hate the asshole. It's clear the woman is a trophy bride for his midlife crisis. That's what rich, middle-aged men who already have two Lamborghinis and ten Rolex watches do. Your father needs a new toy to show off."

Is that what this is?

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I thought my father would've remarried years ago—to someone more his age—but he never has. Probably because he likes playing with little boys.

Sick fuck.

“When are we supposed to get our first Lambo? Asking for a friend,” Killian asks, smirking, then chomps on a piece of toast.

He could afford ten of them, for the record.

“Why the Fox girl? Any ideas?” Travis asks.

I shake my head and drop my mug on the table. I glance around Dune, the establishment owned by Killian. It's one of seven four-star Michelin restaurants dotted around the United States.

We meet at Dune Manhattan every Wednesday morning. I can count on one hand the number of times any of us have missed our weekly breakfast over the years since it opened. Our fight club days have matured, obviously.

While we mostly talk about business, women, and banter like the idiots we truly are, we all know there's a deeper purpose to these catch ups.

Support.

Our friendship is the foundation of our lives because we don't have families. Or more accurately, we're estranged from them because of the abuse we suffered at their

hands.

We are true brothers, bonded by a promise to not let the vile world we started life in define who we became.

Or who we are every day.

Every day we have one another's back, motivating one another to achieve greatness...and one day, to the sweet promise of vengeance.

Clearly, they haven't realized my time has arrived.

“Not to be crass, but have you seen her? She's fucking gorgeous,” Zayne says, pulling out his phone.

Irritation flashes through me, and while I contain my reaction, I stiffen and do a long blink.

What the hell was that?

Yes, Kyra is beautiful—that is unmistakable—but she means nothing to me. I don't know her. Have never met her or seen her in person.

In fact, I'm not even sure I knew that Derek Fox had a daughter. Nor cared.

Now, I do.

Now she has become a very important person in my life. Not that Kyra is aware of that minor fact yet.

She soon will be.

Over the years, several opportunities have arisen to destroy my father. Every company has its vulnerable times. But I'm a strategic and patient man. It's almost like I knew something better would eventually come along.

I'm not an idiot.

I know Kyra isn't the love of Pierce's life. He likely doesn't even know the girl. Unless I'm wrong and there is some fucked-up age gap chemistry between them.

She won't be after his money. As the heiress to Fox & Co., she'll have a trust fund to pay for all the Chanel purses and Louboutin shoes her little heart could desire.

And she is little.

The size two brunette with icy blue eyes looks almost childlike in the photos I've found online.

Imagining her with my father has me scowling.

But if this isn't a match made in fucking heaven, Kyra is in for a shock after their nuptials. My father is a cruel man. He will hurt her and enjoy every second of it.

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I grind my back teeth.

In any case, thanks to me, she won't have to endure it because I'm going to kidnap her.

I'm about to strip him of his pride and humility. Something an insecure and controlling man like him would rather die than succumb to.

My lips twitch.

The moment he announced his engagement to Ms. Fox, I saw a vulnerability, and like a rapid dog, I snapped my teeth, knowing I was going right for the jugular.

Pierce won't be marrying for love.

Kyra's disappearance is going to cause all kinds of confusion and trouble. Trouble I'm going to coax and orchestrate like a conductor.

"Crass is your middle name?" Parker snorts and tugs Zayne's phone, peering at the screen. "Jesus she's young... and smoking."

"Congratulations, you have a hot stepmom, Maddox." Travis gives me a lopsided grin.

They are all fucking perverts.

Not that I blame them.

Kyra Fox is beautiful.

“Not yet,” I reply darkly and keep my plans to myself. It’s so tempting to tell them, but while we all might have some questionable morals—I mean we spent half our lives beating kids into a bloody mess so we could sleep at night—this might be going too far.

She’s innocent, after all.

They’d stop me.

Or try to talk me out of it.

I know this is the right path to take. Nothing will bring my father to his knees faster than being humiliated. His young bride suddenly leaving him days before his wedding is going to be hard to overcome in today’s public world.

I have the power and financial backbone to do this.

The five of us have spent the last ten plus years accumulating wealth and influence.

Killian, who owns Dune, is a successful restaurateur where the rich and famous from around the globe come to dine.

Parker is an investor. If you can call it that. He buys failing businesses, pulls them apart, and then puts them back together again. Ruthlessly. If he’s not in the business news once a quarter for letting go of a few thousand people, someone journalist hasn’t done his job. What they fail to report are the new jobs he creates, which are far more sustainable, and the contribution that has made to the economy.

Those jobs would have gone when the companies inevitably failed. But then again,

that's a boring story and doesn't get clicks and likes.

Zayne was an early investor in AI and works with both policy makers and industries as an independent to ensure it contributes positively to humanity and doesn't fucking destroy us.

It scares the shit out of me, while also being exciting.

"It's been around for a lot longer than people realize." Zayne told me one day. "And everyone is using it. Like every stage in human civilization, we need to keep pivoting and evolving. Or we die."

"Or the bots kill us." I lifted my brows.

"Well, we won't be around to complain about it, so right now we have to put policies in place to ensure it doesn't. Not just put them back in a box. That day has long since passed."

Jesus.

I knew he was right.

"The risk of nuclear war is the greatest it's ever been." He shrugged. "People should be more worried about that."

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“Very true. Just...do a good job, all right. I didn’t survive my fucking father to watch some tin can with legs destroy us all.”

He saluted me with a grin.

Cheeky bastard.

Travis almost became a pro golfer. When he didn’t, he decided to use some of his trust fund to create one of the top golf courses in the country located just outside of Manhattan.

He didn’t stop there.

Travis added a club to his portfolio—a grown-up’s club, if you get my point. The Alliance Club, named after our underground fight clubs, is a place you’ll find us most Friday nights if I’m not attending work events.

The exclusive membership is outside of most people’s budget, and each person is personally approved by Travis. You won’t find innocent young women like Kyra Fox there, although I’d enjoy watching her face as she stepped inside the door.

Not that I know her, but I can tell by her photo and the submissive way she held herself in the photo.

And I know women.

I’ve fucked enough of them.

Personally, I like strong women who think they like an equal lover. It turns me on to watch them fight and eventually break, submitting to their true nature.

Kyra is way too submissive to get the attention of my cock. Which makes her the perfect prisoner. She will do as I tell her, stay quiet, and not cause any trouble.

Meanwhile, I can torture my father and destroy him piece by piece.

First, I need to go get my bait.

My phone buzzes with the message that I've been waiting for since Friday. About fucking time.

I've paid a huge sum to get this man's number and do it anonymously. Apparently, black ops people don't have websites or TikTok accounts.

Go figure.

"Pierce can enjoy his new toy." While he still has her. "Meanwhile, I have a company to run. I'll see all your ugly mugs at Alliance on Friday night."

It's time to go catch my fish.

I walk out the door and lift the phone to my ear, spotting my driver two cars away. I wave to Mitch, my driver, and he nods and pushes off the side of the car.

"Maddox Sterling," I answer, my voice a rumble.

"Mr. Sterling," the man replies.

I smile darkly. He has a digital layer over his voice so I can't recognize him. One that

my company probably created.

If I wanted, I could trace the call and follow the breadcrumbs back to him.

But I don't.

"You needn't have bothered," I say. "I don't care who you are. I just want the job done."

He's silent.

"I'll need the first million in the bank in an hour, then the other three when I deliver her."

I climb into the back of my town car and Mitch shuts the door. He jumps in behind the wheel and we head to my office on Seventh Avenue.

My lips quirk as I spot the coffee cup on the console beside him. Every Wednesday, one of Travis's waitresses, Jenny, takes him a cappuccino and bagel to eat while the boys and I have breakfast.

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I don't know why he hasn't fucked her yet.

"Message me the details and I'll have the funds transferred in five minutes," I reply.
"I'll send you the address to bring—"

I catch myself. I don't want Mitch to be involved in any way. No one can know that I'm kidnapping Ms. Fox. Getting the room set up in my penthouse without leaving any footprints has been a challenge in itself.

"I understand," the man's scrambled voice says.

Then he hangs up.

We pull up outside my building and I climb out, staring up at the Sterling Tech sign on the Manhattan skyscraper. It's a level of success even my father has never reached.

He won't be unaware of who I've become.

"Take the rest of the day off, Mitch. I have meetings until late, so see you back here at six."

"Yes, sir," Mitch says. "I might take my boy out to play some ball."

"You do that." I smile as I shut the door and stride into the building.

Some days I envy Mitch. He might be divorced, but it's amicable and both of them

are dedicated to raising their son, Denzel. He's a good kid who loves math and baseball. Little does he know, but I'm going to pay for him to go to college.

I'm not some nice guy.

I turned my inheritance into a billion-dollar empire with a single-minded vision of destroying my father. I have such an enormous amount of hatred inside me that the world feels like it's black and white.

People are either good or bad.

Of value to me or not.

Except my brothers. Nobody else gets inside my world, my heart, my soul, to see the dark truth.

So, when someone like Denzel slips inside by accident, I notice. I should never have let him ride with us that first time, but the kid was sick, and his mother was working.

"Pick him up," I told Mitch as we headed to a meeting.

"We'll be late, sir."

"Fuck the meeting. The kid is sick. Pick him up," I demanded.

"Are you sure?" Mitch glanced at me in the mirror.

I nodded.

Well, fuck me. That little face, full of snot, and just six years old, sat up in front with his father and talked nonstop. Finally, Mitch shut him up and told him that I was his

boss.

Denzel swiveled around and stared at me like I was an alien or something.

“Why are you in the back seat if you’re the boss?”

Fucking kid.

I nearly laughed.

I didn’t want to tell him that his father was my driver. Something just didn’t feel right. I wanted him to keep looking at Mitch like the sun shone right out of his ass.

“I can’t drive,” I replied, then glanced away.

“You should learn. Dad could teach you,” Denzel said, “Right, Dad?”

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Mitch glanced at me in the rearview mirror, and I could see the gratitude in his eyes.

“Maybe. I thought you were sick? You’re doing a lot of talking for a sick child.” His father shot him a look as he turned the car into the next street.

Denzel had slumped back into the seat, but those innocent brown eyes eventually drifted back to me. I let him watch me for a long moment, feeling the weight of his curiosity.

When I turned to meet his gaze, his face lit up and his smile crashed through the barrier around my heart. I hadn’t been around children much as an adult, and the pure innocence took my breath away.

I smiled back.

That was all he wanted. A fucking smile.

Satisfied with his success, Denzel snuggled back into his seat and sighed happily.

I shook my head, envious of his little life, and was somehow changed by the experience. He’d softened a little spot on my heart and made me want more. Like he’d given me a little glimpse of the good that was available in life, if I only opened to it.

From that moment on, I was determined to make sure he had everything he always needed.

That Christmas, Mitch got an enormous bonus, which took me about an hour to insist he take, and he bought his ex-wife a house.

Idiot.

I was expecting him to buy the house for himself.

“Denzel lives with his mom eighty percent of the time. It’s better for him to have a safe home to live in.”

Jesus Christ.

Now I was going to have to give him another big bonus, and it would take another year.

I knew he wouldn’t accept a handout. The hour in my office forcing the money down his throat proved that. The man has honor and pride. I respected that.

Don’t go thinking I’m a good guy.

I’m not.

If I could, I would have my father strung up in a dungeon and peel pieces of his skin from his body every day. Waiting for it to scab up, then taking a knife and peeling it away just before it healed once more.

Oh, the things I’ve fantasized about. Between the nightmares. After all, Pierce taught me to be a monster.

Denzel just feels like my redemption.

Kyra won't be so lucky.

I transfer the money and send an encrypted message with the address.

Then at the end of the day, I get a message.

Package is ready for delivery.

I stride through my office, ripping my Armani jacket off the hook on the door, and walk out the door. "Have a good night, Janice." I tell my secretary.

"Goodnight, Mr. Sterling," she replies. "I'll have that report from finance to you by ten tomorrow, as promised."

Nodding, I reach the elevators and press the button, my heart thumping.

I've just kidnapped a woman.

There's no coming back from this now.

CHAPTER FOUR

KYRA

OMG! My arms flail around me as shampoo stings my eyes. My legs slip under me as I gasp, but large hands catch me.

What the hell is happening?

I feel a sting in my neck as fear crashes through me, and my body turns to jelly. A second later, I lose control of my limbs.

“Hel—” My words are stopped by a hand which slams harshly over my mouth. Blinking, I try to make out who the large dark figure is, but the fucking shampoo is blinding me.

Where is security?

My home is surrounded by security guards and somehow this person has found their way inside the house, into my bedroom and bathroom.

Am I going to die?

Are these my last thoughts?

I have barely lived. No. I don't want to die.

Please help me.

Even if I was stronger or had learned kung fu instead of stupid Pilates, the drugs have taken my ability to move from me. I'm powerless.

I almost pass out as I pant in terror, but then the rest happens quickly. I'm dragged from the shower, up against my assailant's hard body, and wrapped in something while my mouth remains covered.

Then the world fades to black.

WHEN MY EYES open again, I find myself staring at the ceiling of a room I know isn't mine. There is a fancy-looking light shade and, as I gently turn my aching head, I note the drapes look thick and heavy.

This is not some dirty motel. Somebody with wealth owns this home and has brought me here.

Why?

I try to sit up and my head pounds. Then reality slams into me and I force myself into a sitting position as my heart races.

Where am I?

What day is it?

Beside the bed is a glass of water and some Tylenol. My brows lift in response, as if I'm supposed to believe my kidnappers are kind and thoughtful?

I wouldn't say I've been trained to prepare for such a situation, but when your surname is Fox and you've lived most of your life with personal security, it would be ignorant to say I never thought this was a possibility.

I just never thought it would happen to me.

I'm nobody.

Well, except the heiress to the Fox & Co. fortune. Is there a chance I've signed away my inheritance to Pierce Sterling, so they have kidnapped me now to trade me back for my family's money?

A thought strikes me.

If it worked, would that mean I don't have to marry Pierce?

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Wow. Talk about survival instincts.

I should be more worried about getting out of this alive.

I glance down and notice I'm in a bathrobe. Mine. So that's what they wrapped me in. Then I notice I'm not wearing any panties, so I clench my core protectively.

Did they touch me?

I grab the neck of my robe and tighten my fist into the plush fabric.

Oh god, this is terrible.

Hopefully, this is over quickly, and my father pays them whatever they want. Surely, he will pay.

Right?

I clamber back up the bed and nestle myself into the piles of feather pillows as if they are some kind of protection.

Just in time, too.

The door opens and as light streams through, all I can see is a tall and imposing male figure.

“Good. You're awake,” his rich dark voice says, void of emotion.

Then he steps in and turns on a low light. I almost gasp at how handsome...and terrifying he looks. And somehow familiar, but I can't quite figure out how.

I take in his dark tailored pants, crisp shirt which is folded up his arms, clean shaven strong jaw, and heavy timepiece on his arm. It doesn't make sense. This man doesn't need money.

My eyes dart around the room, confirming my initial reaction. I'm lying on Egyptian cotton with a seriously high thread count, and the furniture looks antique or extremely well-made to replicate it.

This is a man of great wealth and power. His silver eyes study me as he holds his broad frame confidently, giving the strong impression this is a man very few would mess with.

My eyes study the rest of him. He has a lot of tattoos and what seems like a permanent scowl.

He's rich and dangerous.

"Please let me go." I beg as I try to remember if that's the right or wrong thing to say to a kidnapper.

Give him your name. Yes, yes. They say to humanize yourself to appeal to their compassion. Although I'm not sure this man has any by his cold expression.

"My name is Kyra. My mother will be missing me."

He slides his hands into his pockets and tips his head, like I'm some amusement at a museum instead of a human he's kidnapped.

“My father...”

I trail off.

Even in a situation like this, I can't lie and say my father would give him anything he wants to get me back. He might, but I don't know for sure if he'd give away all our wealth.

Isn't that fucking sad?

I suspect it's better I stay quiet.

“I know who you are, Kyra Fox.” He steps farther into the room, reaching behind him to close the door.

“What do you want?” I ask, clenching my hold on the robe tighter and tucking it under my legs.

I feel so vulnerable.

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This man can do anything to me if he so chooses.

Atleast he's gorgeous. If I am going to die, at least he's not some creep. Crazy and dangerous, but not creepy.

What is wrong with me?

He lets out a dry, quick laugh. "I don't want your body, sweetheart, so you have nothing to worry about there."

I blink.

Well. That's good then.

Although I'm slightly offended. But I blink away my reaction, hoping he doesn't notice. I've never attracted many men—that I've been kept at home most of my life probably doesn't help—but a man like him? No, he wouldn't look twice at me.

I'd barely reach his chin if I were standing up.

"All you need to do is stay in here, be quiet, and do what I say," he tells me.

What the hell?

Does he think I'm going to accept that? Like, oh yeah, no problem, do you have Netflix or books?

Is he insane?

Clearly, that's a yes.

"I need to go home. I can't stay here!" I reply, panic finally starting to rise within me.

He draws in what appears to be an impatient breath, his chest expanding, and my eyes shoot to the rolled-up sleeves and his forearms, and I swallow hungrily.

Damn, why couldn't the man I'm being forced to marry look like my kidnapper? And why the hell am I even thinking these crazy thoughts?

"You can make this easy or difficult. I know you're a good girl, Kyra, so do as you're told."

My core tightens at his words, and I feel my face heat.

"I'm not...good." I stutter.

His brows lower and eyes roam over my robe-clad body, then dart back up to me. Then he pulls his hand out of his pocket and rubs his jaw. He blows out another breath, as if this conversation didn't go as planned.

"I will provide you meals. You have a bathroom through there," He nods toward the closed door. "And clothes, toiletries, and everything you need are in the closet."

I gasp.

"You planned this?"

"Of course I did." He frowns like the question is ridiculous and we stare at one

another for a long moment.

“Are you going to hurt me?”

He glares at me this time, and I know the answer is yes. My eyes fill and my body begins to shudder despite every effort to stop it.

I’ve been kidnapped.

I know I begged to get out of my marriage to Pierce, but this wasn’t what I was thinking, universe.

“If you try to escape, yes, I will. The door is locked, the windows can’t be opened and you’re thirty stories high, so I wouldn’t recommend trying to smash them.”

I’m trapped.

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No one knows where I am...or who—

“What is your name?” I suddenly ask.

“Maddox.” For the first time since he walked in, the dangerous and handsome man twitches his lips into almost a smile. “Your fiancé’s son.”

What?

CHAPTER FIVE

MADDOX

I know you’re a good girl, Kyra.

I’m not...good.

The flush on her cheeks when she replied made my cock jolt upright. Which is sick as fuck, given I’d just kidnapped the girl.

I don’t know why. I don’t like submissive women. But there’s something about this slight young woman that has my skin buzzing. If I’d thought Kyra Fox was beautiful in her photos, it was nothing to seeing her in the flesh.

She’s got no makeup on, her hair is tangled—I was going to blow dry it for her while

she was unconscious, but that just made me feel way too Jeffrey Dahmer, thank you very much—and she's only wearing a robe. And still, she's the most beautiful woman I've ever seen in my entire life.

Beautiful and suppressing her sexuality, if I'm not wrong. Or perhaps not aware of it yet.

She's young...but not that young.

I appreciate she's fearful of her life right now, but telling me she's a bad girl had me itching to cross the room, part her legs, and make her tell me the truth about just how good she really is.

I wasn't expecting to react like this to her. I remind myself that Kyra is here for one reason only: to assist me in destroying my father.

Not for my pleasure.

But from the moment she was delivered to me, I felt a pull in my chest I didn't understand. To be fair, I've never had a person kidnapped before. I opened the door to my penthouse apartment, and she was in his arms with her robe slid up her thighs, exposing the curve of her ass.

Fury slammed against my rib cage, and I took her from him, carrying her to the sofa where I placed her down carefully, arranging her robe so she was respectfully covered.

“Boss wants the funds transferred,” the man said gruffly.

If this wasn't so fucked up, I would've had personal security with me, but obviously I don't want anyone knowing about this.

For my safety and so I don't drag anyone else into this.

Running a fight club as a teenager with the boys is one thing—cough, and a few years beyond—but we're not members of a fucking criminal organization.

It's true, we don't play by society rules all the time and we'll need to break a few to take revenge on our fathers—proof in point—but otherwise killing and kidnapping have been outside our playbook.

Until now.

I'm not worried. I would kill to save my own life and there was a gun in the back of my waistband. The guy only wanted the money for the job he'd done, and I had it.

There was no risk.

"Forget my face," I said as he stepped back in the elevator.

"Never saw you," he muttered as the doors closed.

The amount I paid, I'm sure he won't remember.

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Then I headed back to the living room where Kyra was lying unconscious.

“Fuck,” I ran a hand through my hair and contemplated what I was doing, then carried her into the room/prison I’d set up for her before I changed my mind.

She was innocent, but unfortunately for her, my father had chosen her as his bride.

Now she was an integral part of my plan.

I tucked her under the covers and brushed her wet hair off her face so she didn’t catch a chill.

So considerate.

Now, after my first confrontation with her I am tense with desire for my captive and the knowledge that I am going to fucking hurt her.

She knows it and I know it.

“Shit,” I slam my palm down on the marble counter in the kitchen.

So, this is what he feels like to be a monster.

I’VE ADVISED MY housekeeper that I have my young cousin staying with me for a few weeks. That she’s not very sociable and not to bother cleaning her room.

She won't be able to unlock the door, anyway.

"You know teenagers. Just let her come and go as she pleases."

I almost snort at the irony.

Kyra won't be going anywhere.

It's a calculated risk. I don't have time to clean my apartment or cook. Plus, Alma is in the United States illegally, so unless she hears any screaming or fucked-up stuff, I'm almost certain she'll turn a blind eye and just keep doing her job.

Almost certain.

Pulling the baked salmon dish out of the oven, I place a serving in a bowl and grab a fork out of the drawer. Then glance at it for a second.

Nope.

I crouch down to dig through the utensils for a safer option.

When I open the door, Kyra is curled up in a ball staring at the wall.

"Dinner," I say, placing the bowl on the cabinet, lifting the plastic fork into the air. "Good luck hurting yourself with this. But if you come up with any other dumb ideas, just know I won't be back in here until morning."

She sits up and glares at me.

"I'm not suicidal. My father will pay the ransom or whatever you want." She snorts angrily. "But nice to know you'll let me bleed out."

Kyra is right.

It takes a person a lot more than being kidnapped for someone to want to take their life. But she's a trust fund baby with parents who love her. For all I know, she's a fucking attention-seeking princess.

I'm setting boundaries.

I snort back pointedly. "I'm not your daddy, sweetheart. You're here to serve a purpose. Don't expect your usual silver service, and you can forget throwing out any demands."

"You don't know me." She hisses with a little more sass than I saw from her earlier.

Interesting.

I drop the fork back into the bowl and take my time lifting my face once more. “I don’t need to know you. Stay quiet. Stay alive. Then you might just make it home safely one day.”

She wraps her robe tightly around herself, hiding all the creamy skin on her décolletage that I was trying to ignore.

And failing.

While I’m being honest, it was the soft curve of her small breasts I was eyeing. Although I wouldn’t mind running my palm over her décolletage to grip her little neck while I’m slamming my cock inside her.

In another life.

Today, she’s my captive.

Kyra’s voice is quiet and shaky as she asks, “And if I’m not quiet?”

Goddamn her.

I open the door, step through it and then turn. “Don’t pretend you have the courage to find out, Kyra. We both know you’re a compliant submissive.”

I pull the door closed.

CHAPTER SIX

KYRA

Fuck him.

Fuckingfuckhim!

Compliant submissive? I am not.

I am...

I clamber off the bed and pace the floor with my fists clenched. Then I stamp my feet. My eyes dart around the room seeking something to throw, but of course he's prisoner-proofed the place.

I grab a pillow and throw it, but it's incredibly unsatisfactory. So, I storm into the bathroom and start pulling out toiletries.

Bang.

Smash.

I rip open the toothpaste and squirt it all over the mirror.

Jesus, this is making a mess. I'm not usually this messy, so it's actually irking me, and I fight the urge to clean it up.

Tugging the towels off the rail, I throw them in the air then scream.

And scream.

I bang at the door and scream some more until my throat hurts.

Maddox doesn't return.

“Argh!” I stomp back into the room and see the bowl of food. I'm not sure if I am hungry, but the last thing I feel like doing is eating.

For all I know, he's poisoned it.

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I sniff the baked salmon and consider eating it for a second—common sense tells me I should eat when I am fed to stay strong and alive—but I don't do that.

Clearly, I don't have a strong survival instinct.

Instead, as fury thrashes through me, I bend my arm back and throw it as hard as I can at the door. The china dish crashes and breaks into several pieces.

Nowthatwas satisfying.

I've never broken anything like that on purpose before—but it suddenly occurs to me that I've made a bunch of little weapons. I launch across the room, but the door comes flying open.

I grasp a piece and clamber to my feet to face my kidnapper. His dark, angry eyes fall to my hand, and I follow his gaze as blood drips onto the floor.

Shit.

I feel the sting as the sharp edge slices into my skin.

“Jesus fuck.” Maddox growls. “Drop it.”

“No!” I cry, taking a step back.

“Drop it!” He launches at me, gripping my hand.

My numb fingers immediately spring open and drop the makeshift weapon.

How did he do that?

If I don't get out of here soon, he might never let me go.

Why has Pierce never mentioned his son? Nor my mother or father. Is he some psycho with money who plans to skin me alive?

I have no idea.

Maybe he's not who he says he is.

I erupt.

With my good hand, I slam into his chest and start kicking and spitting at him.

Letting me think I'm getting somewhere, Maddox lets me continue for a long moment, then pushes me back toward the bed where I collapse, and his body follows.

Right.

On.

Top.

Of me.

Panting, I glance up into his silver eyes and the dark lock of hair which flops over his forehead, terrified of what he's going to do next.

And yet I'm a little excited.

"Well, aren't you a little spitfire of a surprise," he rasps, pinning my hands above my head.

"Get off me," I say, but the fire has gone out of my fight.

For one reason only. His thick, hard cock is pressed against my stomach and neither of us can pretend it's not. I'm going to need some serious therapy after this. If I get out alive. How can I be so turned on by this man who has threatened my life?

But I am.

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The desire to lift my leg to allow his sizable member inside me is almost all I can think of. God, the way his huge body consumes the space above me and makes me feel so...feminine and desirable. I've never felt this before.

I want him to touch me more.

To kiss me.

To...fill me.

“Tell me Kyra, has my father fucked you yet? Taken you for a test drive?”

I gasp at his crude question.

The asshole.

I take back everything I just felt.

Then I spit in his face.

Maddox closes his eyes and wipes my saliva onto his shirt-clad broad shoulder. His gaze lands back on me angrily.

“I'll take that as a no.” He growls.

I can still see the question in his eyes, and I'm not going to give him the satisfaction of the truth.

“Do this again, sweetheart, and I’ll be wiping your saliva off mycock.”

My mouth falls open and his eyes roam my lips.

I lick them, and he grunts, annoyed with me, then climbs off me. He doesn’t make any attempt to hide his erection as he rearranges himself.

“Don’t read into anything, sweetheart. You’re a beautiful woman. It’s nature. Nothing more.”

I try to sit up and sass him, but wince as my wounded hand presses against the bed.

“Ouch,”

“Fuck's sake.” Maddox reaches down and pulls me off the bed. “Come with me.”

That’s when I get my first glimpse outside my prison cell.

Also...he thinks I’m beautiful.

MADDOX

THE LAST THING I need is Kyra to get an infection and then need to call a doctor. Or take her to the hospital.

I misread her.

I knew the fork was a risk, but throwing the entire bowl and creating a prison shard from it is quite ingenious for a woman like her.

I privately scoff.

She probably did some fancy—and useless—personal defense course with a celebrity trainer.

Sure, I was brought up by wealthy parents, but unlike Kyra, I was not treated with kid gloves. I was abused from the moment I can remember and taught to keep my mouth shut. That my friends would be ashamed of me if they knew that I liked to touch my daddy.

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The day he said that, it scared me. I didn't want my friends to know what happened at night in my home.

I was embarrassed.

So, I stayed quiet.

My parents didn't enroll me in Boy Scouts or baseball or kung fu lessons. I was told to do my homework and do as my father told me.

My spare time was spent sucking old men's cocks or bending over for them, while my mother drunk herself to death downstairs.

Eventually.

I lead Kyra down the hall to my bathroom where the first-aid kit is located and tell her to sit on the closed toilet seat. She turns her head, peeking through the half-open door leading to my bedroom.

"Is that where you take your prisoners when they're good?" she asks bitterly.

I snort.

She has a little sass in her, and it just makes her more attractive. Which isn't good. She will use it as a distraction if I let her.

I won't.

I have survived strong, evil, and dangerous people. This innocent won't get a jump on me. In saying that, as I lay on top of her earlier, the desire to rip open her robe and delve my fingers through her pussy was more than overwhelming.

Would she have been wet?

Is she still wet now?

Christ, I need to stay focused.

Kyra is lucky I didn't act on my desire. There is nothing and no one here to stop me doing as I please with her. Except my deeply sacred morals.

Images of spreading her thighs and tying her up, making her completely and utterly powerless, consumed me in that moment.

God, imagine being able to spend hours touching, licking, and fucking every orifice in her body.

But I won't.

What I will do is keep an eye on my little prisoner, so it seemed like a smart move to set up cameras. Which was how I'd seen Kyra throwing a tantrum from my big screen in the living room.

That and I could hear her.

The moment she picked up the bowl and I saw the glint in her eye, I strode down the hall. It smashed against the door as I was right outside.

The pretty little idiot.

I grab her hand to clean the wound, and she hisses.

“Well, it’s clear you’re not going to be good.” I rumble, my skin roaring to life as we connect skin on skin. I feel her shudder under my touch and can’t help lifting my eyes.

Fuck me.

Hers are rich with desire.

“Why are you marrying my father?” I ask, focusing back on cleaning her cut hand, forcing my attention away from the chemistry rushing between us like a wild storm.

She’s silent until I glance back. This time, those pretty blue globes are filled with tears.

Anger fills me.

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Does she love him?

You must be fucking joking? I assumed this was some kind of arranged situation at best. I mean, the man, my father, is decades older than her.

And a monster.

She can't actually be emotionally attached to the asshole, can she?

"Don't answer that." I growl, tearing open a cleaning swab and wiping it harshly over the wound.

"Ouch!" Kyra cries, pulling back her hand.

"Stay still. Perhaps next time, you'll think twice before misbehaving."

"I'm not a child." She snaps, but her voice still holds hints of the desire I'm trying fucking hard to ignore.

My eyes dart up to hers; anger, arousal, and frustration fight for dominance within me.

"Yes. You. Are."

Compared to my old man, she is. Kyra could be his granddaughter. At a push.

I grab the bandage and start wrapping her hand.

Is her own father okay with this marriage? What about her mother? Has she just stood back and let her daughter go ahead with this partnership without interfering?

Don't they want more for her?

It's none of your business. Just use her and get the job done.

I stand up abruptly.

Kyra scrambles to her feet. "I might be small, but I am an adult. I'm twenty-two."

Jesus.

I was wrong. There're over thirty years between them. Kyra Fox has no fucking idea what she is getting herself into. My father is an evil man. The worst kind. I'm not even sure he has a heart. He'd rip her apart with his teeth, spit her out, wait for her to heal, then start it all again.

Ask me how I know.

"Then you're welcome." I hiss, tugging her from my bathroom and back down the hall.

She pulls at my arm, but I ignore her.

"Thank you?" she gasps. "Thank you for taking me from my home. My family. My friends?"

I push her through the doorway, and she trips, then catches herself and spins around to face me.

“Yes. And for saving you from a lifetime with a monster.”

I slam the door.

My heart pounds as I stride down to the living room and pour a glass of whisky.

Then a second and third as I toss them, angry with her for being a fool.

Angry with myself for giving a flying fuck.

Because apparently, I do.

CHAPTER SEVEN

PIERCE

“We have breaking news this hour. Kyra Fox, daughter of finance tycoon, Derek Fox, has gone missing.”

Jesus fucking Christ.

“Hasn’t she recently become engaged to Pierce Sterling?” The redheaded cohost asks.

They share a look as I sneer at the large TV screen on the wall.

“Yes. She did.” Redhead says. “Quite the age gap. Ms. Fox is only twenty-two, but I suppose the heart knows what it wants...”

There’s an awkward silence while I mentally roll my eyes.

Everyone knows we haven’t fallen in love, but I do not expect the media—who I donate a lot of fucking money to—to be hinting with no subtlety that Kyra has done a runner.

“Yes, well, I’m sure her family is very worried about her. But it is worth asking if there’s some kind of connection here.”

“And Mr. Sterling.”

They both nod at each other, barely containing their judgments, as fury rolls through my body.

I click the remote and turn the TV off. Then throw it across the room.

This is absolutely humiliating!

And unacceptable.

“Pierce.” Derek holds up his hands.

“Where the fuck is she?” I demand.

This is a goddamn PR disaster. I’m not listening to any more of their snide little comments. Announcing our engagement attracted enough of them, but that was before Kyra disappeared.

She’s making me look like a fool. Something no one—and I mean no fucking one—gets to do.

Kyra didn’t help with her pathetic half smile in the PR photos we had taken, but I let it go, dropping an anonymous tip that she was a virgin.

That circulated on social media and shut everyone up.

I half expected her to comment, but she didn’t, proving she’s as obedient as I need.

Until now.

“I’m sure Kyra will return soon. We’ve left messages, but her phone is in her bedroom.” Derek runs a hand over his short dark hair, frowning. “There is, and don’t freak out just yet, a chance she was...taken.”

I rip off my tie and roll up my sleeves.

What rubbish. He’s making excuses.

“Who the hell would want to take your daughter? No offense, Derek, but she’s not the brightest crayon in the packet, nor is she that pretty.”

Fuckable.

But not pretty.

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“Offense taken. My daughter is smart enough—we restricted her education so she was prepped to marry into the right family.” Derek props his hands on his hips.

I tug open my top drawer and pull out a cigarette. I rarely smoke these days, but having my reputation challenged is certainly a good enough reason to suck some nicotine into my aging lungs.

“Well, she’s not marrying anyone if she doesn’t get her ass back here now.” I blow out the smoke and glare at him. “And if you let that happen, we both know it won’t be good for you.”

If he’s right and someone has taken her, why would they? Kyra doesn’t work at Fox & Co., and while she’s the sole heir to their fortune—soon to be mine—he hasn’t mentioned a ransom note.

Yet.

“Listen, Sterling. We both have enemies. It could be anyone. Who would want to stop you marrying my daughter?”

Nice try, Derek. Deflecting blame is so boring.

But he’s not wrong.

“I’m sure there are at least over a hundred young men who’d love to”—fuck her hot pussy—“become your son-in-law, Fox. Who has been sniffing around?” I demand.

He crosses his arms defensively.

“Have you had a ransom call yet?” I continue.

“No.”

“Then, clearly, she’s done a runner. Get her back here and make sure she’s at the church to say her vows.” I draw in another lungful of poison. “I want your PR team to fix this. Fast.”

Derek curses. “And say what? Sally rang the police when she couldn’t find her—she’s certain Kyra had been kidnapped. Something about her clothes still being there.”

“Jesus, Fox. Sort your women out. Are you a man or a pussy?”

He should have been on it and controlling his wife immediately. He knows the impact to business when things like this happen. We are both listed on the stock market.

Idiot.

“Fuck you, Sterling!” He points a finger in my direction. “You blackmailed me into this, and now my daughter is missing. If she is dead, I will fucking gut you.”

Like he really cares about Kyra.

I wriggle my jaw, then smile. “Try it. I will release the compromising photo of you and young Maria. Or was it Mark? I forget.”

His dark glare meets mine.

I know this wasn't his plan. He wanted to marry Kyra off to someone influential and more her age who would contribute to Fox & Co. then take over the business. That's not my problem. Derek shouldn't have attended my private event and sucked some underage pussy.

I could swear it was a delicate little cock.

Whatever, I'll dig out the photos later.

If those photos got out, he'd be destroyed. His stock prices would plummet, his wife would leave him, and his daughter would never be able to look him in the eye.

Instead, Kyra gets to spend her life with her legs apart and my cock inside her.

Lucky her.

I feel said appendage awaken at the thought, reminding me how impatient I am to fuck her.

Derek's glare continues, but we both know I have him over the barrel. He's fucked no matter what he does.

I glance over at the black screen.

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“If I see my name mentioned in relation to this one more time, and Kyra is not at the church, every media channel in the United States is going to see what the chief executive officer of Fox & Co. does in his spare time.”

More glaring.

“Your time will come, Pierce,” he threatens.

I laugh. “You’re not the first person to say that to me.” I widen my arms out in front of me. “Yet here I am.”

“You’re an asshole.”

I sit down in my black leather executive chair and lift an ashtray out of the drawer, flicking the ash off the end. Then take another puff and blow it out.

I stopped caring what people thought about me when I made my first million. Now my net worth is over a billion and I’m immune to others’ judgment. It just bounces off me.

“Why didn’t you just phone me?” I ask curiously. “Did you think she ran away and came here?”

While I’d like to think Kyra’s panties were moist and her little cunt open and craving my cock after our encounter, I’m not arrogant enough to believe that’s the case.

Or perhaps I am.

She's never admit it if I had turned her on. They never do.

But I know how the human body works. It would've had a visceral reaction, even if she was mildly repulsed. I'm looking forward to finding out when she returns.

"Do you not have a tracker on her phone? Her bag?" I demand.

Derek's head pulls back in response.

So that's a no then.

"There's never been a need to track her. Kyra has been a compliant child all her life," he says firmly.

"She is not a child, Derek. She is going to be my wife." Not that I would be opposed to marrying her if she was even younger, but that's no excuse for keeping tabs on her as an asset.

He's been negligent in our agreement.

His dark glare meets mine but I'm over this conversation. I push my chair back, slide open the bottom drawer and pull out the black and teal business card.

I toss it onto the far side of my desk.

"If she's been taken"—which I strongly suspect she hasn't—"call these men. They'll find her."

Derek picks up the card and reads it, glancing back at me.

"Barrett Security," he finally says.

“Expect to open your wallet, they’re not cheap. Next week, I’ll be standing in front of the altar waiting for your daughter. Then I’ll take her home and consummate it.” I snarl, letting that sink in.

Surely, he has to care about his daughter a small amount. I think about my son from time to time, and regardless of what he may think, I love him.

Although, what is love?

An emotion that gets in the way of critical thinking, if you want my opinion.

“Now get out of my office and sort out this goddamn mess.”

Fox crushes the card in his hand and takes a step closer. My personal security, Frank, does the same, stopping him from doing anything stupid.

“You fucking drugged us all, you piece of shit.”

I laugh.

“I didn’t make you eat that child’s pussy. That was all on you, Fox. Now get the fuck out of my office.” I growl.

I nod at Frank.

“Let’s go, Mr. Fox.”

“Close the door.” I call after them and then sit back and smirk.

Idiot.

They all are. I’ve watched enough men with a little liquid courage do things they regret for the rest of their lives.

Mostly thanks to me.

Or maybe they enjoy it and don’t have as many regrets as I think. Either way, one thing remains true: they all remain emboldened to me for the rest of their lives. It’s made me an immensely powerful man. The best part is they can’t even discuss it with one another.

Actually, that’s a lie.

The best part is that I get to watch them destroy their lives. Nothing makes me come harder than a grown man with an innocent, knowing he just made himself my bitch.

I slide my hand under my desk and unzip my fly. Tugging out my cock, I let out a moan as my hand wraps around it.

My eyes press closed as a memory flashes before me. A small body, soft new skin, and a tight hole.

Fuck.

It's the little sounds that tips me over the edge every time.

"God." I grunt as my hand speeds up and imagine Kyra on her knees sucking my cock.

She's young enough to appeal to my desires, and submissive enough to never ask what I'm fantasizing about when she finally figures out that she alone is not enough to fulfill me.

And also, how demented my tastes are.

CHAPTER EIGHT

MADDOX

I put my phone on the speaker as Mitch closes the car door and circles around to the driver's seat.

"Parker," I answer.

"Where the fuck are you?" he demands.

My lids lower in response to his tone. “I am heading home. What’s wrong?”

I think I know, but I’m not offering up the information should I be wrong.

“Is she there?”

Ah, so I was right.

“Who?” I ask, my voice a rasp as I delay answering. I don’t want Mitch to hear, so take it off speaker and put it up against my ear.

“Jesus fucking Christ.” He hangs up and I shake my head.

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“Everything okay?” Mitch asks, turning around.

“Yes.” I nod.

I’ll ring Parker back later.

In fact, I’ll tell all the guys, but I had to get Kyra safely secured in my penthouse before I drew them into it. Then last night she kept me busy with her self-harm activities.

Goddamn her.

The rest of the night I spent stroking my cock in the longest shower of my life while I attempted to replace images of her with literally any other woman.

And failed.

Right now, none of the guys are accomplices and I want to keep it that way. I knew they’d figure it out, but I also know none of them will call the police. But limiting the risk to them, if this goes south, is important.

They’ll disagree, of course.

I’d do the same.

For now, while Pierce starts to lose his shit when he learns Kyra is gone missing, I’m watching her on the cameras via my phone app.

She's slept a lot, paced the room, lain on her back with her legs up the wall, and had a shower. Then, reluctantly dressed in the clothes I provided.

I say reluctantly, because she pulled every item of clothing out and tossed them angrily around the room. Then carefully folded them all and put them back nicely.

She's pathetic.

But I can't seem to look away from the beautiful creature. Mostly, at that time, because she was half naked. Side note: tell my tech team that we need a better zoom on this app.

It's like I'm addicted to some terrible reality show.

Except I'm her captor.

Kyra has small breasts with deep pink nipples and almost no hair between her legs. Which just emphasizes her youth. I might only be ten years older than her, but there's an innocence to her that other women her age don't have.

That doesn't mean she's not as sexual. The chemistry between us was so thick last night I almost couldn't walk away.

Stop fucking thinking about her and stay on track.

I shake my head and watch the cars and buildings go by as Mitch drives me home. Parker must have connected the dots. Reports of Kyra's disappearance hit the news this afternoon. Only one day after I had her removed from her home.

Kidnapped.

Say it.

Even for you, this is fucked up.

I'm not a good man. I can't be. My soul was torn from my tiny innocent body before I can remember, and my heart doesn't know how to love.

I have friends, closer than I imagine most people have, but do we love? I don't know. It feels like we're allies, walking through life, side by side, holding space for the shared pain we all endured as children.

None of us has the capacity for love.

We know right from wrong, but that doesn't mean we don't do wrong.

As I scrolled through the media and watched the news reporting on her mysterious disappearance today, I felt a thrill race through my veins that my plan was unfolding. Especially when they said, "There's been no response from her fiancé's PR team yet."

I snickered.

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I can just imagine the steam pouring out his ears and the screaming. My father will be furious.

I took one of his toys.

Oh no, how fucking sad.

The cunt.

“I heard she’s taken off to England.” Trisha from The Midday Report said to her three co-anchors.

I wonder where she heard that?

She got an anonymous tip from me, that’s where.

“I think we can all agree this isn’t a love match, can’t we?”

“He’s not exactly Prince Charming,” one replied.

“Unless you’re in your sixties.” Another chuckled.

I smile as I gaze out the window and we pull up outside my building.

Pierce will be going out of his mind.

God, I wish I could watch it live.

We're just getting started, Daddy Dearest.

"Have a good night, Mr. Sterling," Mitch says as I climb out of the vehicle.

"You, too." I stride across the sidewalk and head up in the elevator, my heart pounding harder than it should at the thought of facing my little prisoner.

She was sleeping when I took her breakfast this morning. As I stood watching her face from the doorway, I almost cracked and crossed the room.

Why?

"Hola, Mr. Sterling." Alma greets me.

"Hola, Alma."

"Dinner is in the oven. I will turn it on." She offers.

"Thanks."

By the time I've ripped off my tie, dropped my keys and phone on the marble countertop in the kitchen and said goodbye to her, the buzzer on the wall indicates I have a visitor.

"Fucking Parker," I mutter and walk over to press the button.

I don't say anything.

"Let me up." He growls through a slight crackle.

"Why?"

“You know why.”

Motherfucker.

I press the button to give him permission to reach my penthouse floor, then walk into the living room where I pour two glasses of whisky.

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When I turn, I find both Parker and Travis standing in the doorway.

“Cool. An intervention,” I say, then pour a third glass. “You both shouldn’t be here. Go home.”

“The fuck do you think you’re doing?” Travis asks, tossing his jacket over the back of the sofa and taking the offered glass.

Parker does the same, shaking his head at me.

Like me, the two of them are large men. Over six foot two and at least two hundred and thirty pounds each. Hitting the gym and making our bodies strong was a survival technique, and then we realized it attracted women. Something teenage boys are very happy about.

Now it’s a way of life.

It was a choice.

Become fat, pathetic fuckers or strong, powerful men.

Then add a few tattoos and you pretty much get the image of who we are. I’ve got the darkest hair, longer on top. Parker’s has a hint of chocolate brown; Travis, much like me; Zayne on the blonder size; and Killian already has flicks of gray through his at almost thirty-two.

Apparently, it’s distinguished.

And gets him laid more than us.

It's all bullshit.

We could have pussy every night if we wanted. And sometimes I do.

I sit down in my armchair and prop my ankle on my knee.

“What am I doing? Taking revenge, like I've always planned. This was too good an opportunity to ignore.”

“By kidnapping an innocent woman?” Travis drops down onto the sofa while Parker takes the other armchair.

I sip the golden liquid and almost moan as it slides down my throat.

“She's not innocent,” I finally say.

Parker's brows lift.

“She's in love with my father. I believe. Something is going on. Just because she is young and beautiful does not make her innocent. You both know that.” I place my glass on the table beside me, then drop my foot, leaning forward and pressing my palms together, ignoring their incredulous looks. “Look, I have a plan.”

“Here we go,” Travis rolls his eyes.

“Why aren't you at the fucking Alliance Club?” I snap.

“Because I fucking own it and have more money than God, so can do what I want.” Travis snorts. “Here's a better question, why do you kidnap Kyra Fox?”

I sit back and let out a sigh.

“You know the rules, Maddox. We don’t hurt innocents.” Parker points at me with his glass.

“Which,” I remind them, “is yet to be determined.”

“Come on,” Parker drawls.

I feel the muscles in my jaw twitch. These assholes should have my back. We all have a clear goal of destroying the men and women who abused us as children.

It’s not like I fucking killed her.

She’s living in one of the most expensive penthouses in Manhattan, for god’s sakes. Unable to roam around, to be fair, but I’ve fed her, clothed her, and even administered first aid.

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With all those facts on the table, clearly I'm quite a good host.

In any case, they need to listen and understand my plan before cornering me like this.

"I'm not a kidnapper—" Both their lifted brows stop me. "Fine, I've kidnapped her. But I'm going to give her back."

Am I?

Yes, I am.

What else am I going to do?

"Oh well, that's fine, then. We can go." Parker moves to get up, then sits back down and shoots me ayou fucking idiotlook. "It's all over the news. Do you want to go to prison?"

If it meant destroying my father? Maybe.

But I won't be going to prison and they both know it. In the world we play, we have our own commerce system. People who trade information, power, and influence.

And if it's money that's required, then I have billions and can happily pay the piper.

"Let's hear his plan," Travis says.

"This isn't a board meeting." I grumble and pick up my glass again. "I have a plan

and it's unfolding.”

“He doesn’t have a plan.” Travis shoots Parker a glance, who shakes his head.

“I have a fucking plan.” I snap.

“So, when you get arrested, do you want us to bail you out or break you out?” Travis asks, ignoring me.

I can’t help it, I laugh.

“Break me out?” I keep laughing. “Dude, you own a golf course and sex club. No offense, but you might want to leave the security and muscle stuff to some hired help.”

People I know.

“Fine, we’ll let you rot in prison. Just know that I could have got the chopper in the air and repelled down to get you out.”

Looks like I’ll rot in prison with him as my cellmate.

“You are both fucking idiots,” Parker states. “Maddox, you know you’ve crossed the line here.”

We all go quiet.

I do.

But taking Kyra was the only option. I was hardly going to swoop in and make her fall in love with me. I’m not someone who can fake a smile even if my life depended

on it.

I don't even like fucking smiling.

But if he wants to talk about lines being crossed, I've got some comparisons to remind him about why we walk through life as best friends and have pledged to support one another as we take revenge.

Strength in silence: revenge is a patient man's game. We act in shadows, speak only truth, and never reveal our hand too soon.

"You mean like Pierce crossed the line the day he made me stroke my eleven-year-old cock while he poured ice cream over it? Then helped himself to me like I was his dessert?"

"Fuck." Travis glances away, his jaw clenched.

We all have our stories, but Parker isn't budging. I've always thought he might be the one of us with the most morals.

Hard to know.

So I continue.

“Or how he strapped me to the wall and let four of his friends take turns at sucking me off until I couldn’t get another hard-on?”

That went on for hours and is seared into my memory. The drunk mature men, stroking themselves, laughing, and getting off as they wrapped their dirty mouths around my young shaft.

The memory making me clench my fist.

Finally, Parker’s eyes leave mine and I know I’ve hit the mark, triggering his own wound.

“You could’ve found another way.” He growls.

He’s right.

“I could’ve, but Pierce doesn’t deserve to simply be stripped of his wealth after what he did to me and many others. He deserves to be shamed and hung out to dry, and that’s exactly what I’m going to do.” I stand, aware that Kyra has been locked up for almost twenty-four hours.

I want to check on her.

“Do not hurt her,” Parker warns.

“She won’t be harmed,” I promise. “Her reputation, perhaps, but that will teach her not to play with men like us. Maybe she’ll go and find some nice average boy her own age and live a happy life.”

Something about that idea doesn’t sit right with me.

The little firecracker flying across the room to get her makeshift prison shard isn’t someone I see living in Ohio with two-and-a-half kids, baking cakes.

Perhaps that’s what she wants.

My two friends finish their drinks and follow me out to the entrance.

“Bring her to the club.” Travis tells me.

“What? No. She’s a...prisoner.” I shake my head.

Does he not know how kidnapping works?

Do I?

“You can’t keep her locked up,” he replies as if the idea is insane.

“Yes. I can,” I reply. “She’s myprisoner.”

I glance at Parker, seeking support, which I realize is insane under the circumstances, but I don’t understand why I have to spell this out.

“Pierce is about to lose his mind while the media and public try to figure out where

the Fox heiress has gone. Meanwhile, I'm not going to take her out for a walk. She's not a puppy."

Parker snorts despite himself.

The elevator opens and they step inside.

Parker punches the button and meets my gaze. "Well, I've seen her photos. She's a sexy little thing. Don't fuck her. That's the least you can do."

I swallow and feign disinterest.

"I have no interest or intention in Ms. Fox," I lie. "See you on Friday night."

"He'll fuck her," Travis says, as I shake my head and make my way down the hall to see my little prisoner.

CHAPTER NINE

KYRA

How many emotions are there? Like in total? Because I'm almost certain I've experienced all of them a dozen times over in the past day.

Fear.

Anger.

Confusion.

Sadness

Frustration.

The worst? Arousal.

Never in my life did I ever think I'd be kidnapped. I mean, being Derek Fox's daughter and the heiress to Fox & Co., there was always a small chance, but it seemed unlikely.

Especially now I'm an adult.

Something my kidnapper, who closely resembles an angry Henry Cavill, could do with acknowledging. He's no Superman, that's for sure.

What sort of evil person takes someone's freedom from them just because she's marrying his father?

Clearly, he has daddy issues.

When he asked why I was marrying Pierce, glaring at me with those menacing eyes, I wasn't going to answer. Not that he gave me the chance. He can think whatever he wants. I'm sure it makes no difference.

Although I would like to know what his motivations are.

Is it money he wants?

Will my father or Pierce pay?

I wonder if Penny knows I'm missing yet. If only she'd been able to speak with her cousin Chad and if only I'd been able to hide at his place in the Hamptons. The last thing she told me was that he was skiing in Switzerland.

Damn it.

I walk to the window and stare out at the Manhattan skyline. I've figured out where we are. I know this city inside and out, having grown up here. Across from me is Columbus Circle, so we must be on Billionaire Row.

Not surprised.

Maddox is clearly a wealthy man like his father.

And insane.

I hear a noise outside my room. It's been quiet all day, except for the housekeeper. I make out voices so I quickly cross the room and put my ear to the door.

Men.

More than two.

My body tenses, wondering what this means. Do they know I'm here? Is Maddox with them?

"Ouch." I wince as I press my bandaged hand on the doorframe.

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The voices go quiet about ten minutes later and I turn my back to the door, then slide down to the floor. Resting my head back, I close my eyes.

What am I going to do?

He's right, I can't smash the windows. I probably couldn't anyway, and if I was successful, I'd fall to my death.

Tears prickle my eyes.

I'm a prisoner here, but next week I'll be trapped in a marriage to a man I don't like. Assuming Maddox lets me go.

The only glimmer of hope I have is that Pierce is aware of his insane son and has worked out where I am, or that the authorities are looking for me and will eventually negotiate my release.

Surely, he can't want money. He doesn't appear to need it. Unless he's in financial trouble. Perhaps Pierce removed him from his will. This must be some disagreement with his father. I wonder if I can promise him something if he lets me go. I have to try.

What is his plan for me?

To kill me if he doesn't get his way?

Maddox doesn't look like a killer. Then again, neither did Ted Bundy. God, why do I

know so much about psychopaths? Damn Netflix.

Oh...another idea takes form and I start to question my own sanity. I may not have slept with many men in my life, but I know desire when I see it.

I could seduce him.

You have zero seduction skills, idiot.

I frown into the empty room.

That's when I hear the footsteps. My head shoots up and next minute I'm catapulted across the floor and slam into a cabinet.

"What the hell are you doing sitting on the floor?" Maddox growls from the doorway as I scramble to my feet, nursing my hand and rubbing my shoulder.

"Don't you knock?" I snap.

"You're my fucking prisoner. I'm not asking for your permission to enter." He glares.

Fair call.

"Still," I mutter and walk to the bed, sitting on the end.

That really did hurt.

"How's your hand?" He shuts the door behind him, and suddenly, the room feels ridiculously small.

His enormous frame fills the space, and I tug in a breath, searching for my best

seductive move now that I've decided that's my best chance of getting out of here.

I come up blank. I have no moves.

“Sore.” I blink, awkwardly trying to flutter my eyes. “Same as my shoulder now, thank you very much.”

Maddox narrows his own eyes as he walks over, then crouches before me.

“Is your hand infected?” As he unwraps the bandage, my gaze roams his broad shoulders and the way his black shirt pulls taut against his muscular arms.

God, he’s a very good-looking man.

I see a few tattoos peeking out of his shirt and swallow audibly.

Ugh. Hopefully, he thinks it’s because he’s hurting my hand. Not making my panties moist.

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His sharp jawline has a dusting of dark whiskers, and my fingers twitch, wanting to reach out and touch them. Maybe I should. Fuck, I don't know.

When I glance back up, he's watching me.

"What are you doing?" His brows are bunched.

"Nothing," I squeak. "You're just..." Christ. "Very handsome." Then I smile, flutter my eyelashes and kind of push my breasts out.

"You look like you're having a seizure. Stop it."

"That's rude."

He stands and waves his hand around. "Whatever this is, forget it. I'm not a sexually frustrated man who is going to fall for your...let's call them charms, to be kind."

Bastard.

My mouth is gaping as he strides out of the room and bangs the door closed behind him.

"Kind?!" I yell after him. "I bet you don't even know how to be kind!"

It's a wasted effort, but I feel better getting it out of my system.

I can't help but agree with him. I've never flirted with a man in my life. And if I

hadn't been sitting down, I probably would have toppled over.

Ugh.

My plan might need some tweaking. I'm not giving up.

I'm not a sexually frustrated man.

So, he has a girlfriend or dates a lot, then. Or more likely, he sleeps with a lot of women. Another reason I don't want to encourage him to touch me.

But I do want him to.

I glance down at myself and take in the black sweatpants and matching sweater I'm wearing. Clothes Maddox has provided me.

Why do I need to change?

I stand, ignoring my aches and pain, and open the closet. He spared no expense when purchasing the wide selection. It freaks me out when I consider how long he thinks I will be here.

Let's call them charms.

Damn him. I'm not giving up my seduction escape strategy. Mostly because it's the only one I have, but also because I still think it can work.

Maybe.

Dragging some hangers aside, I browse through the dresses and find a green one with a low neckline.

That will do.

I quickly shower, slap on some makeup and make my eyes smoky. It's subtle, but enough to catch his attention.

Then I slide on a pair of black silk panties and a matching bra—all in my exact size, which is creepy as fuck—and then step into the dress.

I'm pulling up the zipper when the door opens. Our eyes connect in the mirror, and I almost grin at his glower. Something has irritated him and I think it might be me. Perhaps he's not as immune to me now that I'm all dressed up.

What he doesn't know about me is that I've survived a life of being controlled already.

I'm not the princess he thinks I am.

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I also know I'm a beautiful woman. I might not be overly confident and seductive, but I can learn. If it means saving my life and getting free, I will work it out.

I turn, step into the black Prada heels, run my hands down the dress and walk to Maddox, stopping at his chest.

“What’s for dinner?”

The deep grumble in his chest gives me the first flicker of hope.

CHAPTER TEN

MADDOX

Kyra is trying to fuck with me. She won't succeed.

I can see right through her weak plan.

Yes, I find her attractive and would like to fuck her senseless. Yes, I watch her on the camera way too much. But no, I will not let the little prisoner seduce me into letting her go.

But I will most definitely enjoy watching her try.

My eyes dip to her cleavage, and while it's less than a handful, I already know what

her small breasts look like. I can see her hard nipples pressing against the green silk fabric and wonder which set of lingerie she chose.

Does she prefer bikini panties or the thong?

My cock swells, remembering how I jerked off this morning in the shower, imagining sneaking into the bedroom to pleasure her wet pussy.

Stop getting an erection for your prisoner.

“Let’s go,” I say, and lead her out to the living area.

It made no sense for her to sit in her room and eat. Or throw another bowl at the fucking wall. This way she can entertain us both with her weird blinking and flirting, and I can make sure she eats.

I have no intention of returning a half-starved woman to her family.

This should not take more than a week or two.

Oh, and she won’t be marrying my father; I will make sure of that.

“I hope you like chicken.” I say, indicating she should sit at the glass dining table.

“Yes. Will there be wine?” Kyra tilts her head.

Jesus.

“This isn’t a date.” I growl and pull open the fridge, grabbing the bottle of New Zealand Sauvignon Blanc.

“And yet...” She smirks at me when I place it on the bench.

“Again, not a date.” I grunt. “Sit down.”

“I can help dish up. I’m bored sitting in that room for over a day. Two days. How long have I been here?” she asks, plonking herself on one of the bar stools.

Christ, she thinks this is a friendly catch-up.

I need to up my game.

“Why aren’t you more scared?” I lower my brows as I pop the cork and pour the wine.

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She's quiet, and it makes glance up. For a second, I see the flicker in her expression.

She is scared.

"I figure you're not a monster." Kyra shrugs.

"That's where you're wrong. I am." I rasp and slide a glass over to her. "Smash these Waterford crystal glasses and find out."

Kyra picks it up and sips.

"Marlborough. Lovely."

I raise a brow. "You know your New Zealand wines. Impressive."

Her eyes flick to the bottle.

"No, I saw the label." She grins. "Come on, Maddox. Tell me what this is about. If you want my help with your father, just tell me. You don't need to keep me locked up."

I press my lips together.

Perhaps I have underestimated my little prisoner. It's bold of her to question me like this. From the data I gathered, she is lacking a good quality education—no college—and has no work experience. Yet she's bright as a tack.

I put the bottle back in the fridge and pull the chicken out of the oven. Then start to dish it up.

“Are you going to talk to me?”

“No,” I reply, then glare at her. “Go sit at the table. Once you have eaten, I will take you back to your room.”

Kyra huffs and slides off her seat but doesn’t do as I tell her.

I recall other information I found out about her and then remember the specific item I had my recovery guy get for me. I pull open the drawer and slide the asthma inhaler over to her.

“This is mine.” She glances up at me in surprise.

“Correct.”

“Well, at least I know you aren’t trying to kill me.”

“Yet,” I say, but smile privately to myself. Nothing is going to happen to her. Not a single fucking scratch. I’ll make sure of that.

“So why did I have to get dressed up?” she asks.

“Beats me. I simply told you to get changed. I never asked you to wear such a revealing dress.” I keep smiling, loving that it’s playing with her mind.

“But you noticed.” I glance up and she’s grinning while mine vanishes.

Damn her.

I walk around the counter and drop the plates on the table. Then turn, finding her beside me. I take her chin in my fingers and lean in close.

“I’m not dead, Kyra. You’re a fucking gorgeous woman. Yes, I noticed your tits, and yes, I would probably want to fuckyou under different circumstances. But I won’t. So, give up this game.”

Her mouth parts andJesus fucking Christ,I want to run my thumb over her wet bottom lip and taste her.

She could drop to her knees right now and unzip my pants then suck on my heavy cock.

It would be so damn easy.

I can get out of a kidnapping charge easily enough, not so much rape. I don’t fuck women who don’t consent, and I think we can both agree her letting me slam inside her while she’s my prisoner would not be consensual.

Even if it would be hot as hell.

“Or we could come to some arrangement,” she whispers.

My cock twitches.

I shake my head. I have to admire her tenacity while I dig deep for my self-control.

“Sit. Eat.” I grate out, and without taking my eyes from hers, I tug out the dining room chair, then step away.

Kyra sits, quietly places the napkin on her lap, and begins digging at the food.

I do the same and take a few bites.

Then another one more angrily as I imagine her sitting in my father’s house—the same one I grew up in—dining with him. The same table I sat at night after night, my stomach in knots, waiting for the inevitable torture that would follow. Knowing my body was about to be used by sick white men who knew better but didn’t stop.

I pick up my wine and take a long sip, pushing back the familiar anger as it tries to consume me.

“Will you ever tell me why you’re doing this?” Kyra asks, taking a small bite of carrot.

“No,” I reply. “You do not need to know.”

“I have a right to know. This is my life.”

“Jesus, why do people seem to have so much trouble understanding how this kidnapping thing works?”

“Says the man dining with his prisoner.” She angrily shovels in another mouthful of her meal.

“You will get heartburn. Slow down.”

Her fork bangs down on the plate.

“So, you care if I get a tummy ache, but not that you have taken away my freedoms. Taken me from my life and family and friends.”

I sneer at her. “Yes. I need to return you in good health.”

“So, you are returning me?”

Fuck.

“Maybe,” I mutter. “Eat.”

Kyra is right. I should have sent her food to her room. These questions are tiresome, and I do not want her knowing anything.

“When?”

“Stop!” I slam my fist down on the table and she jumps in her seat. “Stop asking questions and eat.”

The fear in her eyes has me silently cursing.

I don't want to scare her. I don't like seeing her cringe away from me. I clench my fist around my fork as a sudden need to go to her and assure her I will protect her.

From what?

From who?

Myself?

My father?

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All of us?

While I keep eating, Kyra stares down at her food and doesn't move. Another minute passes, and she still doesn't move.

"Kyra." My voice softer this time.

Her eyes dart to mine, and for a moment, I see inside her soul. To the scared little girl who has no idea what is about to happen to her.

Just as I never did.

But she's not a child. She's the woman my father wants to claim as his, and I'm completely and utterly never going to let that fucking happen.

"Why are you marrying Pierce?" I demand, and she blinks, only just keeping her emotions in check.

Then I see the moment a crack appears.

"Because I was told to."

I stare at her, unsure how to respond to that.

I'm not at all okay with someone telling this woman what to do—ironically—but before I can say a word, Kyra stands.

She's calm—too calm—and places her napkin on the table.

“I'm going back to my cell.”

Fuck.

I watch as she walks through the penthouse. Her eyes flicker to the screen on the wall where four images of her room show the live feed.

Shit, I forgot to turn them off.

Kyra turns back and looks me right in the eye. I wait for her to say something, but she doesn't. She just keeps walking.

I drop my utensils and curse.

Then watch the screen as she enters the room, closes the door and walks into the bathroom. There are no cameras in there. Perhaps she noticed.

But I don't need a camera to know she's having a meltdown.

What did I expect?

And why do I care?

Tomorrow, I will make my next move.

It's time to destroy my father.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

KYRA

The ceiling is completely white, broken up only by an ornate light fixture in the middle. Except for one spot. I've stared at it for so long I'm becoming irrationally fixated on it.

Is it a bug? Is it fly dirt? An imperfection?

I need to know.

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I really need to know. It's my only stimulation right now.

I've even considered putting the armchair on the bed and climbing up to find out, because there's literally nothing else to do.

Prison Warden Maddox, as I now refer to him, hasn't provided any books or a TV. And I don't have my phone.

Obviously.

All I do is stare at the walls and ceilings, seeking out mental stimulation until he brings me my next meal. Now, I know he is watching me from the cameras he's placed inside this room, and that's creepy as hell.

Who else is watching me?

The big question is, did he want me to know that he was watching me? Otherwise, why leave them on so I could see? I don't imagine a man like Maddox makes mistakes.

Are they for my safety, or does he like to watch?

I'm not dead, Kyra. You're a fucking gorgeous woman.

He seemed annoyed by that fact and my fumbled efforts to seduce him. I admit, it was pretty terrible, but you can't just steal people from their homes and use them for whatever fucked-up reason.

God knows his motivations; he won't tell me.

I climb off the bed and glance around the room, searching for the cameras. Maddox might have all the power right now, but let's face it, most men's weakness is hanging between their legs, so I'm going to use his obvious attraction to me.

Even if he does deny it.

He thinks I'm a pathetic heiress, so who am I to prove him wrong? I unzip the hoodie I'm wearing and toss it on the bed. Then remove my jeans, panties, T-shirt, and bra.

God this is humiliating.

Maddox has already seen me naked, so I swallow my pride and focus on getting under his skin and hopefully out of this prison cell.

I spend the next hour wandering between the bathroom and the bedroom pretending to be busy doing something—which I'm not, there is nothing to do—in my birthday suit.

I do some yoga stretches, skipping the downward dog, and then eventually wander to the window to gaze out into the world.

Is anyone looking for me? Has Maddox told anyone I'm here? What about the men whose voices I heard?

Does he have a girlfriend?

Yes, I noticed your tits, and yes, I would probably want to fuck you under different circumstances.

My nipples harden as I close my eyes and imagine a different ending to last night's meal. One where I let myself admit how attracted I am to the strikingly handsome man.

Maddox stands and sweeps our meals off the dining table in my fantasy, then pulls me into his arms, kissing me with raw passion.

A moan escapes me as I hear his deep growl in my mind.

Maybe it's because I'm naked. Maybe it's because the thought of his enormous body wrapped around mine has me shivering and clenching my core. The way he currently glowers at me like a predator who is playing with his prey tells me my fantasy isn't wrong. That he would be rough, demanding, and make me feel the kind of pleasure I can barely imagine.

Part of me wants to be his prey and for him to eat me up until I scream.

Oh, god.

Would he rip up my dress in this fantasy of mine and tear my panties off?

Yes.

My own hand slides around my thigh and slips between my legs. Another moan escapes as my fingers find their way into my delicate flesh.

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God, what am I doing? He could be watching.

Holy hell, my pussy floods with arousal.

My neck tilts, baring my throat as I arch, imagining Maddox lifting me, ripping my thighs open, then clamping his mouth on my pussy. His growl sending tremors through my body.

“Oh, yes, fuck.”

My legs wobble as I circle my clit, widening my legs as I imagine him eating me like an animal. I press my other hand against the glass and lean in so my nipples brush the cold surface.

“Yes, oh, fuck,” I moan louder.

Do I want him to see me?

No. Yes.

I’m lying to myself.

It’s late afternoon, so surely Maddox is at work or in a meeting, not watching me.

But what if he is?

I rub harder, imagining his cock hardening as he watches me touching and pleasuring

myself. The clench of his fist as he has to maintain a straight face for his colleagues.

Or is he in a private office and has his cock in his hand, jerking off to my moans?

I glance over my shoulder.

Then bend, pressing my fingers inside me.

“Fuck,” I cry out, tipping right to the edge.

I fling my head back and rub my clit vigorously with one hand and finger fuck my pussy. There is no vibrator in this room but with the image of Maddox watching me and the fantasy of last night lingering, I’m so damn close.

“Jesus.”

My nipples lift from the glass, then gently touch it, and the stimulation launches me into the hemisphere.

“Yes, yes, oh, god.” I scream as my body shudders and a powerful orgasm rips through me.

Holy fucking hell.

I pull my fingers out and palm the window to steady myself and stare out into the city.

Manhattan is still there, and I’m still here.

In my prison.

Pleasuring myself with fantasies of the man holding me captive.

MADDOX

I sit listening to my team going through their financial results for the month and glare at the screen of my phone.

What the fuck does she think she is doing?

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Jesus Christ.

Obviously, I know exactly what Kyra is doing.

I run a hand through my hair and grind my teeth while my cock thickens inside my Tom Ford pants. Thank god, I'm sitting at the boardroom table and not standing in front of the room.

I'm going to fucking strangle her!

CHAPTER TWELVE

MADDOX

I barge into Kyra's room—fuck, my room—and find her lying on the bed, still naked, with her legs crossed at her ankles.

“What the hell do you think you are doing?” I demand, rolling up the sleeves of my white business shirt.

Her head slowly turns from the ceiling to face me. “Baking a cake. What does it look like?”

I lift a brow.

“Don’t be sarcastic. It’s not attractive.”

She snorts.

The hell?

“I mean this.” I wave my hand at her body. “Whatever this is, you need to stop. Now, get up and get dressed.”

“No, thanks.” Kyra turns her head and returns her focus to the ceiling. “Do you think that’s an imperfection in the paintwork?”

I frown.

And glance up.

“What?”

“Up there. The small black dot. I think you need to repaint this ceiling. It’s bothering me.”

Jesus Christ.

I stride across the room, the door banging behind me, and Kyra leaps in the air. Her legs swing over the bed, and I catch her inevitable fall and steady her on her feet.

Fuck, do not touch any of her bits.

Her sexy-as-fucking-Hadesbits.

“I told you not to play with me. What did you think was going to happen after your

little window show today?" I growl.

I feel her start to shake under my hands as I try to ignore her perky breasts and the gentle curves of her petite body.

"I don't know." Kyra swallows.

She's scared of me, and I like it.

I narrow my eyes and know they're as black as night as I let them dip down her body. The small triangle of hair between her legs is dark and calling to me.

My cock hardens further, because it's not softened since the moment I watched the video, and before I can stop myself, I ask. "Were you thinking about me while your juices dripped from your body today?"

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“Please,” she begs, her eyes darting away.

Fucking hell.

She was.

I step closer, gripping her chin and tilting it so she is forced to look at me. If she wants to play games with me, then I will play. And she will lose.

What kind of idiot strips and taunts a predator like me? A man who has already stripped her of her freedoms, locked her up, and threatened her.

My father might be my true prey, but I’m not a saint and she is walking through dangerous territory here. Unequipped and inexperienced.

My shaft twitches, liking that she is innocent and ready for me to toy with.

Something shifts within me.

A desire I’ve been trying to suppress since the moment I laid eyes on her. She’s pushed me to my limits, standing here with her hard nipples and, I guarantee, a wet pussy.

Her tongue sweeps out and licks her lip.

Silly girl.

“Is that what you want? Do you want the man holding you captive to fuck you while you beg for release?”

Silence.

My cock throbs.

“Answer me.” I growl and tighten my grip around her chin.

“Maddox.” She breathes.

But she doesn’t say no.

I need her to say no.

To stop this, to stop me. There’s one thing taking this woman from her home but using her for my pleasure, when I know she’s trying to manipulate me into giving her back her freedom, is another level of fucked up.

Then again, she’s appealing to the broken part of me that’s familiar with using sex as a tool. The part who hates that my body is turned on by this sick and twisted arousal.

But I am.

And I can see by her dilated pupils that Kyra is too.

I can’t look away.

I can’t step away.

I need to watch her give away a piece of her innocent soul to me while I succumb to

the darkness in me.

“Do you like people watching you? Is that what this is?” My eyes roam her face. “Me on the cameras. The people in the buildings outside.”

The little voyeur.

A million ideas fill my mind at how I could play with this woman and fulfill her kinky desires if she wasn't my father's fiancé.

“They can't see in.” She gasps.

“Or can they? You'll never know, I suppose.”

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Kyra blinks and the electricity radiating from her doesn't dissipate. She's literally throbbing with need.

"Perhaps you'd like them to watch as you drop to your knees and suck my thick, hard cock?" Her cheeks turn pink, and my cock pushes eagerly at my zipper. "Do you want to that, little prisoner?"

I can't stop.

I know I should, but watching her almost combust as she blushes with pre-orgasmic heat is driving me insane.

"Are you wet now, between those soft thighs of yours?"

"No," she whispers pathetically.

Such a little liar.

"I'll make you a deal." I smile darkly. "If you're dry as a bone, I will let you walk out of here."

She blinks.

"And if I'm not?" Kyra asks, her voice a husky rasp.

"If you're wet, you get on your knees and take me right down your pretty throat," I reply, leaning in so our mouths are almost touching.

She swallows.

Walk away right now.

I can't.

I am going to fuck this woman one way or another. There is no way I can leave this room and relieve my throbbing cock with any level of satisfaction. Except inside her.

Unless she screams at me and says no with a truth I can't ignore, I'm taking what I want.

"Legs apart," I growl and, fuck me, she does exactly as I tell her. Immediately. "Good girl."

My hand snakes between us, and I press my finger against her clit.

Kyra gasps, closing her eyes as I glide them through her flesh to her core. Where I find her sopping wet.

I groan deep in the back of my throat and tilt her head, eyeing her swollen lips.

"Soaked," I rumble.

Her eyes open and meet mine.

"Doesn't look like you're going anywhere, little prisoner," I say and press two fingers inside her just an inch.

"Oh god." She moans and tries to arch to take more.

My lip twitches.

“Uh, uh. Not yet.”

Her body is almost jelly, held up only by my hand between her legs and my grip on her neck.

“Will you honor our deal and get on your knees, little prisoner, or do I walk away?”

That’s not happening, but she doesn’t need to know that. I want her mouth around my dick and to feel her pussy convulse on my tongue. Pulling my fingers out, I lift my hand and get my first taste of her.

“As sweet as I imagined,” I rasp while she licks her lower lip. “That better be a yes, Kyra.”

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She doesn't answer, simply lowers to the ground when I release her neck and unzips me.

Fucking hell.

Listen, this isn't my first blow job—probably not even my first hundredth blow job—but watching thenakedwoman I've kidnapped completely submit and take my cock out has me reaching out and gripping the cabinet next to me.

Jesus fuck.

I have to be in hell. Shit like this does not happen in heaven. Not to men like me.

Kyra lets my pants fall to the floor and begins to stroke my shaft. Her hand snakes around and cups my balls, then her tongue swipes over the precum dripping from the end.

Then she takes me fully into her mouth.

“Finger your wet pussy,” I order as I moan.

Christ.

Submission has never turned me on, but I've got full control of this woman and I've never been so fucking hard in my life.

This was not the plan, but I'm not sorry, and I'm not telling a soul. Travis needs to

get out of my head. This is consensual. I gave her a choice. As much as anyone has when they've been kidnapped.

Fuck it. I'm going to hell, anyway.

Kyra's throat works me like a pro, over and over, as she tries to maintain eye contact. Those blue eyes are thick with moisture. While she sucks me, her fingers pump inside her own sex.

She moans.

"Don't you come." I warn and questioning eyes meet mine.

I want your orgasm, sweetheart.

I can't tell her how much I want to eat out her pussy and taste more of her juices. How much I want to watch her fall apart because I'm the one making her fly off the cliff. Owning her screams.

With that image in my mind, suddenly it takes priority to my own orgasm. Gripping her dark locks, I push her down harder on my cock and fuck her throat fast.

"That's it. Fuck. Yes. Good girl." I cry as she gags, saliva sliding from her mouth. My balls tighten as fire spreads through me, and I release inside Kyra's mouth.

Pulling out, she coughs as I take my cock and finish on her face.

I'm not done.

As she kneels in front of me covered in my come, I know I'm not even close to being fucking done with her.

I help her stand as she wipes her mouth.

Like an obsessed man, I lift her by the hips and take two steps, dropping her on the bed.

“Lie down and legs apart.” I order huskily, ripping my shirt and tie off, then toss them across the room.

“You don’t have to,” Kyra says.

I cup one breast and flick her nipple as I kneel over her. Then lean in and suck hard on the peak.

“This isn’t a chore.” I lock our eyes so she knows that I mean what I say next. “Say stop and I will.”

Somehow.

I might have to hand her my gun, but I will stop.

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“But you need to decide now, Kyra.”

There is only a thread of control—a frayed fucking thread—left.

“Or I’m going to fuck you. Two seconds, Kyra.”

Her décolletage flushes and I pray she doesn’t say no. But then again, I’m not a godly man, so I wonder how much it really matters. I believe in the devil more than I do any god. No one saved me, no matter how much praying I did during my childhood.

My mouth dips and I suck her nipple.

One.

Two.

Her body arches as I meet her eyes once more and begin to make my way down her body. I lift one thigh and spread her wide apart like she’s a delicious buffet.

Wet pink flesh presents itself to me and I might be wrong. I think this is heaven.

“What a beautiful cunt,” I growl as I lower and slide my tongue through her.

“Oh, god!” she yells.

That’s right baby, lie back and enjoy.

Palming her inner thighs, I feast. Tangy blends with sweet as her body trembles and shudders. Like me, she's highly aroused and on the edge.

I push back all the reasons I shouldn't be doing this. Knowing how much it's fucking up my plans and could backfire in the future.

If I let her go.

How I should be giving her dinner and focusing on Pierce, making sure all the next steps have been implemented. That he's suffering. That he's unraveling while I revel in the joy of that.

Not fucking the woman he plans to marry.

Grrhh.

The idea of his evil mitts being on Kyra is suddenly unacceptable. As her body writhes under my mouth, I feel an unmistakable need to keep her from him.

Not to punish him.

But because right now her body belongs to me. Her cries belong to me.

My plan is evolving.

I am not giving her back.

I can't keep her captive forever. As my tongue laps at her flesh, sliding through her folds, and I suck on her clit, I realize the fucking mistake I've made.

"Maddox," she moans, and I flinch at the use of my name.

It's so intimate.

She's my prisoner.

Fuck I shouldn't be doing this.

“More.”

I know what she wants. I know what she needs. I should fuck her with my fingers, especially as I've already come. But I need to fill this woman with my cock and seed, dominating her in the complete and utter sense of the word.

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I'm erect and ready again.

And I'm a big enough asshole to do it.

I need to fuck this little prisoner of mine.

Kyra's hips lift, pressing into my mouth, and I suck her hard nub, flicking my tongue as I do.

"Oh god," she cries.

"Come," I tell her, and do it repeatedly as her screams fill the room.

Without giving her time to recover, I rise and cover her with my large muscular frame, palming the linen beside her head. With one hand, I direct my cock to her wet and swollen entrance.

"You got your way, little prisoner." I growl.

Her hands lift to my biceps, and I close my eyes at the feel of her gentle touch as I thrust inside her.

Motherfucker.

She's tight.

She's hot.

She fits like a glove.

“Jesus Christ.” I groan and open my eyes to find her sparkling blue globes staring back at me.

Fuck.

This can’t feel this good. I pull back and thrust in again harder, as if the sheer force of my body will take away how amazing this is.

Then I fucking ask, “Am I hurting you?”

“Yes,” Kyra replies, her nails digging into me.

“Do you like it?”

She clenches her pussy around my cock. “Yes.”

Fuck me.

I’m not sure if she’s just played me exceptionally well or if my entire plan just backfired on me. But I can tell you right now, this is going to happen a-fucking-gain.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

PIERCE

Kyra is still missing, and the story has gone viral. I’m the laughingstock of the fucking entire United States of America.

There are thousands of memes showing her running like Forest Gump, living on a deserted island with Marked Safe from Marrying Pierce Sterling, and every news channel is discussing how terrible it would be to marry me.

Fuckers.

I have been invited to go on a couple of shows, but my PR manager has been instructed to decline.

“I think it’s time you get in front of this,” Terrance says from the doorway of my office.

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“No. I told you. Our statement remains the same: I’m extremely upset and at this point my time and energy are being put toward finding Kyra.”

He frowns.

“Except you aren’t. There is no proof of that anywhere and questions are being asked.” Terrance questions me.

“Then do your fucking job. I pay you multiple six figures to protect my reputation and right now you’re about one day away from being fired!” I yell.

He crosses his arms.

Terrance isn’t easily flustered. He’s worked for me for over five years and got the job because he can confront me. Still, he fucks me off most days, but I don’t want some weak-minded idiot doing this job.

“This is me doing my job. I’m advising you that you have to get on camera,” he says firmly.

“And say fucking what? That yes, she probably has run away?”

I’m not saying that.

My reputation is the most important thing I have. If the people I control start seeing me weaken, my hold on them does the same thing.

I've built my power structure over decades. Like a house of cards, it could all come crumbling down around me.

It can't happen.

It won't happen.

He uncrosses his arms and slides his hands into his pockets. "No, we don't say that. If you agree to do this, we will brainstorm."

I'm listening.

"We could paint a picture of her having mental problems. Say she stopped taking a medication."

Nice. I like it.

Make Kyra out to be mentally unstable and that we've dealt with this before. That we expect her back, and it will buy us time to find her.

Then I will punish her.

I will clearly need to keep a tight rein on her when we are married. That wasn't exactly the plan. I chose Kyra Fox because she is attractive, compliant, and the heiress to a fortune.

"What else?" I ask.

"It might've been a disagreement with her mother. That they're not close. That she has called you."

I pick up a pen on my desk and twist it around my fingers.

This is why Terrance still works for me.

I might even give him a huge bonus this Christmas if it works.

“Fine. Prepare the interview,” I say. “And Terrance, I want the questions vetted and this entire thing tightly controlled.”

“Pfft. Ye of little faith. Leave it with me.” He grins and pushes off the doorframe to set it up.

I stare out at the empty room as I tap the pen on my desk.

Where the fuck is she?

Derek has hired the Barrett Security team, and I was invited to the family meeting to answer questions.

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Connor Barrett is a fellow billionaire and retired US Marine. I was surprised to see him at the Fox household in person rather than sending another one of his team.

“Pierce,” he said, shaking my hand.

“Connor, good to see you.” I sat down opposite him, noting he was watching me carefully.

“Do you think you can find her?” Sally asked emotionally as Derek handed Connor a glass of Macallan and sat.

Meanwhile, the Marine’s trained gaze studied us all, taking in the dynamics. There was nothing for him to discover here. We needed him out in the world finding her.

“There are no guarantees, but I would be interested in hearing all of your opinions on where Kyra might have gone.”

“She’s been taken, not left,” Sally says shakily. “Her phone and clothes are still here. Only her asthma puffer is missing.”

“Nor has she spent a dollar on her credit cards,” Derek adds.

Connor’s gaze drifts to me.

He won’t get anything from me. I know how to play poker like a pro, and I obviously played no part in this.

“She won’t be provided a Sterling credit card until we are married,” I stated.

“She has wealthy friends. Would someone help her?” Connor drags his gaze from me to Sally.

Derek glanced at me, and I lifted my brow.

What the hell did he think I was going to do?

“She has one friend. Penny. I don’t think she’s helped her. She sounds as worried as we are.” Sally wrung her hands together. “We should never have forced her—”

“Sally!” Derek warned.

Connor took a long, slow sip of the Macallan and watched them as if they were guilty of faking their own daughter’s disappearance. “And you, Pierce. What are your thoughts?”

If he thought he was going to rattle me, he was wrong. I had decades on this young man and was innocent.

Why would I take my own fiancé?

“I want her home. We’re getting married next week. I asked Derek to hire you, as you’re the best of the best.”

He took another sip, ignoring the compliment. “That’s not what I asked.”

Fucker.

Sally stared at me.

I laid my arm along the back of the sofa and crossed my legs. “I don’t know, Barrett. Why do women do anything?”

He didn’t laugh.

I was starting to lose my patience, so I got right to the point.

“I’m sure Derek and Sally have shared that this is an arranged marriage. Kyra knew what was expected of her.”

“I see. Did she agree to it?” he asks.

“Yes,” I reply firmly.

Connor made some notes on his tablet and then spoke to the room. “My team will be here in twenty minutes to do a forensics search. I know the police have done one, but we do our own investigation.”

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His focus was mostly on Derek and Sally. “I do need to point out that Kyra is a grown woman, not a missing child.”

My brow had lifted, and Connor noticed.

Of course he fucking did.

“Therefore,” he spelled out, “I need you to know that if we find her and she doesn’t want to come home, we will respect her wishes.”

Sally sobbed and dropped her face to Derek’s shoulder.

He glared at me.

God this is a fucking mess.

“She’s my fiancé. I have a right to know where she is,” I demand.

“No,” Connor said. “You don’t.”

I snapped and launched to my feet as a rampage of insults poured from my mouth. “You’ve been hired to do a goddamn job, Barrett. I want to know where she is! I want her home and at the church on time.”

“Pierce, calm the fuck down.” Derek growled while Connor watched like the beady eyed eagle he is.

He didn't even flinch when I jumped up. And I'm still a decent sized guy for my age.

"I won't calm down. Kyra is marrying me." I hissed and warned Derek next. "You know what's at stake here?"

He goes silent.

Sally looks between us.

"Whatisat stake, Pierce?" Connor dropped his leg to the floor, leaning forward. His beady eyes locked on me.

Goddamn him.

"This is a business deal. One we have agreed on for a long time," Derek interjected, and even I heard the rattle in his voice.

I stared coldly at the Marine as I sat back down.

"Kyra is our daughter. What if she's hurt? Do none of you realize this might not be about her getting married?" Sally snapped.

We all go silent.

Not one of us thinks that.

"There has been no ransom request since she went missing, so it's highly unlikely, Mrs. Fox," Connor told her.

As Sally cried, we all took stock of the situation.

I wasn't sure if Barrett was going to tell us to confess what our deal was or throw in the towel.

But he did neither.

"I feel so responsible." Sally sobbed further. "Her dress arrived today. We can tell her that she doesn't have to marry him."

"No," both Derek and I say firmly.

"Well, she's not coming home!" Sally jumped to her feet. "I'm sorry, Mr. Barrett, but I cannot sit here and listen to anymore. I'm going to ring more of her friends."

Connor nodded as she left the room, then he pressed his fingers together.

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“So. Who wants to tell me what’s really going on here?”

“That is outside the spec of your brief,” I said darkly, and after a long tense stare off, Connor stood and left.

Now, I’m starting to question everything.

Something isn’t right about all of this. Kyra is more of a mouse. Sure, running away might fit her profile, but not on her own.

I can’t fight this feeling that someone is fucking with me.

I don’t think it’s Derek. He’s too scared and knows the consequences.

I take another puff on my cigarette and think.

A thought enters my mind that has both my brows hitting the roof of my head.

No fucking way.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

MADDOX

Fuck. This was not the goddamn plan.

I'm lying on the bed in my one of my guest rooms with an incredibly sexy and delicious woman in my arms. The woman I kidnapped.

The one I fucked to within an inch of both our lives and have no regrets.

Mostly.

Jesus. I'm terrible at this.

Travis and Parker would be laughing their fucking heads off if they saw me right now. And the others who I assume they've told, like the gossipy girls they are.

Killian would likely high-five me. He wouldn't have a problem with it, I'm almost certain.

Zayne? One never knows with him.

Regardless of the fact we're all full of vengeance, we do respect woman and the innocent. Which, yeah, sounds a little ironic given I kidnapped Kyra, but she was never going to be harmed by me.

My cock, apparently.

But not me.

Thing is, she was supposed to stay in this room and be a good little prisoner until I had dealt with my father. Clearly that plan went out the door the moment I saw her pleasuring herself against the window on camera.

What choice did I have?

I am a red-blooded man; I could hardly ignore her or the fact my cock was bursting to get out of my pants.

God, the vision of her fucking her sweet pussy has my sore dick waking up again. For the record, no one can see inside my penthouse, but I wanted to see Kyra react.

She reacted all right, dripping with arousal, needing my cock.

I'm not sorry. Not even a little bit.

Jesus, the way she wrapped her lips around my member was like the best wet dream I've ever had.

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Kyra moves restlessly, pressing her fingers into my pec where her hand lays. I place mine over it to settle her, and she does.

So trusting.

The stupid little prisoner.

I am the world's worst kidnapper. I may as well buy her a car and give her a fucking credit card.

I curse quietly.

“Maddox?” she asks, her voice rough in the dim morning light.

“Hey.” Mine is deep and just as rough, so I clear my throat.

I should've slipped out, but I slept heavily for hours after coming for the third or fourth time. I couldn't get enough of her body, those sparkling blue eyes and her sweet juices.

She's a little seductress.

I wipe my hand over my forehead and then through my hair, letting out a sigh. I don't know what to say to her. This is stepping into seriously fucked-up territory. I spent hours inside her body, her mouth licking and biting every intimate part of me.

I can't just lock her in this room and fuck her whenever I want.

Tempting.

Very tempting.

I need to make a decision on how we move forward. I also can't just send her home. I might be pussy struck right now, but I'm not an idiot. Kyra will call the cops and I'll be arrested.

Worse—slightly—Pierce would regain his reputation and, likely, improve it with news his estranged and insane son kidnapped his fiancé.

Fuck that.

Before I can decide how to proceed, Kyra lifts onto her elbow and gazes directly down into my eyes.

“What did your father do to you?”

Fucking hell.

She goes right for the jugular every single time.

“Trust me, you don't want to know.” I glance toward the windows, forcing my focus to stay in here and now. I don't want thoughts of what that monster did to me as a child in bed with Kyra.

Ever...

My body goes rock hard as I still, taken aback by where that thought pattern was headed.

Ever? As in for-fucking-ever.

Jesus Christ. I sink my cock inside her once—okay, four or five times—and suddenly I’m spending my life with her? Maybe I need to go to a shrink?

That ship has sailed.

“I do, Maddox. Help me understand.” She runs the back of her hand over my cheek, and I close my eyes.

Her touch. It’s like a warm breeze on a summer day, sending rays of joy into my darkness. It’s foreign, and I want to welcome it in, but I can’t.

I turn back to Kyra and grab her hand. Her mouth falls open, but she doesn’t flinch. She should be scared of me, even when that’s the last thing I want.

“No. Tell me you’re being forced to marry him.” I order.

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I need to hear her say it. I need to know that this is not something she wanted or asked for. That it's her worst nightmare, and Pierce turns her stomach sour when he's nearby.

That he's never touched her.

Never tasted her.

Never touched her lips or gazed into the blue abyss as his cock slides inside her snug channel.

Instead, she presses her lips together and rage begins to boil deep inside me.

I'm going to fucking kill him.

"Kyra," I growl, as my hand grips her hip and I sit up, flipping her so she's underneath me.

"Maddox. Don't," she warns softly. "You know you have to return me to him."

NO!

"I don't have to do fucking anything." You are safer with me. "He's a fucking monster. Don't you dare lie and tell me you love him after I consumed every inch of your body last night."

She sucks in a breath.

I grip her hair. “Tell me the truth.”

She both flinches at the pain and lifts her body to meet mine.

I moan and curse simultaneously.

“If you want my cock again, little prisoner, you need to start talking.”

“It won’t change anything. Please Maddox.”

“That’s where you’re wrong. It changes everything. Now say it. Are you in love with my father?”

Her blue globes dart around my face, then lock with mine.

“Yes.”

KYRA

MADDOX ROARS WHEN I answer and flies off me and out of bed. I tug the duvet over me, clutching it at my chest as I sit up.

“Liar!” He growls, pulling on his clothes.

“I’m...it’s true,” I whisper.

I need Maddox to believe me, even though it’s the biggest lie I’ve ever told. I can’t

stay here with him. He's holding me prisoner. And from the way he's behaving, I think he's a little bit insane.

Wait—he's a kidnapper—he's a whole lot insane.

Except the way he touched me, held me, fucked me last night was the most sexual night of my life. His power, his manhood, his beautifully tattooed body calls out to me.

I crave him like I've never felt for another man.

The way his large hands maneuver me with ease, his tongue teasing and pleasuring me, and those silver eyes that send butterflies scattering in my tummy.

But I need to be free.

Yet, if I could stay locked in here for days with this man—not while he’s yelling at me—I probably would.

Because what I have to go home to is a nightmare.

There’s something else going on this morning, though. The way he held me all night as we slept. The circles his fingers drew on my body as he cooed me to sleep.

The way he held my face and gazed into my soul as my last orgasm peaked. “That’s it, baby, come. Feel me filling and owning every inch of you.”

“Maddox,” I’d gasped.

“No one but us, Kyra.”

“No one,” I’d cried as my body convulsed and he’d thrust into me so hard it drove us up the bed. His hand palming the wall and our mouths grinning at one another.

“I got you.” He smirked.

“I know you do.” I’d wrapped my arms around his neck, feeling for the first time in my life like I was somewhere safe. Where I belonged.

With my kidnapper.

He turns, now clothed, and glares at me. Does he not realize how huge he is? His body might be divine, ripped with muscles and a scattering of sexy tattoos, but he's very intimidating. Especially when his anger is directed right at me.

"If you love my father, then Kyra Fox, that makes you a cheating whore!" Maddox stalks to the door, then he turns.

I blink at his nasty words.

Is he hurt?

This man is so confusing.

His father obviously hurt him as a child, and from what I know of Pierce Sterling, I'm not surprised. I wish Maddox would talk to me. Not that there's anything I could do, but he has to realize that kidnapping someone is a felony, and this isn't going to end well for him.

Sooner or later, someone will find me.

As weird as this sounds, and perhaps it's some reaction to the sex hormones racing through my body, but I don't want to see him locked up.

Or I'm projecting.

Clearly, freedom is something I crave.

I need to go home. To face my future and marry Pierce.

"You have to let me go." I pull my knees up and drop my forehead on them.

When he doesn't reply, I glance up and catch the emotions in his eyes, just before he blinks them away.

Oh, my god.

It wasn't just me. Maddox felt something last night, too. More than just sex. More than just pleasure. A connection between the deeper parts of us that should never have come out to play.

But they did.

We fucked. We laughed. We cried out.

A bonding that I've never felt with anyone else.

In that millisecond before he blinked it away, I damn well saw it.

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“Maddox.” I reach out a hand, but he grunts, then pulls the door closed loudly.

I lean my head back against the headboard.

Goddamn it. I think I just made things a million times worse.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

MADDOX

Running through Central Park is not something I do often because I need to take personal security with me. Usually, I just work out at my gym.

The loss of freedom is one downside to being a billionaire. Ironical, given I’m now a kidnapper. My size, youth, and power protect me for the most part, but not from a shooter.

Apparently, having the skills and ability to make a ton of money is evil. Only after a certain amount, though. I could earn a million and they’d clap. Possibly ten million. After that? No, evil.

How fucking stupid.

The thing is most people want an endless supply of money but can’t admit it to themselves or to anyone else. Or have bought into some insane belief that money is

evil.

No, people are evil.

Money is just paper, plastic, or digital. An inanimate object. It doesn't have a point of view or agenda.

We do.

Humans.

Anyway, I'm in a fucking bad mood after the way I ran out on Kyra. So I hit the pavement without any security so I can think. I need to be alone.

If someone tries to jump me, I'd likely beat them to a fucking pulp. God knows my fight club days taught me exactly what to do.

So, with my ear buds in, I set a steady pace and turn up the music. This is my version of meditation. Hard rock cranked up with the base throbbing through my head. Drowning out all the sounds of my inner voice and any others trying to break through.

After twenty minutes, I'm sweating and focused on the beating of my heart and the pounding of my feet.

My phone beeps and an alert comes through.

I stop dead.

I consume all news via podcasts, social media, and email. Except for one alert which pings me when there's something new.

My father.

I swipe my phone, and it sends me straight to a live feed of Pierce being interviewed.

“Fuck.” I step off the path, letting other joggers past and push my buds in harder, turning up the volume.

“Thank you for joining us in the studio this morning, Mr. Sterling.”

“You’re welcome.” His voice grates at my nerves.

It’s not like I haven’t seen photos of him in recent years but watching him live has a different effect on me. My teeth grind and I want to jog over to the studio and run a knife across his neck.

Then watch him bleed out.

He deserves a much slower and more painful death, though. One day...

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“Tell us how you are feeling. Your fiancé is missing, and it’s been a number of days now.”

Are you in love with my father?

Yes.

Calling Kyra, who I was balls deep in last night for hours, his fiancé cuts at me in a way I don’t expect. Perhaps it’s me who is lying. The way her body fits with mine, how I tucked her under my arm and caressed her to sleep.

I don’t do that shit.

I fuck. I leave. I never think about them again.

But with Kyra...shit...I could have kissed her for a hundred hours, just gazing into those pretty eyes. Melting when her little mewls escaped.

The way her toes pressed against my legs, and she nuzzled into me.

Me. The man who had her drugged and taken.

I’m a fucking idiot for turning the tables on myself. If I was a child, Pierce would tell me how useless I am and that I couldn’t do anything right. Then force his cock down my throat. Or press his thumb inside my rectum.

I can’t explain why, but that act was far worse than having my father perform fellatio

on me.

I told Parker once—the need to tell someone overwhelming me one night—and he said he felt the same. It was the unwelcome invasion, he thought.

None of it should've fucking happened.

It's the stark reminder that these evil men deserve the suffering that's coming to them.

"It's been a hard week. We want Kyra to come home." Pierce says as I swallow back the bile in my throat.

"Where do you think she is?" the interviewer asks.

"We don't know yet, but we do know she left without her meds. It appears she may've stopped taking them for at least a week," Pierce says as I frown.

Meds?

Does he mean her asthma puffer? Because I gave it to her. I had no information that she was on medication. What the fuck is he up to?

I should be enjoying his humiliation, but I should have known he would only face the media if he had a card to play.

"What type of medication are you referring to?"

"Well," Pierce starts, and a chill goes down my spine. "Kyra needed support, like many do, so I don't think there's any shame in sharing that she has mental health issues."

That cunt.

“Not at all.” She nods and gives a pitiful glance at the cameras.

“With the excitement of our upcoming nuptials we think she stopped taking them.”
Pierce leans one arm on the table, smiling. “I know she’s spent a lot of time planning and getting a special dress. It’s a lot.”

“Yes.” The interviewer nods but this time I see the doubt in her eyes. Not about the medication, but the excitement in marrying my father.

Surely no one in America thinks Kyra is in love with him, do they?

“Do we think she is in any danger?” she asks my father.

“No. I’m confident Kyra will be home in another day or two.” Pierce says and then he turns his face slowly to look into the camera.

At me.

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Decades old fear that has no place in my life slices through every cell in my body. I shake with fury, leaning my palm on the trunk of the tree I'm standing beside and stare back at him.

I want to kill him.

“Kyra, baby, if you're listening—or the person you're staying with hears this—it's time to come home. You belong with me.”

Fucking hell.

He knows.

He knows I took her. I know it with every part of my being. But that's not the only realization that hits me like a ten-ton truck.

I'm not giving her back.

Kyra belongs to me.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

KYRA

Maddox opens the door, walking in with a tray and placing it on the cabinet without

looking at me. He's been gone for hours and never brought me breakfast after storming out.

I've had a shower and put on jeans and a sweater. My hair is pulled up on a messy bun on the top of my head and I have a simple gloss on my lips.

My body still aches in places from his touch, and yet this man won't look at me.

He also won't free me.

At least he's feeding me. I was getting worried.

While having sex with him was beyond incredible, I have to remember he's dangerous. My instinct says he's not, but I don't trust my own mind right now.

I think I might be the crazy one catching feelings for him. It was probably all imagined and just lust. After all, I'm hardly the most experienced woman.

The aromas from the meal waft around the room, making my mouth water.

"Thank you," I say quietly, because I don't want to starve. If he's going to kill me, I'd rather he shoot me or something just as quick.

Maddox wears a pair of black sweatpants and a short-sleeved black T-shirt. It's the first time I've seen him look casual. If you exclude being naked.

And what a piece of art he is. All ripped and tattooed like some bad boy in a movie. His beautiful silver eyes and heavy frame are intoxicating.

I want him to take me in his arms, kiss me, and whisper sweet and sexy things to me for just one more night. My fingers ache to reach out to him, but I tuck them under

my thighs.

“Tonight, we’re going out,” he announces.

What?

That’s the last thing I was expecting him to say. Going out? Like I’m his girlfriend. This man is so confusing. It’s like he forgets that he’s kidnapped me.

I’m torn between categorizing him as a serial killer and imaging being the woman who walks beside Maddox Sterling as the one he desires.

Stop.

“I need to go home,” I reply. “Maddox. You have to at least call my mom.”

His jaw clenches.

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“I will be back in three hours. Be dressed and ready.”

“Where are we going?” I sigh.

“To the Alliance Club,” he replies as his silver eyes roam my face and body like he’s checking to see I’m okay.

I’m not okay.

I’ve heard of the Alliance Club. It is a very exclusive bar with rumors circulating about what takes place inside.

“Wear the black dress,” Maddox says.

“Okay,” I reply, suddenly wondering if this might be the chance I get to break free. To slip a note to a bartender or have someone recognize me.

It’s certainly a better chance than staying here.

“Do you take medication?” Maddox suddenly asks, his brows slightly dipped.

His question surprises me.

“No. Wait. Yes. My asthma puffer that you gave me. Oh, and I was taking birth control, but only started a few weeks ago,” I confess, biting my lip.

I didn’t want to get pregnant by Pierce, so I had gone to a different doctor than our

usual family one and had three months prescribed.

“At least I know you weren’t planning on producing a little brother or sister for me.”
He hisses, then strides to the door.

Ouch.

“Three hours. Make sure you’re ready.” Maddox then slams the door.

MADDOX

So, the anti-depressants were a lie. I thought so. The fucking prick. With every minute that goes by, the angrier I get about Kyra marrying my father.

It’s not happening.

She belongs to me.

Not in the I kidnapped her, so she’s mine kind of way—although, yes, that too. I mean, she’s mine in every sense of the word.

Mine.

Fucking mine.

I’m not returning her to my father. I’m not walking away and spending my life imagining him sliding his cock inside the woman...I...want.

That I've claimed.

She can lie to me about being in love with him all she wants, but I don't believe her.

I can't.

I won't!

After the interview on the news podcast, my phone lit up like a fucking Christmas tree. We have a group chat that's years old, so Parker, Travis, and Killian appeared on the screen.

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“I’m in Central Park.” I grunted as I walked back to the penthouse.

“Where’s your bodyguard?” Killian asked.

“Waiting by the car. Get to the point. Yes, I saw Pierce on the podcast.”

“What’re you hoping to achieve?” Parker frowned. “He knows you have her.”

He’d picked up on that too, huh?

His comment did help to give me clarity and that I wasn’t overexaggerating inside my head. This is the power an abuser has over you. For life. Even as a grown man, I can admit that the small boy inside me, that didn’t have the brawn and power I have now, still yearns to have the ability to punch him in the face and say, “Do not touch me.”

You trust your parents.

You should be able to trust your fucking parents.

That breach of a fundamental right as a little, vulnerable child is forever etched into your psyche.

It makes you question everyone and everything.

These men, my brothers, keep me grounded and are the sounding board I need when the noises in my head talk over one another, and I can’t hear a safe thought.

As I do for them.

As we do for one another.

“Good,” I replied. “Then he knows I’m responsible for the shame and humiliation he’s already suffered. And I’m not finished.”

“Is all this worth it?” Travis asked, then held up his hand. “Let me ask the question in another way, because of course he deserves to suffer. But what about the girl? Does she?”

The girl.

“Her fucking name is Kyra, and she is well looked after.” I assured them. “I won’t let anyone hurt her.”

I saw their reaction before I could correct myself.

Travis begins to smile. “Boys, you all know my bank account number. A sweet million each, thank you.”

“The fuck? You bet on me fucking her?” I cried as I walked back to my penthouse.

“Yes, he did, and I thought you had better morals than that,” Parker groans, clearly now in debt by a clean mil.

That was stupid of him.

I’m no saint. I don’t even know if I have a heart. A soul perhaps, but not a heart. They all deserve to lose the seven figures if they’re betting on my goddamn morals.

“Jesus Christ, Maddox.” Killian shakes his head. “She’s engaged to your father.”

Was.

By the time I’m finished with her.

I’m not going to explain my messed-up mind when it comes to Kyra. All they need to know is that I am keeping her, and Pierce is not marrying her.

Well, they don’t even need to know that. Not yet.

Anyway, they’re hardly saints themselves, so I turned the conversation back on them.

“Don’t tell me you wouldn’t do the same.” I rolled my eyes.

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Every single one of my friends is rich beyond most people's imaginations and handsome as fuck. Women line up to spend a night on the end of their cocks. Every week.

Every night.

"Fine. But none of us have kidnapped a woman." Travis reminded me with a brow lift.

"Don't need to," Parker added.

Assholes.

They're winding me up.

"Fuck off. I didn't kidnap her to get my rocks off. You know why I'm doing this. I could destroy my father's company in forty-eight hours, but it won't have half the impact of embarrassing him in front of the nation. Look at him already lashing out with this bullshit about her mental health."

"Destroying his company would also shame him. Tell me you didn't do this because you wanted the girl." Parker tested me.

I went silent, not willing to go there. "Fuck off."

"It's okay if you did. But next time just ask a girl out for dinner, for god's sakes." Travis snorts.

I wasn't in the mood after seeing my father on screen. I need them to understand exactly who he is. I've shared what he did to me, not what I've suspected and confirmed since.

"Listen, Pierce runs a child sex ring. He's a goddamn snake, bringing executives into his lair and then blackmailing them with evidence of what they did when doped up."

"Jesus," Killian curses.

What he did to me as a child was disgusting enough. He would have friends over, and when Mom would crash out, he'd pull me out of bed and take me to the library where the men were drunk as hell.

Shaking, I'd wrap my arms around myself knowing I wasn't able to fight or stop them. I was too small. Too weak.

My pajama pants were always the first to go.

Pierce would tug them down and lead me over to the men while stroking my little cock.

I hated that my body reacted. That the noise of the men, the smell of the smoke and alcohol all blended into one terrifying scene. At least in my memory it did, as if not being able to play it back might erase it from reality.

But I do remember.

I remember enough.

I remember the feel of the wet mouths around my dick, the way my body trembled in fear. The way I felt sick and shamed as I came and the gleeful pleasure on their faces.

I think the aroused glossy eyes were the most revolting.

Knowing now that he's done it to hundreds of other young kids makes me sick to the stomach.

"How?" Parker asked, shocked.

"I don't know." I glance at the phone and push the button at the crossing.

I don't know how he's doing it. But I know it was taking place. I'd overheard a conversation I shouldn't have at the Alliance Club one night outside the back entrance. A man confessing that he'd gone to a private event and had very little recollection of what happened. Next minute, he'd been blackmailed and received an incriminating photo of himself.

I'd felt sorry for the poor guy and a bit guilty as I suspected he was talking to his lawyer.

Then the last piece of the mystery clicked into place when, I presume, he was asked if he did it.

"Yeah, but I'm not into fucking underage boys, so I had to have been drugged."

My hands clenched as the Sterling name was tossed out, and I knew. I vaguely knew who the man was and did some digging. Turns out he does know my father and that was enough proof to me that he's been abusing other children for years.

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That was three months ago, and I knew then I had to take action. Revenge has been at the forefront of my mind all my life, and I'd been waiting for the right opportunity.

Once I knew he was hurting other children—likely hundreds over the years—I couldn't wait any longer.

Having him killed was one option. One I strongly considered.

Then when he announced his engagement to Kyra Fox, it was as if life had handed me the opportunity on a silver platter.

No, I didn't do this to fuck her.

I did this to fuck with him.

"I'm going to bring her to the club tonight." I suddenly told them.

"Seriously?" Parker asked.

"At least we'll get proof of life." Travis snickered. "Also, you know her face is all over every social channel, right?"

I smiled.

"Yes, I'm counting on it."

"I'll message Zayne," Killian said. "He won't want to miss this."

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

PIERCE

I know who has possession of my fiancé.

At least, I'm almost certain.

Maddox. My son.

What he thinks he's going to do with Kyra and how they met are not clear, but the more I thought about it, the more I realized it was extremely possible he's responsible for this.

Aside from a ransom, nobody would want her, and there's been no demand.

What has been achieved is my humiliation. Of course, there are a lot of people who will be enjoying this, but I can't think of anyone with the balls to do it.

Except perhaps my son.

Not that I know him as a grown man, but I saw the signs in those last few weeks. It's why I sent him off to boarding school.

He was still young the night I'd told him to come to the library where my friends and I sat drinking. I'd seen the fire in Maddox's eyes as his defiance grew, but I thought I had a little more time.

I should've known better.

After all, he has my DNA.

He entered the room looking pale but angry. His fear had long since been replaced with anger, and the innocence dead and gone. Just as mine had. Maddox had glanced around at my guests and then looked me right in the eye and said, “They can fuck me, but not you. Your cock is too small.”

Three of my guests had burst out laughing while I’d raged silently before saying, “You aren’t here to entertain us with your words, boy. Pull your pants down and bend over.”

A slap across his face sorted him out.

But it was the last night

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Two weeks later, after arguing with my wife, Maddox was sent away to school. She knew what had gone on over the years. Not completely, but she had enough of an idea and knew not to mention it.

Until the first night, we were alone.

“You are a monster. I should never have let you touch our son. You’re disgusting.”

“I know,” I’d replied and walked out of the room, leaving her to her bottle of gin.

I think that’s why he never came home again. No holidays. Not even when he graduated and fought for his mother’s inheritance.

I planned to take him under my wing, tell him that what had happened in the past should stay there. That I would teach him to be a powerful businessman.

Maddox proved me wrong.

He did it all on his own.

But I’ve been waiting for him. For his wrath. For his demands that I apologize or repent my sins. If that’s why he’s taken Kyra, he will be waiting a lifetime.

Or mine at least.

My message on the show was clear—return her. What else does he plan to do? Kill her? Christ, that mouse of a girl must be terrified. Not my concern, as long as she is at

the church the day we are to marry.

“The narrative is shifting,” Terrance says, walking into my office. “The interview was good.”

I nod.

“It’s probably too early to tell, but I think most people are starting to believe Kyra Fox has a mental health condition and was having premarital jitters.”

“It’s been six hours.”

“That’s about one hundred years in the social media landscape these days.”

I grunt.

“Well, good.” I push out my chair. “I’m heading home for the weekend. Call me if anything changes.”

I need to prepare to send my son a stronger message beyond today's if Kyra isn't returned. I know where he lives and have a few cops in my back pocket.

It doesn't serve me to see my son locked up, but if I have to, I will.

Maddox might not think I've kept tabs on him, but he's wrong. He's underestimated me and embarrassed me twice.

He won't do it again.

Surely, he doesn't think I love the girl. After my wife died, I knew I didn't want to marry again. I enjoyed the freedom to be the depraved man I am. Now, I'm older. I

need a woman to attend events and play the role of my wife.

Yes, it would've been better to choose a more age-appropriate woman, but I wasn't worried about gossip until this fucking situation occurred. I was focused on choosing someone compliant.

Kyra is perfect.

Once returned, I will marry her, and she will take her place in my household and spread her legs so I can fuck her whenever I please. It's going to be even more pleasurable knowing my son failed to destroy me.

If he's fucked her, then even better.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

KYRA

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I turn as the door opens and Maddox's eyes immediately drop from mine and slide down my body lazily.

The hairs on my arms lift and I fail to suppress a shiver.

Not just because of the way he's fucking me with his eyes, but I'm almost doing the same.

Tonight, he's wearing a pair of black pants with polished black shoes, a black shirt with the top buttons open showing his mouth watering tattoos, and the sleeves rolled up. A large gold watch hangs from his wrist.

I swallow back my lust, reminding myself that this dangerous and commanding man held me in his arms last night. And that he's taken my freedom.

It's almost ironic that I was craving freedom before he took me, and now it's all I want.

I had more than I realized.

Compared to now.

Tonight, I have a chance to raise an alarm, escape, or take advantage of any situation that may arise. Not that I have a choice, but I am going along willingly.

Being the woman on his arm is also not a hardship.

Although it would be nice if I wasn't his little prisoner, as he annoyingly calls me.

I bite my lip, knowing that in a few hours I may be free and that I will never see this dark, handsome man again. The connection I imagined between us must've been just that. Imagination.

I could never love a man like him.

It's insane to even consider it.

"Ready?" Maddox rasps, stepping back.

"Yes." I glance around, looking for a purse and phone I don't possess, then slide my hand down the silk of the black cocktail dress and cross the room.

Then quickly run back and grab my puffer.

As I pass Maddox, I feel his eyes and warm breath on my shoulder. Then he follows closely until we reach the elevator.

His hand lands on the small of my back.

"You look stunning." He leans into my hair, which I styled straight and have pulled it over one shoulder. His fingers brush over it, tucking it farther over my ear.

"Thank you," I whisper and swallow.

When the door opens, he puts his hand out to stop it closing and stills me with his body.

"You will say nothing to anybody. Just be a good girl and do what I say."

My lips stretch into a frown. “Fine. But isn’t my family looking for me?”

Maddox moves and nods for me to step into the elevator. He follows and pushes the button, then turns to me and smiles. “Yes.”

My eyes widen.

What is he up to?

If there is a chance I might get caught up in his game and get hurt, then maybe I need to be more focused on staying alive than running away.

I don’t understand any of this.

I’m simply his pawn, powerless to do anything.

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His hand brushes against mine and I gasp, but he simply takes my puffer, and I glance down as he drops it into a pocket.

“Tell me if you need it.”

“Maddox, please.” Panic rising within me.

Is this another way to control me?

He takes my chin. “You have no pockets. You will not leave my side. If you need it, simply tell me.”

He’s right.

The doors open and there are two men in suits standing by a black SUV waiting for us. I step out into the low-lit garage and climb into the vehicle. Maddox follows, the doors close, and then we are on our way.

This is the first time I’ve been out of the penthouse for days. I feel almost normal as I watch the city lights pass. People walking, cars beeping, and cabs flying past.

Then I’m pulled back to the present when a large hand lands on my thigh. My eyes dart to Maddox’s hand and then at the driver. He’s paying us no notice, which is good because now the silk of my skirt is tugged up.

“Spread your legs,” Maddox orders me.

“Here?” I squeak in a quiet voice.

“Now,” he rasps.

My thighs part as if he has some magical remote control over them, and his hand snakes between them. My traitorous core burns excitedly.

Oh, my god.

My heart thuds inside my chest when he tugs my panties aside then rubs my clit like he did last night, sending threads of delicious electrical beams through my body.

We cannot do this here.

He’s crazy.

“Maddox.” I place my hand over his.

He grabs my chin with his other hand and turns my face. “Don’t. I want your juices on my lips before we arrive.”

Holy fuck.

A rocket of arousal takes off and I groan as his finger thrusts inside me. I arch, leaning my head back against the seat, pressing my eyes closed as he growls.

“Christ, Kyra.”

God, it feels good.

Now I don’t want him to stop. But he does, way too soon.

My eyes flick open in time to see Maddox sucking his fingers. He wipes them across his lips and then tugs me closer. Then his dark eyes lock with mine as he presses his mouth to mine.

“Taste yourself, Kyra. Taste yourself on me. Know that you belong to me,” Maddox rasps.

Before I can stop myself, my tongue snakes out and a tart but slightly sweet taste hits my senses.

“Fuck, yes.” He growls, then slides his fingers inside me again. “Behave tonight and I will give you my cock again. I’ll fuck this pussy and make you scream with pleasure.”

It’s almost enough to make me want to stay with him.

Almost.

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“Would you like that, little prisoner?”

“Yes.”

Say no, damn you. This man has kidnapped you—he’s not your boyfriend or date. Gah.

“Good girl.” His fat fingers slide in and out a few more times as those silver, smoky eyes roam my face with almost an amused glint within them.

“Ohhhh god.”

“Don’t come,” Maddox warns me, and my questioning gaze meets his. “I want you wet and craving me all night.”

Is he kidding?

That’s torture. I’m wet and in need of release. He can’t leave me in this state. This is just another type of control. I’m starting to see a trend.

“No. I can’t go in there like this.” I panic and tighten my pussy around his fingers.

“Such a naughty little cunt. Behave.” He lets out a dry laugh and pulls out, smacking my clit.

Holy hell. My nerves leap as my juices soak my tiny silk panties.

“Maddox,” I hiss.

But he’s already pulling my skirt back down, and before I can argue any further, we arrive at our destination.

The Alliance Club.

The door opens, Maddox climbs out, then holds out a hand. I take it, glance around, and let him lead me toward the door.

I already knew that it was located at the golf course owned by Travis Warner, the billionaire. More proof that Maddox is as wealthy as I suspect.

His two bodyguards shadow us as we enter the lobby and head down a dark hallway to the exclusive club.

“Good evening, Mr. Sterling.” The doorman nods and opens a solid black door, exposing a world I could never have prepared for.

My mouth drops open, and I tighten my grip on Maddox’s hand because he stops and glances down at me.

“Kyra. I won’t leave your side,” he rumbles. “No one will touch you or fucking look at you. Do you understand?”

I nod, grateful as I swallow.

He’s brought me to a sex club. My pussy is throbbing with unfulfilled need and seductive music pulses around us.

That’s just the start, I realize as he leads us farther inside.

It's not seedy as one would expect a sex club to be, likely due to the obvious luxury and wealth emanating from every inch of the establishment.

The members pay no attention to us and that's likely nothing to do with us, and everything to do with how...busy they are.

My eyes roam over three people to my left. The man has his cock in his hand, stroking it, while the woman kisses another man. I'm confused at first, but the closer we get, I notice her top has been tugged down to expose her breasts, and there is a girl on her knees below her licking her out.

Jesus.

We keep walking and I see a man sitting on his own. But he's not. A second later, a head pops up and then down again over his lap.

My body buzzes inappropriately, turned on by all of it.

"Like what you see?" Maddox asks, releasing my hand and sliding it over my behind.

I shiver.

“I’ll take that as a yes.” He laughs roughly. “Through here.”

Another man nods and lifts a rope, giving us entry to a private section where a large circular sofa is set back in the room. There are multiple low tables in front of it and the wall is open in front so we can see into the main room.

“About time.” A tall, dark-haired man with a cheeky smile approaches as our bodyguards find positions around the edge of the room.

“I didn’t know there was a time.” Maddox grouches.

“Travis Warner.” He ignores him and reaches out a hand to me.

“Kyra Fox,” I reply, shaking it. Kidnappee, I leave off.

Does he know?

“I’m glad he got you out of the house.” Travis shakes his head at Maddox. “What would you like to drink?”

“Macallan for me and a vodka for Kyra.” Maddox answers for me.

“Wait, you know?” I gasp.

Another man steps up. “That he kidnapped you? Yes.”

“This is Parker.” Maddox grunts. “And I told you all not to talk about this tonight.”

Parker, who is gorgeous and an inch taller than Maddox but a little less bulky, lets out a roar of a laugh. Then shakes my hand. “Parker Stone.”

My eyes dart around, confused, as I’m led over to the sofa and Travis orders our drinks.

“Zayne. Killian.” Maddox points to the other two men sitting with three gorgeous women.

“Nice to meet you.” Zayne nods as I take in the snake tattoo around his neck. Like Maddox, his shirt is unbuttoned, but much farther so I can see his muscular abs.

One of the women smirks at me and runs her hand over it. Then licks her lips.

I dart my eyes away as Killian smirks at me. “Enjoying yourself, Kyra?”

He has longish dark hair, which is up in a bun, and wears a white shirt and two gold chains around his neck. His skin is darkly tanned, and he looks like he could be in the Caribbean rather than in a NYC club.

A sex club, I remind myself.

I’m guided around one of the tables where Maddox sits and pulls me down hard against him. I feel his arm lift and lie along the back of the sofa behind me.

Our drinks arrive.

“How did you know I drink vodka?”

“You’re a girl. All girls drink vodka.” He mutters against the rim of his glass.

“He’s very sexist. You’ll get used to him,” Travis says, sitting on one of the tables grinning at me like I’m some dancing monkey.

I glance at Maddox, then back at Travis. I don’t know what they think is going on here, but I’m making my position clear.

“Oh, I’m not staying around long.”

“And this is how I make my money back.” Parker smiles, dropping down on a seat near us.

“Keep betting on me and you’ll end up living in the Bronx, Stone.” Maddox takes another sip.

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“There’s another bet?” Killian leans forward.

“Hey!” The girl who was trying to undo his zipper complains.

“On your knees, baby.” He pushes her to the floor.

Now I know why these little tables are spaced apart.

Wow.

Does Maddox think I’m going to fuck him in front of everyone? Is that why he brought me here? Yes, my core is throbbing and wet, but I have morals. I’m not some random girl looking for a billionaire. With my trust fund, I’m a multi-millionaire in my own right.

I’m talking eight figures.

I wriggle uncomfortably as the girl pulls Killian’s cock out and wraps her mouth around it.

“Tell me later.” He leans back and grabs her hair.

I find Travis smiling at me when I finally look away.

“She likes to watch,” he says to Maddox.

“Nice.” Parker sips his drink, nodding as if this was very interesting information.

“She also likes being watched.” Maddox informs them and my patience dissolves.

“I’m sitting right here!” I snap. “And I do not like either of those things. This is not the kind of place I normally come.”

I drop my glass onto the table and glare at them all.

“Everyone comes sooner or later here.” Travis winks.

Gah!

“How can you just sit there knowing he has kidnapped me?” I demand of them.

Parker sips his drink, watching me as if I’m just a show on TV. Travis tilts his head, and I hate that I find him a little bit adorable. His dimples are almost permanent, but I can see there’s a darkness to him.

All of them have it. A hard edge that is impenetrable.

“I can see why you’re keeping her.” Travis’s smile breaks open and stretches across his face, but then just as fast turns serious as he faces Maddox. “You need to fix this and look after her.”

“Fuck you. I’m looking after Kyra just fine.” Maddox snaps.

Keeping me? Wait a damn minute.

“Except for keeping me locked up.” I cross my arms as I mumble. “And he isn’t keeping me.”

My eyes slide across his thick strong thighs which are spread wide, taking up all the

space, and up over his black-clad body. Around us, the music heats up and the girls drag some of the guys up to dance.

“If you think I’m going to do what they’re doing, you are mistaken.” I tell him.

His arm drops behind me and presses into the small of my back, pushing me up against him.

“You’re hardly in any position to be making the rules, little prisoner.” Maddox rasps, then grabs my jaw with his other hand. “Especially given I know how wet you were when you entered. I saw how turned on you were watching that threesome.”

Ugh.

I hate that he is right.

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“If I want your mouth around my cock, you will do it.”

“No, I won’t.”

His hand drops and slides between my legs. I try to move, but he holds me still. We both know I want him to touch me. With little effort he loops his finger around my panties and tugs them a few times before they drop to the floor.

I gasp and then do it a second time as his fingers slide inside me.

“Soaking wet for me.” His head tilts, and his silver eyes filled with arousal roam my face.

“This isn’t right,” I say pathetically. Not even I’m buying my halfhearted resistance.

“Tell me, little prisoner, have you thought about my cock all day today?”

Yes.

Damn you.

“Have you worked out that I can please you far more than my monster of a father ever could?” He curls his fingers, and I grip his arm.

Holy hell.

“Did you touch your naughty pussy today?”

No, because I was mad at him for walking out. For taking me in the first place. For making me want him as much as I do. Craving more of his touch.

His thumb presses on my clit and I hear myself begging.

“Climb on my lap.”

“No. I’m not fucking you here.” I panic.

“Okay.” His fingers slide out of my pussy, leaving me empty and needy.

“Maddox.” I grip his shirt.

“Make up your mind, little prisoner.” He lifts a dark brow and glances away. When I see him watching the girls dancing, a strange and unwelcome feeling ripples through me.

One I’ve never felt before.

Envy.

I’ve dated few men. Always knowing I was going to be partnered with a man my family chose. Still, I could have fallen for one of them, I suppose, but I never did. I liked a few of them. But I never felt jealous.

I never cared if they spoke to other girls or never called.

Right now, I feel a powerful urge to hurt the woman writhing away to the music. To pull her hair out and tell her she can’t have him.

She glances his way and flicks her hair.

Fuck her.

I climb on Maddox's lap, blocking his view, and slam my mouth down on his. His hands grip my hips as he takes our kiss deeper, and it occurs to me that this is our first kiss.

Yes, we kissed while fucking the other night, but this feels different. Our tongues wind around one other's hungrily as the same connection I felt last night rises once more.

He likes that I want him like this.

He likes my jealousy.

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I like that he likes it.

God, we are both so messed up.

Maddox releases my lips and slides his hand through my hair. “About fucking time, Kyra.”

CHAPTER NINETEEN

MADDOX

In two seconds flat, I could have my zipper down, cock out, and slam inside Kyra. But I know she would hate me for it.

More so than kidnapping her.

She’s so fucking turned on by this place, it’s messing with her mind. She wants me touching her and yet feels ashamed.

In time, she’ll get over it.

Then again, the thought of fucking her and others seeing her pussy doesn’t sit well with me. Which is the polar opposite of last weekend. I had a girl spread out on the table ten feet from where I am sitting now and was licking champagne from her clit.

Kyra is different.

Why?

Because she is engaged to Pierce?

I don't know why I feel the way I do about this woman, but I keep my hand in her hair and leave my cock where it is.

"Let's dance." I say and stand, lifting Kyra with me.

She wraps her legs around me and I smirk, carrying her out of our usual restricted private area onto the dance floor.

"I don't want to dance. I want you to fuck me." She pouts.

"No, you don't." I drop her to the floor, and she scrunches her face, glancing around.

A topless woman wearing a Chanel skirt sways to the fast beat as a man fondles her.

Kyra moans.

I pull her against me and kiss her again.

"Watching you get turned on is making me hard as fuck."

She presses her stomach against my cock and my lip twitches. "Then do something about it."

"Maybe you have Stockholm syndrome."

I want to hear that I'm wrong. That climbing on my lap and kissing me like I belonged to her was because she was jealous of that woman eye fucking me across the room. It damn well felt like it.

I want to hear that she craved me all day and was lying about being in love with my father. I don't know for sure, but I'm almost certain it's not true.

I regret my harsh words to her this morning. It's not like me to lose control and lash out. My emotions took over. After fucking her once? What is that?

What I do know is that there's no fucking way in hell I'm letting her go and standing back while Pierce marries her.

My chest swelled when she kissed me with such possession moments ago. I want more of that. I want Kyra to show me I'm not alone in how I feel.

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What this means for my plans, I don't know.

Tonight, people will see us together and it's going to drive a knife through Daddy Dearest's pride. Pierce Sterling's fiancé, dancing with his much younger billionaire son.

He's going to fucking hate it.

Meanwhile, Kyra and I can spend some time exploring these feelings. These cravings. I'm not a patient man, but every second I'm with this woman makes me feel things I never thought were possible.

"Maybe I do. Or you made me horny before stepping inside a sex club." Kyra scoffs.

I glower down at her beautiful face and kiss her once more before settling into a seductive, rhythmic dance. Her warm body fits perfectly against mine as I breathe in her rose and vanilla body wash.

One I bought for her.

We sway slowly despite the fast beats of the song, and Kyra rests her face on my chest.

I press her tighter against me, traveling my fingers down her back to rest on her hips. I'm mesmerized by this woman as the need to protect and own her floods every cell in my body.

Mine.

This wasn't the plan, goddamn it.

Her face lifts, and there's no ignoring the question in her blue globes.

"Ask, little prisoner."

"I want to know why?"

I let out a deep growl which the music masks.

"He is a dangerous man."

"So you were saving me?"

Not initially, but now...yes. Kyra deserves the truth and while I can't give her all of it, I will give her enough.

"No. To start, it was to destroy him." I brush my fingers along her cheek, and then around the back of her neck, pressing them in hard.

Possessively.

"And now?"

"Now I can't give you back to him," I tell her firmly. "You know that, right?"

Her eyes dip and she nods.

I force her face to mine. "Tell me you know why."

I can't hear it because of the music, but I see and feel her gasp.

"Maddox." She mouths.

A raw animalist need to slam her against the wall and demand she feel what I do takes over me. She must see something in my face because her hand lifts and she cups my cheek.

Fuck.

My eyes close, my body calms somewhat, and my desire changes. I want to know who this woman is. Not her body. Not her role as my captive.

Who is Kyra Fox, the woman in my arms?

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“Why have you never had a job?”

While researching Kyra, I found some interesting things which don't match the woman I'm discovering. She's had a limited education and no work experience. Generally speaking, you would assume a person like that was lacking intelligence or drive.

I clearly don't know her well, but I don't think that is the case.

She blinks up at me and those shutters are back over her eyes as her hands falls from my face. “I have a trust fund.”

“Bullshit. Tell me the truth.”

God, she's always lying to me. What is she covering up?

“I do.” She frowns.

“I know you have a fucking trust fund. But why did you not go to college?”

Her cheeks flush red and it even deepens the skin on her exposes décolletage.

The black silk dress I had chosen for her has simple straps and dips between her breasts. The skirt finishes just below her knees but has a split which I've taken advantage of already this evening.

“I wasn't given the option. My parents felt marrying the right man was the best path

for me.” Kyra says and stops dancing.

“You didn’t feel the same?” I ask.

“I did what my parents told me to do. I was a child.”

A compliant child.

I grip her chin angrily hating that she never fought for herself. “And did you have dreams? Passions. Who do you want to be Kyra?”

Her eyes lift to mine as she whispers, “Free.”

Fuck.

I LEAD KYRA off the dance floor and down a private hallway. Travis gave us all access to the private rooms that lay beyond our usual party area.

I’ve only ever used them to take urgent business phone calls. Taking a woman into one always felt too intimate. As if it gives the impression there is something more personal going on.

Well, there’s something going on right now.

Guilt for one.

Dominance for another. It’s threading its way through every cell in my body.

And a protective nature I never knew I had. Yes, I’d fight to protect my brothers, but

a woman? Never. Beyond just being a decent guy. I would never stand back and let a girl get hurt.

But knowing Kyra's parents restricted her education and never let her thrive when she's clearly a smart, vibrant, and incredible woman has me feeling a little murder-y.

Mine failed me in ways most children on the planet will never know—thank fuck—but that doesn't mean there aren't other forms of abuse.

I know wealthy families like this. They groom their daughters to marry men. But to my father? He's fucking old.

She's twenty-two goddamn years old. Even I'm too old for her at thirty-one.

Kyra has never been given the chance to become who she truly could be, and I'm furious.

Who do you want to be Kyra?

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Free.

Also furious with myself. I took the one thing she ever wanted. Her freedom. God knows she barely had any.

Marrying Pierce would destroy her.

I cannot let it happen.

How I fix this, as Travis so nicely put, I don't yet know. But I am. Somehow. My father is not getting his grubby, abusive hands on this beautiful woman.

I need to speak with her.

Right now.

“Where are we going?” Kyra asks as I push her into the small room with a bed and selection of sex toys, lube, and moody sounds playing.

I close the door and the loud music from the club disappears. Kyra glances around but doesn't move.

I take her hand and tug her inside farther.

Shit.

My body, already coiled and wanting to fuck Kyra, is electrified by the environment.

I was going to talk, not fuck her, but my cock hardens, and I wipe a hand over my mouth.

She places a hand on my pecs and starts undoing my buttons.

Stop her.

I don't.

I watch her tongue slide over her top lip as my shirt slides to the floor. This gorgeous little prisoner of mine is taking the lead. For now. And I like it.

Kicking off her shoes, she drops to her knees and pulls my cock out.

"Fuck, Kyra." I groan.

Her tongue sweeps out, licking the precum off the end of my cock, and I groan again. Then she takes all of me in her mouth and starts working me beautifully.

My hand grips her hair, not caring that I'm messing it up as I thrust forward.

"Suck me harder."

Her cheeks hollow and I force myself not to come, wanting this moment to last. If she becomes mine, I don't want her here again. This is not a place for my...

Don't say it.

My hand tightens around her hair, needing more of her, needing to be inside her. I'm not going to be happy until I'm balls deep.

Right fucking now.

Pulling out, I lift her up and then into my arms, crossing the room.

“Maddox!” Kyra cries in surprise as I drop her on the bed, towering over her.

“Take off the dress or I’m ripping it.” I growl.

I undo my pants properly, kick off my shoes, and toss everything aside as I watch Kyra remove her dress and bra. Her panties are already out in the club.

I glance at the display of toys and grab two silk ties and a wand, then stalk back over to her.

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“What are you doing?” her voice is small but rich with arousal.

“Taking complete control, Kyra. I know you want your freedom, but I am a possessive man.” I cup her breast, flicking the nipple, and then take her first arm and tie it to the bedpost.

She gasps.

“You might want your freedom, and perhaps one day I might grant you that, but your body knows it belongs to me.” I tie thesecond one and then walk to the end of the bed. “Spread your legs.”

Kyra lifts them and lets her thighs fall open.

My fucking god.

Glistening pink flesh greets me as I stand, stroking my wet cock. I turn the wand on and climb onto the bed.

“Have you played with toys before?” I ask, and she shakes her head.

Good.

I like being her first at this.

I press the wand on her clit and her hips fly off the bed, her arms tugging on the silk restraints.

“Easy, little prisoner.” I say, smiling down at her sexy naked body. Circling her flesh, I do it again, leaving it there to stimulate her sensitive nerves.

“Maddox,” she moans.

I stroke my cock, eager to enter her but equally needing this play time with her. Watching her mouth part, eyes close, and breasts wobble as she shakes with pleasure is enough for now.

Every time I’m with her like this, the chance my father could have her sexy body flickers in my mind.

Fury blends with desire.

Fuck I hate him with every cell of my being.

What if I do let Kyra go and she returns to him? Marries him? Fucks him? A raw and violent need to possess her overtakes me as she lets out a cry. The orgasm rips through her as I fall deeper into the abyss of this gorgeous, feminine creature.

I toss the toy and climb on top of her as a rumble escapes me.

“Mine,” I growl.

“I’m not,” she whispers as my tongue slides over her neck.

She’s wrong.

“Maddox,” she whispers as I line my cock up at her entrance and lift my face to gaze down into her beautiful blue eyes. “Will you ever let me go?”

No.

“I don’t think I can, sweetheart.”

I thrust inside her, balls deep, claiming all of her. I know I’m hurting her, but I can’t stop. I need her to feel me. All of me.

My heart.

My soul.

My pain.

“Please,” Kyra begs.

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If she's begging me for her freedom, I won't give it to her. I will never let another man touch her.

She belongs to me.

If she is begging me to be gentle and soft, then she has the wrong man. I'm broken in all parts and feeling her pussy wrapped around me, clenching eagerly for pleasure, is the only time I feel whole.

Kyra is my nirvana.

The one I sought all my life.

When I'm inside her, nothing and no one but her exist. There is pleasure and peace.

I will not give her back.

Or grant her freedom.

Which makes me an even worse monster than my father.

CHAPTER TWENTY

KYRA

Maddox lifts my hips and slams into me harder, spilling his seed as he screams into the air. Gripping the back of my neck, the intensity with which he stares into my soul is almost terrifying.

If it wasn't for the orgasm ripping through me, I might be frightened, but on some level, I know this man will never hurt me.

Keep me?

Will you ever let me go?

I don't think I can.

Maddox thinks he's going to keep me forever, but we both know that can't and won't happen. While I want to stay in his arms enjoying the most incredible passion of my life, I know I have to find a way out of this club.

Just thinking about never seeing him again has my chest tightening and eyes blinking back tears.

Reactions that he'll think are due to my pleasure.

In a way, I suppose they are.

But not in the way he thinks.

God, I had no idea it was possible to feel this way about someone. To desire them. To crave them. To feel like they are the other half of you that was always missing. Even on the dance floor, the way he held me, I felt like I belonged to him.

Not as his prisoner.

As a woman.

I'm likely romanticizing all of this. If Maddox truly cared about me, he'd let me go.

His response to my earlier life, my lack of education, and restrictions from my father took me by surprise. He looked angry on my behalf.

What would he be like to have someone on my side?

To be loved and cared for by a man I was also attracted to. A true love match.

I almost snort.

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Now I'm really dreaming.

Maddox likes fucking me. Our chemistry is off charts, but everyone knows that burns out as fast as it started. This isn't some fated meeting that will turn into love.

Not that I am expecting love from Pierce.

My stomach turns as Maddox places his mouth on mine. A commanding but gentle kiss. Can I really marry his father after this?

Do I have a choice?

Maddox presses up on his hands. "Did I hurt you?"

"A little," I admit.

He doesn't apologize, simply gently slides his cock out, unties the silk bands holding my arms and crosses the room. When he returns, it's with a warm cloth.

"Relax your muscles." Maddox cleans between my legs with a level of care that has me blushing. "Such a beautiful little cunt."

I rub my arms and keep watching him adore me.

One day he will marry. He will fall in love and some lucky woman will have this man's heart and soul. I know he's broken. He's been hurt. But the woman who wins his heart will have it for life. I know that with all that I am.

I've seen glimpses as he's lowered his walls, and it's left me gasping for air.

I could drown in his possession.

Maddox pulls me up to a sitting position and presses his lips to mine, sliding his tongue inside, and my body begins to tingle all over again.

I don't think I could ever have enough of him.

"You're divine. My cock already misses being inside you." He rumbles.

I glance down and see him hardening again already.

"Don't you ever feel satisfied?"

Like, I can talk.

"Not when it comes to you." His fingers slide through my pussy again, and as I moan, he glances at the side table and leans to open the drawer.

I turn and watch him pull out a black box.

"What is that?"

"Go use the bathroom and come back." He pats my bottom and when I don't move, he says more firmly, "Kyra. Go."

I blink, wondering if there is an escape, and then scramble off the bed, grabbing my dress. When I get inside the bathroom, there isn't a window in sight.

Goddamn it.

But I can't ignore the relief I also feel. Running from Maddox doesn't feel right. Even though I must.

I slide my dress back on and use the toilet, flush, wash my hands, and then return, feeling confused. I do have to leave him.

I was going to use the bathrooms as a potential escape route, but if they're all in the middle of the building, all hope is gone. I'm not exactly skilled or experienced in this type of thing. Perhaps I could ask one of the girls if I can use their phone when the men are busy?

Maddox has his pants and shoes on but is shirtless.

God, he's beautiful.

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All those tattoos and layers of muscle have my heart pounding, wanting to melt into him. I'm not sorry that he took me. I can't be. This time with him has been amazing.

If I can't find a way to leave, then I'll have to reason with him. Surely after what we've done together, he'll see reason.

Will you ever let me go?

I don't think I can.

"Come." Maddox reaches out his hand, and I notice a shiny black object inside the box just before he guides me to lie down.

"What is that?"

My dress falls around my waist as he lifts my legs apart.

"I'm a possessive man, Kyra. You belong to me. If my cock can't be inside you every minute of every day, then I'm going to make sure your pussy is full."

He slides the object inside me.

"Oh."

Holy hell, it feels nice. I'm still wet, raw, and it takes no time to become aroused again. Knowing it's to own me sexually sends explosions of fire through me.

“Tighten around it.” He rumbles. “That’s it. Good girl.”

Jesus. It isn’t as big as he is, but it’s still filling my pussy and, with his fingers caressing my flesh, I’m already trembling again.

“This part sits against your clit. You can stimulate yourself but remember the rules. You cannot come unless I give you permission.”

Okay, well, he might be out of luck here. I don’t think I can wear this all night without becoming so aroused I fall over the edge. Not if he’s going to run his fingers over my nipples or have me sit on his lap kissing my neck.

The fullness is foreign, but there’s something about being told it’s a replacement for his cock that makes me feel so dirty, so naughty, so sexual.

Things I have never felt.

“All night?” I ask, curious about what he plans to do.

“Every day and every night, little prisoner. I will get you some more and we can play with them, but if my cock is not in there, then your pussy will be filled with my toys.”

Oh my god. Every day and night? Is he insane?

“Why?”

“Because it now belongs to me.” He growls and leans in licking me, sucking, and lifting my hips off the bed so he can get better access.

Then his thumb presses near my rear hole and I jump as I let out a cry. Nerves fire off in multiple places that have never been touched by another person in my life.

Maddox lifts his head and a low rumble escapes.

“We’ll save that for another night, little prisoner. I am definitely fucking that hole one day.”

“No, you are not.” My eyes widen but he simply grins, then lifts me to my feet and runs a hand over my hair while those silver eyes roam my face.

The intensity has me leaning into him, but before I can fully, Maddox cups my pussy.

“Don’t forget who this belongs to. With every clench of your walls, you remind yourself.”

I swallow.

He leads me back out to the club and when we settle back onto the sofa and pick up our drinks. I wonder at my sanity as I feel his arm wrap around me and I nestle into him.

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I blame the sex hormones.

They make you crazy.

My eyes roam around the club looking for another escape, but a sudden and irrational sense of guilt hits me. I'm sitting here with this man's toy inside me, filled completely, and I'm trying to run away.

Because he kidnapped you. For the love of god.

I suck the straw between my lips and glance up at his beautiful, tortured face. His eyes dip to mine as he runs his fingers over my shoulder and then takes a sip of his whisky.

I feel a sense of contentment and shake my head, smiling.

“What is it, gorgeous?” Maddox asks, a hint of a smirk on his face as the constant throb of electricity hums between us.

Can he tell that I'm happy?

Is he as confused by that as I am?

And more to the point, is he as terrified as I am now that we've bonded on an unspoken level, wondering how it will end?

“Kyra Fox!” a voice booms from the doorway. “NYPD. Lift this rope now.”

My head flips around and I come face-to-face with my father and four police officers as Maddox's arm drops and grips me firmly around the waist.

Shit.

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

MADDOX

Fuck.

How the hell did the cops get in here?

Of course, I knew people would share photos on social media, but the security is like the fucking pentagon at the Alliance.

My eyes flick to Travis and he looks as fucked off as I am.

I thought it would hit social media first and we could then slip out the back. That was my fucking plan.

Jesus, I guess time got away from me.

I got sidetracked with Kyra's pussy and ended up fucking her in one of the private rooms for way too long.

Christ.

I'm not worried about being arrested. Half of these cops are poor as hell and will be

easy to pay off. My lawyer will take care of it in an hour. What I'm—

Kyra suddenly rips out of my hold and flies across to her father as I reach out to stop her.

No!

He wraps his arms around her and glares my way.

Mine.

“Kyra,” I command, calling the woman currently wearing a sex toy that I put inside her.

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“Maddox Sterling, you are under arrest,” one of the cops with blond hair says.

“For what?” Parker stands in his way.

“Parker,” I warn, not wanting any of them to be brought into this.

“No, fuck that. She was here on her own free will.” Parker props his hands on his hips.

At thirty-one, Parker is a well-known investor of businesses in the United States and a billionaire. His companies are listed in the Fortune 500, and he frequently donates to causes.

Likely for his own benefit.

“Mr. Stone, please stand down,” the cop says.

“Ask her,” he demands as Kyra finally lifts her head from her father’s chest.

I don’t like her being this far from me. And don’t fucking like that she won’t look at me.

“Kyra,” I repeat through gritted teeth.

“How dare you fucking come into my home and take my daughter?” Derek Fox growls as I study the hold he has on Kyra. There’s little affection. He’s simply keeping her from moving.

I remain silent.

I'm not saying a thing until my lawyer gets here.

"Calling Troy right now," Travis says from behind me, on it.

"Thank you," I say, not taking my eyes off Kyra.

She finally lifts her head and looks directly at me as my heart pounds. As it crumbles.

"Come here," I say in the darkest and roughest voice I have.

If she leaves with them, I know I'll never see her again. That is unacceptable. She belongs to me. Anger begins to bubble up with every second that passes, and she doesn't walk back across the room.

"Mr. Sterling, we are arresting you for kidnapping. I recommend you refrain from talking to the victim," the blond cop says, pulling out some handcuffs.

"I didn't kidnap anyone." I growl.

"Are you hurt? Did he hurt you?" her father asks, holding her at a distance.

He doesn't care. I can see it in his eyes. He's looking for something else to charge me with.

"How did you get in here?" Travis demands of the cops.

"Step back, sir." One of them holds up his hands and Travis rolls his eyes, shooting me a look. I shake my head back, telling him it's okay.

But it's not fucking okay.

I want her back.

My cock was just filling that woman, and she belongs to me. I felt it with my goddamn soul. I will burn the fucking planet to ashes to get her back if I need to.

What would be really fucking nice is if she was honest and admitted how she felt these past few hours and days and walked back over here.

“Kyra.” Her father presses her for an answer because we all know her testimony will be vital here.

“I...” Kyra starts and glances back at me, then at the cops.

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“Come here,” I repeat, calling on the dominant and submissive bond we’ve built.

“Hey! Fuck you, asshole.” The blond cop pushes past Parker and yanks me to my feet.

With great effort, I might add.

I’m a big man weighing at least two hundred and forty pounds.

“Be careful,” I say calmly, warning him, and he blinks for a second.

“Stop.” Kyra rips from her father and takes a few steps toward me.

That’s it baby, come back to me.

“Wait. He didn’t kidnap me,” Kyra announces, and I blink as everyone in the room stops.

“Oh, I thought it was the girl on the news,” the girl who sucked Killian off earlier says. “You said it was her,” she says to her friend.

“It is. I think.”

“Are we going to get in trouble for phoning the cops?”

Goddamn the stupid bimbos. They called the goddamn cops. I thought they’d go straight to TikTok.

Fucking hell.

“Please stop talking.” Killian moans, rubbing his face.

“We still need to take him in,” Blond Cop says to Kyra, “and you will need to make a statement. And explain your whereabouts.”

“Drop the cuffs,” I growl. “Or lose your job when my lawyer is done with you.”

“I’d listen to him.” Parker slides his hands into his pockets.

The cop glances at his partner and the guy nods. I’m obviously not the first billionaire he’s dealt with. In New York, money is power and there’s a different set of rules when you have as much as I do.

Sorry. Not sorry.

“You need to come down to the station.” Blond Cop tells me as I nod then look back at Kyra.

She’s trying to tell me a hundred different things with the look in her eyes. But I can only see one of the messages.

Goodbye.

“What the fuck do you mean, he didn’t kidnap you?” her father demands. “Where have you been all this time?”

She swallows, and I want to punch him in the face.

“Maybe she doesn’t want to marry a dirty old man. Ever fucking thing of that?” I

ground out with fury.

It's taking everything I have not to cross the room and use the gun under the seat to shoot every single fucker in this room.

Except my friends.

The girls can die, though. Little bitches.

"Can we talk about this at home?" Kyra shakes her head and pleads with her father.

Watching them together, I can see she fears him. How he's groomed her to do as he says. Much like mine did with me when I was younger.

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Abuse comes in different forms, and Kyra Fox has been controlled and taught she must obey her father.

Well fuck that, if anyone is going to control her, it's me.

I wish I could turn back time and not kidnap her. I wish I could have known how I'd feel about her and sweep her off her feet. Date her. Make her fucking fall in love with me.

Instead, I let my hatred for my father dominate everything.

"Come with me Kyra," I tell her, and she bites her bottom lip as tears fill her eyes.

"She isn't going anywhere with you, Sterling. Stay the fuck away from my daughter," Fox grinds out.

I will deal with him one day.

Not today.

Right now, I need her to know she can walk back over to me of her own free will.

"Kyra is a grown woman. She can decide for herself who she wants to go with."

"Maddox," she almost whispers, but I feel her slipping away from me.

No.

I can't lose her.

I don't care about my father. I don't care about revenge.

I cannot let her go.

I tug against the hold the blond cop has on me but it's too late. Kyra turns her back on me and ice fills my heart. From the tips of my toes to the tips of my ears I feel the cold pull me under.

She chose him.

I should've known she would.

Fox leads her around the corner and then out of my life forever.

I let out a roar, picking up my glass and smashing it across the room.

"Okay, big guy, let's go," the cop says.

"Out the back," Travis tells them. "You're not walking through my club with him."

"You should listen to him," Zayne warns.

TEN MINUTES LATER, I'm in the back of the cop car seething when my phone rings.

"Hello Maddox," my father's voice says. "Have you finished playing with my bride?"

The motherfucker.

I almost crush my phone, but I dig deep for the familiar control of my fury which I've long since learned to channel.

"No," I reply. "And you should know I've taken every inch of her innocence, so you may as well toss her away. You will never pleasure her."

He laughs. The same revolting dry laugh I heard every time my small ass was penetrated by one of his friends' cocks. Or as their come leaked from my mouth.

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Or I cried for my mother, wanting free of his abuse.

“Ahh my boy. You never understood, did you? It’s never been about anyone else’s pleasure. Only my own.”

Fucking cunt.

I hang up, as his continued laughter rings in my ear, and my jaw almost snaps with fury.

I was wrong. I still care about revenge, but now it’s time to end this.

Kyra walked away, but I will not accept this is over.

He didn’t kidnap me.

Kyra protected me. She could’ve tried to have me locked up for fucking life. Instead, she lied to the authorities.

Without proof and with her statement, I will be home in a few hours. Then, I need to work out my next steps.

Steps to get Kyra home, where she belongs.

In my arms.

I LEAVE THE police station two-and-a-half hours later, my lawyer beside me.

“This isn’t just going to go away,” Troy says. “It will leak into the press.”

No, it won’t. I have people who will clean that shit up.

And money.

“Make sure it doesn’t. That’s why I pay you over a thousand dollars a goddamn hour.” I grunt, searching for Mitch and my car.

Troy arrived just as I was being released.

I spot Mitch beside the vehicle and wave out.

“Fine. Keep away from Kyra Fox for now, at the very least. We need to let the heat cool. The media will be all over this now that you have been arrested. And that’s harder to control, even with all your money.”

Whatever. He just needs to do his part and keep the cops away.

I’m not staying away from Kyra. I just haven’t quite figured out the best approach. She may need time.

Then again, she has that toy inside her, reminding her who she belongs to.

That gives me hope.

“I will call you tomorrow,” I tell him, climbing into the back seat.

“You okay, boss?” Mitch asks.

“Tired and hungry.” I tell him, wondering if Mitch recognized Kyra from earlier tonight and what he thinks. Strangely, I care about what he thinks. Maybe it’s because of Denzel. “Just a misunderstanding. Ms. Fox is going to clear things up.”

“She’s a beautiful woman,” he says, and we pull out into traffic.

That she is.

I dig into my original research files on Kyra from my phone and find her phone number. Then send off a message.

You are mine, little P. Come home.

I might've become a monster, but I'm her monster.

This time she needs to come to me.

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

KYRA

I shower when I get upstairs to my room after finally listening to my parents rant and rave for hours. Dad dropped the caring parent act the moment we got in the car. But when Mom saw me, she was all over me like a nasty rash.

We haven't always been super close, but she's been an okay mom for the most part.

Still, I don't remember getting so many hugs from her.

She was worried, I get it.

But I can't tell them that I was kidnapped, as I have to stick to my story. The truth is it was a traumatizing experience. But it was also confusing.

My feelings for Maddox were changing by the minute before the cops turned up. I did take what they said to me seriously after giving my statement.

“If you change your mind and want to change it, you can. Stockholm syndrome can hit almost immediately. Survival makes us do and say many different things.”

Is that what it was?

“Mr. Sterling is a good-looking man, Ms. Fox,” a female officer said to me, smiling at me like I was pathetic. “And a powerful man. That’s quite the aphrodisiac.”

She has no idea.

“You would be excused for feeling like it was real.”

It was real.

Wasn’t it?

“So, if you have doubts or want to talk to us, you can. Here’s my card.”

Meanwhile, back home, Mom apologized a million times for forcing me to marry Pierce. My father slapped her in the end, leaving a bright red mark on her face.

“You are still marrying him.” He pointed at me.

“I know.” I nodded, then climbed the stairs, feeling like I’d been hit by a truck.

Depression.

I walked away from Maddox tonight. I couldn’t remain as his little prisoner, and I know he’ll never forgive me. His demands to go to him felt like a rope pulling on me. The anger in his eyes as I turned from him will forever be etched into my memory.

It feels weird to be home, standing in my own shower, using my own toiletries.

I know I wasn't gone long, but being with Maddox changed me in ways I am still figuring out. My body clenches around his toy still inside me and stupid tears prick at my eyes.

Come here.

The way he can command my body is something no man will ever be able to replace. In fact, I don't think I'll feel the way I do about him with anyone else.

Maddox's dark gaze as he filled me with his seed will be seared into my soul for eternity. Suddenly I burst into tears, dropping my face into my hands as the water runs over me.

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What a mess.

These feelings, real or not, are not going to vanish.

If I'm not inside you, then your pussy will be filled with my toys. Because it now belongs to me.

I reach between my legs and pull it out, staring at the black device. I rinse it and climb out of the shower, placing it on the bench.

My body aches from being with Maddox tonight and last night. We might've been ripped apart, but his come is still inside me. The taste of him is still on my tongue.

I dry off, pull on a white cotton nightie, and climb into bed, staring at the ceiling. There is no way I'm going to sleep tonight.

I focus on the emptiness within me and blink at the craving it creates. No. I can't. It's wrong.

And yet, I need it...

I run back into the bathroom and then climb back into bed. I close my eyes as I rub my clit and visualize Maddox between my legs. In seconds I'm wet, imaging his broad inked shoulders and silver eyes demanding my submission.

Then I slide the toy back inside me and moan happily.

Nestling the arched arm on my clit, I writhe against it, wishing I was in Maddox's bed, but happy to have the feeling of history inside me again.

I need the feel of him.

I need to know he's still here with me as his DNA still seeps from my body.

Until I can tear these feelings from my heart.

When I'm Pierce's wife, I will discard it. Until then, in my mind, I still belong to Maddox.

You belong to me.

As I'm drifting off to sleep, a ping from my phone sounds. I put it on charge when I first came upstairs. It's probably Penny. I will look at it in the morning.

Tonight, I'm going to dream of my sexy kidnapper.

WHEN I WAKE and finally look at the message on my phone, I burst into tears.

You are mine, little P. Come home.

Everything comes crashing down over me as I sob. Being kidnapped. Being thoroughly and perfectly fucked by Maddox. Going to the Alliance Club—a sex club. Watching him being surrounded by police and accused of kidnapping me...which, okay, fine, yes, he did.

And how I've fallen in love with him in some irrational way.

I don't know what is real and not.

Perhaps the officer was right, and I'm messed up.

But this room doesn't feel like home anymore.

Come home.

Maddox can't seriously think that prison cell was my home, can he? Do I? Would I return and let him lock me up, to feel him fuck me every day and night?

To take me to the Alliance Club and tease my pussy, making me wet and compliant to every one of his desires?

I let out a groan and desire stirs in me.

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A knock at the door startles me and I slide my phone under the pillow.

“Come in,” I call out.

When the door opens, I freeze.

“Hello sweetheart,” Pierce says and closes the door behind him.

No. Please. No.

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

MADDOX

“She is still fucking marrying him!” I yell, tossing my phone on the sofa the next night.

I know I shouldn’t be surprised. I kidnapped her. Took away her freedom. The only thing she has ever wanted.

Apparently.

Little does Kyra know that Pierce is going to take far more. He will take her freedom and her soul. Her pride and humanity.

I should know.

I want to destroy him, but with the heat on us all—me—the last thing I can do is send a hitman to his house. Trust me, I want to.

Am I capable of killing my own father?

Yes.

I was a week ago, and now, the thought of him touching Kyra has my finger hovering over a number I have committed to memory.

It has always been Plan B.

Now, after speaking to him on the phone, I want him gone. Completely.

I pace the floor of my penthouse and fight every instinct that tells me to drive the fuck over to the Fox mansion and steal her one more time.

She hasn't replied to my message.

I know she's read it. I'm a fucking tech security specialist and know how to monitor these things. Well, that and the two little ticks on the screen.

Fuck me.

I'm like a teenage goddamn girl.

Kyra has chosen not to reply, and I need to respect that.

No, I fucking don't.

I also need to stay away—so says my lawyer and the police. But fuck them. They don't understand that she belongs to me.

“It's her choice,” Parker says from my balcony and blows out the smoke from his cigar.

“Stop smoking those fucking things. They stink.” I growl, shooting him a look.

“I'm trying them out. I think they make me look distinguished.” He shrugs.

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They don't.

"They'll make you look dead if you get fucking lung cancer. But, whatever, kill yourself, I don't care."

Parker knows I don't mean it.

There are very few things I care about. My friends are right at the top. I would die for these men. As they would for me. We might not have the same surname, but we're brothers walking the same fucked-up path seeking revenge from those who damaged our souls.

"Jesus, you really like this girl, don't you?" Parker exclaims and blows out more fucking smoke.

Like? No. It's worse than that. I've claimed her.

Claimed her with every part of my being.

I stop pacing and face him, then look him in the eye. "She's mine, Parker."

"Fuck," he mutters and puts out the cigar, then props his hands on his hips. "So, how are we going to fix this?"

I just shake my head for a long moment, then glance out at the city lights.

"I have one more day until she walks down the aisle."

I'm still hoping she replies to my message. I'm still hoping she has my sex toy inside her pussy. I'm still hoping I can wrap myself around her and make her utterly and completely mine forever.

"Whatever you need. And I speak on behalf of all the guys," Parker says firmly. "You know that."

I nod.

I just need to make sure what I ask of them doesn't destroy them further.

"Side note...I found her," Parker says, snapping me out of my thoughts.

My brows lift in surprise. I know who he's talking about. I don't need to ask.

"Jesus, what have you done?"

"Nothing yet."

But he will. The unspoken words hanging heavily between us.

"She is innocent, Parker."

Jesus, have I been that distracted with Kyra that I stopped paying attention to my friends?

Yes.

I need to sort this out. Get my girl and make sure Parker doesn't do something crazy.

"Fuck you, Maddox. Like you can talk." He points the dead cigar at me and sneers.

“Unlike you, my father is dead. I don’t get the luxury of tormenting him. But I can torment her.”

He will too.

Fuck.

We need to call an intervention. And if he doesn’t like it, he started it the night he and Travis turned up at my place.

This is what we do now, apparently.

Or we could just hit some dark alley and revert to our fighting days. I wouldn’t mind throwing a few punches right now.

Source Creation Date: July 3, 2025, 4:33 am

Parker might look like some tattooed GQ model walking around with a big fat bank account, investing in businesses and turning them around. But deep down, the wounds fester. He's the kind of kid that pulled wings off flies and sat watching them suffer with a lick of joy.

Maybe even more.

All four of us know we must keep him in check.

I don't know who hid the second wife and stepdaughter when his father died and we left college, but they were smart.

Now, Parker's found her.

He's fantasized about what he'd do when drunk or angry, and there's no way any of us are going to let him follow through with his plans.

"Don't do anything before we talk." I say firmly.

His lips twitch into a smile.

"Parker, where is Aurora?" I growl, taking a step closer.

"Safe for now," he replies and walks to the edge of the balcony, placing both hands on the railing and looking out over Manhattan.

I bet she fucking isn't.

I'm in no position to argue with him right now. I kidnapped Kyra. But I had no intention of hurting her. Nor falling...

Fuck.

Am I in love with her?

"Marry her, Maddox." Parker turns. "I saw you two together last night. I saw the look in your eyes. The utter possessiveness and lust."

"Lust"—I shake my head—"doesn't keep a marriage together, Park."

He pushes away from the rail.

"It does for a man like you." He walks up to me and lays a hand on my shoulder. "She needs your dominance and to be owned. Even if she doesn't understand it yet."

Jesus. Is he right?

"You'll give her the freedom she wants while keeping her protected from those who will take advantage."

Like both our fathers.

"If he's fucked her, Parker, Jesus." I run a hand through my hair as his hand falls away.

"Kill him." I let out a long breath at his firm and final words, but he continues. "Stop fucking around. You know he needs to die. He will tear her apart and spit out what's left of her."

A roar builds inside me.

“Get it done so nobody can trace it back. You have enough money and power to protect yourself. If it needs to be ordered by one of us, just say the word.”

I stare at a framed picture on the wall, imagining a bullet flying through the air and hitting my father’s forehead.

Seeing him fall to the floor and him taking the last breath of life he’ll ever take.

Feeling the satisfaction that the pain can now end once and for all.

“Do it for all the young children he’s harmed. For all the men he’s framed. Hell, he probably has a few judges blackmailed. How many people do you think would be sad to see him dead?”

“None,” I reply darkly.

Including Kyra.

I think.

Her parents have groomed her to take a man who will further their business and, for all I know, taking that from her could be the worst thing I do. Psychological damage is not to be disregarded.

She needs your dominance and to be owned. Even if she doesn't understand it yet.

I hang on to Parker's words.

But her silence is deafening and not being in control is not something I am comfortable with.

"Remember the code." Parker says, and together we say, "Strength in silence: revenge is a patient man's game. We act in shadows, speak only truth, and never reveal our hand too soon."

"Thank you." I hold his stare for a long moment, then he nods, walks to the elevator, and disappears.

I RIP MY bath towel off and hang it on the rail, then stride into my bedroom. I'm wound up like a caged tiger.

I glare at my phone for the millionth time.

What if she doesn't have her phone? What if her father read the message and is keeping her from me?

"Fuck this." I cross the room and dial her number.

It rings.

And rings.

And...

"Hello," her soft voice answers and my eyes press closed.

"Kyra," I rasp roughly.

Neither of us say anything for a long moment.

"Tell me you're okay," I demand.

"Yes."

"Are you alone?"

"Yes. I was almost asleep," she replies, and I imagine her lying in bed curled up.

My mind flicks back to the headlines online about how Ms. Fox had returned home and would be walking down the aisle to marry Pierce Sterling as planned. The Fox PR team had concocted some cold feet story, coupled with her mental health condition, and Kyra apologized to law enforcement for wasting their time.

Clearly, her father had made a sizable donation to the city.

It was all complete bullshit.

“I want you to come home.” I rasp.

“It’s not my home. It was my prison,” she whispers.

“You belong here with me.” I hiss.

“I can’t.” I hear her whimper, and it infuriates me. I know she’s submissive, but for fuck's sake, how can she let them force her into marrying the asshole?

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I snap.

“Tell me Kyra, do you have the toy inside your pussy right now?”

Silence.

My lips curl at the edges as my brows dip. She does.

“The one which stays inside you until my cock replaces it?” I growl. “Is the bar on your clit teasing you as I did with my tongue?”

“Maddox, stop.”

“Are your nipples hard hearing my voice?” I grip my thickening cock. “Tell me, Kyra.”

“Yes.” Her voice barely audible.

“I’m stroking my cock, imagining that I’m thrusting inside you.”

She lets out a moan.

“Rubbing my thumb over your clit as you arch into it. Oh baby, if only you could see how much my cock is leaking right now.”

More moaning.

“Clench around the toy, baby.” I stroke harder, closing my eyes.

“Maddox.”

“Does my father make you hot like this?” I ground out angrily. “Do you want his mouth on your cunt, Kyra?”

I know she will hate me for this.

“Or do you want my tongue lathing you? The fat head of my cock sliding inside you as you press your small tits up, begging for me to suck them.”

“Stop.” She cries and I almost halter at the pain I hear in her voice.

“Do you want his come dripping from you, creating a child inside you that will be my sibling? Is that what you fucking want, Kyra?”

I hear her sobbing, but I can’t stop. I want this woman, and I need her to understand the implications of what she is about to do.

What she’s about to take from both of us.

“To be my stepmother instead of my lover?”

My wife.

Jesus. I’ve never thought of marriage. Of taking a wife. Of committing to a single soul beyond my brothers. Of loving anyone.

“Maddox, I can’t—”

“Marry Pierce, and you become my enemy.” I warn, strangling my cock with my hand. I might be still aroused but thick hate is flowing through my veins.

“Maddox, please.” Kyra begs.

I don’t speak, waiting for her to come to her senses.

I don’t mean it. She could never be my enemy. I’m just going out of my damn mind.

“I am confused,” she finally says. “You kidnapped me. Took me. That’s wrong. I don’t know...I shouldn’t have felt the way I did.”

Fuck that.

“How did you feel?” I demand.

“Scared.”

That’s not what she’s meaning. She’s lying all over again.

“What else?”

“Desire.” Her voice is small again.

“What else, Kyra? What fucking else?!”

“Pleasure and...I want to feel all of that again, but it’s not right. I can’t trust you.” She rushes out.

Despite my frustration, I know she’s right to feel all those things. She shouldn’t trust someone who would pay to have a man drug her and kidnap her, then lock her away from her world.

I would kill anyone who tried to do it to her again.

She needs your dominance and to be owned. Even if she doesn’t understand it yet.

“Your body needs mine, Kyra. Tell me I’m wrong.”

“No. You’re not wrong. God, I ache for you.”

Fucking Jesus. My cock hardens again, and I begin to stroke, fighting the urge to drive over and take her all over again.

“I can’t stand by and let another man own you, Kyra. Especially not the monster who destroyed my very soul. You can’t ask that of me.”

“You don’t understand. My father said Pierce will destroy him if I don’t. I have to do this.”

So, her father sucked some cock along the way too, did he? The truth hits me like a ton of bricks. Of course, this is why he’s letting his daughter marry Pierce. My father is blackmailing him.

I don’t say it out loud.

There’s no way I want Kyra to know what these fucked-up men do. What they did to me. She’s way too innocent. And while I hate her father, having those thoughts of him in her head would hurt her more than benefit me.

I stay silent.

I don’t think Kyra knows that she has freewill. Pierce has already taken everything from me. I won’t let him have Kyra. She might not choose me after this is over, but at least I know he won’t be lying beside her every night. Touching what is mine.

“Rub your pussy for me,” I rasp. “Do as you’re told, sweetheart.” I hear the sheets rustle and a moan escape again. “Good girl. Rub faster while I stroke my cock.”

I close my eyes and imagine my gun pointing at Pierce’s forehead. Stroke after stroke

I see him falling to the ground, begging for his life while I listen to Kyra's heightened breathing and little mewls.

"Oh god," she cries. "Maddox."

"That's it. Clench the toy, pretend it's my cock."

"Shit. Oh, shit." Her voice is trembling.

"Come now, Kyra." I command as my orgasm strikes and I curse, coming in my hand.

Goddamn, I want her in my arms, up against my chest, my mouth on hers.

She groans out her pleasure and I'm brought completely back to the moment, imagining her hand between her sweet legs.

"The next time I see you, I'll be licking that pussy clean," I say. "Goodnight, Kyra."

“Wai—” I hear as I hang up.

I have another call to make.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

KYRA

It’s been a couple of days since Maddox rang and we had phone sex. Then he just hung up. After demanding that I return home. The urge to do as I was told was as powerful as his seductive words.

Then he announced I was his enemy if I marry his father.

He doesn’t understand. I have no qualifications. No work experience. And a trust fund that could be cut off at the instruction of my father any minute. Plus, the warning from my father that Pierce has information that could destroy our family name.

How can I carry that guilt for life if he does?

Worse, Pierce gave me a much more terrifying warning of his own.

The night he knocked on my door will haunt me forever.

He ran a hand over my hair as an icy shiver ran through me. “How’s my bride?”

“Fine,” I replied, feeling vulnerable in my nightie and having just put Maddox’s toy back inside me.

Pierce smiled coldly as his hand drifted along my arm, then rested on my sheet-covered thigh.

“I’m happy to see you’re back home.” His fingers curled, dragging the sheets with them. I tugged it up to cover my breasts.

Pierce pulled harder, looking mad. “Let me see that you’re unharmed.”

“I’m not hurt. He didn’t hurt me.” I rushed out.

“No. He wouldn’t.” Next minute the covers were ripped away as I squeaked.

“Please.”

“Oh, I like begging.” Pierce ran a hand over my legs and nudged my thighs apart. “Keep going.”

“Please don’t,” I said, then closed my eyes, realizing I’d fallen right into that.

“Very nice.” His fingers pressed against my clit, and he stilled. “Well, well, well, what have we got here?”

With one swift movement, he pulled my nightie up and discovered the little arm of the toy resting inside my pussy.

He grinned.

“I’m shocked, Kyra. I had no idea you were a dirty little slut, but this is a welcome surprise.”

I tried to close my legs, my body shaking, but he held them open. Then ran a finger through my wet folds and pushed against the toy. I hated how it stimulated me.

Sucking on his finger after touching me, he said, “Fucking hell.”

I wanted to scream.

While his touch was making my body react, I wanted to tell him it wasn’t his to play with. ThatIwasn’t his.

“Tell me Kyra, did my son taste you?”

Blink.

He barked out a laugh. “I’ll take that as a yes.”

“I don’t want to get between you. Please. It’s none of my business,” I replied urgently.

Maybe if he knew I didn’t like his son, then he would stop this.

Unlikely.

All I knew was that this man was to be my husband, so I didn’t have the right to stop him.

Right?

Pierce’s fingers returned to my flesh as his eyes roamed up my body. “Unfortunately for you, Maddox has involved you. And now, things are going to have to be balanced out.”

I had no idea what he meant, but I was about to find out.

He yanked my legs, so I was lying down, and slammed his mouth down on my pussy. While I tried to get away, Pierce gripped my arms, holding them down while he bit and sucked at me.

When I wouldn’t be quiet, he shoved a pillow over my head and pushed down on it so

I could barely breathe then resumed helping himself to my sex.

All I could do was lie there, fighting for oxygen while my aroused pussy was licked. He tore the toy from me, and I feared that he would fuck me.

But he didn't.

Eventually, Pierce's fingers and tongue brought my body to an involuntary orgasm, and he stopped.

Ripping the pillow from me, he leaned over my body and wiped his mouth over his arm. "Christ, that was good. You are a very wet little girl. I will save the rest for our wedding night."

I sucked in all the air I could while my lungs burned, unable to respond.

He stopped at the door before opening it.

"Whatever he promised you, make sure you remember who holds the power here. You, your body, and your family belong to me. Oh, and if that toy belongs to Maddox, I want it destroyed."

When the door closed behind him, I sobbed and curled up into a ball. Clearly, I didn't obey. It's all I have left of Maddox, so in an act of rebellion and with a fuck you, I slid it back inside me the night he phoned.

Soon I will be Mrs. Sterling. Maddox's stepmother. Pierce's wife. And I'll have to endure a lifetime of nights like that with him.

Make sure you remember who holds the power here.

If I'd told Maddox what his father had done—raped me—he'd kill him. I know that for certain.

So, I didn't.

I couldn't.

Enough pain and suffering have already taken place between them. The best thing I can do is marry Pierce, and Maddox can forget me.

What other choice do I have?

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

MADDOX

“Mr. Sterling.” Connor answers my call. “Junior.”

Source Creation Date: July 3, 2025, 4:33 am

“Yeah, nah. It’s just Maddox.” I cringe at being referred to as my father’s son.

Connor Barret is a former US Marine. Plus, a fellow billionaire, so we often rub shoulders at events. We’re not buddies, but I respect the entrepreneur. He runs one of the best private security companies in the nation and is one of my biggest customers.

“I met with your father recently,” he tells me and my brows lift.

“Oh, yeah?”

He’s probably looking to put a hit out on me. But then again, the fact he had my phone number, which is fucking hard to get, tells me Pierce has known how to reach me for a long time.

I should have known.

The man is shrewd.

“You took something that belonged to him.” Connor adds, but he sounds bored.
“Apparently.”

“No, I didn’t.”

He’s a smart guy. I know he’ll figure it out.

“No. Which is why we didn’t retrieve her.”

The fuck?

My brain explodes as I work out what he's saying. He knew where Kyra was the whole time? Unbelievable. Then again, is it? He has a team of experienced US Marines and other military experts, some of which have worked off book.

As in the government books.

"You could've called the cops." I shake my head as I drop my feet from my glass coffee table and start paying attention.

"I could've extracted her and taken her home as I was hired to do." He snorts dryly.

I let his words hang in the air for a moment while I plan my next steps. Then something occurs to me.

"It wasn't me you left her with, was it?"

"No," he replies.

Then we're on the same page but I need to be sure. Very sure before I ask this astute man for what I'm after.

"You were keeping her from Pierce."

"Yes."

God, he's such a chatterbox.

"Which means you know what he's been involved with" I add.

“I also assumed you would continue to protect her,” Connor says. “And now you need my help.”

I grit my teeth at his accusation.

“It’s complicated.”

“Always is with women.” I hear the humor in his voice and recall once meeting Mia Barrett, the former mafia princess.

“I need a phone number. That’s all.”

He’s silent for so long, I almost think he’s hung up.

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“That’s not the type of business we’re in Maddox,” Connor says. “You wasted a phone call.”

Then I hear the click.

I drop the phone beside me and stare at the wall. Waiting. Ten minutes later, an encrypted message lands on my screen.

Using my fucking software.

I would smirk if this wasn’t so damn serious.

Have you finished playing with my bride?My father’s words have played over and over in my head, driving me insane. I hate that he got to me, but my priorities have changed.

I will pay whatever price there is to pay to have her back in my arms. In fact, I already tried that.

“How much?” I asked Derek Fox when he answered his phone last night.

Silence.

“How did you get this number?”

I snorted.

“I’m capable of much more than finding your private mobile number, Derek. Now how much to stop this wedding?”

I heard his deep inhale.

“You can’t stop it, Maddox. The wedding is going ahead.” I hear the sound of glass on glass, then the sound of him pouring liquid.

Yeah, he will need a stiff drink for this conversation. I’ve already thrown back three fingers of Macallan.

“Bullshit. Everything has a price.”

He’s quiet, which I assume is because he’s taking a long drink. Or thinking. Wouldn’t it be nice to pretend that he’s considering Kyra’s future and happiness? But I’m not naïve. I haven’t been for a very long time.

Derek Fox is considering himself and only himself.

I wonder if he even loves his daughter.

How can he?

If I had a little girl, I’d love and protect her with every part of my being. And more. I’d move heaven and earth, gut a man, and destroy governments if it meant ensuring no corrupt and grubby old man touched her.

I would die for her.

Kyra has never had anyone protecting her. I know she’d see it as me taking away her freedom—which yes, okay, I did hold her captive—but if she gives me another

chance, I'll show her the difference.

Fine line, I realize.

A possessive man like me could be the last thing she needs, and yet, I've decided she is mine.

Forever.

She needs your dominance and to be owned. Even if she doesn't understand it yet.

Parker made sense.

But last night I was still trying to do the right thing and not slit Pierce's throat in broad daylight. I want Kyra to have the freedom of choice to walk into my arms. If that means letting him live so she isn't scared of me, or disgusted by me, then...

No promises, but I think I would.

Source Creation Date: July 3, 2025, 4:33 am

For the first time in my life, I am putting something—someone—else before the obsession with destroying my father. That scares me so fucking much.

“Not this time, Sterling,” Fox said. “Kyra is getting married.”

I gritted my teeth and felt my hand tighten around the Waterford crystal glass. “He’s a fucking monster. How can you let him near her?”

He cursed under his breath.

“Because if I don’t, he’ll destroy all of us, including her. You have no idea what is going on.”

My brows lifted in complete disbelief at his ignorance.

“The fuck I don’t!” I yelled. “Do you really think you’re his first victim? Wake the hell up man. If you let her walk down that aisle, you’re handing her over to an evil her soul will never recover from.”

My heart pounded as I waited for him to come to his senses, but he didn’t. I knew deep down that he wouldn’t, but I was trying to be a good man for her.

Trying for once to do things the right way.

To have the best chance of winning her precious heart, because I had a feeling no one in Kyra’s life ever cared enough to do that.

“If I don’t, the shame on our family will destroy her worse.”

I shook my head.

“You have your head in the sand, Fox. Remember this conversation. I gave you a chance and you’ve tossed it away.”

“Is that a threat?” He hissed.

I stared out across the city and threw back the last of my whisky, then let out an audible sigh. “No. It’s a promise.”

I ended the call and tossed the phone on the leather sofa, then turned and faced my brothers.

“Plan B?” Parker asked, leaning his hip against one of the cabinets.

Travis and Killian each sat on one of the armchairs with their legs parted. Zayne stood with his arms crossed, looking ready to launch into action.

He probably would have too.

“Plan B.” I nodded as a deadly smirk appeared on Parker’s face.

“Let’s fucking do this.” Travis grinned.

Now, tonight, I had the last piece of information I needed. I wasn’t going to get blood on my hands and let Pierce take the last piece of my humanity.

Nor was he taking the woman I loved.

I shoot Connor another message and he replies with an affirmative.

It's go time.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

KYRA

Tears leak from the corners of my eyes as I stand staring at myself in the floor-length mirror.

“You look so beautiful,” Penny sighs.

Source Creation Date: July 3, 2025, 4:33 am

I probably do. I don't care. The dress is beautiful. It's cream with a figure-hugging mermaid skirt and covered in pearls and diamantes. The top is a sweetheart neckline emphasizing my small breasts.

The door opens and my father enters. "Are you ready?"

I clench my teeth. How typical of him. There's no emotion. No compliments on my dress or questions about how I'm feeling.

"Doesn't your daughter look lovely, Derek," Mom says, taking yet another gulp of champagne.

I haven't had a single bite to eat or sip of water all day. My head is pounding, and I think I'm going to vomit.

"Yes. Very nice," Dad replies and runs his eyes up and down my dress.

Penny rubs my arm and gives me a pitiful smile in the mirror.

"You're doing this for the family. I am proud of you," Dad says.

Pride? Is he fucking kidding me? I'm marrying a man who raped me hours after being kidnapped. Who threatened everyone and, likely, has done it many times.

I've had all my freedoms taken from me—most I never had. I've been the good girl all my life and he can't even show a single ounce of love.

Not even on my wedding day...to a man I despise. To the father of the man I...I...shit I think I might love.

That probably means I'm completely unhinged, and yet it's how I feel. I would give anything to have Maddox beside me right now. To scoop me up in his arms and run away with me.

How insane.

I want the very man who first kidnapped me to do it again. Yup, I'm certifiable.

Something inside me snaps.

I meet my father's gaze in the mirror and glare at him.

"Keep your pride. It's your love that I wanted, but clearly that's never going to happen."

"Kyra!" Mom cries and Penny's eyes widen.

"Love doesn't pay the bills or keep this family safe. I'm doing what's necessary. Which you have no understanding of as you're a child with zero responsibilities," Dad snaps. "You have five minutes. Make sure you're downstairs."

When he turns and walks out, I burst into tears and Mom races around to fix my makeup.

What a nightmare.

Six minutes later—because it is my wedding so I can be one minute late—I grip Penny's hand as we stand just outside the doorway, waiting for the music to start.

“You’re shaking,” she whispers, squeezing my hand. “It’s going to be okay.”

It won’t, but I smile at her anyway.

The music begins.

Oh god. What am I doing?

More tears fill my eyes, and I force them back, swallowing and blinking.

“Let’s go,” my father says.

Penny squeezes my hand one last time, then walks out ahead of us.

Shit.

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An overpowering need to bolt crashes through me and I turn, only to be stopped by my father, looping his arm through mine.

“Smile.” He orders me.

“Fuck you,” I spit out, and my eyes fly open.

Holy shit. I’ve never cursed at my father before. He stills and glares down at me. With my heart pounding, I force that same attitude back on my face, wiping away the shock I just gave myself.

“I guess I deserve that,” he replies then pulls me through the door.

Hundreds of faces appear as I shake harder.

“Walk,” Dad hisses, dragging me along step by step.

My legs almost give out under me as I look from face to face, searching for someone to help me.

To save me and stop what is about to happen. But I know I’m on my own, and the one chance I had to escape all this is gone. He is now my enemy.

A cry stuck in my chest makes me hiccup, and Dad presses his fingers into my arm painfully.

Then I spot Pierce standing at the front of the church and my stomach lurches. He

looks so much like his son, and that just makes what happened the other night so much worse. Their silver eyes are the same, except Pierce's are older and more like the devil.

I know Maddox is full of hate and revenge and thinks he's a bad man, but he's not. Not to me. He could have hurt me, but he never did. I trust him more than his father. Far more.

Even while making love to me, he never let his dominance overtake the need to pleasure me. I may have little experience, but a woman knows when a man is being a selfish or a generous lover. And I certainly know the difference between a great fuck and rape.

Wait...did I say making love? Is that what I think it was? Do I think Maddox loves me?

I shake off my stupidity. If he loved me, he would've fought more and, I don't know, kidnapped me again. Part of me was almost expecting it until he declared me his enemy.

If Maddox knew his father had touched me, he wouldn't want me anymore. I know him. His hate for his dad is bone deep.

I spot my mother in the front row, and she doesn't look at me. I let her wallow in her guilt as I fight the urge to shove my father and run back down the aisle away from everyone.

Then Pierce smirks at me and reaches out his hand while Dad almost launches me in his direction.

A small sob escapes me, and Pierce glares angrily at me.

“Pull yourself together,” he hisses.

I sniff, swallow, and glance out at the enormous number of guests. There must be over five hundred people. I know about six of them.

The priest clears his throat, and my eyes dart his way, pleading with him silently to help me. He holds my gaze for a moment and then glances out at the crowd.

My last hope comes crashing down.

I zone out as Pierce holds my sweaty hands, not hearing the words.

“Do you Kyra Louise Fox take Pierce John Sterling to be your be wedded husband? To have and to hold from this day forward,for better or for worse, for richer or for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish; from this day forward, until death do you part.”

I can’t breathe.

Pierce crushes my fingers. I open my mouth but...I can’t speak. He hisses at me and the pressure on my fingers increases to intense pain.

I draw in a breath and start to hyperventilate.

The crowd begins to murmur.

“She does! Continue,” Pierce demands.

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“No.” A deep voice booms from the back of the room. “She doesn’t.”

My head spins around as I gasp.

Oh, my god.

Maddox stands in the aisle dressed in the most stunning black suit, looking like some kind of model/gangster. His arms hang from his broad shoulders and there is so much power rolling from him that the entire room is silent.

Around him stand Parker, Travis, Killian, and Zayne. Also, all in black, like they’re ready for battle.

His eyes meet mine and my mouth falls open.

“Well, well, well,” Pierce mutters, almost amused beside me.

My father flies to his feet. “Security! Get these men out of here!”

My mother looks like she’s about to have a heart attack, swiveling around and then glancing back at me. I look at Maddox again and for the life of me, I don’t know why, but I smile.

His lips twitch and his left hand reaches out, inviting me to choose him.

The crowd shuffles, turning to work out what is happening, and their phones lift to take photos of the disruption.

I don't care.

“Go to him and I will destroy your father.” Pierce grinds out. “Tell my son he needs to leave.”

“Why are you doing this?” I beg of him.

“Because”—he leans his mouth against my ear—“it makes my cock hard. The same one Maddox sucked over and over and over when he was a little boy.”

CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN

MADDOX

I watch as Pierce tugs Kyra against his chest and let out a growl as my feet start moving.

“Woah there, tiger.” Parker grabs my arm, stopping me. “Remember the plan.”

My fists clench.

“Security! Get these men out of here!” her father screams.

Oh yeah, about that.

Connor Barrett's security team has been briefed not to interfere.

“Happy for them to stand back while you get your girl, but if anyone looks like they're about to get hurt they'll step in,” Connor said to me on the phone last night.

Fair enough.

Out of the corner of my eye, Travis takes a few steps to the right to intercept Derek Fox as he approaches.

“Just give the bride a minute to decide,” he warns him.

“The fuck—”

“Listen to him,” Killian says, flicking a knife around in his fingers.

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“They’re armed!” someone yells and people start piling out of the building.

We expected this.

A couple of Barrett Security guards appear and start guiding people out, telling them to remain calm. One of them shoots me a look to say he’s unimpressed but I give zero fucks.

“I’ll go.” Parker heads over to one of Barrett’s men, Mack, and says something to him.

Mack nods but still looks fucked off.

“I told you to leave the knife in your pocket.” Travis grunts.

“You’re not my mom,” Killian says. “And I don’t trust these assholes.

“Your mom can suck my cock if we get arrested. I have a club to run tonight.” Travis hisses.

“Stop being a pussy.” Killian’s eye roll is evident in his voice as I seek out Kyra’s worried gaze.

“Go get her.” Zayne rasps behind me. “I’ll sort these two squabbling bitches.”

I almost smirk. But I’m focused on Kyra. Whatever Pierce is saying to her has her stiffening and pulling away.

Come here, baby.

Please.

I need her to come to me. That's the only way this is going to work. Suddenly, she spins toward me and there are tears in her eyes.

Fuck.

What did he say?

She tries to pull from him, but he grabs her. A roar escapes me, and I hear oh fuck from two of the guys as I take off down the aisle.

Then the woman I love surprises me.

I'm still over ten feet away from her when Kyra stamps on Pierce's foot with her sharp high heel. With a yell, he releases her and hops on one foot, grabbing for her.

"Get the fuck back here, you little bitch!" Pierce screams.

But Kyra is too fast. She grabs her huge skirt and begins to run.

Toward me.

Like a fucking corny romance movie.

Mine.

Time slows as I watch every expression and every emotion and see my future inside her soul. Then she crashes into me, and I wrap my arms around her, lifting her until

her lips are back where they belong.

On mine.

Kyra opens to me, and my tongue thrusts inside, claiming and taking possession. Sparks consume and connect us, blocking out the world as her fingers thread through my hair.

“Maddox,” she moans.

“I’m keeping you this time,” I say against her mouth, and I mean it.

Not as her kidnapper, but the man who loves her. If it takes her time to feel the same, I’ll wait. I’ll do whatever it takes.

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“Okay.” Her reply is soft and my heart bursts open.

I kiss her once more as my brothers surround us, keeping Pierce, her shrieking mother, and her angry father at bay.

“Uh uh, give them a minute.” Parker holds out his hands.

“Who the fuck are you?” Derek demands.

“How rude. Did you hear that, Trav?” Parker asks and I almost laugh, but while Pierce screams out demands, our eyes lock for the first time in over fifteen years.

It’s like a bomb goes off inside me.

The hate I feel pouring from the pores of my skin is more than any one person should feel in one lifetime. I’m bigger than him now. Strong enough to overpower him, strangle him until he takes his last breath.

Kyra’s hand on my cheek snaps me out of the moment and I drop my eyes to her.

“Please get me out of here.”

That’s when I know something is wrong. There’s something in her voice that wasn’t there before. Before I let her be taken from me.

What has he done?

It's more than not just wanting to marry Pierce; I hear fear, and I hear pain. I recognize her anguish in her voice and my eyes fly back to Pierce.

"What did you do?" I slide her down my body and glare at him.

A smirk appears on his face.

That fucking asshole.

"Maddox. Please," she pleads.

"Maddox," Parker warns, turning.

Every cell in my body wants to rip the gun out of my jacket and shoot him right in his dead fucking heart.

"You want to go to jail?" He grabs my wrist. "Take your girl and let's go."

"What did he do to you?" I rasp as Kyra's palms flatten on my chest.

"Not here." She tucks herself under my arm and I feel her shaking.

Mack walks over. "You need to go."

"Take my daughter and I will be calling my lawyer." Derek threatens.

"I am a grown woman, Dad," Kyra says, leaning into me. "You don't own me. I'm not marrying Pierce."

About goddamn time.

I'm so fucking proud it takes the edge off the urge to murder Pierce. Just the sharp corners. Not completely.

"Honey, let's talk about this."

"Mom." Kyra shakes her head. "Don't."

"Let's go baby." I nod at Mack and lead her out of the church.

This is going to go viral, but I don't care. I am marrying this woman, so the world is going to work it out sooner or later.

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Before we exit with Travis, Parker, Zayne, and Killian trailing behind me, I turn.

“Take any action whatsoever against me or Kyra—or any of these men – I will expose the truth. All of it.” I growl darkly, glancing from Derek to Pierce.

Derek’s face goes white, and my lips stretch into a dark smile.

I thought so. The piece of shit.

My father, still nursing his injured foot, glares at me in the controlled way he did when I was a child.

This isn’t over. I know that.

But now is not the time.

I glance down at Kyra, rip off her veil, and then turn to Killian, holding out my hand. He hands me the knife.

“Maddox! What are you—”

I cut the skirt she’s wearing above the knee. I don’t want to see her in the dress she was about to marry my father in.

“Let’s go, sweetheart.” I say, scooping her up into my arms, then just before I step through the door, I turn. “Kyra was never yours.” My voice booms through the chapel. “She is the one thing I won’t let you take from me.”

“We’ll see,” Pierce replies. “We’ll see.”

Parker pulls the doors closed and we jog down the steps to the waiting limousine.

“See, we needed a knife,” Killian says.

“Fuck you. Your club membership is revoked.” Travis gives him the bird.

“Bullshit. All the ladies would complain.” He grabs his crotch, and I shake my head.

“Ignore them.” I cup Kyra’s face as she snuggles into my lap.

“You came for me,” she whispers into my ear.

“Always.” I kiss her forehead and stare out the window, wondering what the hell happened to her.

She’s not the same woman I held just days ago.

And there will be consequences for that.

CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT

MADDOX

“I JUST WANT to sleep.” Kyra turns over and curls back into a ball.

It’s been three days.

She tried to go back into the guest bedroom—her cell—the first night I brought her home. I pulled her against my chest and gripped her face. “Kyra, you aren’t my prisoner anymore.”

“I know, I just...I just want to go back to how it was.”

Fucking hell.

“What did he do to you?” I demanded.

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She shut down and wouldn't talk, but I knew.

Deep down, I knew.

Finally, she let me take her into my bedroom and take off the remainder of her dress. We stepped into the shower together, where I washed every single inch of her.

Except between her legs.

Goddamn that fucking asshole.

"You need to eat, sweetheart," I say now, sitting on the bed and placing a hand on her hip.

"I can't," Kyra whispers. "I feel sick. I'm sorry."

My eyes dart around the room helplessly. I thought she might need one or two nights, but she's not opening up. I, of all people, know you don't bounce back after...after.

I love this woman, but if she isn't happy here, then I need to do what is right for her.

So, I ask the one question I don't want to ask—one of them at least.

"Do you want to go home?"

Silence.

Instead of responding, Kyra rolls onto her back and throws a hand over her eyes. When she glances back, I can barely read the emotion within them. Like she's completely shutting down. "Do you want me to leave?"

The hell?

"No. Fuck no." I cry. "I want to help you. I want...damn it. I know you need time, but this is killing me, Kyra."

Tears pool in her eyes and I rip her from the bed, pulling her against my chest.

I have no idea what to do here. Unless she wants to talk, all I can do is love her and be patient. Something I'm absolutely shit at. But if it takes half a lifetime, I'll do it.

Whatever she wants.

"I can't say it, Maddox. You'll...hate me. Be disgusted. I can't, Maddox," she says through her tears.

I freeze.

She thinks I'd be disgusted?

For the first time in my life, I feel sadness rip through me and my eyes fill.

"Oh, fuck baby," I say, releasing my hold on her and looking directly into her eyes. "Never. I promise."

That's when I know it's time to tell my story.

CHAPTER TWENTY-NINE

KYRA

“Nothing in this world could make me not want you,” Maddox says, and I shake my head.

He doesn’t know.

If being abused wasn’t enough, when he learns it was by the person he hates most in this world, he’ll change his mind. He won’t want his father’s seconds even if I wasn’t penetrated by him.

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I don't know if I could handle it either.

I feel constantly dirty.

"This would." I shake my head.

"Kyra." He grips my chin. "I know what happened. If you don't want to tell me that's okay. But I know."

I blink.

How does he know?

A memory flashes back from the church when Pierce was holding me in a grip.

It makes my cock hard. The same one Maddox sucked over and over and over when he was a little boy.

I had barely a second to process that information with everything that was happening and have been in a state of depression since he brought me home.

Home.

Is this my home?

"No. You don't. If you did, I wouldn't be here."

“Listen to me,” he growls.

I grip his strong muscular arms, where the sleeves are rolled up, and look him directly in the eye. “I didn’t even stop him, Maddox. The man you hate the most. I didn’t stop him.”

Motherfucker. I hate him.

Maddox stills for a moment, draws in a slow deep breath.

“Neither did I.”

My hand flies to my mouth as tears roll down my face. His vulnerability is almost too much. My chest tightens and I fall against his chest.

“Shhh.” His hand runs over my hair.

“I hate him. I hate him. I hate him.” I sob, clutching his shirt.

“Me too, baby. Me too,” Maddox replies, way too calm and controlled for the moment.

I glance up, wiping my eyes.

He dips his head. “I have lived with what he did to me. But hurting the woman I love is too much.”

I blink.

Did he just say—

His hand threads through my hair. “I love you, Kyra.”

Oh god. I never dreamed that he would truly feel this way. I thought perhaps he felt responsible. That this was no more than lust.

I need Maddox to know I feel the same.

“I love you, too. Are we crazy?”

“Most definitely.” The corner of his lip lifts.

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I smile and hiccup at the same time.

“You need to know, you couldn’t have stopped him. And it changes nothing about the way I feel about you.” He reassures me. “When you’re ready, I’m going to make love to every inch of your body and cleanse his evil from you.”

I feel myself react to his words.

But before I can let myself truly feel again, I need to say the words out loud. If I love this man, I will. I have to do my part in healing.

“He found the toy, Maddox.” I say, ashamed. “He put his mouth there.”

His palm cups my face.

“He did much the same to me, but he will die for doing it to you.”

I gasp.

Without asking, I know with every cell in my body that he means it and that he’s capable of it.

Selfishly, I want him to do it.

So I nod.

MADDOX TRIES TO talk me into having a rape kit done. While Pierce didn't penetrate me, he says it's important to go through the process and have it on record.

"We'll have him charged," he says the next morning as I lie in his arms surrounded by his crisp white sheets. "I'm going to make sure he spends the rest of his life in prison."

I wonder if he's changed his mind about killing him. Perhaps it was just his anger talking.

"He was my fiancé," I remind Maddox, running my fingers over the tattoo on his pec.

I am slowly coming out of my shell and feeling his power, and the strength of his body helps. He held me all night and I've never felt closer to anyone. We're living in a bubble. Yet again, I don't have my phone or any belongings. In some ways, it feels like I have started a whole new life.

What it looks like when the bubble bursts, I don't know.

"That doesn't give him a right to touch you without permission. No means fucking no," Maddox says, and I fall in love with him ten times more.

He came for me.

He stopped the worst—second worst—moment of my life happening.

I'm not sure if I'm strong enough to go through a legal battle, but we don't need to decide right now. But I feel like Maddox needs to vent and fight. It's his way of dealing with it.

So I don't commit and just say maybe.

“How did you survive?” I ask, wondering if he’ll talk more about his childhood.

“Travis,” he says. “Parker. Zayne. Killian. Their stories are theirs to tell, but they’re the reason I survived. How we all survived.”

My mouth parts, horrified that all these once little boys came together for what sounds like the same reason. Abuse.

“I’m so sorry.”

“It made us the strong men we are today. We survived, and so will you.”

“Because I have you.” I go to lean against his chest, but he stops me.

“No, because you’re you. Kyra. You’re stronger than you think. I wouldn’t love you if you weren’t. You challenged me. Tried to play me...goddamn, you were a nightmare.”

I can't help my smile.

“Well, you shouldn't go around kidnapping young ladies.”

He snorts.

“You sound like Travis.”

“Wait. How many times have you done this?”

“Never.” Maddox frowns. “Once.” He corrects, then shifts his body and props his elbow under his head. “I want to make sure you understand this. You're free to leave. I want you to stay forever and spend your life with me. God, I'm so fucking in love with you, but I'm a possessive man and that might be smothering.”

He loves me.

This beautiful and powerful man loves me.

“If another man even looks at you, I'll kill him. But you are free.”

My heart flares like a supernova as he bares his own to me. A hint of almost nervousness appears in his eyes as he awaits my response.

“I don't want to leave.”

He takes my hand and kisses my fingers.

“I want you to touch me.”

“Kyra.”

“No. I need this. I want you to be the man whose touch I feel. No one else’s.”

I take his hand and lower it to my breast and watch fire explode like it’s the Fourth of July in those piercing silver eyes.

CHAPTER THIRTY

MADDOX

I stand across the road in the shadows and pull the phone away from my ear, then slide it into my pocket. My hands follow.

The night air is chilly, and I can see my breath in the air.

How appropriate for a murder scene.

A week ago, Kyra let me make love to her. It started gentle, something I’m not good at, and she berated me for it.

“Touch me, damn you. Properly.”

“I don’t want to hurt you.” I rasped.

“If you don’t, I will find someone else that will.” Kyra pushed at my chest.

Rage erupted, and I pushed her back down on the bed. “No one, and I mean no fucking one, is touching you. You are mine!”

“Then prove it. Fuck me.”

A growl ripped from my chest as I plucked her nipple with my teeth and pulled her legs apart. My mouth crashed onto her pussy, and I sucked her flesh with such passion you’d think I was a dying man needing water.

Or her juices.

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Because I did. More than anything. And she needed it just as much.

“My pussy.” I grunted, plowing my fingers inside her.

“Yes.” Kyra arched.

“Only my cock goes here. My mouth.”

“Oh god, yes.”

I fucked and sucked her until she screamed, then almost crushed her as I slammed inside her with my cock. Palming the wall with my hand, I watched her flush with orgasm as she wrapped her arms around my neck.

“Own me.” Kyra begged.

“You are mine.” I promised her.

“Forever.” Her fingers grappled at my short hair.

She had no idea what she was signing up for. My darkness was much deeper than hers, but I would protect her from it and make sure she only ever saw the light.

Which is why, I knew, before making her mine officially, I had to put the past behind us. To end the cycle. Not just for her, but all the innocent lives that he’d hurt.

Which is why I’m standing here, staring up at my father’s window and waiting.

Not long now.

It takes a couple more minutes and then I see the flash.

No sound—good ol’ silencers—but I saw the moment the gun went off.

And his life was gone.

My phone beeps a minute later, but I already know. Even without the visual proof, something shifted inside me the moment his soul was extinguished.

Freedom.

Ironically, Kyra gifted that to me before this, but knowing he’s gone and can’t hurt anyone ever again feels fucking amazing.

Killing my father never felt like something I could do. As if it would destroy my soul. But the moment he hurt her? Yeah, there was no question.

Now it’s my turn to give her the life she deserves.

I walk over to my car and climb in.

“All good boss?” Mitch asks.

“Yes. Everything is perfect. Let’s go home.” I smile and send Kyra a message.

KYRA

I STARE IN the mirror and then glance down at the message from Maddox once more.

Shit.

What am I going to do?

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I have no idea how to tell him. I have no idea how he will respond or what he even thinks about this. It's only been a few weeks since I met him.

Correction. Was kidnapped by him.

For all I know, this could fizzle out and we'll end up saying goodbye.

Except we can't now.

"Hey." Maddox appears in the doorway, ripping off his black coat.

I swallow and push back the lust that is always there when he's near me. It's like this constant high which is never satisfied.

He hangs his coat on the hook in the walk-in closet and then steps into the bathroom. Taking my face in his hands, he kisses me like I'm the most cherished thing in his life.

I really hope I am.

"What's wrong?" he asks, picking up on my tension. "Did your mother call again?"

She's called every day for a week, and I finally replied yesterday saying I need time and that I'd come over next week to collect my things. That I was living with Maddox now.

I'll need to get a job.

I need to figure out who I am and what I want with this newfound freedom. Maddox said I can take my time. That I have my whole life ahead of me. He's so certain that we will be together.

Well, he might be right now.

"No, I..." But I see the moment his eyes land on the little plastic stick. His eyes shoot to mine.

I nod.

"What is that?" He releases me and reaches for it.

"Something I peed on so you might want to wash your hands."

Those silver eyes pierce me with their intensity.

"I had my mouth on your pussy this morning. Do I look like I care?"

I laugh, but it's wobbly.

"Kyra." He demands.

I step into his chest, and he tosses the stick into the basin and pulls me in tighter, gripping my chin.

"We are pregnant."

Please don't leave me. Please don't freak out. Please don't hate this.

My body shakes like a leaf.

“A baby.” He rasps and there is so much wonder in his eyes I know I’m crying.

“Yes.”

“Jesus fucking Christ. I haven’t even proposed to you.”

I can’t help my relief and the smile that stretches across my face.

“Not tonight. It can’t be tonight.”

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“No. I wasn’t. That’s not...I don’t expect.” I mumble awkwardly.

His smile lights up the entire country.

“It’s happening, but not tonight sweetheart.” He rumbles and his conviction sends a tremble through me. “You will marry me, and we are having this child. I want to make that very clear.”

A tear slides down my face.

“Really?”

“Really, little prisoner. I told you I was keeping you. Now I get to keep both of you.”

Then he kisses me like I’m his entire world and I’m starting to think I might be.

Just as Maddox and this child are mine.

Who knew being kidnapped was the best thing that would ever happen to me.

I might have the world's most protective man, but I’ve never felt so free.

EPILOGUE

MADDOX

Parker walks in and gives me one of those man embraces, slapping my back.
“Congratulations man.”

Travis, Zayne, and Killian follow, looking like they belong in some crime family with their black attire, chunky watches and rings, and inked skin.

“I don’t know about this.” Travis reaches down and hugs Kyra. I might trust these men with my life, but I don’t like them touching my girl.

“You don’t believe I’m pregnant?” She giggles.

“I can’t believe this goon is about to become a father.” He winks and I hear the growl leave my throat.

Killian laughs and walks over to the bar, rolling his sleeves up.

“Congratulations.” Zayne shakes my hand and kisses Kyra on the cheek.

“They need to stop touching you.” I grunt, as I pull her into my side and follow them into the living room.

Penny and a few dozen of our other friends are also here. Some spilling out onto the balcony.

“I don’t mind getting hugs from lots of good-looking men.” She smirks up at me while I mock scowl back at her.

It’s not that fake, though.

I don’t like it.

She is glowing. Her eyes and cheeks flush and so far there has been no morning sickness. I'm as happy as she is, because morning sex is my favorite.

Sliding inside her wet pussy from behind while she's still opening her eyes and I'm cupping her breasts is the best way to start the day. Then she follows me into the shower and I can't help it, I lift her onto the bench seat and plow into her again.

I am addicted to filling her hot pussy.

"Is that what a girl needs to do? Get knocked up to get the attention of a gorgeous man?" Penny asks.

I frown.

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“I think the chicken comes before the egg, Penny.”

Does she not know how the birds and bees work? I’m not spelling it out for her.

“You need to work on his sense of humor.” She deadpans Kyra and they both nod knowingly.

“Work in progress.” Kyra pats my chest. I snap my hand over it and then kiss her fingers.

She melts before my eyes.

I’m already eager for our guests to leave so I can rip her yellow sundress off. It curves over her breasts and hugs her hips, while stopping just above mid-thigh. It’s almost inappropriate, but I’m not sorry. It teases just enough that I think I might get a look at her panties.

I never do.

Or she’d be fucking changing.

The urge to run my hand up her thigh has my cock semi-erect all damn night.

“Ugh. So damn jealous.” Penny rolls back her head and then spins back to check out my friends. She’s way too much of a good girl for them, but I know they’ll treat her with respect.

The doors open behind us again, and I turn to watch Derek and Sally Fox walk in.

It's been two weeks since we learned we were going to become parents. It changes you whether you like it or not.

Kyra told her mom, because that's what girls do, and a day later Derek phoned me.

News of Pierce's death had already been front page news. I was questioned by police but as it turns out I was with my driver on the way home to see my girlfriend the night it happened. Then, celebrating the news of our unborn child.

True story.

I don't know who killed him.

Also, the truth.

The money I paid...untraceable.

So, when I answered the phone, Derek cleared his throat and said, "I know it was you."

No, he doesn't.

He suspects, but he doesn't know for sure.

Not even Parker, Travis, Zayne, or Killian truly know. They simply sat across from me at breakfast the following Wednesday and all met me in the eye, nodding.

I nodded back.

Then we ate as normal.

“You’re my child’s grandfather. That is all we need to discuss. You’ll be welcome in my home if you respect both Kyra and our children. If not, I won’t allow them to see you.”

The truth is, I would never force Kyra to stop seeing her parents, but I do have a say about our kids.

Fox’s outdated and abusive beliefs have no place in our world. And she agrees with me.

“Well, I’m not sorry he’s dead. Whoever did it freed a lot of people.”

I shake my head even though he can’t see me.

“Weak people. You should’ve taken fucking responsibility for what you did and called his bluff.” I ground out. “Giving power to a man like Pierce is an endless game. One you failed at.”

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He cursed and there was a long silence.

“I want to be in my grandkids' life,” he eventually said.

“Then be a better man, Fox.”

More silence.

I’m giving him one chance. I invited him to tonight’s party because he should be here to celebrate with his daughter. I know how evil my father was and for that, he gets one allowance.

One.

I want my children to have grandparents and Kyra’s parents are all they have. But if he fucks up...that’s it.

“Mom.” Kyra rushes over and hugs her mom.

It’s the first time she’s seen her dad since the church—I refuse to call it her wedding day—so I stay to make sure he does the right thing.

“Forgive me,” her father says, reaching out his arm and taking her hand.

“In time, Dad. In time.” Kyra gives him a small smile. “I am glad you came, though.”

Her mom places her hands on her tummy, and pride that’s starting to feel familiar

rushes to my chest.

I'm going to be a fucking dad.

A good father. Nothing like my own. I will teach my kids that they are worthy, loved, and amazing little beings. That they can be anything in this world and never to put up with an ounce of abuse or disrespect.

Sally glances up and locks her tear-filled gaze with mine. Then she mouthsthanx you.

I nod.

I get it. I'm a parent now and I'd feel the same way.

But it was Kyra who made the choice. She ripped out of Pierce's arms and came running into mine. She's braver than she thinks. Fuck, she's going to be an amazing mother.

I've already been sent three parenting e-books that I have to read.

A bossy mother, perhaps.

I leave them to it and walk outside where Killian has taken control of the BBQ as I knew he would. He doesn't just own Michelin star restaurants, he's also a chef.

Travis and Penny are playing pétanque. She's accusing him of cheating.

"There're"—he holds out his arm—"two balls. How can I cheat?"

"Dunno. But I think you are." She props her hands on her hips.

“Maddox. Help me out here,” he says, but I see the smirk on his lips.

“Don’t play poker with him,” I warn, laughing.

“I don’t know how,” Penny admits.

“Ahh, well, I can teach you.” Travis grins and both Parker and Zayne, who are leaning against the wall with drinks, shake their heads and say no.

“Penny, if he tries anything, you call me.” Zayne arches a warning brow at Travis.

“You don’t have a very good reputation.” She crosses her arms.

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“They just hate losing. Now take your shot, princess.” Travis nods to the game.

Kyra walks over and I lift my arm. We relax and watch our extended family and friends enjoy themselves as the sun begins to drop.

After we’ve eaten and the dishes are cleared away, I lift my glass from my seat at the head of the long table and make a toast.

“To good friends, a new generation, and a happy long life.”

“Hear, hear.”

“To good friends.”

“Cheers.”

Glasses clink as I tap mine against Kyra’s and she sips her mineral water.

I watch Parker pick up his phone for the tenth time during the meal and swipe, staring down into a screen.

“He got a big investment on the stock or something?” Travis asks.

So, he hasn’t told anyone else.

I didn’t think so.

“No.” I sip my Macallan and then place it down on the table.

I’ve never seen him this preoccupied.

It’s time to do something about what he shared with me. Kyra is home. She’s safe, happy, and I’ll stay by her side making sure our child comes into this world healthy and happy. But Parker needs our attention before he does something to destroy his life.

Or Aurora’s.

“No,” I say again. “He’s found her.”

Travis chokes on his drink.

“What?” He coughs. “Aurora. When?”

Weeks ago. Enough time that this could have gotten way out of hand.

When Parker lifts his eyes to mine, there is both death and desire within them.

Shit.

Then he smirks.

“Oh fuck,” Travis says.

AFTER EVERYONE LEAVES, I tidy up a few things, then head to our bedroom. Kyra has already showered and changed into a silk nightie I thought I’d torn days ago

with my teeth.

It is probably one of a dozen I replaced it with after apparently getting in trouble.

The next day, I cut her credit card in half and replaced it with another.

“What are you doing?”

“I am your family now. You’ll use this.”

Source Creation Date: July 3, 2025, 4:33 am

“I can’t spend your money. Maddox, that is my trust fund.” Kyra gasped.

“You can and you will. You’re the mother of my child. There are expenses and things you’ll need to buy. Formychild.” I placed my hand on her hip and tucked the credit card into her bra. “No arguing.”

I watched her argue silently in her head as she stared back at me. I couldn’t help the smile that stretched across my face.

“What’s so funny?” she asked.

“Nothing.” I’d kissed her then walked into my office to make a call.

In that moment, I’d known. Perhaps I’d always known. But the time was right. Finally, today, I’d had a reply and picked up my order.

Kyra turns as I’m undoing my shirt. She still watches me like I’m not hers to touch when she wants. I toss it on the armchair in the corner of the room, kick off my shoes, and then undo the top button on my pants.

“Is this a strip show?” She blushes.

So damn cute. She has my cock in her mouth at least once a day and still blushes.

“Come with me.” I take her hand and lead her through the house. When we reach the door leading out to the balcony, she tugs on me.

“Oh no. I’m not having sex out there.”

Then she stops.

There are dozens of candles lit with a scattering of yellow rose petals everywhere. Only possible because Penny snuck back in to help me set it up.

“What is—”

I lift her out the door and she clings to my arms as I place her back on the floor so we’re overlooking Manhattan.

Then I drop to my knee.

“Maddox.” She gasps as the silk of her short gown flutters in the breeze.

God, I could press my face into her bare pussy right now. I know she never wears panties in bed because I banned them.

Focus.

“Kyra.” I take her hand and glance up. “Marry me. Let me love you and protect you until my last dying breath. Let me be the best father I can to our children.”

“Oh god. I love you Maddox.” A tear drips down her cheek, and she lets out a little hiccup.

Okay, but say yes.

“Spend your life with me, sweetheart.” I wait for her to reply.

I think I've sent her into a state of shock as she's shaking.

"And at any point, you can say yes."

She lets out a little teary chuckle.

Say yes for the love of god.

I stand, and her face lifts as she follows me. I cup her head and run my thumb over her jaw. "Just so we're clear, if you say no, I'll just kidnap you again."

Her eyes sparkle in response, humored by my words.

"Yes." Kyra finally says. "Yes, to marrying you. Yes, to you kidnapping me. And yes, to you making love to me as you did that first night, forever."

Source Creation Date: July 3, 2025, 4:34 am

Oh, god, yes. My girl likes to be watched.

I glance around us and at the lights from the few neighboring skyscrapers above us.

I can feel my eyes sparkle in excitement as I take her hand that's hanging at our side, lift it, and slide the enormous square yellow diamond onto her finger.

Mine.

"Oh my god, Maddox." She gasps, holding her hand out, admiring the multi-million-dollar ring.

We can admire that later. I have something even better in mind.

Kyra gasps again as I lower to my knees and rip the silk nightie right down the fucking middle.

"Not another one."

"Hold on to my shoulders." I growl, spreading her legs and thrusting my tongue inside her pussy.

"Oh fuck," she cries, almost collapsing. But I hold her thighs and keep at my task, sucking and nipping at her pink flesh. Sliding my hand between her legs, I plunge two fingers inside her.

"Shit." Kyra's voice is loud in the night air.

Over and over, I fuck her with my hand and mouth, until she is shuddering so hard I know she's on the edge. Then I stop, pulling out and standing up. I ignore her question and lift her onto a table.

“Lean back on your arms.”

She obeys.

“Good girl.”

“Please, Maddox. I need you.” She pleads as I pull out my hard cock and thrust deep inside her hot, wet pussy.

“You have me, little prisoner. Forever. Now suck my thumb and come around my thick fat cock. I want the world to hear you scream my name as they watch.”

As Kyra's body lights up like fireworks, I know I won't wait long to marry her.

My little prisoner is about to become my little wife.
