



# Daddy's Vengeance

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**Category:** Romance, Crime And Mafia, Action

**Description:** Vengeance is mine — and so is she.

I'm in Paris for one thing and one thing only. To destroy the man who murdered my baby cousin.

And Giorgio's pretty little maid is going to lead me right to him.

I just need to gain her trust first. At least, that's what I tell myself as I use her sweet body in every way I can imagine.

But when she cries out for Daddy with my marks all over her naughty bottom, I know there's no way I'm leaving this city without her. Or the vengeance I crossed an ocean to claim.

And god have mercy on anyone who tries to keep me from either.

**Total Pages (Source):** 53

# Page 1

*Source Creation Date: July 4, 2025, 6:10 am*

One

Cole

Nursing the subpar scotch I already regretted ordering, I watched my target attempt to ward off yet another sleazy would-be suitor from her spot at the bar. Not for the first time, I wondered what she was doing here of all places. This wasn't a place meant for sweet, soft women. It was meant for hard men, cold men, the kind of men women like her crossed the street to avoid.

Men like me.

It was almost a shame she worked for Giorgio. Under different circumstances, I would have enjoyed keeping her tied to my bed for a few days, completely at my mercy, before we went our separate ways. Business trips were always more enjoyable with some... company.

She was a stunner with her dark hair cascading in a sleek waterfall over one shoulder, leaving the other bare courtesy of the short, strapless dress she'd poured her slight curves into. When she sipped her whiskey, the red she'd painted on her thick, full lips left a stain on the glass. An image of those lips wrapped around my cock, her huge emerald eyes staring up at me popped into my head, forcing me to shift uncomfortably in my chair. Tipping back the remainder of my drink, I left my table and headed for the bar, unapologetically pushing between her and her pursuer.

"Excusez-moi," the man growled between clenched teeth.

“Vous êtes excusé,” I responded, dismissing him with a thoroughly American comeback I wasn’t sure he’d understand.

But apparently my sarcastic “You are excused” translated to French just fine, though he didn’t seem to appreciate my wit. Standing, he let loose a string of words I couldn’t quite catch with my limited grasp of his native tongue, but the challenge in his body language was enough. Bring it on, bastard. It had been a while since I’d been in a bar brawl, but I hadn’t been raised to back down from a fight. If it hadn’t been for the woman behind me, he’d already be kissing the filthy hardwood floor.

“That’s the extent of my French, my friend,” I lied. I could speak and understand a bit more, but he wasn’t worth the time or energy I’d have to put into translating.

The bartender sauntered over, a hard glint in his eyes as he tossed out a few words that agitated the man further. Apparently deciding he’d had enough, he slammed his glass on the bar before storming out, still muttering what I assumed were curses strong enough to make a sailor blush. Turning back to my target, I flashed a smile and slid onto the recently vacated stool beside her.

“Thank you.” Her voice was deeper than I’d expected, and her accent gave the flawless English a rounder, more guttural sound than one might hear from a native speaker.

“You’re welcome.” Lifting my tumbler, I nodded at the bartender for a refill before turning back to her. “He didn’t seem to be getting the picture.”

“Most of them do not,” she confirmed in a dry tone tinged with the resigned amusement of a woman who had experienced more than her fair share of unwanted advances.

With the refilled glass hovering near my lips, I studied her profile over the rim as she

lifted her own tumbler with steady hands. She didn't seem the least bit flustered by the confrontation. Perhaps I'd underestimated the little maid.

Deciding to push my luck, I took a slow sip of my scotch and let my gaze roam over the bare skin of her shoulder, the curve of her neck. It wasn't entirely an act to show interest when all I could focus on was what she might look like under that damn dress. "I can't say I blame him."

Finally turning on the stool to face me, she crossed one leg over the other and took another drink, her green eyes boldly meeting mine. "Is that so?"

Oh, yeah. I'd definitely underestimated this one. A familiar thrill pumped through my veins and sizzled across my skin. "Yeah." I let the corner of my lip lift in a smirk. "That's so."

"Hmmm." She mirrored my expression and added a bold sweep of her gaze down to my shoes and back up. "American, yes?"

"That obvious, huh?"

"Between the accent and the arrogance, oui."

If the insult hadn't been delivered with a teasing smile that made my cock ache, I might have been offended. "How about you? Are you local?" I asked, shifting on my stool in hopes of relieving some of the pressure.

"Yes. Unfortunately, I have not spent too much time outside of France." A sullen look crossed her face for a moment before she masked it with another smile. "It is not easy to travel on a maid's salary."

"A maid?" Show interest, draw them in, get them talking about themselves. Lessons

I'd learned from my family on how to get the information I needed from a mark.

"Excusez-moi," she said, her voice as strained as the apologetic smile she sent my way. She turned, too quickly, spilling her drink with her elbow. Eyes wide and a little wild, she jumped off the stool as the drink splashed over the side of the bar, landing on her dress. "Oh no! My apologies."

"No problem." Moving cautiously so I wouldn't spook her even further, I slid off my own stool before the sticky liquid hit my clothing as well.

Another apologetic smile. "I need to go clean up. I am very sorry; I am not usually so clumsy."

"Not a problem. Go get cleaned up, I'll be here."

The barkeep hurried over with a towel to sop up the mess, catching her attention long enough for me to gently slide the small purse from her shoulder as she hurried toward the bathrooms. The clingy material of her dress lovingly hugged an ass made for worshipping.

It really was a shame I'd have to kill her when the job was done.

## Page 2

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Adele

With my heart tapping wildly against my ribcage, I dashed off to the bathroom, hoping the interloper would be convinced by my helpless act. Even if he wasn't, finding nothing but my fake ID, my phone, and some cash in my purse should convince him. I didn't trust my own pickpocketing skills enough to try and slip his wallet from his ridiculously well-fitting jeans, but I knew another operative when I spotted one. Especially when said operative showed up at the same time as a huge break in my case.

And I would be damned if I was going to let some American cowboy ruin three years of undercover work because he'd made me at a damn bar.

When my dress was dry enough, if no less sticky, I headed back to the bar a little bit more level-headed. The American was no longer where I'd left him, and our seats were already occupied by others. I scanned the room until my gaze met his. With a cocky lift of his eyebrow, he gestured to the empty chair across from him at the small table he'd apparently commandeered while I was in the bathroom.

I patted my side, as if checking for my bag and was alarmed to find it gone. I snapped my head toward the bar then back to him. He held the black string between two fingers, my bag swinging freely in the air. After a deep sigh to show I was relieved to have found it, I joined him, settling into the chair opposite him.

"You should really be more careful with your things."

The low, teasing tone sent a shiver down my spine. Not because he was flirting with

me, but because of what lurked beneath the surface of his words. A warning, not unlike what I was used to hearing from the Doms at the club I frequented between assignments.

It had obviously been far too long since I'd been able to scene if a stranger at a bar was able to have such an effect on me.

"Merci," I said, allowing my voice to go a little breathless as though he'd just rescued me from certain doom. "I never leave my purse laying around. I do not know what is wrong with me tonight." Accepting the bag as he handed it to me, I popped it open and searched, more for the show of it than any real concern he'd taken anything.

Leaning back against his seat, the corner of his mouth kicked up in a smirk as he watched me inspect the contents. "I didn't steal anything, sweetheart."

"Oh!" I allowed a blush to warm my cheeks. "No, no, I would never... I apologize for any offense," I finished demurely, lowering my eyes to his chest and swallowing the bit of bile that rose in my throat from the overly submissive behavior.

"None taken. But how much have you had to drink tonight?"

Despite my best efforts, my temper flared, and I lifted my head to glare at him. "Unlike a certain cocky American, I know my limits."

Lifting his hands in a time-honored gesture of surrender, he sent me a relaxed smile. "Easy, sweetheart. I was just wondering since you said it's not like you to leave your purse laying around. My mama raised me to look out for the ladies in my life and at the moment, you qualify."

It was on the tip of my tongue to argue that I wasn't a lady, and I could take care of myself. But I remembered my role just in time and forced what I hoped passed for a

sheepish smile. “I apologize, again. I have had a hard day and I am feeling, how do you say, out of sorts? But I should not have lashed out at you when you have been so kind.”

There was a good bit of truth to the apology. Giorgio was a trying man on any given day, but he’d been particularly vexing lately. And even with the new intel earlier today, my operation had all but stalled, which left me feeling frustrated and irritable.

I did not, however, feel the least bit bad about snapping at him.

“No hard feelings, sweetheart.” The American nudged a tumbler of whiskey closer to me. “I took the liberty of ordering you another drink, if you’re interested.”

Letting a coy smile curve my lips, I lifted the glass in a toast. “Interested in a drink with a handsome man? How could I say no?”

He matched my gesture with a toast of his own and we both sipped in unison. The burn of the whiskey as it slid down my throat had me questioning again why I frequented this particular bar. I loved a good whiskey, but nothing they served here could be called “good” whiskey.

“I’m Cole, by the way.” That cocky smile flashed again, and it took every ounce of my willpower not to toss my drink in his face. Did that really work for him? Were there women out there who actually found it charming?

There probably were, and “Adele” would likely be one of them, so I gave him another pretty, flirty smile. “Adele.”

“Beautiful.”

Okay, maybe the American charm had some merit, judging by how my stomach



flipped at that single word. “Merci.”

“So, Adele. What do you like to do for fun, other than torture men in seedy bars?”

“I am not torturing anyone!”

“Please.” His gaze swept over my body, lingering on the shoulder left bare by the dress. I swore I could feel the heat of it on my skin, as if he’d physically touched me. “We both know there isn’t a man in this room who stands a chance with you, even though every single one of them would give their right nut for an hour of your time.”

“And you? What would you give?” Alarm bells rang in the back of my mind, telling me to back off. Going off with the cowboy or bringing him home with me was far more dangerous than a simple flirtation in a bar.

Then again, if I could convince him to take me back to whatever seedy hotel he’d shackled up in, perhaps I could learn more about him. At least figure out what agency he was with. And if I got a few half-decent orgasms out of the deal, well, it was about time my job came with a few... benefits.

Ignoring the alarm bells, I leaned into the flirtation, figuratively and literally. Cole mirrored my stance, moving in until our lips were a breath apart.

“Come back to my place and I’ll show you.”

It had either been far too long since I’d last spent the night with a man, or I’d vastly underestimated the American’s charm. His words sent a shiver down my spine, straight to the pulsing heat between my thighs. I’d been on the fence about actually leaving with him, but I leapt straight over it in that moment.

“All right. Show me, cowboy.”

## Page 3

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Two

Cole

Cowboy, huh? Grinning at the pretty little maid, I pushed away from the table and held out my hand for hers. She hesitated just long enough for me to see a hint of uncertainty flash across her face, but then her features smoothed out once again and she allowed me to pull her up out of the chair.

She tugged at her hand when she was on her feet, but instead of releasing it, I tucked her fingers into the crook of my elbow, trapping her. The look she shot me might have withered a weaker man, but I simply shrugged in response.

“Old habits,” I explained as I led her out into the night, the cool evening breeze cleansing the stale bar air from my lungs. “As I said, my mama raised me to be a gentleman.”

“Did she?”

Chuckling at the note of incredulity in her smoky voice, I leaned in, dropping my voice low enough for only her to hear. “I never said she did a good job of it, sweetheart.”

A soft hmmph was my only response, but I caught just the hint of a smile curving her lips before she turned her head.

We strolled in silence, the kind usually reserved for long-time lovers perfectly

content in each other's company. The air between us practically buzzed with sexual tension, but I couldn't detect even a hint of nerves in the woman by my side.

She was a bit of a mystery. By turns confident, almost calculating, and then sweet and shy, like she barely knew how to interact with a man. It was almost as though she were two different women, and I was fairly sure one of those women was purely an act. So, which one was the real Adele?

"This is us." Using my hold on her to guide our way, I turned toward the steps of my apartment building.

Her soft, shocked gasp nearly made me grin. "Merde. You are staying here?"

"Yes. I hope you'll find it up to your standards."

My teasing earned me another if-looks-could-kill glare. "I am sure I will make do, somehow."

There was obviously something wrong with me that I found her dry response so fucking sexy. Everything about her made me want to pull her over my knee and blister her ass until she was a sobbing, blubbering mess and then put her on her knees so she could issue a proper apology for her behavior. I could practically hear her crying out, begging Daddy to let her come as I fucked her every which way to Sunday.

My cock straining against the zipper of my jeans, I hurried us past the stone-faced doorman and straight to the elevators. God must have taken pity on me because we managed to have the cab to ourselves.

As soon as the doors closed on the lobby, I turned, pressing her up against the mirrored wall behind her. I captured her lips with mine, silently, greedily demanding

her surrender.

Instead, she battled with me, wrapping her arms around my neck and pulling me closer, each of us vying for dominance. Moving a hand to her hair, I gripped tightly, yanking her head back and sinking my teeth into the soft flesh of her neck.

Her shocked gasp broke the silence and her hips rocked forward, instinctively seeking my touch.

“Naughty,” I murmured, lifting my head to nip at her full bottom lip. “You aren’t in charge here, sweetheart.”

“I beg to differ.”

Before I could respond, a soft ding signaled that we had arrived on our floor. Releasing my hold on her hair, I grabbed her ass with both hands, lifting her so she could wrap her long, shapely legs around my waist.

“You Americans are so showy.” Despite the mocking tone, her voice caught, the breathless quality betraying her arousal.

“Give me about thirty seconds, and I’ll give you a show, sweetheart.”

It took less than that to carry her down the hall, fumble the key from my pocket, and shove the door open. As soon as I managed to kick it shut again behind us, I pinned her to the wall, capturing her mouth again. I could still taste the whiskey on her lips and her tongue as we devoured each other.

When we broke apart, each of us dragging in desperate gulps of air, I stepped away from the wall and stumbled to the bedroom. With her legs still wrapped around my waist, I fell backward onto the bed and rolled to pin her beneath me.

“Just so we’re clear, I plan on fucking you senseless tonight. So, you’d better tell me now if you had other ideas.”

A knowing, purely female smile curved her lips. “I hate to disappoint you, cowboy, but I believe it is I who will be fucking you senseless.”

“Guess we’ll just have to see who gets there first.”

The smug tilt of her grin was all the warning I had before she struck. With a swift scissoring of her legs, our positions flipped, and she was straddling me, her dress rucked up around her hips.

## Page 4

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“You were saying?”

Doing my best to hide my surprise, I raised an eyebrow. “Maybe you’re right where I want you, sweetheart.”

Her derisive snort ended on a gasp when I moved a hand between us, pressing my thumb against the gusset of her panties. When her eyelids fluttered closed, I took advantage of her momentary distraction to flip us back to our original positions.

Eyes flying open, she glared up at me. “You don’t fight fair, cowboy.”

“All is fair in love and war, baby. Now, be a good girl and let Daddy take care of you.”

Adele

Ashocking flash of need followed Cole’s growled command, and I nearly came on the spot. I’d never called a man Daddy, even though I’d played with a few who identified as such here and there. But in that moment, with his lips lighting little fires all along my skin as he worked his way down my body, it just felt right.

“Tell me what you like, sweetheart.” Strong, calloused hands slipped beneath my dress, tugging the skimpy black satin panties over my hips and down my thighs. “Do you want Daddy to eat your pretty little pussy until you scream?”

Oh, god. “I... I...” Confused, at war with myself, my words trailed off as my hips instinctively lifted, seeking his touch.

This was not going at all how I'd imagined. When we'd left the bar, I'd had a very specific plan: a quick bounce, wait for him to roll over and start snoring, then poke around his apartment for clues about his real identity before sneaking back to the dingy hole in the wall I currently called home.

Nowhere in my plans had I accounted for a man who tapped into the submissive inside of me so quickly and easily. It was equal parts terrifying and exhilarating.

One night. I deserved one night of pleasure after three years of near celibacy and complete devotion to my job, right? And it really didn't change my plans at all. I could still wait for him to fall asleep after and do a quick recon of his apartment.

I would just enjoy the fuck out of him, first.

"Yes," I finally said, rolling my hips again in a silent plea for him to continue.

His soft hum of approval vibrated against my skin, and I nearly wept with need. "Ask me nicely."

"What?" He couldn't possibly mean...

"Say 'Please eat my pussy and make me come, Daddy'."

Merde. If he kept speaking to me in that teasing but commanding tone, he wouldn't even need to touch me to make me come. But although I wanted nothing more than to have his mouth on me, the desire to spar, to push back, to be forced into compliance rose up inside of me. "I am not saying that."

"Oh, I think you will."

Heat pulsed between my thighs at the threat in his voice. Pushing up on my elbows, I

met his fiery gaze head on. “Make me, cowboy.”

I had no idea what to expect. Part of me desperately wished he’d roll me onto my stomach and paddle my ass until I broke down and obeyed. Maybe he’d even use the thick leather belt around his waist. God, it had been so long since anyone had left his mark on me and the hunger for it was like a living thing inside of me, clawing at my insides, desperate to be fed.

But he didn’t spank me. To my utter disappointment, he pushed his hands up under the hem of my dress and slowly inched it higher. And then his mouth was on me. Not on my aching pussy, where I so desperately wanted him, but right on the bit of skin he’d just exposed.

The touch of his lips sent a shot of electric need straight to my clit and I groaned, rolling my hips again, another silent entreaty for the release I was being denied.

“Ask me,” he murmured, before pressing another hot kiss to my opposite hip.

“No.” Even as the refusal left my lips, a voice in the back of my mind screamed at me to stop being so fucking stubborn.

“Have it your way, sweetheart.”

Inch by torturous inch he pushed the dress up, exposing me to his touch. And each newly uncovered bit of skin was worshiped with his lips, his tongue, until every nerve in my body had been set on fire.

I finally cracked when the fabric of my dress slid up over my breasts. Lowering his head, he traced the outline of my bra with his tongue, and I nearly wept with frustration.



Writhing under him, out of my mind with need, I begged. “Please.”

“Please, what, sweetheart?”

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Despite being so fucking turned on it was bordering on painful, the words stuck in my throat. “Please, Cole.”

“As pretty as my name sounds on your lips, you know that’s not what I want to hear.”

Nudging the satin of my bra to the side, he took my nipple in his mouth and gave it a quick, hard pull.

And I broke.

“Please! Please, Daddy, make me come!”

A low growl rumbled in his chest a moment before he shifted, shoving my legs wide. And then my mind went blank, and all I knew was pleasure as he feasted. Lips, teeth, and tongue teased and nipped, coiling the tension inside of me tighter and tighter. Lacing my fingers through his thick hair, I bucked against his mouth, urging him on.

Until I shattered. Pleasure, sharp and molten hot raced through my veins and my scream of release echoed in my ears.

I was dimly aware of him leaving the bed, the sound of foil rustling. And then he was inside of me, filling me.

Fucking me.

He wasn’t gentle. Each thrust of his cock inside of me was a brutal claiming, scraping my already sensitive nerves raw.

“Again,” he commanded, and even as I shook my head from side to side, I felt it building inside of me once more.

“Again,” he repeated, slamming his cock home. “Be a good girl and come for Daddy.”

The sound of skin slapping against skin and our rough, ragged breathing filled the room as he drove us both closer and closer to the edge. Stars exploded behind my eyelids as we went flying together.

Collapsing on the bed beside me, Cole drew me in, settling my cheek on his chest as we both fought for air. “That was fucking incredible,” he said, pressing a kiss to the top of my head.

“Mmm. It was okay. I think we can do better.”

“Brat.” Amusement colored his tone. “Anyone ever tell you that you need your ass spanked on a regular basis?”

“It’s been mentioned.” Yawning widely, I snuggled into his side and let my eyes drift closed. I just needed a few minutes of rest, and then I’d finish what I came here to do.

## Page 6

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Three

Cole

Carefully sliding my arm from beneath the adorably snoring pile of woman in my bed, I crept to where she'd dropped her purse during our wild ride to the bed. Bag in hand, I paused to watch her as she slept, arms and legs akimbo and her hair a tangled mess.

Beautiful.

Shaking off the unsettling rush of emotion the sight filled me with, I grabbed my phone from the pocket of my jeans and slipped from the bedroom, quietly shutting the door behind me. The apartment I was renting came with a small office, so I locked myself in before swiping my phone open to make the call.

"Mikey."

I couldn't help but grin at the gruff, irritated tone. "It's Cole. I have a job for you."

"Of course you do," he answered with a snort. "You ever call just to fucking chat? No. What's the job?"

"I need you to dig up everything you can on someone. Adele Bernard." Pulling her ID from her bag, I rattled off the address listed. "She works for Giorgio, but I need to know if she works for Giorgio."

Before our spectacular fuck session, I'd simply brushed her off as another one of Giorgio's maids. But after tangling with her, I couldn't shake the feeling there was something more to her, and I'd be damned if my mission was going to get derailed because I let my cock do the thinking.

"When you say everything, you mean normal everything or deep dive everything?"

"Deep dive."

"Got it. Going to take a couple of days, and there's a premium for international."

It was my turn to snort. "There's always a premium with you."

"That's because I'm the best."

"Just get me the information. And tell Aunt Scarlett I said hello."

"I do that and Mama's just gonna start hounding me about when you're coming 'round for dinner."

Chuckling at the whine in his tone, I shoved Adele's ID back in her purse. "I'll call you on the plane when I'm done here, and we'll make plans. Deal?"

"Deal."

With that chore completed, I made my way to the kitchen for a bottle of water. I downed one while standing in front of the open fridge, then grabbed two more. If I was lucky, maybe I could rouse the little maid for another round before I crashed for the night.

My cock twitched at the thought, already coming back to life. There was no denying

I'd enjoyed having her in my bed, far more than I'd expected to. Where I'd been anticipating a pleasant, if boring, romp between the sheets, I'd found a tiger instead. A woman willing to go toe to toe with me until she finally caved to my demands.

If Mikey didn't unearth anything alarming, maybe I wouldn't have to kill her after all. The thought of having her in my bed night after night certainly wasn't an unpleasant one. And when we eventually tired of each other, I'd be perfectly willing to set her up in a condo somewhere stateside and ensure she was comfortable until she was able to build a new life for herself.

Grinning at the idea of having a warm, feisty woman to fill my nights, I dropped her purse on the floor again and set the bottles of water on my nightstand. I crawled onto the mattress and tugged the sheet from her body, chuckling when she growled in protest.

Rolling her onto her back, I nipped at the shell of her ear. "Wake up, sweetheart. Daddy wants to play."

Adele

I woke to sunlight on my face and the smell of something I couldn't quite place filling the air. Rolling, I stretched, relishing the twinge of my well-used muscles as memories of the night before began to replay in my mind.

Merde!

Scrambling to sit up, I scanned the unfamiliar bedroom and willed the fog to clear from my brain. The bar. The American. Hot, frantic, filthy sex. Twice.

And, judging by how bright it was outside, the best night's sleep I'd gotten in years.

So much for my brilliant plan.

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Still, if I moved quietly enough, I might be able to poke around the bedroom a bit. As silently as possible, I slid from the bed and tiptoed over to his nightstand. Gripping the handle on the drawer, I slowly pulled it open.

Nothing. Well, a box of condoms, thank god. But nothing to tell me who he actually was.

My foot brushed up against something and I glanced down, inwardly crowing when I spotted his jeans. Crouching down, I tugged his wallet from the back pocket and opened it.

Cole Porter, according to his driver's license. An address in Chicago. A few credit cards, including a black American Express that had my eyes widening.

What the hell kind of a cop was he?

The sound of footsteps approaching caught my attention, and I shoved the wallet back into his pants and launched myself onto the bed, pulling the covers up under my armpits like they always did in the movies. The attempt at modesty made me feel foolish, but it was better than the complete and utter vulnerability of being naked.

"Well, hey there, sleepyhead." Carrying a tray laden with food, Cole pushed the bedroom door open and grinned. "I was beginning to think you'd sleep all day."

"Apologies. I do not usually sleep so late."

"I'll take that as a compliment." A smug sort of satisfaction shone in his eyes as he



settled the tray across my lap. “I wasn’t sure what kind of breakfast you usually eat, so there’s a bit of everything.”

He wasn’t exaggerating. There were the more American options of bacon and perfectly fried eggs, along with the more French breakfast of fresh fruit, and tartines with butter and an array of jams. And, of course, croissants. Because what American could have breakfast in France without croissants?

Under his unnervingly watchful eye, I added milk and sugar to one of the mugs of coffee and held it up. “I’m good with this. I really need to get going soon.”

His jaw tightened, sending a swarm of butterflies into a frenzy in my stomach. “You need to eat something.”

Resisting the urge to roll my eyes, I sipped my coffee. And nearly wept with joy at the rich, creamy flavor.

Money may not be able to buy happiness, but it bought really great fucking coffee. And that was almost the same thing as far I was concerned.

I allowed myself a moment to close my eyes and simply savor the experience. Whatever his deal was—because now that I was thinking clearly and wasn’t distracted by my libido, it was clear Cole Porter was not an American operative—the man had excellent taste in coffee.

“Interesting.”

Opening my eyes at the amusement in his voice, I cocked an eyebrow. “What is?”

“You make those same noises when I’m eating your pussy.”

Years of training, both personally and professionally, kept me from spitting coffee all over his bare chest. Barely. “That is very inappropriate.”

“Very,” he agreed with a sly grin. “But accurate.”

Taking one last sip of coffee, I forced myself to set the mug on the stand by the bed. “I really do need to get going.”

“After you eat.”

“I do not usually eat breakfast during the week.”

“Well, today you do.”

There was a note of warning under the cool, easy words. And maybe if it hadn’t been so damn long since I’d been under someone’s command, maybe if my lady bits weren’t still so beautifully sore from the fucking of a lifetime he’d given me the night before, I might have been able to heed it.

Jutting my chin out, I curled my lip in the brattiest smirk I could manage. “No. And you cannot make me.”

Cole stepped closer, crowding me, and my breath caught in my chest as I was forced to tilt my head back to keep eye contact. “I could make you. Would you like to know how?”

“You could try.” I was tempting fate and I knew it, but when his eyes hardened and he grasped my chin between his thumb and forefinger, there was no backing down.

“Just so there is no misunderstanding, I will give you three choices. One, you can sit and eat your breakfast like a good girl and then you may finish your coffee. Two, you

can get dressed and I will call a car to take you home and that will be the end of it. Or three”—his grip on my chin tightened and he forced my head back further—“you can continue being a disobedient little brat, and I will put you over my knee and spank the sass right out of you. Which is it going to be?”

Jerking my face from his hold, I stood and nearly giggled at the flash of disappointment in his eyes. But it was quickly replaced by an unmistakable heat when I picked up my cup instead of my dress. Our gazes locked, and I took a slow, deliberate sip of coffee.

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“The spanking it is, then,” he said, reaching for me. Grabbing my upper arm with one hand, he plucked the coffee from my grasp with the other and returned the mug to the bedside table.

My heart slammed up against my ribcage as the reality of what was happening hit me. “Um, Cole, this isn’t necessary. I’ll eat breakfast.”

“Too late, sweetheart.” Pulling a straight-backed chair from the vanity on the opposite side of the room, he sat and tugged me down over his lap all in one fell swoop. It was a position I had never actually been in despite the numerous spankings I’d endured over the years. I felt vulnerable in a way I couldn’t remember feeling before, like a naughty child who’d been caught misbehaving, which was exactly how I imagined he wanted me to feel.

His next words confirmed my suspicions. “Naughty little girls who don’t listen to Daddy get their bottoms spanked. Isn’t that right?”

Was he giving me an out? If I said “no” would he let me walk away?

Maybe he would... but I honestly didn’t want to find out.

“Yes... Daddy.”

And with that, I sealed my fate. A strong arm wrapped around my middle, holding me in place while he rubbed a hand over my naked backside. It seemed impossible that my body could want more after we’d so thoroughly enjoyed each other the night before, but my pussy spasmed at his touch.

“Good girl.”

The hand on my ass disappeared, and a moment later a resounding crack echoed around the room. Pain blossomed where his hand had landed, and I sucked in air. But before I could scream or cry out, he repeated the action on the opposite cheek and the breath stuck in my lungs.

Somehow, over the last few years, I’d forgotten how much a simple spanking could hurt.

And Cole wasn’t playing. Despite the teasing tone he’d had while scolding me, he spanked hard and he spanked fast, lighting my entire backside on fire before I could fully process that first swat.

“Ow, ow, ow, ow!” I finally managed to gasp out. “Stop! Ow!”

But instead of a reprieve from my punishment, all my protest earned me was a lecture.

“Coffee is not an acceptable breakfast, little girl. You have a physically demanding job, and your body needs fuel. Am I making myself clear?”

As if to punctuate his lecture, he targeted the extra-sensitive crease between my ass and thighs, and I howled at the intensity of those well-placed swats. “Yes! Perfectly clear!”

“Are you going to argue with me the next time I give you an instruction?”

“No, Daddy!” An impossible to keep promise, as I suspected we both knew, but in that moment, I was willing to say just about anything to end my punishment.

Two more extra-hard swats to my sit-spots capped off my spanking and then I was on his lap, in his arms as he rocked me gently.

“Are you ready to be Daddy’s good girl?” he asked softly, pressing his lips to my temple in a gesture so tender it made my heart ache.

“Yes, Sir.” I allowed myself a pitiful snuffle, even though I wasn’t anywhere close to crying. As much as the spanking had hurt, it was going to take a lot more than that to bring me to tears.

“Good. Now, why don’t you go eat something and then you can finish your coffee.”

Now that the spanking was over and the pain in my backside had ebbed, I was acutely aware of another part of my anatomy that was throbbing. Shifting, I straddled his lap, looping my arms around his neck.

“Can it wait just a few minutes longer?” Peeking up at him through my lashes, I pushed my bottom lip out in a pout. “Please, Daddy?”

It took a lot longer than a few minutes and every bit of our breakfast was cold by the time we got to it. But it was more than worth the delay.

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Four

Cole

“You really don’t need to do this.”

Biting back a sigh of aggravation, I glanced over at Adele, who was currently tugging at the hem of her dress as if she could make it longer through sheer force of will. “I am not letting you walk home alone, so just drop it.”

With an obviously irritated huff, she abandoned her dress and crossed her arms over her chest, turning her head to glare out the window.

Unable to resist teasing her, I leaned in and dropped my voice so the driver couldn’t hear me. “What do you think happens to little girls who throw temper tantrums?”

Pink blossomed on her cheeks, reminding me of the color of her bottom earlier, wriggling and writhing over my knee during her spanking. “Fine, I will drop it.”

Her accent thickened when she was annoyed. And, as I’d learned last night, when she was turned on. My cock hardened, despite having had her again twice this morning, once after her spanking and again in the shower. “I asked you a question, Adele. I would like an answer.”

Whipping her head around, her eyes widened with shock. But there was a hint of excitement there, just as there had been when she’d challenged me that morning.

You can't make me.

That same excitement burned in my veins and if the car I'd ordered for us had come with any semblance of privacy, I would have taken full advantage of it. Still... there were ways to convince naughty little girls to obey, even in public. Running my hand up her thigh, I gave the delicate skin a sharp pinch.

She winced and inhaled sharply, but other than that, she barely reacted at all. A strange sort of pride filled me when she shot me a glare.

"Answer the question, sweetheart. What happens to little girls who throw temper tantrums?"

Glancing at the driver, who was doing an admirable job of pretending to not pay us a lick of attention, she lowered her voice. "They get spanked."

"That's right." Sliding my hand even higher, I pushed a finger inside of her. I'd confiscated her panties earlier, claiming they'd been lost during our activities the night before. "But good girls get rewarded. Are you a good girl, Adele?"

"Yes, Daddy."

Barely a whisper, but good enough for me. "If you can be quiet, Daddy will let you come again. But you have to be perfectly silent."

The only response I received was a slight widening of her legs, allowing me easier access. From the neck up, she appeared perfectly serene, if a bit annoyed. Her breaths were quicker and a little shallower than usual, but otherwise, nobody glancing at us would have any idea what was going on from the waist down.

Between her thighs, I stroked the sensitive bundle of nerves inside her soaking wet



pussy, while the heel of my hand pressed against her clit. Her hand gripped my forearm, her nails digging into my skin as I finger-fucked her to release.

She came with a slight jerk of her shoulders, her velvety inner walls clamping down on my fingers as I milked her orgasm for all it was worth.

By the time the car parked in front of her apartment, her breathing had returned to normal, and her dress rearranged to cover her nakedness. Linking my hand with hers, I lifted her fingers to my lips and brushed a kiss across her knuckles. “I’d like to see you again. Dinner tonight?”

“Ah... I might have plans. But I will let you know.”

“You don’t have my number.”

Flushing that adorable shade of pink again, she tugged her hand from mine and pulled out a cheap phone. A surge of annoyance surprised me. I wanted her to have the best money could buy. Not this rundown apartment in the seedy part of town with a phone from the early aughts.

“Why are you scowling at me?”

Her question shook me out of my funk, and I forced an easy smile. “I was just contemplating what it would take to convince you to let me buy you a new phone.”

“Perhaps we should start with dinner and see where things take us, yes? Your number?”

I rattled it off for her to plug into her phone.

Tucking her phone back into her bag, she sent me a surprisingly shy smile. I’d have

thought after the events of last night, there wouldn't be anything for her to feel shy about, but obviously I was wrong. "I have some errands to run, but if they do not take too long, I will give you a call."

"Sounds good," I lied. What sounded good was taking her back to my apartment, tying her to the bed, and having my way with her until we were both too exhausted to move.

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But despite my growing feelings for the pretty little maid, I let her climb out of the car and rush into her rundown apartment building. I had a mission, and we both had a part to play. And nothing, not even sweet, sexy, eminently fuckable Adele Bernard was going to stop me from killing Giorgio Bianchi.

Adele

Inside my apartment, which felt even dingier after having spent a night in the lap of luxury, I pulled my phone from my purse and hit the one number I had programmed into the speed dial.

Voicemail.

“Goddammit.” Hitting the button to end the call, I tossed the phone on the bed and pulled my dress up over my head.

Where the hell was Pierce? It wasn’t unusual for us to go for weeks at a time without speaking, but he had never failed to answer when I’d called him. And this was the second time in less than twenty-four hours I’d called without a response.

Something was wrong. Whether that something had anything to do with Cole Porter, I wasn’t sure. Which was exactly why I needed to get in touch with Pierce, so I could get some damn intel.

It was entirely possible we’d met because Cole had decided to go slumming and get a drink in a dive bar. But the timing of it didn’t sit right with me. The same day I overhear Giorgio making plans for a major weapons deal with the Russians, I get

picked up in a bar by a ridiculously rich American?

It was too big of a coincidence.

Plopping onto my bed, I pulled my computer onto my lap and opened the lid. A basic internet search shouldn't send up too many red flags, and even if it did, I could easily play it off as just wanting to know more about him. Doing my due diligence. After all, as a single woman living in one of the largest cities in Europe, didn't I owe it to myself to know more about this man if I was going to be spending time with him?

The internet, however, proved to be rather unhelpful. Cole Porter, thirty-six, born and raised in Chicago, was as squeaky clean as they came. No criminal record, without so much as a hint of impropriety even during his college years. His money was family money, but he'd managed to grow the family fortune through some kind of financial voodoo. Again, without even a whisper of scandal or anything nefarious.

Which still didn't explain what he'd been doing in a seedy bar in Paris, picking up a maid. Men like him generally had no problem finding women more suited to their lifestyle. So, why me? Was it simply a desire to go slumming with a woman beneath his station?

Or did he know more than he was letting on, and I was simply a pawn in a larger, more dangerous game?

Frustrated by the utter lack of anything to explain his presence, I dug deeper. It wasn't until I branched out on the family tree that I hit gold.

Drive by shooting. Nearly a dozen dead, including a girl who hadn't even seen her sixteenth birthday. Suspected gang violence, an innocent family caught in the crosshairs of America's war on drugs and poverty.

There was nothing in the news to even hint that the family was involved in any kind of criminal enterprise. But there was a connection. The owner of the restaurant, the father of the girl who was murdered, had a sister. And the sister had a son.

And that son happened to be in Paris, hitting on a woman investigating a mafia enterprise with bases around the world. Including a chapter in Chicago.

Coincidences, my ass.

Picking up my phone, I called Pierce again, but still there was no answer. “Call me,” I barked into the phone when his voicemail answered. It went against protocol, but so did leaving me high and dry in the middle of a goddamn operation.

If Cole was in Paris for revenge, Giorgio would know soon enough, if he didn’t already. And if Cole’s presence spooked him and he went underground again, the last three years of my life were for nothing. Weighing my options carefully, I hit enter on the newest entry in my phone.

“Cole? It’s Adele.”

Five

Cole

Hidden in the shadows of a small back alley, I watched the gates of Giorgio's compound slowly swing open, admitting a long town car. Flashy and unnecessary, and so very Giorgio.

Everything in me was chomping at the bit to rush over and take him out. The highly illegal firearm strapped under my jacket would get the job done, but it would be loud and messy and there was no guarantee I'd survive the encounter. And I'd come too damn far to screw the pooch now.

Laying a hand over my chest, I rubbed the outline of the solid gold cross that hung beneath my shirt. The action helped to ground me, easing the fury boiling in my veins, even as it renewed the ache I'd lived with for almost a year.

Natalie. My sweet, beautiful, smart as a fucking whip baby cousin.

The light of my life, snuffed out in an instant.

I could still hear the sound of glass shattering, of my aunt's screams echoing in the night as she held her daughter's lifeless body in her arms. Could still smell the metallic scent of blood permeating the air, my own mixing with what had already been spilled as I crawled across the broken glass to my family.

My phone vibrated against my thigh, jolting me out of my memories and back into

the present. Shoving my hand into my pocket, I pulled it out and frowned at the unfamiliar number on the display.

“Porter.”

“Cole? It’s Adele.”

Pushing thoughts of vengeance and blood from my mind, I focused on her sweet, hesitant voice. “Hey, sweetheart. Miss me already?”

“Ahh... yes. A little.”

I could practically hear her blushing through the phone. Leaning back against the brick wall behind me, I grinned at the thought of her, all pretty and flushed, pacing her apartment as we spoke. “I miss you too, sweetheart. How is that sweet little pussy of yours feeling?”

“Cole! That is not why I called. You are very... very... effronté.”

I wasn’t a hundred percent sure of the exact translation, but I got the meaning and my grin widened in response. Flustering her was turning into one of my favorite pastimes. “Sorry, sweetheart. What were you calling for?”

“Well, maybe now I do not want to tell you.”

“Adele.” I let the warning tone slip into my voice. “Tell Daddy why you called.”

“You do not play fair,” she answered with a huff. An image of her, sitting on her bed, squirming at my commands flashed into my mind, and once again, my cock was straining at the zipper of my jeans. It should have been impossible to want her again so badly so soon, but my hormones apparently hadn’t gotten the memo.

“I know. Tell me why you called, or I’ll get a car to take me back to your apartment and you can answer the question with a red, hot bottom.”

“Dinner,” she blurted out. “I was calling about dinner.”

“Did you finish your errands already?” A quick glance at my watch confirmed less than an hour had passed since I’d dropped her off. She’d made it sound like she’d had a full day planned, but perhaps she’d only said that so I would leave her alone. The thought amused me more than it annoyed me, but she didn’t have to know that. Any reason to get her gorgeous ass back over my knee worked for me.

“Errands?”

Naughty little brat. “Yes. Your errands. You said you couldn’t commit to dinner when I dropped you off because you had errands to run. Or did you lie to Daddy?”

“I might have... exaggerated a tiny bit,” she admitted after a drawn-out silence.

“Hmmm. Do good girls tell lies, Adele?”

The hitch in her breath came through the phone loud and clear and I had to bite back a moan. God, this woman might be the death of me if Giorgio didn’t get to me first.

“N-no, Daddy.”

“No, they do not. I’ll be at your apartment to pick you up at seven. We can discuss your punishment then. And Adele?”

“Yes?” Her tone was sulky, and I could clearly see her face in my mind, her bottom lip in a full pout. The image only made me more eager to get to the end of the day so I could see it in person.



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“No panties. I want you bare the rest of the day, to remind you of me and what’s going to happen when I get there. Understood?”

A quiet sigh came through the phone ahead of her reluctant response. “Yes, Sir.”

“Good girl. I’ll see you tonight.”

Adele

Standing in front of my mirror, I tugged at the hem of my dress, willing it to lengthen. I really should have done laundry today. Maybe then I wouldn’t be stuck in a dress that would show Paris all of my naughty bits if I forgot to bend at the knees.

All day, I’d been acutely aware of my nakedness, first under my pajama bottoms as I’d cleaned and done some more digging on my date for the evening. Other than the connection to the massacre last year, I hadn’t found anything to suggest Cole Porter was anything other than an upstanding citizen who paid his taxes and donated loads of cash to various charities.

All I had was my gut. And my gut was rarely wrong.

Which made my desire to please him all the more baffling. I tried to tell myself I was playing a part. Adele would be eager to please, and I was Adele for the time being. It was true enough to ease my conscience, but I couldn’t deny the very real attraction between us.

Or my very real reaction to Cole’s natural dominance.

Merde. Without the benefit of my underwear, that very real reaction was currently dripping down the inside of my thigh. If I didn't get my hormones under control, it was going to be a long, messy night.

Just as I finished cleaning myself up, a knock on the door nearly had me gushing again. How did he make a simple knock sound so commanding?

Taking a deep breath to steady myself, I slipped into my "Adele" role as much as I could and opened the door. "Hi."

A smile that could only be described as wolfish spread across his face. "You look good enough to eat, sweetheart." Stepping into the apartment, he closed the door behind him. "But only if you're a good girl."

I told myself I only let the blush heat my cheeks because I knew he would expect it. "Yes, Daddy."

Fire lit in his eyes and then his hands were on me, sliding under my dress to cup my ass, and his mouth was claiming mine. All I could do was cling to him as the pounding waves of need and want threatened to sweep me out onto a sea of madness.

"Good girl," he growled against my lips, his large hands kneading my bare ass. "On your knees."

I hit the floor before he finished the command, my mouth practically watering. Never in my life had I been so hungry for a man's cock.

But when I reached for the zipper on his slacks, he swatted my hands away. "Arms behind your back. You aren't in control here, sweetheart."

Playing the part of the sweet, eager submissive, I obeyed and positioned myself per

his instructions.

Freeing his cock from his pants, Cole palmed the shaft and gave it a few quick, hard strokes. Merde. Was it my imagination or was it much larger than it had been the night before? Perhaps I was only noticing now because it was literally right in front of my face, and I was helpless to stop him from taking his pleasure however he saw fit.

“Open.”

My lips parted of their own accord at the growled command, and he guided his cock to my mouth. I bobbed my head forward, but his hand caught in my hair, holding me still. With a quick flex of his hips, he thrust his cock into my mouth.

It clicked, then, what he wanted. More than just the pleasure of a quick blowjob before dinner, he wanted to use me. This was about teaching me a lesson as much as it was about him getting his rocks off.

You’re not in charge here, sweetheart.

I focused on that simple phrase as he fucked my mouth, and everything else fell away. For a few, blissful minutes, I wasn’t an agent investigating one of the most notorious criminals of the 21st century. I wasn’t even a woefully naïve maid being wooed by a dangerously sexy foreigner.

All I was... was his.

A peace I hadn’t felt in years settled over me and I was practically floating by the time his cock swelled inside my mouth and his cum poured down my throat.

“Swallow, sweetheart. And then you can lick Daddy’s cock clean.”

I obeyed, even though I knew it would make my stomach churn a bit. I never had been one of those women who truly loved giving head and swallowing it down. But I did it for him without complaint, and then I licked every trace of it from his cock before he pulled me away.

“Good girl.” Taking my hands, he pulled me to my feet and brushed a tender, surprisingly chaste kiss across my forehead. “Go bend over the back of your couch so we can finish getting you ready for dinner.”

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My brain struggled to make the connection between his instruction and his reasoning.  
“What?”

“Couch, sweetheart. Just do as Daddy says.”

Follow orders. I could do that. I was good at following orders.

Well, sometimes.

Still floating on the high from the quickie blowjob, I made my way over to the couch and draped myself over the back as instructed. The hem of my dress rode up to my hips, fully exposing all my private bits to him.

“Beautiful,” he murmured, running a hand over my naked backside. “Now, let’s have a little chat. Why did you lie to me about having errands to run today?”

Well, crap. Why had I lied? I could barely remember my own name at the moment, with his hands on me. “I don’t know.”

“Hmmm. And what do you think is an appropriate punishment for a naughty little girl who tells lies for no good reason?”

“A spanking?” I asked, secretly hoping it was the correct answer.

“I think you might enjoy that a little too much.” A plastic snapping sound caught my attention a moment before something cool dribbled between my bottom cheeks. “Has anyone ever fucked this pretty little bottom before?”

“N-no, Daddy.”

A soft whimper escaped my lips when he pushed the tip of a slick finger inside of me.

“Good. I like the idea of being the first.”

Merde.

His finger pushed in further and I forced myself to relax. Despite my backside’s virgin status, I was no stranger to anal play and butt plugs. I knew enough to bear down so my bottom would more easily accept the intrusion.

“Good girl.” His words were practically a purr, and I could feel my arousal coating my thighs once more. “Have you worn a plug before?”

“Yes, Sir.”

“In public?”

“No, Sir.” Unless one counted a club as public, but I didn’t think sweet, innocent Adele would have been to those types of places, so I kept my answer free of any qualifications that might give me away.

“Well, I guess tonight is going to be full of firsts for you, then.” A second finger slipped in beside the first, stretching me open with a bite of pain that had my pussy throbbing.

“Daddy...” I allowed myself to whine, a pitiful, needy sound I’d never made before. Begging wasn’t something I was accustomed to, and on the rare occasion I did beg, I never whined. But it felt so right under the circumstances, and with every twist of his fingers I was sliding deeper and deeper into my role.

“What do you need, baby? Do you need to come with Daddy’s fingers in your tight little bottom hole?”

Need was too calm a word for what I felt in that moment. I was desperate, aching with the wanting of him. “Yes, Daddy, please!”

His fingers slid from me and a moment later, something much harder and less forgiving pressed against my entrance. Bit by bit, he worked the plug inside of me, stretching my muscles until I thought he might tear me in two.

But then the plug slid home and my muscles clamped down around the slim neck. I wiggled my hips, both with the hope of enticing him to give me the release I was so desperate for and to test the weight of the plug inside of me.

Cupping my ass with one hand, his fingertips digging into the sensitive flesh, Cole leaned down to whisper in my ear, his words harsh and guttural in comparison to the sweet, teasing tone from earlier. “Naughty girls who tell stories don’t get to come until Daddy says so. If you are a good girl the rest of the night, I may allow you to come when I fuck your bottom later. Until then, let your wet, needy little pussy remind you of why you’re being punished.”

I wanted to beg, to kick my legs and scream at the unfairness of it, but instinct told me all that would earn me was a red and possibly welted ass, and no orgasms. So I allowed myself a small pout, but nothing more. “Yes, Daddy.”

“Good girl.”

Six

Cole

Watching Adele squirm in her seat and glance about the restaurant to see if anyone was noticing her behavior was possibly the most fun I'd had with a woman in years. The blush on her cheeks never quite faded, and every time it seemed like it might, she would shift in her seat and the color would bloom bright and pink again.

I found myself torn between wanting to whisk her away back to my apartment to have my way with her and prolonging her torment for my own perverse enjoyment. Both options appealed in their own way.

As I was toying with the idea of ordering dessert for the sole purpose of keeping her on edge just a bit longer, her gaze caught on something over my shoulder and her spine stiffened.

"That son of a whore," she muttered, her eyes narrowing dangerously.

Gone was my sweet, shy little maid. The woman across from me more resembled the wildcat I'd taken to bed the night before, but instead of passion, it was fury lighting her eyes.

What the hell was happening?

"Sweetheart, if looks could kill, someone would be dead on the floor right now."



My words seemed to jolt her back to reality and she sent me a sheepish smile. “I am very sorry. I... saw someone I was not expecting to see this evening.”

“Usually when a woman gets that riled up about someone she hasn’t seen in a while, there’s history. Old boyfriend?” It was the easiest and most likely answer, but the thought of her with another man filled me with a rage I’d previously only felt for one man. Although some corner of my brain knew it was illogical, I wanted to track down every man who had ever dared to lay a hand on my girl and cut off any part of him that had touched any part of her.

Her gaze flicked back to the side, to whoever had caught her attention in the first place and her mouth twisted into a grimace. “Ah, something like that, I suppose. Would you excuse me for a moment? I need to use the ladies’ room.”

“Of course.” Leaning back in my chair, I sipped from the single glass of wine I’d allowed for each of us. I wasn’t sure exactly what was going on, but I was absolutely certain of one thing.

My little girl was going to learn a harsh lesson about lying to her Daddy.

Adele

Clutching my handbag, I made a beeline for the ladies’ room, swerving at the last possible second to duck through the kitchen doors. I held my head high, eyes forward, moving swiftly through the crowded, noisy space as if I belonged. People rarely questioned you as long as you moved with confidence. Working Undercover 101.

Outside, I pulled my phone from my purse and hit the speed dial.

Voicemail. Again.

Fury boiled up inside of me until I could no longer contain it. Pacing the back alley, I called him every foul name I could think of until I'd exhausted my extensive vocabulary of swear words in every language I knew.

When I felt as though I had myself under control again, I turned and pulled on the kitchen door.

Locked.

Merde.

I knocked a few times to no avail. Admitting defeat, I hurried out of the alley. Hopefully, I could slip inside again without Cole realizing I'd come in through the front door.

But luck was not on my side. Turning the corner onto the street, I crashed straight into a wall of muscle.

Grabbing a hold of my arms to steady me, Cole smiled, but there wasn't an ounce of warmth in the gesture. "There's my naughty girl."

Desire pooled in my belly at the growled greeting. "Um. Hi. I was just... getting some fresh air."

"The car is waiting for us," was his only answer as he turned, slipping an arm around my waist and guiding me to the waiting vehicle. Tonight, he'd hired a limo and I knew from the ride to the restaurant we would have plenty of privacy during the drive back to his apartment.

I slid inside, but he paused at the open door, dropping his voice too low for me to hear as he spoke to the driver.

As soon as the door closed behind us, he pulled me onto his lap, turning me to face him so I was forced to straddle his thighs. I'd expected anger when I met his gaze, but the flat, cold expression I found was somehow worse.

Sliding his hands under my dress, he grabbed one ass cheek and squeezed hard enough to make me yelp at the flash of dull pain. With his other hand, he gripped the base of the plug, pulling it out so my poor abused hole was stretched uncomfortably around the fullest part.

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“I don’t appreciate being lied to, Adele. You are going to tell me the truth now, or I swear you won’t sit comfortably for a week.” The plug slid out a little further and then back in, up to the fullest part, a reminder of the punishment awaiting me once we reached his apartment.

The truth was out of the question, and my mind raced for a believable lie. Which was difficult to do, when all I could think about was how I was in the backseat of a car getting my ass fucked with a piece of plastic.

“You have ten seconds before I start adding belt strokes to your punishment, starting at ten and working my way up from there.”

“I’m hiding.” I blurted out the first semi-believable lie my brain could conjure. “My ex-boyfriend, he... he was not a nice man. I left him a few months ago, and I’ve been hiding from him ever since. I thought I was safe, but one of his friends showed up at the restaurant tonight and I just freaked.”

Eyes narrowed, his gaze scanned my face, most likely looking for any hint I was lying. “You looked angry, not scared.”

“I was, at first. And when I said I was going to the bathroom, I was going to confront him but then he saw me, and I got scared.” I let my bottom lip tremble, let my eyes widen enough for them to water ever so slightly. “I’m sorry I wasn’t truthful.”

His expression didn’t soften, but the plug slid blissfully back into place, and I nearly sighed with relief. “And earlier? When you lied about running errands?”

“I don’t know. I was just... nervous, I think. You’re the first man I’ve been with since I left him, and this has all happened so quickly.” Changing my position slightly, I moved closer until I could feel the bulge of his cock pressing against my pussy. “I’m sorry, Daddy.”

Grabbing my ass with both hands, he pulled me even closer, and I let out a strangled gasp at the sensation of his silky dress pants on my clit. “Thank you for telling me the truth, baby. But I’m still going to fuck that pretty little ass of yours. Do you know why?”

“Because I lied to you?”

“That’s right. But also because I want you to understand something very important. Do you know what that is?”

My breath caught in my throat, leaving my voice sounding strangled and scared when I replied. “What?”

His grip on my ass tightened. “You are mine, Adele. I don’t care about who came before, but as of right now, there isn’t anyone else. Not for you, and not for me. You. Are. Mine. You hear me?”

I couldn’t promise him that. It wasn’t fair to either of us. But I still had no clue if he’d figured out who I was. And I needed to keep him close until I learned everything there was to know about him and why he was really in Paris. If I pushed him away now, I could be putting everything I’d worked so hard for at risk.

Swallowing the bile rising in my throat, I nodded and did what I’d been doing since I met him—I lied through my teeth. “Yes, Daddy. I hear you.”

“Good.” Shifting his hold on my ass again, he pulled the plug out until only the

pointed tip remained inside of me. But before I could sigh with relief, he pushed it back in. In and out, fucking my bottom hole with the plug.

The simmering arousal I'd been living with all evening flared to life again, and I squirmed on his lap, desperate for enough pressure on my clit to give me some kind of relief.

"Naughty girl," he growled, fucking me harder with the plug. "Didn't I tell you no pleasure for you tonight until Daddy says so?"

"Please, Daddy, please." I was whining and begging again, but I didn't care. I'd left my dignity behind me in that seedy bar the minute I'd agreed to go back to his apartment with him.

"What do you want, baby? Tell Daddy what you need."

"I need to come; I need to come so fucking bad."

Moving his free hand between our bodies, he brushed his thumb over my aching clit, but it was just enough to tease and torment until I let out a shriek of frustration.

"Goddammit! Just fuck me already, please!"

No sooner had the words left my mouth than the plug slid fully from my ass. Frantic with need, I tugged at the closure on his dress pants until his cock sprang free. Pulling the tube of lubricant from his pocket, he handed it to me.

Heart pounding, I poured the lube over the head of his cock, but I honestly didn't care how slick he was. He could have taken me raw, and in that moment I would have welcomed every moment of torment if it brought me closer to the release I needed.

“Enough,” he growled, jerking me to him, the head of his cock pressing into my entrance. A sob escaped my throat as he pushed inside of me, stretching and filling me in ways the plug had barely prepared me for.

Strong hands gripped my ass, pulling me closer, forcing me to impale myself on him. I whimpered and whined with every inch, until he was fully settled inside me.

“Naughty little Adele.” His words were low and harsh, and my pussy spasmed with each one, reminding me of how woefully empty it was, and how embarrassingly full my bottom was. “Are you going to lie to me again, baby?”

“N-no, Daddy,” I lied. Guilt twisted my stomach into a knot, but I pushed it down deep, with all the other deceit I’d had to commit over the years for my job.

The hands on my ass lifted me, then pushed me back down, his cock scraping every nerve in my bottom as he forced me to ride him. Was this part of my punishment, having to participate in this lewd, humiliating act?

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If it was, I didn't care. In that moment I would have done anything he commanded of me if he would just fucking touch me.

"Daddy, please." The plea left my lips on a gasp as I rode him with awkward, jerky movements.

"What, sweetheart?" His taunting tone only added to my humiliation, but I was too far gone to give a damn. "Tell Daddy what you want."

"Wanna come. Need it. Please."

Again, he shifted his hold on me and his thumb brushed far too lightly across my throbbing clit. "Hmmm. I don't know. You were very, very naughty tonight."

A strangled cry was the only answer I could manage. Every nerve in my body felt like it was on fire, and I honestly worried I might spontaneously combust if he didn't grant me the release I needed.

Because it was a need. We were well beyond want or even desire. I needed his hands on me, rough and demanding. I would welcome every bite of pain he wished to inflict on me, if only it meant I could finally feed the clawing, gnashing beast inside of me.

"Do you have any other secrets to tell me, Adele?"

In that moment, lost in that haze of painful, desperate need, I almost told him everything. But at the last minute, I managed to pull back, shaking my head. "No, Sir. That's everything, I swear."



“And nothing but the truth from now on?”

“Yes, yes, I promise! Please, Cole, please, I can’t stand it.”

His fingers dug deeper into my flesh, and he thrust his hips upward at the same time he pressed the pad of his thumb firmly against my clit. Pain and pleasure sliced through me, and I came, screaming his name.

With my body still spasming from pleasure, he flipped me onto my back on the long bench and a moment later he drove into me. Each thrust of his cock inside of me burned, but the pain only had me climbing frantically toward my peak once more.

And when I came again, my bottom clenching around his cock, he went over with me, filling me with his cum.

“No more lies. No more secrets.”

I ignored the guilt and the shame washing over me, mingling with the high of the two spectacular orgasms he’d just gifted me with as I nodded. “No more.”

Seven

Cole

Flashes of the night before played in my mind while I watched the front gate to Giorgio's estate. My sweet little Adele, sprawled facedown on the bed with the black tip of her plug peeking out from between her pinkened bottom cheeks. The way her nose had crinkled when I'd popped the plug back in her well-fucked little hole and told her it would stay there the rest of the night. Her ass bouncing under my hand when she'd gotten sassy with me after our shower, and then the way she'd begged Daddy to let her come again.

Letting her go this morning, knowing she would be spending the day in Giorgio's orbit, was one of the hardest things I'd ever done. All I wanted was to bundle her up and whisk her away to America where I could spoil her and spank her and fuck her as I pleased.

But that would mean leaving Giorgio alive. And it was disconcerting to realize the idea of letting him live didn't leave the bitter taste in my mouth it should have.

Gripping the gold cross through my shirt, I closed my eyes and tried to bring Natalie's face to mind. The grief was as sharp as the night she died, but her face was blurred, like a copy of a copy of a copy. What did it say about me, that I was no closer to avenging her death nearly a year later, yet her memory had already begun to fade?

Movement on the sidewalk distracted me from my self-flagellation. Adele, in her too-

short uniform, hurrying toward the gate. Grabbing the camera perched on my passenger seat, I focused the zoom lens on the number pad by the gate and began snapping rapidly as she punched in the code and pressed her thumb to the pad below. The gates swung open and she scurried through.

The code should be easy enough to figure out from the pictures and Mikey had given me a kit just in case I was lucky enough to be in a situation where I could copy a fingerprint from someone who had access to Giorgio's inner sanctum. Adele not only fit that requirement, she slept like the dead, so it would be nothing to get the impression once she fell asleep after our date tonight. Which meant I would have the means to break into Giorgio's compound tomorrow night.

And Natalie would finally be avenged.

Returning the camera to its spot on the passenger seat, I allowed myself to imagine his death for what felt like the millionth time. As much as I wanted to be able to take my time, to make him suffer, my window of opportunity wouldn't be large enough for what I had planned. And Mikey had already talked me down from moving him to a secondary location. I'd settle for a bullet in his brain, and then I'd work on getting my girl out of the country.

Which meant she'd need documentation. A visa of some kind, at the very least. Something else to have Mikey start working on before we left.

As if on cue, my phone rang, and I grinned at his name on the screen. "Mikey. I was just thinking about you, my friend."

"Well, you can stop. Every time you think about me, it just adds to my workload."

The seas may rise, kingdoms may fall, but Mikey would always be a giant grouch. Even without video, I knew he would be sitting at his cluttered desk in his cramped

office, his jaw working furiously at the stick of nicotine gum he'd recently begun chewing to replace his smoking habit.

I missed the hell out of him.

"I do have a bit of a favor to ask. Adele is going to need paperwork. A visa, but not a work visa. Although I suppose we could create some kind of bullshit position for her at my company." Since she would be spending the majority of her time under me, it would be fitting. "Whatever puts up the least amount of red flags. You know what to do."

"Ahhh, yeah. About your girl. That's why I'm calling."

Something in his tone had the hairs on the back of my neck standing on end. "What is it? What did you find?" Maybe the ex-boyfriend was a bigger deal than she'd let on.

Maybe there was no ex, and despite her wild, desperate promises the night before, she was still keeping secrets.

For her sake, I hoped not.

"Nothing. That's the problem."

Irritated by his vague answers, I scowled at the phone. "I don't understand how 'nothing' is a problem."

"I don't just mean I didn't find anything negative. I didn't find anything. At all."

"That's impossible. She works for Giorgio; she'd have to pass a background check." Unless Giorgio had been the one to set up the fake identity for her.

No. Whatever her secrets, she wasn't a criminal. That much, I knew in my bones.

"Yeah. And she does, at least on the surface. It's once you start digging you realize there's nothing there. The school she supposedly went to never had anyone with that name enrolled. Her parents exist on paper, but I can't find employment records or anything beyond birth and death certificates for them. So on and so forth. She's a ghost, boss."

"Who the fuck is she, then?"

"I'm working on it," he growled, annoyance laced through every syllable. It wasn't often Mikey was stumped by someone, and it was obviously making him grouchier than usual. Which, for some perverse reason, eased the fury boiling in my veins.

"Let me know what you find as soon as you have it."

"Always."

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Ending the call, I tossed the phone on the seat and put the car in drive. I had some shopping to do before my next date with Adele.

Mikey had his ways of discovering the truth, and I had mine.

Adele

Running my rag over the already gleaming wood of the floor-to-ceiling bookcase in the massive library, my mind wandered to the night before. I couldn't remember the last time I'd fallen asleep feeling so thoroughly... used. My ass still ached from my punishment and every step was a reminder of how brutally he'd taken me.

But like a true Daddy, he'd also been sweet and caring once we made it to his apartment. Even though he'd made me wear the stupid plug all night, he'd taken care scrubbing me clean in the shower. And after, he'd delivered a short but effective spanking when I'd gotten an attitude over something silly, then ordered dessert delivered to the apartment, which he'd insisted on feeding to me while I was perched on his knee.

It really was a shame it couldn't last. I was under no delusions that our relationship could survive my deceit. Even if he could forgive me, once Giorgio was behind bars, "Adele" would disappear and I would return to my office at Interpol, pushing papers while I prepared for my next assignment. And Cole would return to America, where he'd live out his life with some heiress with no secrets and more money than she could spend in a lifetime.

Would I marry? Perhaps, eventually. If I left Interpol or at least moved to a less

demanding position. Undercover work wasn't really conducive to marriage and kids.

Pausing in the middle of wiping down a shelf, I frowned at my thoughts. What the hell was wrong with me? I'd never really considered a life outside of the job before. A few days with Cole Porter and I was ready to throw away my career so I could, what? Settle down with some faceless man and raise a brood of children?

Distracted by my internal struggle, I knocked a crystal wolf off the shelf I was dusting. It hit the plush carpet harmlessly, but in my surprise, I kicked it and it disappeared under the desk at the other end of the room.

Grumbling under my breath, annoyed at myself for getting so wrapped up in my personal drama, I crawled under the desk to retrieve the silly thing. Why did people need random little chunks of glass sitting around, anyway?

"Well, now, that's a pretty sight."

Fear, icy cold and primal, froze every muscle in my body as I reached for the wolf. I'd heard the rough, deep timbre of his voice on enough recordings to know who it was without seeing him.

Grabbing the wolf, I scooted out from under the desk and smiled up at Giorgio Bianchi with as much apology as I could muster. "Excusez moi, je vous laisse la place."

He returned my smile, but without any apology. Or warmth. The gesture was as dead as his eyes, and another frisson of fear raced down my spine. "You aren't in my way at all." I forced myself not to react when he placed a fingertip under my chin and tilted my head back even further. "As a matter of fact, I believe you are exactly where you need to be."

I watched, my horror growing as he reached for the buckle on his thin dress belt. For three years, I'd managed to go unnoticed by him and his goons, just another one of the many servants moving around the monstrously large house.

“Je ne comprends pas?” It was a gamble, pretending I didn't understand him. I was under no delusion that it would stop him from whatever plans he had for me, but I just needed a moment to think. The fear crawling across my skin wasn't the thrill I was used to during a sting. This was a primal, uniquely feminine kind of terror.

Run!

Even as the word echoed in my mind, my body froze. Some evolutionary instinct kicked in, and I became prey, hiding perfectly still in the weeds, desperately hoping the predator stalking me wouldn't be able to see me if I simply did not move, did not even breathe.

“Oh, I think you understand me just fine, beautiful.” The button on his pants popped open and ice coated my stomach. “The language of love is universal.”

Love? There was no love involved in what he wanted. There was only power, a need to prove he could have whatever he wanted, whenever he wanted, and nobody could stop him.

Just as he was tugging at his zipper, a knock on the door distracted him. “What?” he barked, turning his head to glare at the intruder.

Fueled by that prey instinct, I threw myself backwards, crab-walking as quickly as I could toward the side door. Giorgio swore and lunged for me, but I was faster. Flattening myself against the hardwood, I rolled, causing him to run headfirst into a bookcase.



Then I was up and running. Through the side door, down the hallway, out of the servants' entrance. I stopped just long enough to grab my purse from the hook by the door, but once I was outside, I didn't stop running until I made it to my apartment building.

Chest heaving with each greedy gulp of air, I forced myself up the stairs to the third floor. It took three tries to unlock my door, courtesy of my shaking hands. Tears of relief burned at the corners of my eyes when the key finally slid home and I managed to yank the door open.

But my relief was short-lived. If I hadn't been struggling for each breath, I might have screamed at the unexpected sight of a man sitting on my couch.

"Well, hey there, Dell. Long time, no see."

Pierce.

Giving myself some time to finish catching my breath, I shot him a glare and tossed my keys and purse on the table beside the door before stomping to the kitchen to pour myself a glass of water. Silence filled the space between us, irritatingly calm and unperturbed on his part, increasingly antsy and expectant on mine.

"What the fuck are you doing here?" I finally spat at him, wiping water from my mouth with my forearm.

Throwing an arm across the back of the couch, he settled back against the cushions and grinned up at me. "Came to check up on you. After you almost blew your cover at the restaurant, I wanted to make sure everything was all right."

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A red haze coated my vision. The only reason I'd almost blown my cover was because he'd been dodging my calls, and he had the nerve to insinuate it was all my fault? "Everything is not all right! I've been calling you for days, Pierce. Where the hell have you been?"

"Busy." The grin fell away, and he was all business for once. "We may be making a move on Giorgio soon. Your little American friend has pushed the timeline up a good bit."

"Cole?" Apprehension skittered up my spine. "What does he have to do with any of this?"

"You don't know?" Utter glee colored his tone, and the grin was back in full force.

"How am I supposed to know anything when you do not answer your goddamn phone?"

"I thought you would have pieced it together by now."

If I didn't know any better, I would have said he was mocking me. And maybe he was. Pierce had always been a competitive asshole.

"Didn't you research him at all?"

"Of course I did. And I learned enough to assume he is here because Giorgio had a hand in his cousin's murder."

Excitement flashed in his eyes. The thrill of the hunt. I recognized it for what it was, considering how often I'd felt it myself when finally closing in on a target.

“That’s just the tip of the iceberg. Your new best buddy is the son of none other than Raphael DeCosta.”

My brain went into overdrive, working furiously to place the name. And when it clicked, the room spun around me. “Holy shit.”

“Yeah. Your little boyfriend is the crowned prince of one of the largest crime families in the United States. And you’re going to help us nail him.”

Merde.

Eight

Cole

I was seated at a table in one of the finest restaurants in France, enjoying a meal that would most likely cost me more than most people made in a week, and I hadn't tasted a single bite. My entire focus was on the woman across from me, and all the things I still didn't know about her.

Who are you, Adele Bernard?

We'd made all the usual small talk, discussing the weather, the events of our day. Something had happened at work, but she wasn't telling me what. There'd been a flash of what I would swear was panic in her eyes when I'd asked, but she'd simply said work was fine and quickly changed the subject.

More lies. More skeletons in her closet.

I didn't want to talk about how dreary and cloudy the weather had been. What I wanted was her in my bed, writhing under me as I fucked every last one of her secrets from her.

"Adele."

Looking up from her plate, she offered me a shy smile and again I found myself wondering if this sweet, demure Adele was the real version. Or was the real Adele the bold hedonist who'd begged me to fuck her ass in the backseat of a limo? Two

completely different versions of the same woman, and yet they both seemed to fit, making it aggravatingly difficult to figure out who she really was.

“Yes?” she asked softly, tilting her head to the side like an eager puppy awaiting a command.

“Are you wearing any underwear?”

Pink color slashed across her cheeks, and she glanced around as if checking to see if anyone had heard me. “Why?”

Setting my expression in stern lines, I raised an eyebrow. “I asked you a question, little girl. I expect an answer.”

“Oh.” Even in the dim light, I could see her pupils dilate even further. Her breasts strained against the fabric of her dress—the same dress she’d been wearing the night we met which told me her wardrobe was sadly lacking—as she drew in a deep breath.

Enjoying her discomfort far more than a gentleman should, I leaned in so I could lower my voice a bit. “Answer Daddy’s question, Adele. Are you wearing any panties tonight?”

“N-no, Daddy,” she whispered, her cheeks flushing an even darker pink than before.

“Good girl. I think you deserve a reward.”

Her eyes lit up. “A reward?”

“Yes. Come here.”

Rising from her chair, she slid onto the bench beside me. The restaurant had a

modern flair, and each table had a bench long enough for three or four people, with a high, rounded back which gave the occupants a good bit of privacy. The tables to either side of us could see half of our table, but not us once she was seated beside me, and the white tablecloths hid everything from the waist down from view.

“Legs open,” I murmured, waiting for her to obey, which she did far more quickly than I’d expected. Another point for bold, hedonistic Adele. “Good girl. Now, Daddy is going to finish feeding you dinner and you’re going to show Daddy how you touch yourself when you’re all alone.”

“What if someone sees me?”

“If you get caught, then I’ll have to punish you, won’t I?”

Her breath caught at the threat, but her hand disappeared between her thighs. Pulling her plate across the table, I scooped up a bite of cassoulet and held it up to her lips.

While she chewed, I leaned in so my breath would caress her ear with every filthy word. “Would you like Daddy to tell you what will happen if you get caught?”

A small whimper and a quick, jerky nod were my only answer, but it was enough for me. “First, I’ll make you stand in the middle of the restaurant and tell everyone what a naughty little girl you are. You’ll apologize for ruining their evening, and you will assure everyone that your Daddy will properly punish you when we return home.”

I wouldn’t, of course, but the fantasy of being publicly shamed had an immediate effect on my sweet little maid. The scent of her arousal greeted me as her fingers worked furiously at her clit.

“Once we get home, your punishment will start with a long, hard spanking over Daddy’s knee. And I won’t stop until your cute little bottom is a nice, bright red and

hot to the touch. You'll be crying and promising to never touch yourself in public again, but I'll need to make sure you learn your lesson. After all, you were very, very naughty, weren't you, sweetheart?"

"Uh huh," she managed to gasp out between shallow breaths.

"So even though you'll be a sobbing, whining, begging little mess, your punishment won't be over. But what's next? Daddy's belt or the hairbrush he bought just for his naughty little girl? I think the brush," I continued without waiting for a response. "Yes, a good, hard paddling should drive my lesson home, don't you think? A naughty girl like you might enjoy the belt too much, and I need you to know this is a punishment."

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Her responding moan was just a smidge too loud, so I scooped up another forkful of food and fed it to her. Still working herself toward her orgasm, she hurriedly chewed and swallowed.

“That’s my naughty little girl. Finger-fucking yourself in the middle of a restaurant just because Daddy told you to. Quiet, baby,” I admonished when she whimpered again. “Come for Daddy, dirty girl.”

Threading my fingers through her hair, I yanked her to me, swallowing her cry of release as she came with a jerk of her hips. I kissed her until the last shudder passed and she melted against me.

“Good girl,” I murmured against her lips. With one hand still laced through her hair, I used the other to lift her fingers to my mouth. Her eyes, still heavy with pleasure, flew open when I wrapped my lips around her arousal-soaked finger and sucked. “Delicious.”

Adele

Body still humming with pleasure and the adrenaline rush of my public orgasm, I slid into the backseat of the car. No limo this time, dashing my secret hopes of some quickie sex on the way back to his place.

My mind was still reeling from what I’d done in the restaurant. I’d never considered myself an exhibitionist. Even when I played at the club, I preferred private rooms to the dungeon floor.



But Cole had a way of breaking down my defenses, pushing my limits in ways I not only allowed but craved. That fact alone would have made him the most dangerous man I'd ever met, even without the "heir to the throne of a mafia empire" aspect.

Guilt pricked at my conscience as my conversation with Pierce that afternoon played over and over again in my mind. I allowed myself a moment to wallow in it before Cole joined me in the backseat, but I ruthlessly squashed it and forced myself to smile and lean into him when he draped an arm around my shoulders.

"Are you enjoying Paris?" I asked.

"Very much so. I've found the locals very... accommodating."

Desire coiled in my belly at the implication. Despite having just gotten myself off, my body still craved his touch. "Hush. You will ruin our cold and aloof reputation."

His deep laugh filled the car and I found myself relaxing against him. Why did being with him have to be so damn easy? None of my real relationships had ever felt so natural.

And what the hell did that say about me and my choice of men?

The pads of his fingers brushed across the top of my breast, distracting me from my sour thoughts. "I doubt anyone could accuse you of being cold or aloof, sweetheart."

"You bring out a different side of me," I confessed.

The hand on my breast stilled. "Is that so?"

Was it my imagination or was there something in his tone? Something cold and almost... angry. Tucking the observation away, I continued as if nothing odd had

happened. “Yes. I feel more like myself when I am with you.”

“And who are you, Adele?” Some of the ice in his tone had thawed, but there was still something dangerous lurking beneath the deceptively simple words. “I know you’re a maid, but it occurs to me I don’t really know much more than that.”

My heart knocked against my ribcage, but I simply shrugged in response. “There isn’t much to know, really.”

The car rolled to a stop before he could respond, and I said a quick, silent prayer that was the end of the conversation.

But my hopes were dashed when we reached his apartment. Taking a seat on the long, sleek couch in the center of the living room, he pulled me down to join him. At the last moment, he used my downward momentum to topple me, and I ended up sprawled across his lap, my legs and torso stretched out on the couch.

“What are you doing?” I asked as he tugged the material of my dress over my bottom, baring me to his gaze.

“I find you’re much more cooperative in this position, and I have some questions I’d like you to answer.”

Had I been discovered, after all? No. Surely a man raised by Raphael DeCosta would have more... effective ways of interrogating an undercover cop. “What kind of questions?”

“Let’s start with an easy one. Who are you?”

“Adele Bernard.”

To my shock, a rapid flurry of painful swats rained down on my exposed backside. I yelped at the unexpected burn, twisting to the side to try and escape his hand.

“Your real name, please.”

Alarm bells rang in my head. What did he know? “My real name is Adele Marie Bernard.”

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Another flurry of explosive spansks landed, but I was better prepared and managed to brace myself for them just in time.

“I said your real name, little girl,” he demanded, his voice a cruel snarl. “Not your full, fake name.”

“I don’t know what you’re talking about! That is my real name!”

“What happens to naughty girls who tell lies, Adele?”

He nudged a finger between my cheeks, pressing against my bottom hole and I couldn’t help but whimper. “Daddy, no, I’m still sore!”

“Then I suggest you start telling me the truth. I have all night, baby, and I’d be perfectly happy to spend it paddling and fucking your cute little bottom to get what I want.”

Merde.

“I’m not lying! Why don’t you believe me?” I didn’t dare confess a single thing until I knew exactly what “evidence” he might have.

“Because Adele Bernard does not exist. At least, not the version of her you’ve created. So, let’s try this again. Who are you and why are you pretending to be someone else?” His fingers dug into my backside as he squeezed the tender flesh. “The truth. Now.”

“My ex,” I blurted out, my mind latching on to the only plausible scenario that wouldn’t expose me and ruin my operation. “I told you I was hiding from him. I just did not tell you how deeply I was hiding.”

“Oh, baby.” Flipping me over, Cole wrapped his arms around me, cradling me to his chest. “Why didn’t you tell me?”

The sudden, drastic switch from cold, sadistic interrogator to sweet, caring Daddy nearly gave me whiplash. “As you pointed out in the car, we do not really know each other. I was scared.” I dropped my voice to a whisper, as if admitting a dark, shameful secret.

“I suppose that’s fair. I’m glad you told me. Although, I’m a little disappointed you caved so easily.”

“Oh? And why is that?”

“I had a very elaborate plan for interrogating you. Starting with a spanking and ending with you finally confessing all your secrets in exchange for being allowed to come.”

Shifting on his lap, I straddled his thighs and grinned down at him. “Well, now I am thinking perhaps I confessed a little too quickly. Maybe we should pretend I did not?”

Heat flashed in his eyes, and he matched my smile with a wicked one of his own. “That sounds like an excellent plan.”

Nine

Cole

Sliding my hands up under the hem of her dress, I dug my fingers into the warm flesh, savoring the small whimpers flowing from her lips. Desire turned her eyes glassy, even as she winced in response to the rough treatment. “Tell me your secrets, Adele.”

It was an order, one I hoped she ignored. With her actual secrets out in the open, there was nothing to keep us from enjoying a bit of role play.

Adele responded beautifully, her bottom lip pushing out into a perfect pout, her eyes lowering so she was studying the buttons on my shirt rather than my face. “I am not keeping any secrets.”

“What happens to naughty little girls who lie to their Daddies, Adele?”

A pink flush crept up her neck to her cheeks and her breath hitched at the question. “They get punished,” she whispered, her fingers playing restlessly at the collar of my shirt.

“Yes, they do. And since a spanking apparently wasn’t enough to loosen your tongue, I suppose I’ll have to up the ante. Stand up.”

She surprised me by not asking any questions before hurrying up off my lap to stand in front of me. “The dress. It needs to go.”

Still silent, she pulled the dress up and over her head. For a moment, I sat in stunned silence at the sight before me, my tongue seemingly stuck to the roof of my mouth. Not only was she without panties, her beautiful, pert breasts were also bare, leaving her completely naked in the middle of my living room, mine to punish and pleasure as I pleased.

Mine. The thought popped into my mind unbidden, but once it was there, it took root. Indeed, despite the lies and secrets, I wanted her. Not just tonight, not just for a few weeks or months or even years, but forever.

The details would have to be worked out later, but for now, I planned to stake my claim. By the time I was done with her tonight, there would be no doubt in her mind who she belonged to.

Pushing to my feet, I reached for the buckle at my waist. Adele's eyes widened slightly, but they stayed locked on my movements as I pulled the thin strip of leather free.

“Lie down on the couch but keep your bottom nice and high. I think it's past time my little girl had a taste of Daddy's belt.”

Adele

Trembling with that strange mix of desire and fear I craved from moments like this, I lowered my body to the couch, my breasts pressed flat against the cool leather and my knees bent to keep my ass high and waiting for the first kiss of his belt.

“Are you ready to tell me your secrets, little girl?”

The low growl of his voice sent a shiver racing down my spine, and despite the explosive orgasm I'd been forced to give myself at the restaurant, my pussy spasmed

in response.

“I’m not keeping any secrets, Daddy, I promise!”

I hated the taste of the lie on my tongue, no matter how necessary it might have been. But then I heard the swoosh of leather slicing through the air, felt the explosive pain of it biting into my skin, and my tense muscles immediately began to loosen.

Whether he knew it or not, this was exactly what I needed to ease some of the guilt inside of me. It would never fully leave, I knew that much from experience, but a fast, hard whipping would be enough to clear my mind and keep my wayward emotions locked up tight for a little while longer.

Another line of fire scorched my skin and I let out a long howl at the delicious pain. “Daddy, no!” I wailed, more for form than out of any real desire for him to stop.

The begging and pleading, that was all part of the fantasy. Being forced to submit, to surrender control to another person, completely helpless to stop them from delivering whatever punishment they felt I’d earned—all pieces of the whole for a scene like this. All working in tandem to allow me to free myself from the job that hung around my neck like a giant weight.

He delivered a full six before he paused to run the tips of his fingers over the raised welts on my bottom. A hiss escaped my lips before I could stop it when he brushed over a particularly sore spot.

“Are you ready to confess, my pretty little Adele?” Clever fingers drifted lower, teasing my swollen lips, my aching clit. “Are you ready to tell Daddy all your secrets?”

I could make up something. I could probably even tell him some naughty secret from



my childhood, and he'd know I'd had enough. There were a dozen ways for me to "give in" and end the torture.

But I didn't want it to end. My mind was not clear enough, the weight on my shoulders not yet light enough. "No."

As I'd hoped, my refusal earned me a heavy sigh and Cole moved back into position, lifting the belt high before snapping it down against my welted, heated flesh once more. Tears pricked my eyes. The pain wasn't quite enough to have me sobbing and weeping the way a true punishment sometimes did, but merde did it hurt.

Another six left me panting and whimpering, my bottom burning and aching, but I still wasn't ready to give.

"Tell me your secrets, little girl, or I'll have to get mean."

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*Source Creation Date: July 4, 2025, 6:10 am*

God, yes. Be mean, be cruel. Please, Daddy. “I have no secrets!”

I braced for another stripe, but none came. “Sit up.”

Confused, but painfully aroused by the uncertainty of what he had in mind, I shifted positions so I was sitting up on the couch. The leather was not as welcoming for my poor, abused bottom as I might have liked. “Sir?”

“Scoot forward so your ass is hanging off the edge and lean back a little.” A smirk tilted his lips when I obeyed. “Hands behind your knees and hold them up as far apart as you can manage.”

The position left my pussy fully exposed. My most sensitive parts were completely vulnerable to whatever punishment he might dream up, and the knowledge nearly made me whimper.

And when he gripped the buckle of his belt, wrapping the thin leather around his hand so only a short strip was left hanging free, I had to fight to stay in position. Knowing what was coming did nothing to prepare me for the burn and sting of the leather lashing against my swollen, soaked lips.

Screwing my eyes shut, I suffered through three such painful strokes before I broke. “No more, Daddy, please! I’m sorry, I’ll tell you everything!”

“Tell me, and I might just let you come while I fuck you.”

Merde, the things this man did to me. “I, um, wh-when I was twelve, I stole a lipstick

from the store while I was out with my friends.”

“Naughty little girl. Did you return it?”

Still gripping my legs, I shook my head. “No, Sir. And I never told anyone.”

It was, for once, the truth. A secret I had never shared with anyone, not even my closest girlfriends at the time.

“Thank you for telling me, sweetheart. We can discuss your punishment for shoplifting at a later date, but for now, my good girl deserves a reward for telling the truth.”

And then he was on his knees in front of me, that wicked tongue of his working its magic against my clit. Pleasure as sharp as the pain he’d inflicted on me exploded inside of me, but I didn’t dare release my hold on my legs. I hadn’t been given permission, and the last thing I wanted just then was to give him any reason to deny me my release.

“Daddy, please, please, please.” For what felt like eternity, I begged and pleaded with him to make me come, to give me what I so desperately needed.

“Not yet.” Sitting up straight, he grinned, the stubble along his chin glistening with my juices. “I want to feel you come around my cock. Roll back on your tummy, baby.”

I hurried to obey while he stripped and knelt behind me on the couch. Hands gripping my hips, he hauled my ass up high once more as he sank into my dripping pussy.

Rough, hard, without mercy he fucked me. Each stroke felt like a branding. A claiming. And even though I knew it could never be, I gave myself over to it. To him.

In that moment, I was his, and nothing else mattered but the brutal way he was using my body.

“Come for me, baby. Come all over Daddy’s cock like a good girl.”

The order, combined with his fingers finding my clit as he rode me to oblivion sent me screaming over the edge. But even as I went limp, my limbs heavy with pleasure, he continued to work me up to the peak again.

“Can’t,” I managed. “Daddy. Stop.”

I barely recognized the whiny, needy voice coming from my own lips. My protests earned me a sharp pinch to my clit, and a throaty chuckle.

“You can. And you will.”

My body responded instantly to the growled command. Another scream ripped from my throat as pleasure and pain mixed together, rushing like molten lava through my veins.

Cole’s cock slid free from my pussy, and a moment later I heard his grunt of release right before his hot, sticky seed coated my welted ass.

“Beautiful,” he murmured, gathering me up into his arms. “Let’s get you washed up, sweetheart, and into bed.”

All I could manage in response was a soft hum of agreement as he strode toward the bathroom.

Ten

Cole

Interrogating Adele had been even more fun than I'd anticipated. I could foresee us revisiting that particular role play on a regular basis once we were back home.

Perched on the bed beside her, I brushed a tangled lock of hair from her exquisite face. "I'm going to get you out of here, baby. You'll never have to worry about that asshole ever again."

A quiet snore was the only response to my declaration, and I couldn't help but grin. Sprawled on her stomach, her ass bare and still bearing the welts from our play, she made a pretty perfect picture. It was tempting to see if I could rouse her again, maybe wring another orgasm or three from her before I let her go back to sleep.

But I had a job to do and the sooner I got it done, the sooner I could get the both of us out of Europe and back to the safety of the DeCosta estate. The family would be antsy for my return, and I'd already stayed away longer than I cared to.

Lifting her right hand, I carefully pressed her thumb into the soft clay from the kit Mikey had sent me. I made three impressions, as instructed, and prayed one of them would be good enough to open the gate.

When I had my samples, I slipped from the room to the small office on the other side of the apartment and closed the door. A few minutes later, I was seated in front of my laptop, grinning at Mikey's scowling face.

“Did you get them?” he barked out the second the call connected.

“Hi, cuz. How’s Paris? It’s lovely, Mikey, thank you.”

Mikey rolled his eyes and I had to bite the inside of my cheek to keep from laughing at him. If there was one thing Mikey despised more than anything else, it was small talk.

“Yeah, yeah. Did you get the imprints or not?”

“I did. So how does this work?”

For the next half hour, he walked me through the process of creating thin, rubbery pads to place over my thumb which would mirror Adele’s fingerprint, or at least mimic it enough to bypass the security scanner at Giorgio’s compound.

I’d just finished carefully packing the pads up in the container he’d provided when a soft knock drew my attention to the door.

“Daddy? What are you doing?” Looking adorably rumpled in one of my t-shirts which was several sizes too large for her petite frame, Adele rubbed the sleep from her eyes and yawned widely. My heart thumped against my ribcage, and all I could think was: Mine.

“Just catching up with my cousin Mikey back home. What are you doing out of bed, sweetheart?”

“I woke and you were not there. I was worried.”

“Awww, baby. Come here.”

From the corner of my eye, I saw Mikey's eyebrows raise up into his hairline, but I ignored him. If anyone could keep my secret until I was ready for the rest of the family to know, it was Mikey.

Rounding the desk, Adele settled on my lap, snuggling in with another wide yawn. "Hello, Mikey. It is nice to meet you."

For a moment, he looked at a complete loss for words. But he quickly recovered enough to grunt out a response. "Uh, yeah. You too."

"Mikey, can you give me five minutes to get her settled back in bed? I need to go over a few more things with you."

"Sure, cuz. You're the boss."

"Daddy, it is the middle of the night," Adele whined.

Chuckling, I pushed to my feet and scooped her up into my arms. "It's not even dinner time back home. Say goodnight to Mikey, sweetheart."

"Goodnight to Mikey, sweetheart," she mumbled, her eyes fluttering closed.

Mikey's surprised laughter followed us out of the room as I carried her back to my bed and tucked her back in under the covers. By the time I brushed a kiss across her forehead, she was snoring quietly once more.

Still grinning when I returned to my desk, Mikey wagged his eyebrows. "Daddy, huh?"

"Shut up," I shot back without any heat. "I have another favor to ask."

*Source Creation Date: July 4, 2025, 6:11 am*

“This favor got anything to do with pretty little Adele?”

“It does. She says her fake identity is because she’s hiding from an old boyfriend. What would it take to make it more... concrete?”

“How deep do you want it to go?”

“Deep enough to stand up to the scrutiny of the US Government. I can’t very well marry her if she doesn’t exist.”

“Marry her?” The teasing smile vanished, replaced by his usual scowl. “Jesus, Cole, you just met her. And you still don’t know a goddamn thing about her. You don’t even know her real name!”

“Once you work your magic, Adele will be her real name. And we’ll have the rest of our lives to get to know each other.”

“Whatever you say, boss.”

My lips twitched at the obvious irritation in his tone, but I managed to hold back a smile. “And Mikey... while you’re trying to dig up dirt on my girl, do me a favor and see if you can locate the boyfriend. I’d like to pay him a visit before we leave Paris.”

Adele

For the first time since I’d begun spending the nights with Cole, I woke before him. Flat on his back with a lock of dark hair over one eye, he looked nothing like the



dangerous criminal I knew him to be. Even having seen the dossier on him, I was struggling to believe it.

For a moment, I considered waking him for a repeat of our fun from the night before. But I still had a job to do, and this was a perfect opportunity to explore his apartment, so I slipped out of bed and crept out of the bedroom toward the office where I'd found him chatting with "Mikey" the night before.

Michael DeCosta, Cole's cousin on his father's side. Raphael DeCosta, current "alleged" head of the DeCosta crime empire, was the oldest of four boys, all of whom were married with children of their own. All male again, with the exception of Camilla DeCosta. There hadn't been as much information on her in the file, giving me the impression she was kept hidden away, the princess in the tower.

Mikey, however, had made quite a name for himself within law enforcement circles. The man was a whiz with computers and there was considerable speculation that he was the one responsible for the DeCostas's squeaky clean public records. It was all pure speculation though, because he was good enough to not leave a trace of himself behind during the cleanup. All of the files on the brothers and their children were littered with "allegedly" and "believed to" comments.

My search turned up a fat lot of nothing, until I reached the top right drawer of his desk.

Locked.

And the key was nowhere to be found. If I had to guess, he carried it with him. A man like Cole wouldn't leave it laying around for just anyone to find.

What the hell was he keeping in there?

“A little early for snooping isn’t it, little girl?”

I froze at the sound of his voice, slowly lifting my head to meet his gaze. “Hi. I wasn’t snooping.”

“Oh? Did you get lost, then?” His tone was amused, but there was a coldness to it that sent warning bells ringing in my mind. “I know it’s a larger apartment than you’re used to, but it’s not quite large enough for you to lose your way.”

“No. I, um, was looking for a notepad and a pen. I wanted to surprise you with breakfast, but I assume leaving without a note of some kind would not bode well for my backside.”

An almost boyish grin stretched across his face, and he visibly relaxed at my explanation. “You assume correctly, sweetheart. How about we go out for breakfast, see a bit of the city?”

I had some time before I needed to be at work, so I returned his grin with one of my own. “That sounds lovely. There’s a bakery not too far from here with the most delicious escargot aux raisins.”

Confusion knitted his brow. “You want snails. With raisins?”

Laughing at his misunderstanding, I rounded the desk and slipped my arms around his waist. “Yes. That is exactly what I want.”

“Well. When in Rome, right?”

“Exactly! They are my favorite breakfast.”

Half an hour later, we were seated at a small table outside of the bakery, with Cole

staring down at the pastry on his plate. “I am so confused.”

“It is a snail. See?” I circled my finger over the pastry, pointing out the shape of the bread which did, indeed, resemble a snail’s shell.

“I’ve spent the last thirty minutes hyping myself up to eat snails with goddamned raisins on them for breakfast and the whole time you were talking about bread?”

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Pulling off a piece of bread, I stuck my nose in the air and popped the pastry into my mouth. “It is not my fault you misunderstood.”

“Maybe not, but I’m still going to wear my belt out on your ass when we get back to the apartment.”

Letting myself sink into my role, I pushed my bottom lip out in a pout. “That is not fair!”

“Agree to disagree. And who makes the rules?”

Heat blossomed on my cheeks, and I glanced around to ensure nobody could hear us. “You do, Daddy.”

“Good girl.” Breaking off his own piece of the pastry, he took a hesitant bite. “Holy shit, this is amazing.”

“I told you.” We fell into a companionable silence as we ate, and for a moment it was easy to believe we were just lovers enjoying the city, with no secrets or lies between us.

But the weight of my responsibilities sat like lead on my shoulders and what I needed more than anything was information. “So, ah, how much longer will you be in Paris?”

Some of the amusement faded from his eyes, but his smile never faltered. If I hadn’t been well-trained in the art of reading people as well as the art of deception, I would have missed the subtle shift.

“A few days longer, at least. I have some business to wrap up, and then we can be on our way.”

“Our way?”

“Yes. You’re coming back to Chicago with me.”

Shock froze me in place, even as an undeniable warmth spread through my belly. He wanted me to come back to the States with him?

No. He wants Adele to come back with him, a nagging voice which sounded suspiciously like Pierce reminded me. Everything Cole knew about me was a lie, so how could he possibly want me, when he knew nothing about me that was real?

Other than the nights we’d spent together. The passion we’d shared. My desire to submit, to be loved and cared for by a sweet but strict Daddy. All of that had been real.

Maybe it could be enough. Maybe I could take off with him to Chicago, leave my old self behind, begin a new life as Adele. And maybe one day I could even tell him the truth.

Giving myself a mental shake, I forced an apologetic smile. If I told him who I really was, the true reason I was working for Giorgio, I was more likely to earn myself a bullet in the head than a spanking. The level of deceit I’d been committing these past few days went well beyond a naughty little girl lying to her Daddy, and I knew it.

“I am sorry, Cole. I cannot go to America with you.” Despite my best efforts to harden my heart, little cracks began to form, and I worried if he pushed too hard it might simply shatter in my chest.

“Of course you can.” With a careless wave of his hand, Cole swatted away my worries as if they were no more than pesky little flies on a summer day. “Mikey is working on your identity, filling in the holes so that anyone who digs will find a perfectly normal, if somewhat tragic personal history. You have nothing to worry about, sweetheart.”

My heart rate picked up, and it took every ounce of training I had not to scream at him. If Mikey was tampering with my identity, Interpol would know. They would know, and they’d track it back to him, and god only knew what that trail might lead them to.

Which was exactly my mission, in addition to taking down Giorgio. So why was I panicking at the thought of them being traced and caught? I had a job to do. It wasn’t my fault they were making it so easy for me.

Swallowing down the bile rising at the thought of my coming betrayal, I gave a hesitant nod. “Yes. All right. I will go to America with you.”

Joy lit Cole’s eyes and the cracks in my heart spread a little further. “Excellent. You’re going to love your new home.”

No, I won’t. And neither will you.

Eleven

Cole

It's time. Tonight.

Stretched out on the couch with Adele snuggled up against my side, I studied Mikey's text for a third time. Over the past few days, I'd spent every moment I wasn't with Adele poring over the layout of Giorgio's compound, the security, everything I could to prepare for this moment.

Turning the screen off, I set the phone aside and pulled Adele in closer so I could drop a kiss to the top of her head. "I have a favor."

"Mmmm." Her hand moved to my thigh, a light, teasing touch that instantly had my cock standing at attention. "What kind of favor?"

"While I appreciate where your mind is, not that kind of favor." I paused, weighing my words. Despite her naturally submissive nature, Adele wasn't the kind to simply sit and stay because Daddy said so. "I'd like for you to stay here tonight."

"That is not much of a favor. I had assumed I would be coming here after work, yes?"

"Yes. But I think you should call off. Actually, I'd prefer if you went ahead and told your agency you will not be coming to work ever again."

Sitting up to face me, Adele's forehead scrunched up in a way that told me she was

preparing for a fight. “I cannot simply quit without notice. I have work to do.”

I felt my own temper spike in response, but I was careful to keep my expression and tone as neutral as possible. “You don’t need the job. And we’re leaving soon for Chicago, so it’s really just a few days early.”

“But it is not professional to leave so abruptly. They are expecting me this evening.”

“Adele, this is not a request.” Capturing her chin in my hand, I put more steel behind my words. “I do not want you anywhere near Giorgio’s estate ever again. If I catch you there, there will be no pleasure for you in the punishment you’ll be receiving. Am I making myself perfectly clear, little girl?”

The struggle played out clearly in her eyes before she finally gave in with a pout. “Yes, Sir. I will call.”

“Good girl. Since you don’t have to get ready for work, why don’t you go take a nap? I have some things to do before this evening.”

“What is this evening?”

There was a note of curiosity in her tone, but no more than I would expect under the circumstances. “I have a meeting with some business associates.”

“Oh. And am I not allowed to attend?”

“I’m afraid you’d be bored to tears, sweetheart. I’ll make it up to you tomorrow, but tonight you’ll be on your own here at the apartment.”

“But I want to come with you. I barely know anything about what it is you do.”



“Trust me, you’ll be much happier here at home.” Pulling her close, I brushed a kiss across the crown of her head. “Go make that phone call and take a nap while I get some prep work done for this meeting. I’ll wake you before I go.”

“Yes, Sir.” Moving somewhat more stiffly than usual, she rose from the couch and headed to the bedroom. It was obvious her feelings were hurt, but there was little to be done about it, now. Still, a sulky babygirl could easily turn into a defiant one, and this was one time I would not be disobeyed. Not when her life could very well depend on her obedience.

“Adele,” I called after her, stopping her before she disappeared into the bedroom.

“Yes?” she replied without turning back, her voice tight with obvious annoyance.

“If you do not make that phone call before I have to leave this evening, you will find sitting to be a very uncomfortable option for several days. Am I understood?”

“Yes, Daddy.”

Still sulky, but I trusted she would obey in spite of it. “Good girl.”

I waited for the bedroom door to close behind her before making my way to the office where I pulled up the blueprints for Giorgio’s home one more time. Picking up my phone, I dialed Mikey’s number.

“Yeah.”

“Let’s go over the plan again. I don’t want any mistakes tonight.”

Adele

Something was off with Cole, but I couldn't seem to put my finger on it. There had been a fierceness in his tone when he'd ordered me to stay away from the Bianchi estate. More than just a Daddy who wished to be obeyed, although I imagined that had also fed into the sternness behind the order.

Under normal circumstances, quitting would be a no-brainer. Over the past few days, I'd managed to avoid Giorgio and his unwelcome advances, but it was only a matter of time before he managed to corner me again, especially since I was on his radar now.

But these weren't normal circumstances, and my position in his household wasn't just a job. Sitting on the bed we'd shared the past few nights, I hit the button to call Pierce, praying he'd answer for once.

“What?”

“Porter wants me to quit my job. As Bianchi's maid. He thinks we are running away to America together; I assume when he has done whatever he came to do.” The thought twisted my stomach into knots. Avoiding the actual word didn't diminish the enormity of Cole's plans.

Murder. Cold-blooded, calculated, murder.

It was the only thing that made sense. A man like Cole Porter wouldn't let his cousin's death go unanswered. And everything we'd uncovered pointed to Giorgio

being behind the girl's death.

There was a small part of me, a dark, violent part I tried to pretend didn't exist, that wanted him to succeed. Natalie's face was imprinted on my mind. Young, beautiful, vibrant.

Innocent.

But society had order, and vigilante justice was not a part of that order. So as much as I might sympathize with Cole's thirst for revenge, I couldn't stand by while he murdered a man in cold blood, no matter how much I felt it was deserved.

"You mean after he kills Giorgio Bianchi," Pierce said, echoing my own thoughts.

"Yes," I snapped back, nerves and fear having drained my already shallow well of patience. "What should I do?"

Silence fell, weighted with the enormity of our next move. "Go ahead and call the agency, tell them you've had a family emergency and you need to leave Paris immediately. We have a handle on Giorgio, so your main objective now is to stay close to Porter."

"Understood."

After ending the call, I made another to the agency, pulling on years of training to put tears in my voice as I spoke of the aunt who had raised me after my parents' deaths and her illness, explaining I needed to rush to Nice immediately to be by her side, and I didn't know when I would return. Guilt coated my stomach at my supervisor's sympathetic tone urging me to go and be with my aunt.

I stretched out on the bed, willing myself to sleep at least for a few minutes. If my

instincts were right, things between Cole and Giorgio were about to come to a head, and I needed to be as clear-headed as possible in the coming days.

But sleep eluded me, so I made my way into the almost sinfully luxurious bathroom just off the master bedroom. A giant soaking tub stood along one wall, with a basket of bath salts and other frilly feminine things beside it.

When was the last time I'd allowed myself the simple luxury of a long soak? Bolstered by the idea, I turned the water on as hot as I could stand it and peppered the water with a bath salt mixture simply labeled Tranquility before stripping and stepping into the tub.

That was where Cole found me, nearly an hour later, with my eyes closed and my head resting on the edge of the tub. While I still hadn't slept, I felt calmer, and far steadier than I had after my call to Pierce.

"This does not look like taking a nap, little girl."

Opening one eye, I peered up at him, relieved to see he didn't look angry. "I couldn't sleep."

"Hmmm." Head tilted to the side, he studied me, his expression unreadable. "Well, the point of a nap was to allow you time to rest, and you certainly seem rested."

"I feel rested." Although, his sudden closeness had my body humming and tensing up in anticipation. "Am I in trouble?"

"No, sweetheart. As a matter of fact, I think you deserve a reward for being such a good girl today." Kneeling beside the tub, he unbuttoned the sleeve on his dress shirt and slowly, deliberately rolled the cuff to his elbow. My mouth instantly watered in response to the sight.

The tips of his fingers trailed across the surface of the water, the anticipation sending little bolts of electricity straight to my clit every time he came within a few inches of my breasts.

By the time his hand dipped below the surface, my breaths were coming in short, fast pants, every nerve alive with expectation. My knees seemed to part of their own accord, granting him access to the parts of me that most craved his touch.

And when he finally slipped a finger inside of me, then two, his thumb pressed firmly against my clit, I nearly came undone then and there. Water sloshed over the sides of the tub as I bucked under his touch, my cries of need echoing off the tile walls.

“That’s my good girl.” Coaxing, cajoling in that deep, graveling voice of his, he worked me straight to the edge—and held me there.

“Adele.” The whip-crack of his voice forced my attention to his words. “Promise Daddy you won’t leave the apartment tonight.”

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Not wanting to lie, I rolled my hips, desperately seeking the release he was so deliberately holding just out of reach. When the pressure on my clit eased, all I could manage was a whimper of protest.

“Promise me, Adele. Or you won’t be allowed to come until I return.”

I was an asset of one of the widest-reaching law-enforcement agencies in the world. Trained to withstand pressure, bullying, and even torture. And yet, somehow, I was powerless against this man.

“I promise, I promise! Please, Daddy!”

“Good girl. Come for Daddy, sweetheart.”

A flick of his wrist was all it took to send me flying. To have my screams bouncing off the walls as I thrashed in the water, overcome by the pleasure only he seemed capable of giving.

“Beautiful,” he murmured, leaning over to press a gentle kiss to my lips. “I won’t be back until well after dark, sweetheart,. And I have a feeling I’ll be craving something French when I return.”

It was a cheesy line, but I couldn’t help but grin up at him. “Okay, Daddy.”

“Be good, sweetheart. I’ll see you when I get home.”

Still floating figuratively and literally, I waited for my system to calm before

climbing out of the tub. I was just stepping into a pair of jeans when my phone buzzed against the nightstand.

Glancing at the readout, I allowed myself a scowl before answering Pierce's call. "Bernard."

"We have a situation. Your man is walking into a trap."

My heart slammed against my ribs, but I swallowed the fear, shoving it down deep where it wouldn't cloud my judgment. "I'm on my way."

Twelve

Cole

Sitting in my car across from the gate to the Bianchi compound, I watched the minutes tick by on my watch. The changing of the guard was a strict schedule, and I would have only five minutes to get into the house, undetected.

Getting out would be messier, but as long as Giorgio Bianchi was dead at the end of it, I'd do whatever it took to get back to my sweet Adele. It was a relief to know she was tucked up in the apartment, safe from harm. Not that I would have let her leave, even if she had fought me on the resignation. But at least this way she could enjoy herself instead of being tied to a chair with a red and welted bottom for her troubles.

The thought had me grinning down at my watch as the hands clicked into place. Just as Mikey had promised, the guard manning the gate stepped out, heading around to the back of the house where he would be clocking out of his shift and the next guard would be clocking in.

Mikey never would have allowed for such gaps in my security, and I made a mental note to give him a nice fat bonus when I got home. He'd more than earned it over the past few months.

Stepping out of the car, I kept to the shadows, avoiding the streetlights lining the street as much as possible. The next shift was still nowhere in sight as I pulled Adele's thumbprint from my pocket and pressed it to the keypad.



For a moment, nothing happened, and I realized with a flash of annoyance that they may have revoked her access already. An oversight on my part, and one I wouldn't have made if I hadn't been so focused on keeping her safe.

But just as I was judging my own ability to scale the tall, wrought-iron fence, the screen flashed green, and I was prompted to enter her code. With a wink for Lady Luck, and a quick prayer for her to continue by my side for the rest of the night, I keyed in what I was about eighty percent certain was Adele's number, grinning when the gate eased open.

From my conversations with Adele, Giorgio should be in his study at this time of night, with a glass of thirty-year-old McCallan double cask and a cigar. Adele, under the pretense of talking about her day, had let that little gem slip when telling me she always saved the study for last when she was working the later shift in order to avoid... unpleasant altercations with him.

Other girls, I had gathered, hadn't been so lucky. Or perhaps they knew exactly who they were dealing with and assumed his affection for them would provide some form of protection down the road.

I didn't need Adele to tell me how wrong those assumptions had been.

The knowledge only added another log to the fire of my hatred for him as I followed the map in my mind through the front hall to the study. Footsteps on the marble signaled I was about to have company, so I ducked into the half-bath outside the study, leaving the door cracked just enough to make sure it wasn't Giorgio leaving for the evening.

It wasn't, but there was something familiar about the tall, flat-nosed man. Too polished to merely be one of Giorgio's guards, but not high enough in the ranks for me to recognize immediately, I flipped through my mental file of the Bianchi

organization, trying to match a name to the face. Nothing clicked, but there was no doubt I'd seen him before.

Tucking that mystery away for later, I waited for him to pass before slipping back out of the bathroom and making my way just a few more steps to the study.

My pulse thundered in my ears, as loud as the hoofbeats at the races my father had enjoyed betting on before he'd been imprisoned. Standing in front of the closed door, I unholstered my weapon, a gun my uncle had given me the day we buried my cousin. Along the barrel, there was a simple inscription: For Giorgio. And other than a single test shot, I had never fired it. Every bullet in the magazine was meant for one man, and one man only.

Eyes closed against the fresh wave of pain and anger, I pulled Natalie's face into my mind. Although most of my memories of her had begun to fade, there was one image I knew would be burned into my brain forever. The night she died, taking her from my aunt, cradling her in my arms like a lifeless little doll.

As it had every day for nearly a year, my heart ached for the loss. Not only of the girl she'd been, but of the woman she would never grow to be. The greatness she would never achieve. The children whose cheeks she would never kiss, and whose nightmares she would never chase away. All of that, and so much more, had been destroyed with one senseless act.

Pushing open the door to the study, I leveled the barrel of the gun at the man behind the ornate, wooden desk, my hand steady, my finger curled around the trigger.

"Hello, Giorgio."

Adele

Merde. What was that man thinking?

Dressed in my maid's uniform, I watched him from the shadows across from the study. Watched as he paused just outside the door, the grief etched into every line of his face clear even in the dim lighting. A flash of silver glinted under the lights as he pulled the gun from his side and pushed the door open.

I knew what I should do. My training, my own personal sense of right and wrong could not allow for a premeditated murder to happen right in front of me without doing anything to stop it. Even if the man was someone as deserving as Giorgio Bianchi.

And still... I hesitated. Huddled in the shadows, frozen by indecision, I watched Cole step into the study, his gun aimed right at Giorgio's head. A face flashed in my mind, young and sweet in her high school yearbook photo.

Then bloodied, eyes empty, mouth open in a silent scream in the pictures taken the night she was murdered.

Everything I had been taught, everything I believed told me this kind of vengeance was wrong. But I could not deny that a part of me, a darkness I tried to pretend didn't exist, craved it. Cried out for it, an echo I felt in the deepest parts of my soul.

As I struggled with my own demons, one of Giorgio's men crept up behind Cole, and everything else was forgotten. A second flash of silver as another gun was raised, this time with the barrel pressed right against Cole's head.

Moving as silently as I dared, I searched the hallway for a weapon. Fortune smiled on me in the form of the treasures Giorgio so loved to fill his home with. Just to my right, a heavy ceramic vase, hand-painted with various erotic scenes, sat on a pedestal. It was nearly too heavy for me to lift on my own, but I didn't need to carry

it very far.

Or, I realized, at all. My original plan of smashing the vase over the other man's head held far too much risk. For one, he was a solid foot taller than me, making the angles nearly impossible. And there was a chance I could miss and hit Cole instead.

All I needed, really, was a moment of distraction, just enough for Cole to have a chance at escaping. Preferably without spotting me, but I would cross that bridge if we came to it. My bottom clenched at the thought, already anticipating the punishment it seemed I was unlikely to avoid at this point.

Placing my hands on the vase, I took a deep breath, and shoved it to the floor.

Thirteen

Cole

The cool metal of the gun pressed against the base of my skull froze me in place, my own weapon aimed right at Giorgio's grinning face.

"Welcome, Mr. Porter. I've been expecting you." Rising from his chair, Giorgio rounded the desk, obviously unaffected by the prospect of his imminent death.

"Do you really think I won't pull this trigger and end both of us, Bianchi?"

"Oh, I have no doubt you would." With his slimy smile still in place, he took another leisurely step toward me. "But then you would never learn all the wonderful secrets I've just been dying to tell you."

Do it! End this. Now!

Despite the voice in my head urging me to get on with it, I couldn't help the niggle of curiosity his words inspired. "What secrets?"

"Well, let's start with the pretty little maid you've been consorting with. Did you really think you could seduce a member of my own staff without me knowing, Porter?"

Red colored the corners of my vision. "You leave her out of this."

“I’m afraid she’s already in it. Deeper than even you realize.”

Before I could ask him what the fuck he was talking about, a crash echoed in the hall. The pressure of the gun against my head eased. Taking advantage of the momentary chaos, I ducked, pulling the trigger, not bothering to see if I’d hit my mark. Spinning around, I rammed my shoulder into the chest of the man behind me. We stumbled together out into the hallway, and I jerked my head up, hearing a loud crunch as my skull crashed into his chin.

Head throbbing, my vision going dark at the edges, I raised the gun I’d managed to hang onto to his chest and fired twice. Down he went, crumpling to the floor as though he’d been made of nothing more than paper.

No sooner had I pulled the trigger than the alarms began howling. Behind me, Giorgio was shouting orders in his native tongue, and despite not being fluent in Italian, I had no doubt he was ordering my death.

“This way!” a familiar voice hissed in my ear a moment before her hand found mine, tugging me over toward an alcove almost entirely hidden in shadows. “We can get out this way, they won’t be looking for you here.”

With a press of her fingers, a panel in the wall slid open, revealing a long, narrow passageway. I followed her through, my only thought at the moment of getting us to safety.

Adele led the way through the hallway, to a small room where another woman in a matching uniform stood frozen, watching us with wide eyes. Before I could decide whether to pull the trigger for a second time that night, Adele was speaking to her in frantic, whispered French. The other woman looked from her to me, then back again before nodding her agreement and scurrying from the room. With another tug on my hand, Adele guided us through a side door and out into the cool night air.

“Chloé will tell them she spotted us on the north side of the house, to draw the guards away from us. Where are you parked?”

“Across the street from the front of the house. But if we go straight across, we’ll be spotted.”

Gnawing at her bottom lip, she appeared to consider our predicament. “There is another, smaller gate along this wall. If we go out that way, we can follow this street up a few blocks, then cut across and back down for the car. Assuming they have not discovered it by then.”

“For your sake, it might be best if they’ve slashed the tires,” I growled, once again following her lead as we hugged the outer wall on our way to the gate.

“Why would you say such a thing?” she shot back in a fierce whisper.

“Because the second we get back to the apartment, I intend to get some answers. And then you have one hell of an appointment with the business end of Daddy’s belt.”

Adele

My breath caught in my throat at the threat, but I tried to ignore my body’s immediate, instinctive reaction. Just then, all that mattered was getting us to safety. Once I knew he was out of harm’s way, I didn’t care what he did.

Quiet as church mice, we hurried along the south wall to the gate. There was no fingerprint required to leave, only my code. By the time anyone bothered to review the logs to see who had left via this entrance, we would be long gone.

Once we were out on the street, Cole pulled me to a stop. Shrugging off his jacket, he wrapped it around my shoulders. With our size differences, the jacket was large

enough to hide most of my uniform from view.

Holding his jacket tight around me, I leaned into him, allowing a small smile to curve my lips as we fell into a more leisurely stroll. To the untrained eye, we were merely a couple in love, enjoying the romance of Paris under a starlit sky.

My heart seemed intent on hammering its way out of my chest the entire long walk to his car. Especially when he would lean down every few steps and whisper in my ear. The gesture added to the visage of two lovers out for a stroll, but his words were anything but romantic.

“Do you know what happens to naughty little girls who lie to their Daddies, Adele?”



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“Sitting comfortably will be nothing more than a fond memory by the time I’m finished with you, little girl.”

“Did you really think you could sneak out and I wouldn’t notice, sweetheart? Or maybe I haven’t been harsh enough with you. Maybe my naughty little girl needs a heavier hand, hmm?”

The last was said as he helped me into the car, and I could swear I was soaking straight through my panties. Despite knowing I was in for perhaps the worst punishment of my life, my body was reacting to every whispered threat as if it was the sexiest thing I’d ever heard.

And in a way, I suppose it was. I’d always had a weakness for men who took control with no apologies. As much as I enjoyed our play, punishments held a special place in my heart, and I knew by the end of the night I would be his in a way I had yet to fully allow myself to be.

“Spread your thighs.” The barked order snapped me out of my thoughts, and I complied without hesitation, spreading my legs as much as the confines of the car would allow.

With one hand on the steering wheel guiding us back to the apartment, Cole used the other to begin my punishment. Short, sharp, stinging swats to the insides of my thighs that had me crying out and fighting the urge to squeeze my legs shut. Such an action might allow me a brief reprieve, but there was no doubt in my mind I would pay for it once we arrived home.

The punishment was delivered in silence on his part, with nothing but the sound of skin slapping against skin and my occasional cries filling the car. By the time we parked in front of his building, the insides of both thighs were pink and sore to the touch from his chastisement.

But as I discovered when he helped me out of the car and we made our way into the building, the real punishment was the friction between my thighs with each step we took. A whimper of relief escaped when we stepped into the elevator, and I was allowed a moment of rest.

Or so I thought. As soon as the doors closed, Cole was on me, his hands under my skirt, gripping my ass and hauling me up so I was forced to wrap my legs around his waist. Still without speaking a word, my panties were shoved to the side, and he was inside of me, pinning me to the wall with each short, powerful thrust.

The orgasm ripped through me, surprising me as much as the sudden invasion had. Clinging to him, I rode out the wave of shocking pleasure while he fucked me.

“You are mine, Adele. Mine. I. Will. Not. Lose. You.”

We arrived at our floor with a ding from the elevator just as he finished. Silent once again, he fixed our clothes and slipped an arm around my waist, guiding me out of the elevator and down the hall to his apartment as if nothing had happened. As if I weren't still reeling from the sudden burst of pleasure with his cum filling my panties.

“Bedroom.” Another barked order the moment we stepped into the apartment. “You can go put your nose in the corner, since you want to act like a naughty child, sneaking out after Daddy told you not to.”

I opened my mouth to argue but honestly, what could I say? As far as he knew, that

was exactly what I'd done, and there was no way for me to explain my actions without giving away who I really was. And while Cole obviously felt great affection for Adele the maid, there was no guarantee he would feel the same way about an Interpol agent in his bed.

No, telling him the truth, especially when the fury in his eyes still burned bright and hot was out of the question. With a stiff nod, I hurried to the bedroom, but I didn't go immediately to the corner. I'd deliberately left the door cracked, just enough to try and listen to any conversations he might be having.

But all I could hear was the low rumble of his voice as he spoke. Goddammit, why did he have to have such a deep voice? Pulling the door open further and saying a quick prayer of thanks to whoever kept the hinges oiled, I crept toward the living room, flattening myself against the wall as I strained to listen.

"He knew I was coming, Mikey. How the fuck should I know? All I know is I got there, and it was like he was waiting for me, and the next thing I know, I've got a gun to my head. There's a goddamned leak somewhere. Find it and plug it."

A mole in his organization with a direct link to Bianchi? It was plausible, but something about his assumption didn't seem to fit. There was a bigger picture here, one we were both missing, and if we couldn't fit the pieces together soon, it might cost us both our lives.

Fourteen

Cole

From the corner of my eye, I watched Adele slink away back toward the bedroom. Something inside me, the darkest part that craved violence and retribution, practically crowed at the knowledge she'd disobeyed me. Under normal circumstances, I was able to temper those urges, to keep the beast leashed with a little rough sex.

But tonight, the beast was off its leash, and she'd just walked into its cage.

"I'll call you later," I snapped, interrupting whatever excuses Mikey was trying to make. I'd barely heard a word he'd said over the roar of my own fury. Fury at being sold out, at being caught unaware, at finding my woman in the middle of harm's way. Whoever was responsible would pay, but for the time being, I had a naughty little girl to deal with. "Find the fucking leak and take care of it."

Pressing the button to end the call, I made my way to the bedroom, where Adele was now standing with her nose all but pressed into an empty corner. Did she really think she'd gotten away with disobeying me yet again?

I took my time readying myself for her punishment, running different scenarios through my head. That she would be going to bed tonight with a red, welted bottom was a given, but was it enough? Moving about the room, I shrugged out of my suit jacket, ensuring that the hanger clattered loudly against the rail when I hung it up, which caused Adele to give a delightful little jump.

The belt around my waist was adequate for a quick, stingy reminder of who was in charge. But for what I had planned, I needed something with a bit more... substance. From the closet, I retrieved a thick, heavy belt I hardly ever wore. Its purpose was almost exclusively for the disciplining of naughty little bottoms, and I never traveled without it.

Sitting on the bed with the belt on the mattress next to me, I watched her. Now that the room had grown silent again, she was getting fidgety. Shifting her weight from one foot to the other, rubbing the palms of her hands on her skirt.

I waited, patient as a lion stalking its prey, until the tension in the room was thick enough to cut with a knife. "Turn around."

Adele froze, exactly like a gazelle that had just spotted the predator in the weeds. Slowly she turned, her eyes wide with fear.

And excitement.

Oh, yes. There was no doubt my naughty girl was riding high on the promise of the punishment to come, the way only a submissive like her could. They didn't all enjoy punishment. Some did everything they could to avoid it, and just the threat of one was enough to keep them in line.

Others, like my sweet little Adele, craved it. Not just the pain, though there was no doubt Adele welcomed the sting and the burn with every breath she took. They craved the fear of not knowing what came next, the stomach-clenching expectation while they waited. They craved the cleansing that came with every stripe, every welt, every tear.

Well, if it was punishment she was after, then who was I to deny her?

“Come here.” Finger pointed at the floor to indicate where I wanted her, I kept my gaze locked on hers as she slowly crossed the room to stand in front of me. “Knees.”

Eyes widening even further, she sank gracefully to her knees, lowering her head in a gesture of deference that had my cock hardening again despite having just fucked her in the elevator a few minutes before.

Placing my finger under her chin, I forced her head back up so I could watch her expression as we discussed her transgressions.

“You were a very naughty little girl tonight, Adele. Weren’t you?”

Her breath hitched and her tongue darted out, a little flash of pink, to wet her lips. “Yes, Daddy.”

“And what happens to naughty little girls who disobey their daddies?”

“They—they get spanked.”

“That’s right. They get their bare bottoms spanked until they’re sobbing and begging for Daddy to stop.” Forcing her chin up a little higher, I drank in her soft whimper of discomfort. “I am going to ask you a question. If I think for even one second you are lying to me, you will be tasting soap for a week. Am I understood?”

“Y-yes, Daddy.”

“Why were you at Giorgio’s tonight?”

“My company called. I am sorry, it was an emergency, and I did not think it would be a big deal to help out this one last time.”

“Even after I had specifically told you what would happen if I ever caught you there again? Even after you promised me you would not leave the apartment tonight?”

“Yes. I”—she swallowed hard, the muscles in her throat working furiously in what had to be an uncomfortable position—“I knew you would be angry if you found out.”

“And is that an acceptable excuse for sneaking out?” Red colored the edges of my vision, and I moved my hand to her neck, wrapping my fingers around the slender column of her throat and squeezing. “Do you really think mopping some asshole’s floors is an excuse for disobeying me?”

“No, Daddy,” she managed to gasp out.

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Easing my grip but keeping my hand in place, I allowed her to drag in a deep breath. Tears glittered on her lashes, soothing the beast. Sighing, I stroked my thumb along her throat. “I am glad to hear that, sweetheart.”

Under my hand, she relaxed, and I almost felt guilty for giving her that false sense of hope. “But after tonight, I can promise you will think twice before disobeying me ever again. Stand up and strip.”

Adele

Excitement and fear were a delicious cocktail of emotions swirling inside of me as I rose to my feet and slowly divested myself of my uniform. I’d known this was a likely outcome when I had snuck out, and I was prepared to pay the price. But I couldn’t find even an ounce of remorse, considering he would have been dead without me.

If I felt any regret at all, it was that I couldn’t be honest with him about who I was. That guilt stayed with me, and I welcomed any chance to purge it. So, I would accept my punishment, and I would focus on the guilt I did actually feel.

When I was completely naked, he pulled me down over one knee, my torso resting on the bed and his other leg locking me in place.

“While I have you here, perhaps we should discuss eavesdropping, as well.”

My stomach did a slow roll. A lie sprang to my tongue, but I immediately swallowed it, unwilling to test his threat of washing my mouth out with soap. If he was bringing



it up, then he had obviously seen me, and lying about it now would only make things worse.

“I am sorry,” I whispered, adding a snuffle I hoped he would buy as repentant.

“You certainly will be by the time we are through.” His hand patted my bottom, sending a shock of need to my clit. “I do not give orders lightly, little girl. So, when I give them, I expect to be obeyed. Not only did you disobey my orders multiple times tonight, but you also broke my trust. And until you can earn it back, you will be confined to the apartment. If you wish to leave for any reason, you will need my permission to do so. Do you understand, Adele?”

Merde. How was I supposed to figure out who had betrayed him if I was locked up in the apartment all day? “Do you not think that is a bit excessive?”

Without warning, his hand connected with my bare skin, an explosion of pain that had me squealing and drumming my toes against the floor. A dozen swats landed so quickly I didn’t have time to even catch my breath before it was over, leaving behind a burn across my entire backside.

“Do I think that keeping you safe until you learn how to do as you’re told is excessive? Not in the least, sweetheart.”

Obviously, arguing with him at the moment was only going to earn me a longer, harder punishment than he already had planned. There would be time to change his mind about the restriction later.

Or I would simply need to sneak out again, which hopefully could wait until the welts on my ass had healed.

“Yes, Daddy,” I acquiesced with a deliberate pout.

“Good girl.” With that, the spanking started again with a vengeance, harder and faster than he’d ever spanked me before. Instinct overwhelmed my training and I wiggled over his knee to try and escape the punishing blows. But he wrapped his other arm around my waist with barely a pause, further trapping me in place as he rained hellfire down on my unprotected backside.

“Daddy, stop! It’s too hard!”

I barely heard his snort of derision over the steady staccato of his hand smacking against my skin. “You know what would be too hard, Adele? Losing you. Watching you die a violent, bloody death because you’re too goddamned stubborn to do as you’re told!”

Pain, the kind of pain that only comes from losing someone you love more than anyone, echoed in his voice. The guilt I hadn’t felt before coated my stomach as tears filled my eyes. No matter my motives, or that I had saved his life, I could not deny the pain I’d caused him by following him to Giorgio’s.

But I knew I would do it again without hesitation, because if I had lost him, it would be my pain which would be too great to bear. “What about you?”

My question, spoken in a voice strangled with unshed tears, brought the punishment to a halt. “What about me?” he demanded.

“What would I have done if you had died tonight? Which you almost did if you do not remember!”

“You don’t need to worry about me, sweetheart, I can take care of myself.”

Craning my neck around, I glared at him through tear-glazed eyes. “Were you taking care of yourself when one of Giorgio’s men had a gun to your head?”

A muscle in his jaw jumped, as if he were biting back the words he truly wished to say. “My work requires me to deal with dangerous situations. I’ve accepted that. What I will not accept, is you being put in harm’s way.”

“Why? Because I don’t have a hunk of meat hanging between my thighs?”

“Because you aren’t trained, Adele!”

“Would you train me?” I shot back, not taking my eyes off of his, daring him to deny me.

He hesitated, and his nod was reluctant, but it thrilled me all the same. “Yes. If you want me to train you to fight, I’ll train you to fight.”

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“And then you will take me with you when you go into these dangerous situations.”

“Goddammit, Adele —”

“You said it was not because I am a woman, but because I am not trained to handle myself as you are trained.” Which was bullshit, and oh how I relished the idea of showing him exactly how untrained I was, but for the time being I needed to play my role. “So, once I am trained, I will go with you.”

The hand resting on my heated flesh squeezed, hard enough to make me yelp. “I will never be okay with you waltzing into danger. But if you can prove yourself to me, we can discuss you joining me in certain situations.”

“I suppose that will do for now.”

“But even if that day comes, I will still expect you to obey me and follow my orders. Especially when listening or not listening could be the difference between life and death. Which means I am even more determined for you to learn this lesson tonight before that day comes. Stand up.”

Merde.

Fifteen

Cole

“Bend over the side of the bed, with your forearms resting on the mattress.”

Adele moved into position with obvious reluctance, and I felt a tug of pity. It was clear she felt guilty for disobeying me, and the temptation to let her off with a warning was strong. But if she truly wished to be my partner in business as well as my bed, she needed to learn to obey orders without hesitation.

Memories crowded my mind and my heart. But instead of Natalie’s face, it was Adele’s lifeless eyes staring up at me. Adele’s blood staining my shirt as I wept over her body.

No. I would do everything in my power to ensure she never met such a fate, even if it meant blistering her ass on a daily basis until she learned that my word was law.

“Feet apart.” My voice was hoarse, strained with the emotions buffeting me as she shifted into position, her pinkened bottom lifted high for my belt.

“This is a lesson I don’t want to repeat, Adele. Am I understood?”

A soft sniffle preceded her sweet, sad response. “Yes, Daddy.”

Stepping off to the side, I folded the belt over, making a loop with the leather. I fussed with it a bit longer than necessary to get my wayward emotions under control.

As pissed as I might have been, I didn't want that anger clouding my judgment as I punished her.

When I felt reasonably under control, I raised the belt high, and brought it down, whipping the leather across the fullest part of her bottom. Adele's pained shriek rang out, her fingers clutching at the duvet as a bright pink stripe blossomed across her bottom.

The next was aimed lower, the bottom edge of the belt digging into the sensitive crevice where ass met thigh, sending Adele to her toes, her hips wiggling back and forth in a vain effort to relieve the sting. My cock strained against the zipper of my slacks, eager to sink into the folds glistening between her thighs.

There was no doubt the strapping she was receiving hurt like hell, but her body didn't seem to mind one bit. Stepping forward, I slid my fingers into her pussy, letting her honey coat my skin. With a quiet moan, she dropped her forehead to the bed, her hips pushing back against my hand, a silent plea.

"Is my naughty girl enjoying her punishment?"

Her only response was a frantic shake of her head, and I chuckled at her attempt at deceit. Was she lying to me, or herself? Either way, what kind of Daddy would I be if I let such a lie stand without repercussions?

"No, she says. Hmmm. So, what is this?" Leaning forward, I pushed my hand in front of her face, confronting her with the evidence of her desire.

"It hurts," she whined, lifting her head just enough to pin me with the most perfect puppy-dog eyes and pout I'd ever seen.

"Just because it hurts, doesn't mean you aren't enjoying it, sweetheart. Now, clean up

Daddy's fingers so we can finish your punishment."

Confusion filled her eyes for a moment before realization dawned, along with a raw hunger she wasn't quite quick enough to hide. Her lips parted, welcoming my arousal-coated digits into the warmth of her mouth. Fuck, I'd forgotten how good she was with her tongue. Memories of her, on her knees, sucking me off in her apartment flooded my mind and, for a moment, I seriously considered giving in to the temptation.

But I had a punishment to finish, so both our pleasures would have to wait just a while longer.

"Enough," I growled, yanking my fingers from her mouth and moving back into position. Three more times in quick succession I brought the belt down across her ass, watching with grim delight as welt after welt formed across her skin.

"You will learn to obey me, Adele." Another three, drawing a long, loud wail from my increasingly sorry little girl. "You will not put yourself or others in danger just because you do not feel like listening."

The next set of three loosed a sob, and the sound of it tore at my heart. "I had to go!"

Apparently my lesson wasn't sinking in. "No, little girl. What you had to do, was follow your Daddy's instructions and stay home. Someone else could have covered the shift."

"There was n-no one else."

"I see. And scrubbing some asshole's floors was so important, it was worth this?" I laid down another three stripes, the hardest yet, to punctuate my point.

“No, that’s not—” She seemed to catch herself, forcing herself to draw in a shaky breath. “That’s not what I meant.”

“Then what did you mean, Adele? What could be so important it was worth breaking your promise to me and putting yourself in danger?”

“I made other promises first. And I didn’t know it was dangerous because you did not tell me!” Standing straight, she turned to glare at me, tears streaming down her cheeks, but her head held high. “You may not think what I do is important, but it is good and honest work. And I did not feel right leaving them so short-handed at the last possible minute. It was not fair of you to ask it of me, especially without an explanation!”

Fuck. She had me there. “You’re right. I should have told you about the danger, so you would understand why I asked you to quit your job. I’m sorry for that. And I’m sorry for putting you in such an awkward position that you felt you needed to choose between listening to me and fulfilling your obligations to your job.”



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Shock filled her glittering eyes. “Thank you,” she replied, her voice confused but prim.

“However,” I continued. “From now on, I expect you to follow my instructions, even if you do not have all of the information. There may be times I will not be able to give you a rundown of why I am telling you to do something. I want you to keep that in mind as you count out these last six.”

Adele

The hope that had begun to blossom in my chest deflated with his last words. My ass was on fire, and I could already tell I would be feeling this punishment for days to come.

Turning back to the bed, I bent at the waist, positioning myself as before.

“Don’t forget to count, sweetheart. Just six more and we’re done. I’m proud of you for taking your punishment so well.”

Surprisingly soft, encouraging words from the man who had already left welts up and down my butt and thighs. But I couldn’t help but feel a surge of pride at his praise. “Thank you, Sir.”

A moment later, the leather snapped down across the middle of my bottom, reigniting the pain from the previous strokes. “One!” I called out, already bracing for the next.

Unlike the first round, these were delivered slowly and deliberately, so I was forced

to absorb the full impact of one punishing blow before the next fell. By the time I called out “Six!” I was sobbing again, my knees weak from the effort of staying in place.

“That’s my girl. Come here, sweetheart.” Scooping me up in his arms, Cole stretched out on the bed with me curled into his side while I wept out not only the pain of the whipping itself, but the guilt and frustration of all the lies and deceit that had led up to it.

More than ever before, I wanted to tell him who I was. Explain why I was working for Giorgio, why I’d gone after him. Beg his forgiveness for deceiving him and vow to do anything to win back his trust.

But what if I told him and he turned on me? It was obvious he felt something for me, but was the strength of his devotion enough to overlook such deceit?

The uncertainty kept the words from spilling out. With my cries quieting to the occasional snuffle, I lifted my head, my lips seeking his. Need for him clawed at me, a desperate, caged animal demanding release.

And when he kissed me back, his lips hot and branding on mine, I nearly wept again from the relief of knowing that, at least for now, I was still his and he was mine.

No words passed between us. The only sounds filling the room were my sighs and cries of pleasure as he kissed and licked and nipped his way down my body. Every touch drove me further out of my mind with want, reducing me to my basest urges.

I barely noticed when he stripped himself bare, but I came alive again when he linked his fingers with mine, pinning them to the bed above my head as he filled me, slowly stretching me with his cock until he was buried as deep inside me as humanly possible.

My bottom ached with each thrust of his hips, but I didn't care. At that moment, the pain seemed only a reminder of how deeply I was loved, how ferociously I was protected. And soon, pain and pleasure were melded together, impossible to separate as he drove me closer and closer to my peak.

"Cole," I whispered, arching up to meet him, desperate to somehow pull him even deeper inside of me.

"Adele. My sweet, lovely Adele. Come for me, baby. Come for Daddy."

Tears trickled from the corner of my eyes, my heart aching as he spoke my name. A fake name for a fake woman. I wanted to weep again at the unfairness of falling for a man who loved a version of me that didn't even exist.

But I pushed it from my mind, focusing on what was real. The pleasure we found in each other's bodies, the intimacy we shared as Daddy and babygirl. And as I crested that wave of unbearable pleasure, I let myself believe that for now, it was enough.

Sixteen

Cole

Something had changed.

I couldn't quite put my finger on what, exactly, it was. But there was a definite shift in my connection with Adele after her antics of the previous night. I'd seen a side of her I'd only caught glimpses of before, the tiger lurking behind the sweet, doe-eyed facade. And that was certainly part of it, but I couldn't shake the feeling we'd crossed some line we could never fully return from.

Sitting in my office, I sipped a cup of coffee as I studied Mikey's report and waited for her to rise. No doubt she would sleep later than normal, considering the severity of the punishment she'd received. Which was perfectly fine as far as I was concerned. Perhaps the extra few minutes would give me time to get my equilibrium back.

And maybe I would have if Mikey's report had turned up anything of interest. As far as he could tell, we didn't have so much as a dribble in our organization. At least not one high enough to compromise my mission.

"It doesn't make any fucking sense," I mumbled, glowering at the screen.

"What does not make sense?"

The hairs on the back of my neck bristled at her voice, but I clicked out of the report and sent her a reassuring smile. "Nothing, sweetheart. Just going over some things

Mikey sent over.”

“Ah. He has identified your mole.” A bright smile lit her face as she crossed the room to my chair, her stride a little more stiff than usual.

Good. The beast she’d unleashed last night may have been restrained once more, but it was wide awake now, and it reveled in the thought of her bottom aching for a while longer. Perhaps she would be more careful, at least until the pain was more of a memory.

A wince flashed across her expressive face when she settled on my knee, and I couldn’t quite hold back a smug smile. “How is your bottom this morning?”

“Sore, as you can very well tell,” she shot back, her voice haughty and pouty. “I expect I will be so for quite a long time.”

“Hmm, that sounds like Daddy needs to check your bottom and make sure there isn’t any bruising.” Without giving her a chance to argue, I flipped her over, her silk-covered bottom high over one knee.

“That is not necessary! Cole, stop it!”

She reached behind her, but I caught her wrist in my hand, pinning it to the small of her back much like I had done during her spanking the night before. Grabbing the hem of her robe, I slowly dragged it up over her hips, exposing her creamy white bottom.

The red had faded, as I’d expected. There were still a few lingering welts and when I pressed on her flesh, a few spots felt stiff and rough. Those places earned me a few beautiful yelps from the woman over my knee, and I grinned as I patted her bottom.

“No damage done it seems. Which means there is no reason I can’t spank this naughty little bottom today if necessary.”

“It will not be, I promise!”

“Well, seeing as how you’ve already forgotten to address me properly once in the few minutes you’ve been awake, I’m not holding out much hope of you making it the rest of the day without going over my knee at least once.” I punctuated the reminder about my title with two sharp swats to her thighs before helping her back up to sit on my lap.

Her pout was adorable, as was her mussed hair from her trip over my knee. “That was mean.”

“No, sweetheart.” Fisting a hand in her hair, I pulled her closer. “Mean would be forcing you to your knees so you can take Daddy’s cock down your throat to make up for this raging hard-on you’ve given me. Mean would be bending you over this desk and burying myself in your ass without worrying about how your poor little bottom is feeling. Do you want me to be mean, baby?”

“No, Daddy,” she gasped out, but her pupils were blown with desire, giving her away.

“So, if I put my hand between your thighs right now, I wouldn’t find your sweet pussy soaking wet?”

Before I could test my theory, my phone rang. A quick glance at the readout told me it was Mikey.

Swearing under my breath, I yanked her to me for a quick, hot kiss before releasing her. “I need to take this. Go run yourself a nice hot bath and soak for a while, and

then I'll take you somewhere nice for breakfast."

Her pout returned, but she rose to her feet. "Yes, Daddy."

"Good girl." I waited for her to disappear into the master suite before I picked up the phone to call Mikey back.

"What's up?"

"I still haven't found the goddamn leak. But I did find something you need to know."

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Concern laced his tone, making those hairs on the back of my neck stand at attention again. “Oh?”

“Interpol knows you’re in Paris.”

“Fucking hell. How?”

“They’ve got eyes on Giorgio. And I think they may actually have someone in his organization. Dunno who just yet, but I’m working on it.”

For a brief second, my mind flashed to the night before. Adele distracting Giorgio’s man long enough for me to escape. Adele, cool as a fucking cucumber leading the way out the side door and sneaking us out into the night.

It couldn’t be. Could it?

But just as quickly as the thought came, I dismissed it. There was no doubt that there was more to her than I’d originally thought, but there was no way she was an undercover agent. I’d know if I was being played.

Still, it didn’t sit right with me that Giorgio and I both had a target on our backs now. The sooner I could take care of him and get myself and Adele out of France, the better.

Adele

By the time Cole finished with whatever secret conversation he was having with



Mikey, I was already finished in the tub, and I'd stretched out on the bed, scrolling through the news on my phone. I'd considered lurking outside his office, but my bottom was still aching enough to dissuade me from tempting fate. The skin felt stiff and leathery, and each step I took came with a little flash of discomfort to remind me of how thoroughly I'd been punished the night before.

It was absolutely lovely.

"There you are. Did you enjoy your bath, sweetheart?"

Rolling onto my side, I smiled and lifted my chin for a kiss. It wasn't until he'd delivered and my head was swimming with the wanting of him, that I realized I'd done so completely without thought. There had been no artifice in the move, just an instinctual desire to have his lips on mine.

It would have been unnerving if I hadn't made up my mind that I would be going with him when this was all said and done. If I could convince him to forgive my deceit, that was. My bottom clenched at the thought of the punishment he would devise for having lied to him about something so monumental for so long.

But we could cross that bridge when we counted our chickens, or however the Americans said we would deal with things later.

Setting aside those worries for future Adele, I focused on the present. "I did not enjoy it as much without you."

"My poor, neglected babygirl. Did Daddy not give you enough attention last night?"

Alarms bells rang in my mind at the overly-sweet tone. "I did not say that."

"I think you did. Apparently two orgasms in the span of an hour weren't enough for

you.” Pushing me onto my back, he placed his hands on my knees and shoved them apart. “Let’s see if I can do better this morning.”

“You promised me breakfast,” I reminded him as he pressed a trail of hot, wet kisses up the inside of my thighs.

“Looks like I have my very own buffet right here, sweetheart.”

“Yes, but—oh!” My protest was lost on a gasp of pleasure and soon I forgot exactly why I’d been arguing with him in the first place.

He outdid our previous night’s count by more than double, leaving me boneless and satiated on the bed while he showered. Something vibrated against my side, and it took several persistent rounds of buzzing for me to recognize it as my phone.

A blocked number. Pierce? Struggling to pull my fractured mind into focus, I hit the button to answer the call. “Hello?”

“It’s happening tonight.”

“What is happening?”

“Giorgio,” Pierce snapped. “You know, the whole goddamned reason you’ve been undercover the last three years?”

Suddenly fully alert, I sat up, my robe falling, forgotten, to my waist. “Tonight? It’s... I did not realize we were ready.”

“Yeah, well, your little boy toy bumped the timeline up on us. We have no idea if his men saw your little disappearing act with him last night, so we have to consider you compromised. And rumor has it if we don’t take him down tonight, he’s planning to

leave France and then this whole operation was for nothing.”

“All right. I will be there.”

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Closing my eyes, I made a mental note of the time and place Pierce rattled off just as the shower switched off.

“I have to go,” I whispered. “I’ll see you tonight.”

Without waiting for a response, I hit the button to end the call only seconds before Cole stepped back into the bedroom, beads of water running down his chest and disappearing under the towel wrapped haphazardly at his waist. My mouth practically watered at the thought of following those water trails with my tongue. Taking him in my mouth and—

“Who was that?”

Lying about being on the phone would only make him suspicious and likely end with the same treatment I’d received last night. So, I sent him an apologetic smile and told him a lie he would have no trouble believing. “The cleaning company again. Apparently they are still in a bit of a jam.”

His face was a careful mask, not giving any hint to his true feelings. “And what did you say?”

“I told them that I was sorry, but I was unable to help. And that I would be leaving the country soon.”

Heat flashed in his eyes. “Good girl. I’m proud of you, sweetheart, I know that wasn’t easy.”

A knot formed in my stomach, but I forced a bright smile. “Thank you, Sir.”

“Let’s get dressed and go find some food. We’ll go wherever you want.”

“Oh, I know the perfect place!” The knot was still there, but my enthusiasm wasn’t feigned as I pulled on a light, flowing dress he’d insisted on buying me one day while we’d been out wandering the city together as if we hadn’t a care in the world. “There is a little restaurant just a few blocks from here with the most heavenly breakfast. They even have an American option, complete with all the fatty meats you enjoy clogging your arteries with.”

“My arteries are just fine, brat. I get plenty of exercise, especially with you around.”

Laughing, I finished putting myself together for the day. As I teased and joked with my lover, another part of my brain was focused on figuring out the best path for deceiving him one final time so I could finally take down the man who had murdered his cousin.

Seventeen

Cole

“Was this all really necessary?”

Standing in the living room, fists planted on her hips, Adele eyed the pile of bags and carefully wrapped packages from our impromptu shopping spree with the same caution most women would use when confronted with a snake. Or with a man holding a gun to their lover’s head. The latter she’d handled without an ounce of fear, but apparently spending “an excessive amount of money” on a new wardrobe was her breaking point.

“Yes. And do you know why?” Wrapping my arms around her waist, I turned her to face me.

“Why?”

“Because I am the Daddy here and if I say my little girl deserves to be spoiled, then she deserves to be spoiled. Do you need more of a reason than that?”

A perfectly shaped eyebrow arched up toward her hairline. “Other than ‘Daddy said so’? Yes, I do need more of a reason than that.”

Feisty little brat. More and more I felt as if I was seeing the real Adele, and I couldn’t get enough of her. I’d been intrigued by the sweet, unassuming maid. But this Adele fascinated me. I felt protective of the first. But I was compelled to claim, own,

possess the second.

Moving my hand to her hair, I pulled her head back, exposing the slim column of her throat. “How about just saying ‘Thank you, Daddy,’ instead of arguing, hmm?”

“Thank you, Daddy. But you really shouldn’t have spent so much. I don’t need all this.”

Switching tactics, I loosened my hold on her hair and brushed a kiss across her cheek. “You don’t need it now, perhaps, but you’ll need it when we are back in the States. If my men think I can’t provide for my wife, they’ll begin to question my ability to run my empire.”

Her breath hitched, and she tried to step back, but I held her firmly in place. “Your wife?”

“Yes, sweetheart. Did you really think I’d let you loose in Chicago without the protection of my name?” With my free hand, I captured her fingers, running the pad of my thumb over the spot where my ring would soon sit. “How do you feel about rubies? I know a diamond is traditional, but a ruby feels more fitting for my feisty little girl.”

“Is this your idea of a proposal?”

The dry question made me grin, and I lifted her hand to my lips. “I suppose you could consider it a pre-proposal. I’ll do it up right once we’re back stateside.” Once I know you’re safe.

Her lips parted, as if she were about to protest, and I was hit with the sudden thought that she was about to spill some long-held secret. A storm raged, dark clouds gathering in her eyes. That side of her I’d seen hints of during our grand escape, the

darkness I'd sensed inside of her from the very beginning.

What aren't you telling me, little girl?

And just as quickly as it came, the storm cleared, and she was smiling up at me. "I accept your pre-proposal, but I reserve the right to change my mind if the real thing is not up to my standards."

Fighting back the urge to bend her over and paddle her until she spilled every last secret she was keeping, I returned her smile. "Good girl. Why don't you go take a nap, and tonight I'll take you somewhere obscenely expensive to celebrate."

"But I am not sleepy."

I needed to plan my next shot at Giorgio. After the botched attempt last night, his guard would be up, and it would be next to impossible to get to him. There were new patterns to study, increased security to review.

But none of it held any appeal. For the first time since I had begun my quest for vengeance, something else had taken a front seat. It was unnerving, how quickly she'd become the most important thing in my life. Even more so than my family.

Pushing away the uncomfortable thoughts, I swept her up into my arms and strode toward the bedroom. "Well, then, let's see if Daddy can help you relax."

Adele

Relaxed was not the right word for what I felt when Cole was finished with me. Exhausted, wrung out, completely and thoroughly used was more like it. So much so that I did, in fact, sleep rather soundly once we were finished.



I was alone in the room when I awoke. A quick peek out of the bedroom confirmed Cole was nowhere nearby, most likely holed up in his office planning out his next attack on Giorgio.

With a twinge of guilt, I quietly closed the door to the bedroom again and fished my phone from my purse. It felt wrong to be planning to sneak off and deal with Giorgio behind his back, but what other choice did I have? If Cole so much as showed his face at the meet tonight, he'd be arrested on the spot.

Just the thought of him behind bars had my stomach doing somersaults. No, it was far better for him to be kept in the dark for now. Once Giorgio had been dealt with, I would tell Cole so we could begin our new life together.

Extricating myself from Interpol was going to be tricky, especially since they apparently had their eye on Cole. Even a new identity wouldn't be enough to keep me off their radar. But it was something I was certain we could figure out.

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If he could forgive me, that was.

Annoyed with myself for dwelling once more on my deceit and the inevitable reveal, I opened the app on my phone which allowed me to access my files and the internet without being monitored. One of the tech wizards at our headquarters had explained it to me once, but I'd gotten lost in the sea of tech jargon. All I knew was it was safe for me to search what I needed to search, and even if my phone fell into the wrong hands, nobody but me would be able to access the information.

Giorgio's file hadn't been updated to reflect any of the recent developments, which was slightly odd but not alarming. With the chaos of the past few days, no doubt Pierce had his hands full. And paperwork had never really been his strong suit, anyway.

Did I dare search Cole's name? If Giorgio hadn't bothered to update Giorgio's file, there was a chance he hadn't officially documented the tie between him and Cole, either. My search could, however, alert someone to the connection.

Perhaps that was the answer. If Pierce was the only one who knew how they were connected, all I had to do was convince him to look the other way. Lord knew it wouldn't have been the first time we'd redacted information in the interest of protecting an asset.

Pushing that problem to the back of my mind for my subconscious to deal with, I focused on locating the meetup for tonight. I had a vague idea of where it was located, but the timing would be tight if Cole insisted on dinner out.

“You’re supposed to be napping.” Standing in the doorway, a smile curving his lips, Cole tilted his head to the side. “What are you doing, naughty girl?”

“Ah.” With a sheepish glance down at my phone, I hit the button to close the app and opened a search window. “I did not wish to bother you, so I thought I would look for somewhere to have dinner tonight. To celebrate, as you said.”

“Did you find anything?”

“No, not yet. I have not been awake very long.”

“Then I’ll leave you to it. I was coming to check on you, but I still have some work to do. Let me know when you pick a restaurant, and we’ll get ready.”

“Actually...” Rolling off the bed, I deliberately allowed the sheet to fall away so I was completely bared to his hungry gaze. “I thought perhaps we could have something brought to us. So we could have a more... intimate celebration.”

Strong hands cupped my ass, pulling me up to my toes. I hissed at the flash of pain from his fingers pressing against the still sore spots from my punishment the night before. Oddly enough, the pain helped to ease some of the guilt I felt at deceiving him yet again.

“That sounds like an excellent plan, sweetheart. I already know what I want for dessert.”

“You already had that for breakfast,” I reminded him with a laugh. Not that it mattered to my pussy, which was again aching to be touched just at the thought of his hands and tongue on me.

“Breakfast, lunch, dinner, second breakfast, elevenses. I could have you every second

of every day and still never tire of the taste.”

“Oh.” My heart skittered to a stop in my chest before jumping into a gallop. “That’s a lovely thing to say.”

“I meant every word, Adele. As a matter of fact, I think I might be hungry right now.”

“Daddy!” I shrieked as he pulled me up off the floor, forcing me to wrap my legs around his waist. “You are going to drop me!”

“Nonsense.”

He carried me to the bed, and I scurried away when he dropped me onto the mattress. “As much as I appreciate your enthusiasm for French cuisine, I am starving. We did not eat lunch, remember?”

With an exaggerated sigh, he released me and pulled his phone from his pocket. “All right. But after dinner, you are mine, little girl.”

“Thank you, Daddy.” Rising up onto my knees, I pressed a kiss to his cheek, forcing myself to smile as though my heart wasn’t shattering in my chest. I could only pray when it was all said and done, I would still be his.

Eighteen

Cole

At the buzz of the intercom, Adele rushed to press the button. After a short conversation in rushed French, she turned, bouncing on her toes. “Dinner is here! I will go and get it.”

“No, I’ll go.” Perhaps I was being overly paranoid, but something still felt off to me. A gut feeling I couldn’t quite shake that danger was just around the corner.

She rolled her eyes and gave me a look that made it clear she felt I was overreacting. “Don’t be silly. It is just downstairs.”

My phone buzzed in my pocket, and I sent her a stern glare as I pulled it out to check the display. Mikey. “Little girl if you put one foot out of this apartment you won’t sit for a week.” Hitting the button, I turned away, trusting she would do as she was told. “Yeah?”

“We have a big fucking problem.”

The hairs on the back of my neck stood up at the furious growl. “What’s wrong?”

“Remember how I said Interpol has eyes on Giorgio?”

“Yes.”

“And remember how I said they have someone on the inside?”

“Yes,” I snapped, quickly losing patience. “Where is this going, Mikey?”

“I accessed Giorgio’s system to see if they had any info. And boy, do they. Sending you the file on an operative they identified who has been working for Giorgio for years. One Marie Dupont. Look familiar?”

Pulling my phone from my ear, I opened the text he’d sent. There, staring up at me from my screen, was Adele’s face. Without the playful smiles or the shy look in her eyes, but there was no doubt the serious-looking woman on my screen was the same one who had been warming my bed the past few days.

“I see,” I said, keeping my tone as even as possible despite the rage churning in my stomach. “That is a problem.”

“How are you so fucking calm—oh, shit. Is she there?”

“Yes.” Turning back to the door, I swore under my breath when I did not find her waiting patiently for me to escort her downstairs. “Adele!”

Silence.

“I swear to god, when I get my hands on her...” I let the threat trail off, since even I wasn’t sure if I meant to throttle her or put her over my knee.

“That’s not the worst of it, boss.”

“What could possibly be worse than the fact that I’ve been fucking an undercover Interpol agent without knowing it?”

“Maybe the fact that she’s not the only agent in Giorgio’s house. Only this guy’s on his payroll.”

Another photo came through, a man I didn’t recognize. Or did I? There was something oddly familiar about him.

A memory surfaced, putting the face into context, and I snarled into the phone. “Motherfucker!”

“What? You recognize him?”

“Yeah. Adele said he was a buddy of her ex-boyfriend.” Which, I suddenly realized, was obviously a bullshit story on top of the rest of her bullshit.

If I didn’t kill her, she wasn’t going to sit comfortably for the rest of our lives.

“Can you get me a location on her? She slipped out and I have a feeling she’s going to meet this—what’s his name?”

“Pierce. Gregory Pierce.”

Adele

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Adrenaline pumped through my veins as I turned the corner to the warehouse where Pierce had told me to meet him. I was so close to the goal we'd worked toward the past three years.

So close to freedom.

I found him leaning against his car, the scowl that seemed perpetually etched into his face in place. Alarm bells rang in the back of my mind as I took in the otherwise empty parking lot.

"Where is everyone else?" Slowing to a stop several feet away, I watched his scowl deepen, and those alarm bells rang even louder.

"Inside, waiting for you. Come on."

"Where are they parked?" Suspicion niggled at my brain, but my mind instantly rebelled. This was Pierce, my handler. The man who had been walking me through my undercover assignments for years.

One of the few people on this Earth I trusted with my life.

"Around the side. Are you coming, or what?"

"Yes, I am coming." Falling into step behind him, I let my gaze scan the area around the warehouse. Far enough away from the bustling crowds, it was the perfect spot for an ambush.



Pierce yanked open the front door and I followed him inside, our footsteps echoing through the cavernous, empty space. Each step bringing me closer and closer to retribution. To the moment I could look Cole in the eyes and tell him the man who had murdered his sweet, innocent cousin was finally behind bars, that we could both move on with our lives now that he was no longer a threat.

With Giorgio taken care of, would Cole be willing to go straight for me? Even as the thought entered my mind, I realized I didn't care. I'd been undercover long enough to understand the world wasn't as black and white as I'd once considered it. That most people lived within those shades of gray, myself included. Unlike Giorgio, Cole was the type of criminal with his own moral code, one he would defend with blood if it came to it.

It was a code I understood, and one I could live by, if he was willing to forgive me when this was all said and done.

Suddenly itching to get this over with so I could return to him, I picked up my pace, hurrying to keep up with Pierce's long strides.

We made our way past the rows and rows of empty shelves inside the warehouse to another door. This time when Pierce opened the door, he stood off to the side to allow me to walk ahead of him. I stepped through, my brain freezing as I struggled to make sense of the sight in front of me. And when the cold metal of Pierce's handgun pressed against my spine, I knew I had been right about one thing.

This was the perfect place for an ambush.

Cole

"Where the fuck could she be?"

“I don’t know, boss, I’m working as fast as I can.” The irritation in Mikey’s tone did little to settle my own nerves. “Either her phone is off, or she has some kind of blocker on it that’s preventing me from tracking it.”

If either of those options were true, she was just racking up the reasons for me to spank the daylights out of her when she was finally safe.

In the meantime, we had to figure out another way to track her down. Closing my eyes, I struggled to think through the worry and fear, to find any straw to cling to that might help us get to her. “What about Giorgio?”

“What about him?”

“Can you track his phone? If it’s a trap, she’s wherever he is.” The phone fell silent, and I snarled at the device. “Well?”

“That’s fucking brilliant, and I’m pissed I didn’t think of it,” Mikey growled back. “Yeah, I’ve got him and he’s definitely not at his estate. If he’d make a goddamned call, I might be able to pinpoint his location for you.”

As if he’d spoken it into existence, a new call appeared on my screen. “I think we’ve got him. Hold, and keep doing what you’re doing.”

“Got it, boss.”

Hitting the button to answer the new call, I forced the fury from my tone. The last thing I needed was to tip him off that I knew something was up and lose my one chance at tracking them down. “Giorgio.”

“Are you psychic now, Porter?”

At the sound of his voice, the fury came rushing back, a red haze coloring my vision.

“No, you’re just that damn predictable.”

“We’ll see about that. I’ve got someone here you might want to say hello to.”

“Cole, don’t you dare come for me, it’s a trap!”

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Adele's command—and there was no mistaking the authority in her voice, which I mentally added to the list of things we would be discussing later—was followed by a sickening crunch and her sharp, high cry of pain.

“I swear to god, Giorgio, if there is so much as a scratch on her, you will die begging her for mercy.”

“Oh, I plan to put so much more than a scratch on her. Unless you can find her in the next thirty minutes, at which point I'll start cutting into her.”

The call ended, leaving me alone in the mocking silence of my apartment, struggling for some semblance of sanity. With trembling fingers, I hit the button to switch back to my call with Mikey.

“He has her.” My voice was rough, gravelly, with the combination of terror and rage gripping me by the throat. “He has her and he's going to hurt her. Tell me you have the bastard, so we can end this once and for all.”

“Yeah, boss. We've got him.”

Adele

Pain exploded across my cheekbone as another backhanded blow cracked against my face. Struggling to draw a shaky breath, I spit out the blood pooling in my mouth before lifting my face back to stare my assailant in the eye.

Pierce, the man I had trusted to protect me all these years, his eyes now filled with

bloodlust.

“Had enough, sweetheart?”

The inflection he put on the word had my stomach threatening to revolt. “How did... You bugged my apartment?”

“Of course I did. Which, let me tell you, was a fucking waste until ‘Daddy’ came along. Who knew you were such a filthy little slut?”

“Fuck you.”

Another slap and my vision went black around the edges. Fighting to stay conscious, to somehow figure a way out of this goddamned mess, I forced a laugh. “Go ahead. Hit me. God knows the only way a woman would let you touch her is if she was tied to a chair with no choice in the matter.”

“You little bitch—”

“Pierce, control yourself.” Strolling into view as if this were just another day at the office, Giorgio bared his teeth at me. In some sense of the word, I supposed it could have been called a smile, but it reminded me more of a dog signaling its intent to kill. “She’s no good to us if you kill her before Porter gets here.”

“Why not? Either way, they’re both dead.”

A scream welled in my chest, but I swallowed it back. “You’re the dead man, Pierce.”

“You think so?” Giorgio stepped forward, closing the distance between us, forcing me to strain my neck to look up at him. “You really think Cole Porter is going to save

you? He couldn't save his whore of a cousin. So, what makes you so special, Agent Dupont?"

The truth in his words seemed to echo in my very soul. Cole was only one man, and Giorgio had a small army guarding the warehouse. I'd seen them, but unfortunately not until after I'd been tied to the chair and stripped of my weapon.

Unwilling to give him the satisfaction of knowing he was likely right, I glared silently up at Giorgio. Dark, beady eyes met mine, and for the first time I really saw the emptiness in them. The humanity that gave men like Cole a moral code was nowhere to be found in this man, and I knew in that moment he would keep his promise to begin slicing me open once my time ran out.

"Foolish girl," he muttered with another flash of his teeth. "Your knight has ten more minutes, and then the fun can begin."

Giorgio walked away, and Pierce took his place again, standing in front of me, leering down at me. My heart, already so battered by his betrayal, threatened to shatter in my chest. "Why?" I whispered, swallowing hard against the lump in my throat. "Why did you betray me?"

"I didn't betray you, Adele. I realized that all these years working for different agencies, getting passed over time and time again for promotions, living paycheck to paycheck just to put a shitty roof over my head, I'd been betraying myself."

"This was all about money?" Somehow it seemed too vulgar for my mind to fully comprehend. "You climbed in bed with one of the most vicious, depraved criminals we've ever seen for a few extra bucks?"

"A few bucks?" Pierce's laugh rang out, loud and cruel in the large room. "Nah, sweetheart. I have several million stashed in an off-shore bank account, just waiting

for me to retire.”

“If you think you’ll live long enough to spend a dime, you’re even dumber than I realized.”

His lip curled back in a snarl, he raised his arm and I braced for another strike.

“Enough!”

Pausing mid-swing, Pierce took a step back. But my moment of reprieve was short-lived. An evil, almost gleeful glint in his eye, Giorgio approached us again, this time with a wicked-looking knife clutched in his hand.

“Time’s up, Agent Dupont.”

Nineteen

Cole

A scream echoed through the warehouse, turning my blood to ice.

Adele.

Paused just outside the door that led to the walkway around the upper level of the warehouse, I forced myself to stay still long enough to listen. Another scream ripped through the air, and I twisted the knob, easing the door open.

On the walkway stood a sniper, holding his gun at rest, watching the events below him unfold like he was an audience member at some sick kind of theater. Using his distraction to my advantage, I slipped into the shadows behind him.

Voices drifted up from the main floor, but I couldn't quite make out what they were saying. I recognized Giorgio, as much from the cruel, taunting tone as much as the actual timbre of his voice. Another man, who must have been Pierce stood beside him.

And Adele. Not begging or pleading for mercy as anyone else in her position might have done, but strong and fierce.

That's my girl. Just hold on a little while longer, baby. Daddy's coming.

Adele



The twin gashes along my forearms burned and throbbed with every beat of my heart. And with every drip of my blood onto the concrete floor, it became more and more obvious Cole wasn't coming for me.

I was on my own.

My wrists and ankles were zip tied to the chair, giving me zero wiggle room or leverage. I'd tested the bonds during a brief reprieve when my captors had turned their backs on me, but the plastic dug into my skin, rubbing it raw. The chair itself was metal, so the likelihood of breaking it and at least gaining some use of my limbs seemed unlikely.

Merde.

Just as Giorgio turned back to me, the tip of his blade glittering crimson with my blood, there was a soft pop from somewhere in the warehouse and he lurched backward, the knife clattering to the floor. Clutching his shoulder with the opposite hand, he let loose a string of curses, his head jerking up to glare at something over my head.

"Where are you, Porter? Show yourself, you fucking coward!"

Cole? My heart leapt at the sound of his name, then slammed against my ribcage as fear coursed through me. "Cole! Run!"

As if I'd set off some kind of trigger, gunfire exploded above our heads. Giorgio and Pierce circled me, guns raised as they scanned the chaos up on the walkway. When Pierce stepped behind me, I rocked myself backward, crashing into him and toppling us both to the ground. His gun skittered across the concrete, too far away for me to even attempt to reach. But as long as he didn't have it, I assured myself I at least had a fighting chance.

Giorgio spun around, the barrel of his gun leveled at my chest. I froze, fear holding me in place more effectively than any restraint.

“Let her go, Bianchi.”

Like an avenging angel, Cole’s command rang out in the sudden, eerie silence. I hadn’t even noticed that the gunfire had stopped. Beneath me, Pierce was still and silent as well. Dead, somehow, if there was any sort of justice in the world.

“Tell you what.” Giorgio raised his voice, addressing Cole, but his gaze never left me. “Come and face me like a man, and I’ll let the whore go.”

“Don’t do it!” I screamed, pain exploding in my head as Giorgio’s designer shoe connected with my skull.

Another shot rang out, but I couldn’t tell where it came from or what it had hit.

Until I saw Giorgio’s eyes grow wide and the red stain blossoming across his chest. He fell to his knees beside me, and from the shadows stepped Cole, holding a sniper rifle as he approached.

With a kick he sent Giorgio forward. Confused, terrified eyes locked on mine, he let out one final, gurgling breath as the life drained from his face.

“Ah, sweetheart. I broke my promise.”

Tearing my eyes away from Giorgio, I stared up at Cole. “What?”

The corner of his mouth tilted up in a smirk. “I promised if he hurt you, he would die begging you for mercy. I really wanted to give you that.”

“Oh.” I let out a strangled laugh. “I forgive you. Could you, perhaps, get me out of this chair though?”

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With a tenderness belying the carnage surrounding us, Cole shifted the rifle to his back and knelt beside me. From his pocket, he pulled out a knife and sliced through my bonds.

Underneath the chair, Pierce stirred with a moan and Cole raised an eyebrow in a silent question.

“Leave him.” On my feet now, I leaned into Cole, my body rapidly growing heavier as the adrenaline faded. “Let the agency handle him. I do not wish to have any more blood on our hands.”

“Whatever you want, sweetheart. Let’s get you out of here.” Sweeping me up into his arms, he strode through the back door of the warehouse.

Outside, we were greeted by a group of men dressed in all black. Still holding me in his arms, Cole walked straight toward the one who was obviously in charge. Tall, with dark hair and nearly black eyes, he looked familiar, but my brain struggled to make the connection.

“It is done?” the man asked, his accent thicker than my own.

“Yeah. Giorgio is dead. The other man is alive, and my girl here would prefer to keep it that way. Just make sure he gets delivered to the right people.”

“Oui.” Barking orders in French, the man instructed his team to check the warehouse for any other survivors and to transport them for questioning. As the men filed past us, he switched his focus to me, his amusement obvious. “You have caused quite the

stir tonight, little one.”

“Who the fuck are you?”

Cole sighed. “This is the man who helped rescue you. Say ‘Thank you’, Adele.”

“Thank you, Adele,” I mumbled, my eyes drifting closed despite my valiant efforts to stay alert.

“Brat,” Cole said with a chuckle. “I need to get her to the plane so we can get these wounds bandaged up and be on our way. You have a handle on everything here?”

“We have it under control, yes. You take care of your little one.”

“Thanks. If you’re ever in the States, I owe you a drink.”

“I think, perhaps, you owe us more than a drink.” His words were heavy with meaning. “I am sure we will be in touch.”

“He means you owe him a favor. Ow! Daddy, stop,” I whined as pain lanced through my skull when he jostled me.

“Sorry, sweetheart. Gotta get you all buckled in. Safety first.”

I snorted. Seatbelts and car safety seemed like the least of our worries given what we’d just been through.

Forcing my eyelids open when he climbed into the passenger seat, I squinted at him through the pain. “Where are we going?”

“Home, baby. We’re going home.”

Twenty

Cole

An hour into our flight and Adele was still out cold. Between the blood loss, the head injury, and the pain medication she'd been given it didn't seem unusual, but it still worried me.

Just as I was about to call for the doctor to see if I needed to try waking her up, she moaned, a low, pitiful sound that had me moving to the bed.

"Hey, sweetheart. Can you wake up for Daddy?"

"Non."

If the situation hadn't been quite so serious, the petulance in her voice would have been adorable. And it still was, but my concern over her injuries overrode any amusement I might have found.

"Baby, you need to open your eyes."

More mumbled French as the furrow between her brows deepened. Sighing, I brushed the hair from her face. "Stubborn little girl."

"I am not stubborn. I am tired."

Relief flooded me to the point I was certain my knees would have given out on me if

I'd been standing up. "I know, sweetheart. But Daddy still needs you to wake up, just for a little bit. Come on."

Hooking my hands under her arms, I pulled her up so she was leaning back against the wall. One eyelid lifted a fraction, and she moaned again.

"Too bright."

"I'll turn the lights off." The switch was right beside the bed, so I simply leaned over her to flip it off, plunging us into darkness broken only by the rows of dim lighting along the floor and tucked up under the cabinets. "Better?"

Cautiously, she opened her eyes, bit by bit until I could see her blinking owlshly even in the dark. "Yes, thank you."

"How do you feel?"

"Like a madman tried to kill me," she replied dryly, looking down at her bandaged arms. "But not so bad, all things considered."

"How much do you remember?"

"All of it, I think." She looked back up at me, but her expression was impossible to read in the dark. "Giorgio is dead?"

"Yes."

"So, your cousin is avenged."

There was no judgment, no pity in the statement. Just a simple statement of fact, and yet it still had a lump forming in my throat. "Yes."

“I saw her. Pierce had a file on you, and there were pictures of her, from... before. And after.”

“Oh, baby. I never would have wanted you to see that.”

“I am not weak, Cole.” Closing her eyes, she dragged in a deep breath. “I assume you know by now, I am not a maid.”

“I do.” Part of me wanted to wait to have this conversation, until she was better, until she was healed. Until she was mine. But at my core, I knew the longer I put it off, the more likely it was we would simply never talk about. And that was a breeding ground for resentment and doubt. “But why don’t you tell me your version of the story.”

“Oui. Yes. May I have a drink, before we begin?”

“Of course.” Navigating by memory, I crossed the small bedroom to the mini fridge and grabbed us each a bottle of water.

Settled on the bed once more, I handed her a bottle. “Drink, and then we can talk.”

Adele



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It took my time sipping my water, reluctant to have the conversation I knew we needed to have. For all I knew, once he learned the full truth, I would not actually live to see Chicago.

But surely he would not have put so much effort into rescuing me if he only planned to kill me. Right?

It took nearly half the bottle for me to feel that my emotions were back under my control, at least enough for me to tell him what he deserved to know. Screwing the top back on the water bottle, I pulled in a deep, steady breath.

And told him everything.

I explained how I had come to work for Interpol, after a particularly successful takedown of one of the largest crime families in France. Part of Le Milieu as the French referred to “the mob”, which translates more or less to The Underworld. How I’d been selected to go undercover into Giorgio’s organization as a maid, since they had never had any luck getting any of their men into his inner circle without being discovered.

That Pierce had been my handler, and I had trusted him more than I trusted any other human being on Earth. My heart still ached like a rotten tooth at the knowledge of how I’d been betrayed.

“And how do I fit into your plans?” he asked, his voice colder than I could ever remember hearing it. “Did you know who I was when I approached you in the bar?”

“No.” I swallowed hard, the truth bitter on my tongue. “But Pierce told me who you were and why you were in Paris within a day or two of our meeting.”

“I see. And you still let me fuck you, even knowing I was no better than Giorgio?”

“Non.” My brain struggled to translate all that I wanted to say as I pushed to my knees, bracing my hands on his chest when the room spun around me. “You are nothing like him. Giorgio Bianchi was a cold, cruel, vicious monster. You are none of those things.”

“I am. I have been.” Storms gathered in his eyes, and he wrapped his fingers around my wrists, whether to hold me in place or just for the feel of his skin on mine I wasn’t sure. And I didn’t care. “I’ve been a monster when I needed to be, and I will be one again when the situation calls for it. Can you live with that?”

The answer came easily, perhaps too easily. But there would be time enough later to examine the darkness in my own soul. “Yes. Because you are only those things when you need to be. I have seen the man you really are, Cole Porter, and you are not a monster.”

“You’ve spent your life in the pursuit of justice, Adele. Look me in the eye and tell me you can truly leave that all behind, knowing who I am. What I’ve done. What I will do again, whenever it is needed.”

My head was aching with the effort to keep my eyes open and continue talking, but my heart urged me on. “When I joined the police force, I believed the world was black and white. Right and wrong. Good and bad. But even before I joined Interpol, I had come to realize the world is made up of so many shades of gray. That very few people are truly all good or all bad. And knowing Pierce... knowing I was betrayed by the one person in this world I trusted, I’m not sure I could go back to Interpol even without you in the picture.”

“There’s a world of difference between leaving Interpol and marrying a criminal, sweetheart.”

“I know. And I cannot say I will not struggle with it at times. But I want to be with you, Cole. For however long you will have me.”

“Forever.” There was a fierceness in his tone that thrilled me, sending my heart racing. “You are mine, Adele, and you will be until death do we part.”

“You forgive me, then? For misleading you?”

His chuckle was full of dark, wicked promise. “Misleading is a rather tame term, don’t you think? Once you are healed, we will be having several long discussions about the importance of honesty.”

It should have filled me with dread, but there was no room for anything with the hope crowding around my heart. “I am sorry. I did not think I had a choice, at first. And by the time I realized I wanted to tell you everything, I was too scared of what you might think of me. Too scared of losing you.”

“You never have to fear that, sweetheart. All you ever have to worry about is getting that naughty bottom of yours turned nice and red. Which I have a feeling will be happening on a regular basis.”

“I think you are right,” I agreed with a sigh. But the sulking was all for show. I would take a spanking every day for the rest of my life, if it meant I could spend it with him.

“Mom’s gonna love you.” A wide grin split his face. “She’s been after me to settle down with a nice girl for years.”

“I am not so sure I will fit your mother’s definition of nice.”

Throwing his head back, he let loose a long, loud laugh. “Sweetheart, she married a mob boss. In comparison to the rest of the family, you’re Mother freaking Theresa.”

“But did she not divorce your father? I thought that was why you have her maiden name.” The research I’d been able to do on the DeCosta-Porter family had been limited to what was public knowledge, which had been woefully lacking in the details I really wanted to know.

“That’s a long story. Short version is, she divorced him mostly to distance us from the DeCosta side of the family and to give me a more ‘respectable’ cover. And, I think, because she was pissed at my dad for getting caught. But she’s just as involved in the family business as anyone.”

“Your mother sounds fascinating.” And like the type of woman who wouldn’t approve of anyone her son brought home. Perhaps Cole was able to forgive my deceptions, but what about his mother? Or the rest of his family for that matter? Would they welcome a former cop with open arms?

“She is.” Cole interrupted my panicking thoughts. “You’re going to love her. And she’s going to be thrilled to have a daughter to spoil rotten. But we can talk about all of that later. Right now, you need rest.”

As much as I wanted to continue our conversation and learn everything I could before we landed in America, my eyelids were already growing heavy again. “Yes, Daddy.”

“That’s my good girl.”

His praise pushed all the negative thoughts from my head as he tucked me back into bed. No matter what came next, there was one absolute truth I could cling to: I would never have to face any of it alone. He would stand by my side, against whatever obstacles life put in our way. My defender, my hero, my avenging angel.

My Daddy.

### Epilogue

Cole

“What about Dusable? Are the Irish still trying to edge into our territory over there?”

Alexander, my captain in charge of that sector, snorted. “The Irish are always trying something, boss, you know that. But nothing new or out of the ordinary.”

“All right. Keep an ear out for any unusual rumblings and let’s nip that newcomer over in Lincoln Park in the bud. The last thing we need are rumors that we’re getting soft on enforcing our territory. What about the Romanos? Are we any closer to sealing the deal with them?”

To my right, Mikey snorted. “Carlos is being as bullheaded as ever. He’s angling for something, but he won’t tell us exactly what it is. Twenty says he waits to spring it on you in person so it’s harder for you to say no.”

“That’s a sucker’s bet, and you know it.” Carlos Romano controlled almost the entirety of the northern half of the city. With our business expanding, we needed him on our side to safely move our products in and out of the city. An alliance with him would be good for both our families, but he was well known for being a cagey bastard when he wanted something.

The question was, what did he want? And how much was it going to cost me?

“Set a meet for next month. And in the meantime, we’ll see if we can’t dig up some

information on what he might be holding out for.”

Tapping a note into his phone, Mikey grunted. “Got it.”

From across the table, Luca flashed a boyish grin. It always amused me how different he was from Mikey, at least in personality. Side by side there was no denying they were brothers. But when it came to temperament, they couldn’t have been less alike if they tried. “Any chance we could talk Romano into including his daughter in the deal?”

“Leonora? She’s a child, Luca.”

“Not anymore, cuz. She’s at my club pretty much every weekend and believe me when I tell you she is all grown up.”

“And do you see women as little more than bargaining chips?” Seated on the other side of me, Adele pinned him with a cold stare that had Luca glancing back to me.

As if I was going to save him from her. Poor, naïve boy.

When it was obvious no help was to be found, he shifted uncomfortably in his chair and dialed up the charm on his smile. “Of course not, Dell. It was just a joke.”

“I do not understand the joke, then. Perhaps you could explain it to me.”

A ripple of laughter went around the table as Luca’s face reddened. “Never mind.”

Laying my hand on Adele’s thigh to settle her, I sent Luca a pointed look. “We do not include human beings in our business transactions. That is not how the DeCostas do business. Is that perfectly clear?”

“Crystal, boss.”

“Good. You all have your assignments. Dismissed.”

One by one, my crew filed out of the room, until I was left with only one straggler. Now that we were alone, she began to fidget in her chair, her anxiety obviously growing with each passing moment.

Pushing away from the table, I tugged at her hand and she all but dove onto my lap, her head resting on my shoulder.

“Are you ready for your final punishment?”

Once her injuries from her encounter with Giorgio had healed, we had begun the task of addressing all of the lies she had told me during our time in Paris. Starting with her name and occupation, we worked our way through one a week, no matter how small or large the lie.

Last week had been particularly difficult. Her punishment for not telling me she knew who I was so early on, and actively working with Pierce to trap me was by far the harshest punishment I had handed down to her or possibly any of my previous submissives. A dozen with the rattan cane, and then I’d fucked her beautifully striped ass until she’d come, begging for my forgiveness.

I might have regretted being so harsh with her, except I could see the difference in her week by week. As if each punishment lifted some of the weight from her shoulders until she was a completely different person. Happier, more carefree. I’d even suggested forgiving some of her lies at one point, under the consideration that I myself hadn’t been fully honest with her, but she had insisted on following through.

Today’s punishment wouldn’t be quite as harsh, but it still would not be an easy one.



Because not only had she lied, she had put herself in danger in the process. And as far as I was concerned, that was a lesson she would learn as often as it took for it to sink in.

Her nose wrinkled in response to my question, making her look younger than her years. “My bottom is still sore from this morning.”

The memory made me grin. A certain naughty little girl had wanted to argue with me over taking her guard with her on her shopping trip. In the end, she’d not only taken the guard, I was fairly certain he had overheard me taking my belt to her bare bottom before she was allowed to leave. “Well, then, perhaps you shouldn’t have been naughty when you knew you already had a spanking coming this afternoon.”

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“Yes, Daddy,” she agreed with an exaggerated sigh.

“I’ll tell you what. If you are honestly too sore, we can wait until tomorrow. But if we wait until tomorrow, you won’t be allowed to come until you receive your punishment after dinner.”

Eyes wide, she shook her head furiously back and forth. “No, no. Today is fine.”

“I thought you might say that. Let’s go get that bottom nice and red so Daddy can kiss it and make it all better.”

Adele

Draped over my husband’s knee with my dress bunched up around my waist and my panties down around my knees, I felt very much like a naughty little girl and not at all like the sophisticated wife of a powerful, dangerous man.

Which was exactly how he liked it, the sadist.

“Tell me why you are getting this spanking, Adele.”

Adele. Unlike back in Paris, joy filled me at the sound of my new name. Marie Dupont was another person, one who had lived her life on some other plane of existence from my own. I rarely missed her, or the life she had led back in France.

“Because I snuck out to confront Giorgio on my own.” Looking back, it was easy to see how reckless I’d been. And how cruel. Even if Pierce hadn’t betrayed me, I’d put

myself directly into harm's way in a misguided attempt to shield Cole, and in the process, I had also tried to deny him his chance at vengeance for his cousin.

A spanking was the least of what I deserved.

"You snuck out after being confined to the apartment. You lied to me about going to meet the delivery man. And you endangered your life in the process. This bottom is going to be plenty sore by the time I am through with it."

"I'm sorry, Daddy." I was, but I also knew I would not be able to forgive myself until this final punishment was through.

"I know, baby." With that, he brought his hand down hard on my naked ass, harder than he usually began a spanking. As far as warmups went, it was brutal, leaving me with no time to even catch my breath as the sting and the heat built in my backside.

Before long, I was kicking and squealing over his knee, the pain becoming almost unbearable with each swat. I had long ago given up any hope of staying silent enough to not be overheard by his staff and guards. None of them treated me any differently after a punishment, though I had caught some sympathetic glances from some of them whenever I would sit more gingerly at a meal.

"Daddy, I'm sorry!" Giving in to the pain, I threw my hand behind me to try and block the blows raining down on my backside. With barely a pause, he caught my wrist in his free hand, pinning it to my side as he continued my punishment.

By the time he stopped, I was panting and whimpering over his knee, my bottom on fire.

And I knew we were just getting started.

Cool wood tapped against my bottom, and I let out a moan, but I did not protest. I had earned every second of this punishment and I was determined I would not fight it.

“I will not stand for you putting yourself at unnecessary risk, Adele Marie Porter. If I have to spank you every day for the rest of our lives for you to learn that lesson, I will. Do you understand me, little girl?”

“Yes, Daddy.”

“Good. Because the next time we have to have this conversation, it will be a week of bedtime spankings and I can promise you will be a very, very sorry little girl by the time it is finished.”

Before I could respond, the brush cracked against my tender flesh, pulling a howl of remorse and pain from deep within me. He waited, just long enough for the pain to fully sink in, before delivering a matching blow to the opposite cheek.

“You are far too precious.” A third swat, right at that sensitive spot where my ass met my thigh. “To put yourself at risk.” A fourth, in the same spot on the opposite cheek.

“I’m sorry!” I wailed, a familiar pressure building in my chest with each swat. A swell of guilt that I knew would not be released until I had been broken enough for it to burst through the cracks.

Over and over, he punished me, the thick, heavy wood blistering my skin with every swat. Until I could feel those cracks in my resolve, the dam breaking under the weight of my guilt and the pain of my Daddy’s discipline.

Just as my breath began to hitch, the swats started coming faster. Each one driving me closer and closer to the breaking point.

And then I shattered with a sob, collapsing over his lap, weeping out every last bit of the guilt and pain. I was only dimly aware of the spanking actually ending, only really taking notice when he gathered me up into his arms, rocking me on his laps as I sobbed against his neck.

“I’m s-sorry, I’m so sorry.” I chanted my apologies like a mantra, each one lifting more and more of the weight from my shoulders until I simply closed my eyes on a sigh, my head settling on his chest.

“My good girl,” he murmured, running his hand up and down my back. “I’m so proud of you, baby.”

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“You are?”

“Oui. Ma petite fille courageuse. Tu es mon éternité.”

Kicking off the panties that had tangled around my ankles during my punishment, I straddled him, pressing my forehead to his, my heart swelling to the point of pain within my chest. “You are my forever, too. And I am only brave because of you.”

“Nonsense. You were brave before you ever met me, which both thrills me and terrifies me. Promise me you will be more careful.” There was an urgency in his tone, one I knew was borne from the trauma we shared after what happened in Paris.

If he needed me to say the words a million more times, I would happily do so if it brought him an ounce of peace.

“I promise.” Reaching between us, I unzipped his slacks, freeing his cock. I lifted up onto my toes, lowering myself onto him, my soaked pussy stretching to accept him in as I impaled myself.

“Fuck, baby.” Strong hands gripped my bottom, his fingertips digging into my sore, heated flesh. “That’s it, sweetheart. Ride Daddy’s cock like a good girl.”

His words spurred me on, combining with my own need to push me to move faster, driving us both toward our release. With every roll of my hips, he showered me with words of praise, and filthy, depraved encouragement.

My need built inside me, and I wanted to ask, wanted to beg to be allowed to come,

but words were beyond me. All I could manage were whimpers, but apparently he understood me just fine.

“Come for Daddy, baby. Come all over Daddy’s cock.”

It was all I needed to go tumbling over the edge, my body shaking as I came, my inner walls clamping down on his cock.

“Don’t you dare stop, little girl, unless you want to be on your knees with Daddy’s cock in your bottom in the next five seconds.”

The harsh, guttural command instinctively had me moving again, even as the orgasm continued to rack my body. Just as it felt as though my legs would not hold me any longer, he swelled inside of me. Fingers tangling in my hair, he brought my lips crashing down on his, so that I swallowed his cry of release when he emptied himself into me.

As our breathing slowed and our heart rates turned to normal, the kiss shifted from desperate need to a tenderness that made my heart ache with the love I felt for him.

“I love you, Adele Porter,” he murmured against my lips.

“And I love you, Cole Porter. My forever.”

It wasn’t a fairytale kind of love. Nor was it the simple life I’d imagined for myself after I left the agency. We’d been brought together by blood and vengeance, two people on opposite sides of right and wrong, each seeking justice in their own way. But in the end, it was love that held us together.

Forever.

The End