



Depredation

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Category: Erotic, Romance, Adult, Horror

Description: Kidnapped. Tortured. Corrupted. He stole me away in the middle of the night. A windowless cell with a floor of stone became my new home. He took and he took, until I had nothing left to entertain him with. And then I was abandoned and left to die, just like all the other girls. He has no idea I'm alive. He doesn't know he woke the devil inside me. When I find him, nothing in the world will be strong enough to save his tar black soul. 18+ Reader discretion is highly advised. Complete standalone novella. No cliffhanger. Loosely connected to DEVILS WITH HALOS.

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—Chapter One—

Harper

Twenty minutes into our second session, my therapist looked me straight in the eye and told me I had a delicate mind.

This was our sixth session.

I wasn't sure why I'd bothered coming after the first.

Catching the end of Dr. Powell's sentence, I shifted my doe brown eyes back to her from the distracting mural of hideous sunflowers.

“Are you saying that what I know happened didn't really happen?”

She flashed me a smile of large white teeth.

“What I'm saying, Harper, is that perception and reality are often two different things.”

Bringing my hands together on my lap, I shifted uncomfortably in my seat. The worn leather chair crackled loudly beneath my sore, denim-clad ass.

Chewing on the inside of my cheek, I blinked and studied her perfect cherub face. I'd hated her on sight the first time we met nearly seven months ago. Her blonde hair was so ridiculously shiny it looked synthetic. Her fingernails were short and neatly

manicured, and her porcelain skin was relatively flawless.

I was the complete opposite, lying partially doped up on Dilaudid in a hospital bed.

My dark brown hair was matted to the point I eventually shaved it all off, and some of my nails were completely gone.

“Are you ready to tell me about J?” she prodded, not allowing me to blissfully ignore her presence.

Withholding an exasperated sigh, I swept my gaze over the flat surface of her cherry desk. I noticed she never wrote anything down. Wasn’t that something she was supposed to do?

I couldn’t believe my parents, who rarely got along for five minutes these days, had mutually agreed to pay for this. Correction: I hated that my parents were paying for this.

“Why do you talk in circles every time I come in here?” I asked, thinking better of telling her where she could shove the bullshit degree she had hanging on the wall, and exposing her ignorance.

“Harper, I’m here to help you move forward and heal. To do that, we have to—.”

“I’m never going to discuss him with you, so stop asking.”

I glanced down, absentmindedly running my pointer finger over the ugly jagged scar on my wrist.

“I’m not sure what talking about the events that got me to this point is supposed to do for me. I don’t want to talk about what happened. I relive it every time...”

I shook my head and trailed off before I could give away too much. She'd begun to give me a pulsing headache.

She was so certain that if I divulged all that had happened, I'd feel better. It was pure bullshit.

If she knew I'd let a stranger shove his dick in and out of my ass last night until it bled, and I came so hard I saw stars, she'd probably want to talk about that, too.

Some things just weren't meant to be spoken aloud.

It took minimal effort on my end to pretend I was an average, everyday functioning member of society.

If I told this stranger what was bouncing around inside my head, she would more than likely recommend I be taken away to a safe place with a padded room.

I pretended to check the time before looking right into her milky blue eyes and feigning a sense of urgency.

"I'm going to have to cut this session short. I forgot I have somewhere to be."

"We still have twenty minutes left," she objected, glancing down at her wrist. By the time she looked at me again, I was already standing up and preparing to leave.

"You won't believe what I've done...What I've seen."

She opened her gob to spew more medicinal words, but I hastily cut her off.

"I don't have a skewed perception of reality, Dr. Powell, and I don't need a fake diagnosis or a little orange pill bottle to hide behind. I'm a fucked up bitch, period."

It's something the world is just going to have to deal with."

Whatever she said after that fell on deaf ears. I grabbed my things and walked out without a backward glance, the buckles jingling on my combat boots alerting the receptionist of my rapid approach.

"I won't be attending any more sessions," I chirped, zooming past her surprised face.

Stepping outside, I expelled a long stream of air and glanced upward.

A light drizzle had started up, causing the blue sky to turn a murky gray.

I took my time cutting through the parking lot, allowing soft drops of rainwater to run down my face. I would never take fresh air and something other than debilitating darkness for granted.

Just as I reached my ruby red Wrangler, my cell started to vibrate. I climbed inside and dug it out of my purse with one hand, starting the Jeep with the other.

"Lovely timing," I grumbled.

It was my mother, of course, no doubt having received a text from her fluke of a therapist the second I walked out.

I thought there was supposed to be some confidentiality with these people.

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I silenced the call before tossing the phone back inside my bag. I loved my mom to death, but I couldn't deal with her right then.

She would moan and whine, and lecture me on what she thought I needed to do, demanding I go back inside when all I wanted to do was go home.

I rubbed the back of my neck, releasing a heavy sigh. Some days were so much harder than others.

Everyone thought they knew the secret method to make me better. I used to say that, too...that he'd make me 'better.' Sometimes he did, but more often than not it was said before he caused me pain.

I spent two years of my life as a fuck toy to a sadistic psychopath who had just as much fun torturing me psychologically as he did physically.

Do you know how long two years is?

Its seven hundred and thirty days.

Seven thousand five hundred and twenty hours.

Therapy wasn't going to erase a single one of those seconds.

My friends and family needed to understand that the girl who was taken is not the same girl who came back.

That didn't make me crazy, and it shouldn't automatically define me as broken. I was just different.

If they'd spent two years enduring what I did, they'd all be just as fucked up.

Or worse, they would be dead.

Just like he thought I was.

—PART ONE—

—Chapter Two—

J

I knew four months ago that she was the one.

It took me another three and a half to decide to make my move.

Happening upon her was fate, God's way of giving me another blessing. I'd just come from ridding myself of the last girl, dumping her body a few miles off the coast.

Metric gas station was my next stop. I'd driven past the tiny white building at least a dozen times on my commute to and from my cabin, but I'd never seen her until the day I finally stopped.

Going inside wasn't wise. I didn't make a habit of shitting near where I played. I had one of those faces that wasn't easy to forget, so I paid with my credit card.

It was her laugh that caught my attention, called to me like a siren's lure.

The second I laid eyes on her, I felt lightness in my chest, and a wide grin spreading across my face. She was perfect, checking every box on my wish list.

And so it began.

She had no idea who I was, but I took the time to learn all about her.

I never chose a girl spontaneously. I was very selective, always going for a specific type. Brunettes. Brown eyes. Young, too—I preferred early to mid-twenties.

They reminded me of my late mother.

Occasionally, if her body was worth it, I'd take some sweet little thing that didn't fit the usual mold. I wasn't referring to big titties or asses, but all around well-built and healthy.

Harper wasn't anything like my other girls, though. Not Gail, Lilly, Tracy. Or Evelyn, Marcy, Whitney.

No, Harper Roseanne Lane was special.

I could feel it in my bones. She was my lucky number seven this year.

I called her that because I'd never gone beyond girl number six. If you're wondering why, well, that's simple. I liked my house, excelled in my career, and enjoyed my friends.

It was easy to dispose of the girls once I was done with them—that was something I never worried about. But I didn't want greed to be what got me caught, or why I'd have to give everything up.

So I'd been extra patient, even more so than usual, waiting until the time was right.

And after tonight, she'd finally be mine.

—Chapter Three—

Harper

It was nearly over, thank god.

My feet ached, and the thermostat was faulty again.

Staring out the storefront window, I watched tiny flakes of snow join the fluffy mounds already blanketing the parking lot.

"It's really coming down, huh?" Bill, my co-worker, asked from behind the front counter.

"Mhmm," I hummed, "I think it's getting worse."

"Let's close up a little early then. Your Corolla wasn't meant for these back roads in this kind of weather. I'd hate for you to wind up in a ditch, and Isa needs me to grab some diapers yet."

Nodding my agreement, I stepped back and began making my way up and down the few aisles inside the gas station, checking the freezers as I went.

"Damn," Bill cursed.

Seeing him stop half-way to the door, I shuffled back up the snack aisle.

“What’s wrong?”

“Pump five,” he sighed, running a hand through his thinning red hair. The poor man was going to be bald far before forty.

I looked at the large black truck that had just pulled up, unable to see how many people were inside due to the window tint.

“Bill, it’s not that serious. Just lock the door and turn the sign to closed.”

“I can’t. They know we’re open till eleven.”

He actually sounded upset by my idea.

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It was a waste of breath to point out they more than likely didn't know the exact time we closed. Bill was, if nothing else, diplomatic to a fault when it came to pleasing his customers.

“Okay, then you go on ahead so you can get the baby what she needs. I'll close up.”

“I can't ask you to do that.”

“You're not asking, and it's not that big a deal; I'll be fine.”

He remained silent for all of five seconds before surprisingly agreeing. “If you're sure...”

“Go. I've closed plenty of times.”

“I appreciate you, Harper.” He gave me a grateful smile, and then shuffled off to the back to gather his things from our break room.

I wasn't crazy about staying any longer than I had to, but I was scheduled to close regardless. Plus, I didn't have a newborn at home in need of diapers—just a lazy, slightly obese tomcat that probably couldn't care less if I showed back up or not.

The door opened just as I rounded the register, and the driver of the black truck stepped inside. He brought with him a gust of cold air and snowshoes packed with snow.

“Hello,” I greeted, shivering slightly.

A silent nod of acknowledgment was his only response as he made his way to one of the back aisles.

“Alright, Harper, I’m taking off,” Bill said, sweeping past, nicely bundled up in his winter garments.

“Drive safe.”

“You too,” he called over his shoulder, disappearing out into the chilled night.

I checked on the patron, who was now in the snack aisle, before lifting our nightly task list from beneath the counter.

“Take out trash, sweep floors, refill toilet paper/ paper-towels,” I mumbled to myself, mentally adding that I’d have to clean up the snow now forming a small puddle on the linoleum.

“He left you to handle all that alone?” the man asked, approaching the counter. He had a cultured voice with an accent I couldn’t immediately place.

“Oh, it’s not that bad.” I smiled at him and set the list aside, giving him my full attention. He wasn’t a giant or anything, but he was tall enough that I had to lift my chin to look up at him.

Leather gloves concealed his hands. His head and mouth were covered with a black hood and scarf, making it difficult to tell what he looked like.

The only thing that stood out to me was his eyes. They were the color of molten silver, and lively—almost as if they were smiling at some inside joke.

“How old are you?” he asked abruptly, setting his things down on the counter.

“I just turned twenty-two.”

“Just?”

“My birthday was a month ago.”

“Happy belated birthday, then.”

“Thanks.” I smiled, still trying to gauge where his accent could be from.

He looked down for a brief second and snagged one of the bags of Nacho Bugles that hung just below the counter.

“These good?” he asked, holding them up.

“Those are my favorite thing to snack on, but they taste even better with a root beer.”

“I need to grab one of those too, then.” He winked and slid the corn chips beside his pack of mints and a mini flashlight before pointing to the wall of cigarettes behind me.

“Can I have a red pack of Pall Malls?”

“Do I need to ID you?” I asked jokingly. His soft laugh brought forth another smile on my face. He made his way to the freezer where the soda was, and I spun around to grab him a box of smokes.

As I scanned the rows of cancer sticks for the right brand, I swore I could feel his eyes drilling into my spine.

When I turned back to face him, though, he had already sat the cold beverage down,

and was texting someone on his phone.

He had taken one of his gloves off in the process, allowing me to catch a glimpse of a silver wedding band as I rang everything up.

I wondered where he was heading to, or from, so late at night.

“Is this it?”

“That’s it,” he confirmed.

“Okay, it’s going to be—”

“That’s not important.” He tossed down two twenty-dollar bills, telling me to keep the change, before grabbing the tiny black bag I’d sat on the counter.

“Wait, this is way too much.”

He ignored me and made his way to the door. “See you soon, Harper.”

The way he emphasized my name sent a tendril of unease slithering down my spine.

We didn’t exactly get ‘regulars’, so I wasn’t sure how to take his remark.

I stayed where I was and watched him pull out of the parking lot, noticing his truck looked pretty new.

It was equipped with a large metal grille guard and didn’t have any plates on it. Come to think of it, he hadn’t even gassed up.

The whole encounter had a strange vibe. Metric gas station sat off one of the rural

highway exits. It was never really booming with business, but it served its purpose as a quick place to refuel on gas and grub with a clean bathroom.

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I looked down at my simple black t-shirt and confirmed I wasn't wearing my nametag.

So how the hell did he know what my name was?

Maybe I was looking too deep into things...Or maybe I wasn't looking deep enough. It was possible he had come in before, and I just didn't remember. Either way, the vibe turned creepy.

I tried my best to shrug off the whole ordeal, proceeding to lock the front door, flipping the open sign to closed.

After that, I rushed through the checklist, keeping an eye on the weather as I marked off each task.

By the time everything was done, it was almost eleven-forty. The last thing I needed to do was take the trash out.

I pulled on my winter jacket and grabbed my satchel before doing so, double-checking the locks and doing one last sweep.

I didn't have the keys, so once I went out, I wouldn't be able to get back in.

I exited from the rear, carrying small trash bags in each hand. The snow had yet to cease falling, and covered my boots immediately.

I forged through the back lot to the dumpster, sniffing as I went. When the hairs on

the back of my neck began to rise, I stopped and scanned the parking lot.

No one was around, but I couldn't shake the feeling that I was being watched, my mind flashing right back to the man with silver eyes.

Looking towards my car, I frowned. The rear tire on the passenger side looked flat.

"Perfect," I huffed.

I'd had to refill it every few days, too lazy to take it to a shop and figure out why it was losing pressure.

In this cold weather, I should've been keeping a closer eye on it.

Metric didn't have an air pump, but it wasn't the end of the world. I'd just switch it with my spare.

The windshield was covered, more than likely iced over by now. That was going to take me an additional few minutes to handle.

Annoyed by my how this night was turning out, I trudged onward, shifting the bags of trash into one hand so I could lift the lid of the dumpster with my other.

I tossed them up and over, into the large metal bin, let the top slam shut, and then plodded to my car.

Thankfully, my door opened without me having to struggle with it. I started the engine and turned both defrosters to the max before popping my trunk so I could grab what I needed.

I cursed, finding that the jack wasn't where it should have been. I'd never used the

damn thing, so where was it?

I groaned in frustration and slammed the trunk shut. I guess I would be waiting on Triple-A. I wasn't going to drag my parents out of the house for a flat at practically midnight.

This was adulting, right?

Half-way back to the driver side door, I heard what sounded like the snapping of a branch. I stopped. My eyes swept over the parking lot, pausing on the cluster of trees that extended behind the gas station.

Could someone be in there?

"Jesus," I muttered after a minute, laughing at myself. Clearly, I watched way too many horror movies.

I got in the car and turned the heat to high after retrieving my phone from my bag.

I dialed Triple-A and sat on the line, getting an estimated arrival time of forty minutes from an operator.

Once we disconnected, I tapped out a quick text to my mom, telling her I would be there soon. Even at twenty-two, she made sure I checked in every night before my drive home.

I fiddled with the radio and settled on a late night talk show to fill the silence. Then, I leaned my seat back and got comfortable.

I woke from the sound of an approaching vehicle.

A quick glance at the dash told me only fifteen minutes or so had passed since I'd spoken with the operator.

I flicked my wipers on to clear the snow from my windshield, hoping I'd got lucky and a driver was miraculously in the area.

My stomach dropped when I saw the large black truck from earlier. It pulled all the way around to the back lot, parking in the spot Bill always used.

Its lights were off, and because of the dark window tint, I was unable to see anything.

The driver side door began to open, and I reached for my phone again, preparing to call the law.

I wasn't going to wait around and see what he wanted. I was fucking terrified.

This man should have been long gone. He had no reason whatsoever to be back here. I dreaded to find out why he was; the mere thought of doing so made it difficult to breathe.

A gloved fist appeared in my peripheral, connecting with my window.

"You need some help?" he asked, peering in at me.

"I have Triple-A on the way. They'll be here any minute," I lied. "Thank you, though," I added when he didn't say anything.

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I dialed the Sheriff's station, ensuring my doors were locked while I waited for someone to pick up.

I hoped this man just went away. I knew they'd send someone as fast as they could, but it would take time for anyone to get to me.

"Way out here? I doubt anyone comes that soon," he finally said, as if he'd just read my mind.

The Sherriff came on the line just as

I screamed, instinctively flinching away from my shattering window. A gloved hand reached in, grabbing me by the hair.

Before I could scream again for help, a cool blade was pressed against my throat.

"Hang it up," he demanded quietly, his accent thicker than it had been earlier.

I swallowed, blinking back tears as I reached for my cell and disconnected the call, cutting off whatever the Sheriff had been saying.

Everything after that seemed to happen in the blink of an eye.

He had me get out of the car, not bothering to cut the engine off.

My heart felt as if it were about to escape from my chest, slamming violently against my ribs.

He warned me to keep silent, pulled a syringe from his pocket, and jabbed it in the exposed part of my neck.

The last thing I remembered was being forced into the back of his truck.

—Chapter Four—

J

I closed the shackle around her ankle, crouching beside her naked body where she lay on the floor.

Lifting a strand of her long brown hair, I rubbed it between my fingers, bringing it to my nose and inhaling deeply.

I knew her scent well. I'd been inside her house plenty of times when no one was home, collecting little trinkets she'd never notice were missing.

Gently tucking the strand behind her ear, I watched her chest rise and fall. Her tits were the just the right size. Dark areolas encased her pert nipples in perfect circles.

Reaching down, I lightly palmed her left one, rubbing the pad of my thumb over her rosy bud, grinning when it hardened.

She didn't stir, and I sat back up, my dick straining painfully against the seams of my jeans.

I adjusted myself and leaned my back against the wall. Gazing down at her smooth thighs made it worse. I wanted to spread her wide open and fuck her tight little pussy till my skin was chafed and my dick sore.

“Harper,” I called softly, my voice filling the space around us. I knew the small dose of Rohypnol I’d given her would hold her in a tranquilized state for at least another two hours, but it never hurt to check.

I unzipped my jeans and lowered them and my drawers just enough to free myself from the confining fabric.

My dick throbbed, pre-cum already beading on the head. I wrapped my fist around the base, using my other hand to nudge Harper’s legs apart.

I was greeted with a full view of her nearly bald pussy. She had a small triangle of hair purposely cut at the top. I’d never seen this with any of the other girls.

I liked that.

I released my dick and spat into the palm of my hand, using the saliva to lube myself up. Gripping the base again, I went to my knees and started fisting my hand up and down.

Lowering my face, I pressed my nose against her cunt and breathed in the sweetest scent I’d ever smelled.

I went a little higher and placed a kiss on the triangle of curls before inching forward.

I wouldn’t go all the way in. Just the tip.

I continued to stroke myself, pressing the head of my dick firmly against her. I made sure my fist lightly hit the top of my balls with each pump, feeling them lift and prepare to empty.

Her pussy lips spread apart, beckoning me to slide in a little further.

I didn't. I had excellent self-control, even when I was harder than I'd been in months.

Pre-cum slowly rolled down my shaft to my patch of curly pubes. I let myself groan Harper's name, working my dick faster.

I pictured the way she would beg me to stop when I took her, how the tears would fall from her eyes, and her moans of ecstasy and agony would build.

Her torment would be just as psychological as it was physical.

It was going to be exhilarating.

I'd scare her shitless, deprive her senses, and screw with her head so much she'd start to think that I was a fucking god.

All my girls went through the same thing. They had to be broken in and initiated.

I found my release and held it, angling myself away from Harper's pussy and over her stomach. With another low moan, my dick jerked, and my seed shot out.

Taking a second to catch my breath, I sat back slowly, gathering the last remnants of semen off the head of my dick with my thumb, and wiping it across her supple lips, forcing her to smile in the process.

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After tucking my flaccid dick away, I rubbed the come on her stomach into her skin.

She didn't stir once, aside from a slight twitch of her nose.

I stood to leave, casting her one more glance.

"You're welcome," I responded chivalrously to the imaginary voice she thanked me with.

—Chapter Five—

Harper

I was taken.

He undressed me.

Those were my two most prevalent thoughts the second I lifted my lids and waited for the dancing black dots to clear from my vision.

The solid floor beneath my back was chilled and slightly rugged. I felt the prickling of goose bumps spread across my skin.

Inhaling a deep breath to try and calm my racing pulse, the potent aroma of cleaning solution assaulted my senses.

I pushed myself up to a sitting position, listening to my surroundings to make up for

my lack of sight.

Whoever the man was, he didn't seem to be around at the moment. That was a small reprieve.

Not wanting to alert him I was awake until I regained some of my bearings, I reached down as quietly as possible and found myself touching a metal restraint secured around my ankle.

Following the slackened chain attached to it, my palm brushed against a wall just as solid and chilled as the floor.

How long had I been unconscious?

I could vaguely remember the prick of something in the back of my neck. Whatever it was he'd given me was strong enough to keep me knocked out while he removed my clothes, chained me up, and did god knows what else.

Reaching between my legs, I almost melted in relief when I confirmed he hadn't touched me there.

I assessed the rest of me, finding something dry and flakey on my stomach that fell off when I traced over it. Aside from that, I felt normal enough, given the circumstances.

As freezing as it was, perspiration gathered on my skin.

Once I was up on my feet, I crossed my arms, jamming my hands into my pits. It was pretty damn dark, but the floor beneath my bare feet was stone, and the wall felt like concrete.

Unable to be still, I began moving to the left. The chain scraped lightly behind me, never snagging.

I thought my eyes would have adjusted by now, but I could still barely see anything in front of me.

I reached a shaky hand out, and felt something round, sort-of grainy in texture, and solid.

Curling my fist, I moved it up and down, feeling the same thing right beside it.

“Bars,” I whispered to the silence. “I’m touching bars.”

Where the fuck was I?

Swallowing a sob, I followed them all the way down in search of an opening, running into another wall. Unable to find an exit, I used that to guide me.

The room was square, and not very big at all. I passed where the cool air was coming from and tried to find the source, assuming it was a vent too high for me to reach when I couldn’t.

I took a few more steps and then stopped abruptly, needing a few seconds to breathe and process.

I didn’t understand what was happening. Why this was happening.

I did a quick mental checklist. This situation wasn’t looking too bright for me.

A man didn’t kidnap a woman, strip her of her clothes, and then chain her up inside a cell because he wanted a simple conversation.

I wiped a hand across my brow to rid it of sweat, fighting against the overwhelming urge to scream bloody murder and wail my heart out.

Losing my shit wasn't going to do me any favors. I needed to keep a clear head, and think rationally. I didn't know where I was, if this man was working alone, or what made him tick.

Stepping forward again, my foot hit the side of something firm, yet soft. Crouching, I stretched both hands outward to feel it out.

"Mattress," I mumbled, running my palms over its entirety.

It was softer than my bed at home: this wasn't cheap. There wasn't anything on top of it but what felt like a small burlap blanket.

Sitting back on my haunches, I looked towards the end of it and saw a faint outline. Moving towards it, I found myself in front of a plastic bucket.

I shuffled over and peered inside. In addition to two bottles of water and a small box of saltine crackers was everything he'd just bought back at the gas station—minus the cigarettes.

As I stared down at the items, I recalled how he knew my name.

I found it impossible to believe he hadn't already known my favorite chip before purchasing them. So how long had he been watching me?

Shutting my eyes, I let a few silent tears break free.

My family was going to lose their minds when they realized I was missing.

My mother would have tucked herself into bed under the illusion that I'd be arriving safely home.

My dad would set my place at the breakfast table for a meal I wouldn't get to eat.

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I'd tried to do the right thing, and it landed me in a stranger's possession.

All I could do was hope I got out of this alive.

—Chapter Six—

Harper

I was pacing the cell when a blinding white light flickered on, illuminating everything around me.

I blinked rapidly, my eyes adjusting to the sudden change.

Now able to see, I summarized I was in a basement. I glanced around in search of any possible exits, but couldn't find a single one.

The area outside the cell drew my biggest concern and brought fear boiling to the surface. It looked like something straight out of a B-grade horror film.

There was a gynecological chair sitting in the center of the room, looking like it had been handcrafted in hell, with a plastic drop cloth underneath it. Four blue nylon straps were attached to it, and some type of bloody bar was set on top of it. A thick black chain hung from the ceiling behind its headrest.

Aside from that, there was a large industrialized shelf against the back wall, lined with various containers along the top. All were labeled Oxygen Bleach, which explained the chemical smell. A few syringes, dildos, and gags sat on the bottom.

Attached to the opposite wall was a stainless steel sink with more plastic lining its inside. An antique chest, massive metal dog cage, and solid folding chair were the only other items in the room.

My mind raced with every possible scenario for why someone would need a setup such as this.

Heavy footsteps echoed around the basement as they descended a set of worn wooden stairs off to the far left.

I scampered to the opposite back corner, not wanting to be right beside the bed.

My heart sank the second I saw his face. If he was allowing me to see who he was, he had no intention of letting me go. Not alive, at least.

“Hey, sleepyhead,” he greeted, smiling brightly.

His cheerfully sunny disposition threw me off-kilter. I studied him, disgusted by the way his eyes seemed to devour my body from head to toe.

He didn’t look anything like I thought he would.

I expected to see a man physically flawed and rugged, but what I got was the opposite.

His hair was nearly auburn and neatly styled, while his build was more on the athletic side. He had a face meant to charm and deceive.

“Do you approve?” he asked, approaching the cell door.

I kept my mouth clamped shut, refusing to say a word. Had he not kidnapped me, I

may have found him attractive. Good looks didn't mean shit if the person underneath them was a deranged psychopath.

“Playing the silent game? I guess that's better than begging to know why you're here, but I'm going to tell you anyway, soon.”

He unlocked the cell door with a tiny golden key, and stepped inside.

“Go sit on your bed,” he commanded softly.

That was it?

He expected me to be obedient?

Shifting my eyes between him and the bare mattress, I shook my head from side to side. “That's not my bed.”

He smirked. “Of course it's your bed. This is your home now.”

“My home?” I parroted, releasing a bitter laugh. “You're fucking crazy.”

His dark brows furrowed, mouth turning down at the sides. “I'll let that completely ridiculous insult slide just this once because you're new, but please don't make me ask again.”

It was on the tip of my tongue to tell him to go fuck himself, but something in his voice had my brain warning me to be cautious.

Keeping a wide berth to maintain personal space, I did what he wanted.

Now standing beside the twin sized mattress, I watched him, waiting with bated

breath, wondering what he'd do next.

“Good, good.” He nodded. “Now, why don't you have a seat?”

If there was one thing I didn't want to do, it was have a fucking seat. But what was my other option?

There were two parts of my mind, each stressing their opinion. Rationality knew what this was going to escalate to. Denial had me wrapped tight in a false sense of security, believing I could find a way out of this.

Eyeing the surprisingly clean mattress with more than a little trepidation, I slowly sunk down and tucked my knees into my chest.

“See, that wasn't so hard. Relax a little; there's no need to be uptight,” he said, flashing me a smile. “Now before we go any further I think you should at least know my name, don't you?”

“How is knowing your name going to help me?”

“Uh, it won't,” he laughed softly, “but it will give you something to scream, something to plead when you're begging for a reprieve from all the pain. Hell, something to sit down here and curse when you're all alone.”

A sour taste flooded my mouth. I scooted backward, pressing myself against the wall.

He held up his palm in a steady gesture. “Hey, you don't have to worry about that yet. I only have about three hours, and I'd like to spend them getting acquainted.”

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“Acquainted?”

“I need to make sure we’re a good fit. I have to make sure it feels right, so I can start breaking you in first thing tomorrow. Think of it as an initiation; all my girls have to go through one,” he explained.

Images of him strapping me into that god awful chair flashed through my mind, making me weak in the legs.

“Why are you doing this?”

“That’s the million dollar question, isn’t it?” He came closer, stopping near the end of the mattress. “I’m doing this because no one told me I couldn’t. Of course, I didn’t ask for permission, but when you want something bad enough, you have to do whatever is necessary to get it.”

I watched him creep closer, my muscles tensing and heart pounding so hard I could hear it in my ears.

He stopped again, close enough that if I reached out an arm, he’d be touching me.

Unable to sit still any longer, I rose to my feet and bolted to the opposite corner, frantically searching for an escape I knew didn’t exist.

The iron door straight ahead of me was the only way out of the cell, the wooden staircase the only way out of the basement.

“Go ahead, make a run for it,” he taunted, making a sweeping gesture with his hand to urge me forward.

I shuffled a step or two, and then stopped. The chain around my ankle served as a reminder that even if I made it out of the cell, I’d be stopped long before I could reach the staircase.

“Good decision. I’m glad to see you have some common sense. The last girl wasn’t as bright.”

The last girl?

My head spun, stomach sinking with the knowledge that he’d done this before.

“You won’t get away with this.”

“Sweetheart, look around you. I already have.”

“I have family.”

“I’m aware. Your father owns a cement company and your mother refurbishes antiques. They seem like nice folks. Unfortunately, that means nothing to me, and doesn’t do shit for you.”

He’d done his research. Once again, I found myself wondering just how long he’d been watching me. How could I have not known?

I clutched my arms and shut my eyes, tremors causing my hands to shake.

“I get this is a hard pill to swallow, but you’re going to have to deal with that on your own time. This is mine. Come here.”

“No,” I said firmly .

“That wasn’t debatable. Walk over here, now,” he snapped, losing all traces of the easy-going personality he’d shown thus far.

I could feel any bravado rapidly diminishing, taking my ability to speak with it. My heartbeat turned sluggish, and the cold sweat intensified.

“Our first time was supposed to be special, but you have to listen. If you don’t listen, you must be punished,” he said, so calmly I never expected what came next.

I thought he was leaving. Instead, he walked to where my ankle chain was attached to the wall, and took hold of the slackened end.

Rapidly winding it around his fist, he started reeling me towards him.

Grabbing my end, I pulled back, feeling the rusted metal bite into my palms. Eventually, I lost my balance, landing on my back.

My body smacked against the stone; I gritted my teeth to stop from crying out.

There was nothing for me to grab onto. I clawed at the floor in desperation until the nail on my index finger split right down the center. I clenched my jaw, hissing from the searing pain.

When I was where he wanted me, right at his booted feet, he bent down and flipped me onto my stomach.

My chin bounced off the floor, rattling the teeth inside my mouth.

“Stop!” I yelled, kicking at him with my good leg. He ignored me and wrenched my

arms behind my back.

I twisted and turned to no avail; he was too strong for me to fight off.

He held me with a single hand, removing something from his pocket.

“The more you struggle, the more fun this is going to be for me,” he admonished, managing to secure what felt like a zip tie around my wrists, pulling it so tight, my bones grated together.

He stepped over my writhing form and grabbed hold of the chain again.

“Please—” was all I managed to get out before he began to drag me towards the mattress.

He kept me on the floor and cushioned his knees with the bed. The sound of his zipper going down sent my panic into overdrive.

I wanted to curl into a ball, sink into the floor...anything but be right here in this moment.

Things like this weren't supposed to happen, but there wasn't anything I could do to stop it.

“It didn't have to be this way. You should have just listened to me,” he said, forcing my ass into the air.

“You don't have to do this,” I choked out.

“Aw, sweetheart,” he tsked, “I've waited months to do this.”

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I heard him spit, and nearly gagged.

He probed and rubbed me with his fingers, feeling up my labia.

When I felt his hard cock against my entrance, I shut my eyes, praying it would be over fast.

“You can call me J, for future reference,” he said, forcing himself inside me.

I sucked in a breath and curled my fingers into fists, squirming in pained discomfort as he forced me to take all of him at once.

“You aren’t wet enough,” he grumbled, pulling right back out.

He spat into his hand again, this time shoving his fingers inside me, twisting them in a circular motion.

He tightened his hold on my hips and entered me again, proceeding to fuck me from behind ruthlessly.

He’d said he only had three hours. I swear he spent two hours and fifty-eight minutes of them inside me.

I begged him to stop.

He laughed and thrust harder.

I shook with silent sobs, wondering if it would ever end, eventually focusing on a blank spot on the wall, trying to block it all out.

No matter what I did to take myself to some faraway place, I knew I would remember this forever. The way he smelled. His face. The sounds he was making.

The way he felt inside me.

When he finally finished, he was thrusting so hard I'd begun to scoot across the floor, bruising my knees. My arms felt as if they were going to pop out of their sockets.

"Fuck," he groaned, smacking my ass.

"Harper..." He pulled out and hissed my name. A second later, I felt his come hit my lower back, running down in-between my shoulder blades. I kept my head lowered, unable to do much else.

"Good news. We're a perfect fit," he said after an elongated stretch of me sniffing. "If you thought that was bad, wait until I strap you in the chair."

I felt his lips on my cheek, and then he stood up and zipped himself away.

He walked out of the cell whistling a peppy tune.

The door slammed upon his departure, a locking mechanism loudly clicking into place.

I flipped onto my side, trying to free my arms, giving up before he even reached the top of the stairs.

The light shut off, and everything went dark.

–Chapter Seven–

J

When I left Harper, early dawn was blanketing the sky.

I was half-way home when I realized I'd forgotten to remove the zip-tie around her wrists. It was too late to go back; Minnie was expecting me.

She'd just have to find a way to deal with it. Her predicament could be worse. Had she run for the door, I'd have had no choice but to retrain her in the chair much earlier than I planned.

I didn't understand why women always felt the need to fight back, even when they knew it was futile.

Turning onto Hopkins Boulevard, I waved to Davey West as I drove by. He returned the gesture and went back to staring off into space.

Poor bastard had never gotten over the disappearance of his granddaughter.

At just nineteen, she was the youngest of all my girls. All it took to lure her was the promise of a ride on my dick.

She became more of an annoyance than a toy a mere three weeks into her captivity. A quick slit of her throat was the end of that.

I didn't have to worry about such things with Harper. She'd already shown me she was different by taking a few seconds to use her common sense.

That also meant I had to keep a closer eye on her. The smart ones always thought

they could get one over on me, pull some overly submissive bullshit in hopes I'd eventually slip up and make a rookie mistake.

I'd been doing this too long for that to ever happen again.

I'd been fortunate enough to have friends willing to fix my screw-up.

They made it clear they wouldn't be stepping in again.

Finally reaching the end of my driveway, I pulled in, parking directly outside the garage of my Tudor.

The drapes in the living room were already drawn, which could only mean one thing.

Expelling a heavy sigh, my plan to take a long, nice hot shower before work went up in smoke.

Instead, I would have to go inside and deal with my wife.

—Chapter Eight—

Harper

-Day 2-

He came back what could have been hours, but felt like days later.

The removal of the zip tie was what roused me from my unintentional slumber. I whimpered as my arms fell limply to my sides.

“Shhh, it's okay,” J soothed, running a hand through my tangled hair.

Any attempt to protest was feeble. My throat was swollen from all the screaming, crying, and begging I'd already done.

He picked me up, holding me as if I were a fragile piece of glass, and carried me right out of the cell.

His shirt was off; my cheek pressed into the warmth of his solid chest.

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I felt the firmness of his abs as he walked.

My eyes watered a bit, adjusting to the bright light again, honing in on the chain to see just how far it extended beyond the cell.

I was sat directly on the folding chair, caddy-corner from the hellish monstrosity with the straps attached to it. My stomach turned to stone just knowing it was in the same room as me.

“I shouldn’t have left you like that yesterday,” J began.

Yesterday? Had it really been a full day?

What he did to me felt like a dream, something I could have pretended had never happened if it weren’t for the throbbing between my legs and the ache in my shoulders.

“I had some things to do for work, and then a dinner I couldn’t miss with the family.”

Why was he telling me this?

It was only when I took a second to really look at him that I realized he was wearing a dark pair of slacks, and a blue button-down was folded on top of the dog cage.

I assumed he was still in the same outfit he wore the previous night...Or maybe this was how he always dressed.

Maybe for work?

I knew nothing about him, but I had to conclude that if he had a family and a job with co-workers, then this side of him was well hidden.

I wasn't quite sure how one went about obscuring such a screwed up hobby. Where I was being kept had to play a big role in that.

Glancing towards the stairs, I saw a simple wooden door right at the top.

Freedom was through there.

I wanted nothing more than to run away, but I knew I'd never make it.

I could barely swat a fly in my current state, let alone take on J once he came after me, and I was positive he would.

Bide your time, I thought to myself.

If I was going to try and escape—no, when I made my move to escape, I had to do it the right way. I knew I'd only get one chance, and I couldn't mess it up.

Looking back to J, I watched him fill something inside the sink, attempting to see what was inside the few store bags beside him.

“How do you know so much about me?” I forced myself to ask, my raspy voice sounding foreign to my ears.

He cut the sink off and came back to me with one of the bags and a round wash basin in his hands, setting both down on the floor.

“That’s a loaded question,” he replied, pulling a sponge and bottle of body-wash out.

He dipped a corner of the sponge into the basin, and lifted it to my face.

“You didn’t flinch,” he noted, gently blotting my skin.

“I’m not scared of you right now,” I replied, surprising myself with my answer. It was true. I wanted to cut his cock off and shove it down his throat until he choked on it, but I wasn’t fearful.

He lifted my chin with two fingers and stared down at me, his silver eyes seemingly searching for something in mine.

“I don’t want you to be afraid of me, Harper,” he said finally, using the sponge to stroke my sore cheek gently.

“I usually only keep a girl around for three or four months. By then, I’ve had her pussy and ass so much it’s not fresh anymore. I think I want to keep you indefinitely. I’m not sure yet; we’ll see.”

I decided the best response was none at all. Otherwise, I’d spit in his face.

I sat still and let him continue my sponge bath, beginning to shiver from the low temperature in the basement.

It took self-control I never knew I had to willingly let him put his hands on me. He washed beneath my breasts, between my legs, lingering there longer than necessary before running the sponge up and down my back.

The entire time, I was forced to breathe in his scent: citrusy fresh peppermint.

“I saw you when I stopped at the station a few months ago. You were leaning against the hood of your car, talking to someone on the phone. You never saw me. The moment I discovered your existence, I knew you were meant to be mine.”

He stepped back, dropping the sponge in the basin, and went to dump it in the sink.

When he returned, there was a brush in his hand. He stood behind me and began to run the bristles through my knotted hair gently.

“I know you’re probably wondering why I’m doing this. More than likely you’ve thought I’m planning to kill you. Usually, I would tell you outright how I was planning to do it.

“I’ve been doing this for so long, I don’t feel the need to sugarcoat the situation anymore. But if it makes you feel better, I don’t want to kill you, Harper. You’re not going to be like any of the others.”

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He set the brush down, and I felt the warmth from his body fade as he moved away.

“Do you plan on keeping me locked up in a cell forever?” I asked.

“Forever? No. We don’t have forever. For the length of your stay, though, yes. I’ll make sure you have enough food to sustain yourself, water, and a bucket to use the bathroom.”

Listening to him speak, I began to wonder if he really had a family after all. I could make as many guesses as I wanted about him, but in the end, only one thing was certain.

I was a fucking psychopath.

The Swiss hunting knife he withdrew from his back pocket captured my full attention, turning my mouth dry.

It was a limited edition with the initials HML engraved into the side. The first time I saw it was three years ago when my mother gave it to my father for their anniversary.

How the hell did he get it?

“I took it right out of the china cabinet,” he answered my silent question, turning the knife over in his hand.

“If swear, if you hurt them—”

“You’ll do what?” he asked, wedging himself between my legs.

He tangled a hand in my hair, pulling my head back so I was looking up at him again.

“You’re sitting in front of me, defenseless as a baby bird.”

He paused to engage the blade, and continued. “I could have slit your mother’s throat last night, right beneath the chain of that necklace she never takes off. I could be standing here right now, telling you how I watched her bleed out all over that expensive downy comforter she was snuggled underneath. I wonder how Henry would feel, waking up soaked in his wife’s blood?”

“Please don’t hurt—”

“Shhh,” he hushed me, pressing the curved blade to my lips. “I’ll make you a deal. If you go sit in my special chair without a fuss, I won’t ever go near them again.” He moved the knife to my neck, tracing up and down the column of my throat.

I sat ramrod straight in the chair, clenching my core with the sudden need to relieve my bladder. “I—”

His sharp laughter cut me off.

“I’m just bullshitting you, sweetheart. Your parents, your friends... hell, your cat. I don’t give a shit about any of them. This was just proof of how easy it was to slip in and out of your house unnoticed.

“They should really consider a security system, and you should have considered locking your car doors. Who do you think stole your jack?”

My eyes widened. I stared up at him with a pensive expression; my reaction genuinely entertained him.

“Theoretically speaking, what would you do to keep them safe?” he questioned with open curiosity.

“The same thing you’d do to keep your family safe,” I retorted.

His eyes darting to his wedding band was enough to confirm this sick sack of shit had a wife somewhere.

It wouldn’t shock me to find out she was dead, rotting away in his bedroom closet.

“Right, well, stand up. It’s time to get you fitted for the chair.”

Without waiting for me to rise on my own, I winced when he let go of my hair and pulled me up by the arm.

Anxiety churned in my gut, increasing my need to use the bathroom.

“Wait—”

“Didn’t we decide yesterday you weren’t allowed to resist?”

I heard the clear spike of irritation in his voice. He didn’t like being refused.

“I have to use the bathroom,” I nearly whispered, somehow feeling embarrassed to say so aloud.

“Then go,” he replied, keeping hold of my arm.

I glanced around, remembering he said something about a bucket. Thinking he meant the one in my cell, I made to move towards it, slightly relieved to be getting away from the chair.

“No,” he pulled me back with a slight jerk, “go right here.”

His free hand fell to my lower stomach and he pressed down. Hard.

“Stop,” I objected, clenching my core, trying to break free of his hold.

He pressed harder, painfully jabbing his fingers into my flesh until I could no longer hold it.

Shame blossomed in my chest when the first dribble of piss leaked down my leg.

He continued to press until I was fully urinating where I stood. The warmth hit my thighs and formed a puddle of stench around my bare feet.

“You really did need to go,” he mused, shifting his dress shoes out of the way.

I bowed my head and curled my shoulders, letting my hair fall forward to curtain my face, willing myself not to give him any satisfaction. Stripped of all basic comforts, I felt like nothing more than an animal.

When I was done, he pulled me towards the chair, leaving me to drip-dry. He removed the rusted bar and set it gently on the floor.

My legs began to shake the second he forced me to sit in its place. He then leaned me down so I was on my back.

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I stared up at the rafters in the ceiling as he maneuvered me into the straps, a sob lodged in my throat.

“You can scream as loud as you want. In fact, the louder, the better. No one will hear you down here. You can beg, too; I loved hearing you beg.”

Which was precisely why I didn’t. It was a small win, not allowing my misery to entertain him.

He pulled me closer to the edge of the chair, lifting a shaky limb onto the left stirrup and tying it down before doing the same to the right.

As he did the same with my arms, he pressed his solid cock into my apex. When they were secured to the point I could barely move them, he wrapped a hand around my throat, squeezing just hard enough to make me feel uneasy.

Lowering his mouth, he whispered softly into my ear. “You’re nothing but my fuck toy. You’re going to let me do anything I want to you, at any time, on numerous occasions.

“If I want to take your tight little ass until it bleeds, that’s what I’m going to do. When I want you down on your knees sucking my dick until your throat is swollen and your tongue is sore, that’s where you’ll be. You belong to me now. Every inch of you.” He touched his lips to mine once, twice, before running the tip of his tongue along the bottom one, seeking entrance I couldn’t will myself to give.

“If you keep saying no, what use do I have for you?” he asked against my mouth,

squeezing my throat a little harder.

I tried to digest his words, unable to fathom that this was my reality, that any of this was actually happening to me. If this was an ultimatum, what were my choices?

Do or die?

There was only one correct way to respond, and I loathed every fiber of my being for it.

I took a mental breath to calm myself and forced my lips to part. He didn't hesitate to slip his tongue inside, sighing as if I'd just lifted some great weight off his shoulders

I hated how soft his lips were. The taste of Listerine and menthol seeped into my taste buds.

The kiss was aggressive; he refused to let me turn away for air. I felt like he was breathing into me.

He pulled away without warning and looked down, slowly perusing every naked inch of me. "I've been craving the feel of your pussy on my face since yesterday," he divulged.

I clenched my jaw to snuff out the protest as he moved down.

He lowered his mouth and, without preamble, licked me right up to the center, back to front, and then back down.

My bound hands found the edge of the chair and curled around it.

He used his fingers to pull my pussy lips apart and pushed his tongue as deep inside

me as it could go.

“I can taste your piss, Harper” he breathed, delving in and out.

I was disgusted with myself for not fighting back more, for ending up in this position in the first place. For being bared wide open to this twisted fuck.

I kept my focus on the ceiling as he ate me like a man starved, alternating between tongue fucking me and suckling on my clit.

My body reacted like most bodies being stimulated would. I grew wetter the more he continued.

Arousal mixed with saliva pooled between my spread thighs and ran down the crevice between my ass cheeks. I let out a shaky breath, fighting against a budding orgasm. Fresh tears burned in my eyes.

When he rose abruptly, the first thing he did was free his thick, veiny cock from his slacks. I hadn't gotten to see it when he forced himself inside me the day before.

“I'm going to fuck you now, and I want you to watch,” he said simply, easing himself inside me.

He reached up and grasped the black chain dangling above my head, slipping it around my neck like a noose, tightening it just enough that my airflow was impaired.

With my four main limbs tied down, my body was forced into an upward arch, every muscle straining to hold the position.

I pulled out slightly, then thrust back in, burying himself to the hilt, forcing a grunt from my mouth.

“There we go,” he encouraged, repeating the motion until I was groaning with almost every stroke.

I gritted my teeth to keep quiet, squealing when he lurched down and bit my lower lip, not letting go until he tasted blood.

“I want to hear you,” he demanded, picking up his pace.

The chair rattled beneath us, the cool vinyl slick from our mess of body fluids.

My pussy began making a sloshing sound every time he drove in and out of it, my arms aching with each jostle.

I could feel my orgasm building, and from the way my muscles started to tighten, so he could he.

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I'd never come from a cock alone. All the guys I'd slept with had had to aid me with their fingers.

It killed me inside that he was getting this from me, something I would never have given him of my own free will.

His fingers dug into my thighs painfully, forcing them down, causing the chain around my neck to tighten even further. The tiny metal links embellished into my flesh, and a burning sensation began in my lungs, spreading to my chest.

I tugged furiously at the restraints in an effort to break free.

"Please," I croaked in sheer desperation, thrusting my pelvis higher, ignoring the way the muscles in my thighs felt as if they were going to split.

"That's it, beg for me," he sneered, giving my clit a tap.

"Say my name when you come all over my dick," he demanded, rotating his hips so I felt every raw, hardened inch of him.

I whimpered, nearly sobbing in response, feeling the walls of my pussy tighten around his cock.

"Say it," he growled, beginning to rut inside me like a beast with a bitch in heat.

It was too much.

“J,” I cried out, letting everything go on a dizzying climax.

He reached up and hit a release on the chain, freeing my neck. My body contracted, remaining in a painful arch as warmth pervaded through my veins.

“You’re so beautiful,” he murmured, looking down at where our bodies met.

He glanced back up and leaned over me to lick away the tears that were steadily rolling down my cheeks. He continued to rock into me, slowly now, whispering sick sweet nothings into my ear, taking his time to find his release.

I lay trembling in the aftermath, unable to do anything but hold onto the hope that I would make it out of this, staring up at the only door that would grant me freedom.

—Chapter Nine—

J

-4 weeks-

I watched the blood flow like a river, slicing down into the meat.

Minnie sat across from me, doing a terrible job at trying to hide her disgust. The slight curl of her lip exposed her true feelings, her facial expression giving her away as per usual.

The sound of soft conversation and light laughter filled the air around us, disguising the fact we’d barely spoken five words to one another since our food had arrived.

I was more than happy to eat my meal in silence. I preferred it, actually. After a long week, this was the perfect way to unwind.

It'd been a full four days since I'd been able to see Harper, but my mind continued to wander back to her.

I had to remind myself I'd replenished her dismal yet vitally necessary food supply, emptied her waste, and given her a bath—all things I needed to do to ensure she functioned properly when I was ready to play again. Which would be soon.

My balls were bluer than the sky, and my dick got hard at least three times a day when I thought of my newest acquisition. She was the perfect little fuck toy, a dirty whore of my own creation.

A light touch on my hand brought me out of my deep seated thoughts, back to the present moment.

“What are you doing?” I asked Minnie, looking across the table with raised brows.

“I was trying to get your attention. Have you heard anything I've said?” She scoffed at my blank stare response. “Never mind, it wasn't anything important. So, tell me, how are things?”

Chewing another rare piece of steak, I swallowed, dabbed my mouth with a napkin, and then took a sip of my gin before replying. “Things are the same as they always are.”

She gave me a smile that looked more like a grimace, returning her attention to her meal.

“What is it? What's wrong?” I didn't care what her problem was, but it was better to ask outright now rather than deal with the issue when she brought it up a week later.

She huffed out a frustrated breath, shaking her head. “I asked you how things were

and you deflected the question.”

“I answered your question.”

“No, you—”

She shut up the second I placed my napkin over my half-eaten dish. “You asked me how things were. How do you think things are? Business is great, and I’ve been feeling good lately. Other than my balls being sore, I’m grand. Anything else you’d like to know?”

Her mouth pinched into a straight line, eyes darting around to make sure no one in the restaurant was listening in.

“Is that what your problem is? You’re horny? Seriously? If that’s the issue, maybe you should go to the bathroom and take care of it, because I won’t.”

“Minnie, I’m well aware you have an aversion to sucking dick and being fucked bow-legged,” I replied, loud enough to catch the attention of two tables nearby.

Giving a polite smile and nod, I pushed my chair out and stood up.

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Minnie's mouth opened and closed, her face turning red from embarrassment. "What are you doing? Sit down," she hissed.

"I'm going to play," I replied, tossing much more cash than necessary on the table.

—Chapter Ten—

J

I passed Metric gas station, seeing it had finally re-opened.

After I took Harper, it'd been shut down, with police canvassing the area. They never came close to my property line, not knowing the pretty girl they were searching for, the same one whose parents were on the news pleading for her return, was locked up tight in my basement.

I knew how these things worked. After having her for so long, some would hold out hope that she was still alive and well, skeptics would be split down the middle, and those emotionally detached from the situation were already writing her off as dead.

Of course, only one of those outcomes would be correct when all was said and done, but that wasn't going to be anytime soon.

Pulling up to the mid-size structure where I was keeping her, I cut the engine, grabbed my small duffel bag, and got out.

Leather shoes crunching through snow, I approached the only entrance of the front of

the cabin, surveying my surroundings.

No birds were in the trees, and the wind was silent. It was a peaceful winter night.

I went inside, stomping the snow from my shoes on the old welcome mat before proceeding to the basement.

The moment I opened the door at the top of the stairs, the smell of old feces and urine wafted up to greet me.

Flicking on the light, I headed down, whistling as I went, shoes resounding off groaning wood. It seemed chillier than usual; I think I almost saw my breath.

I peered into the cell and surveyed my product contently. Harper was perched on her mattress, already in a sitting position.

She was coming along nicely, much quicker than expected. Total isolation seemed to be a key component for her programming.

“Did I wake you?” I asked by way of greeting, unlocking the cell.

She shook her head, blinking and rubbing her eyes to adjust to the florescent light.

I tossed my duffel bag down and went right over to the bucket, grabbing it by the handle.

I emptied its contents into the sink, pouring some oxygen bleach inside and both eliminating the smell and sanitizing.

Harper coughed a few times from the intense stench, but there wasn't much I could do about that. My own nose burned as I breathed in and out.

“Chair,” I said, as if I were telling a dog to sit.

From my peripheral, I watched her stand and begin moving without any rebuttal.

I felt a sense of pride, watching her.

Her hair had lost a bit of its shine, she’d gotten a little skinnier, and body hair had grown in, turning that triangle patch I was so fond of into a bush, but she was still beautiful to me.

I left the bucket to soak in the sink, going to the chair to strap her in.

Her brown eyes watched me with a satisfying balance of alertness and unease.

Unlike Minnie, Harper had expressive eyes, but an excellent poker face. I often wondered what was going on inside that pretty head of hers.

“I have a wife,” I found myself saying. I wanted to talk to this girl. I’d had her long enough to know I could do that.

“The ring kind of gave that away the day we met,” she replied.

I paused in buckling the strap around her leg. Was she using sarcasm? With me?

“Her name’s Minnie.”

“Like the mouse,” she said.

“Just like the mouse.” I grinned, finishing the restraint on her other leg, spreading her pussy wide open for me.

Seeing her arms resting comfortably by her side, I decided to leave them free as a little test.

“She’s a princess, so to speak. Nothing like you. You’re a pauper—what I really prefer.” I walked over to my shelving unit and selected a simple blue dildo. “Suck on this,” I urged, pressing the rubber head against her lips.

Her mouth opened, and I slipped it inside easily, leaving it there as I removed my black button down and belt, and lowered my slacks.

“You know, we’ve been together a whole month now. That’s thirty days of a solid relationship. And we’ve only had one argument,” I joked.

She narrowed her eyes in response, unable to speak.

Gently fingering her curls, my dick hardened in anticipation.

Reaching into my back pocket, I removed her father’s Swiss knife and flicked out the blade.

Removing the dildo from her mouth, I dragged it down, through the path between her breasts, over her navel, her slit, and stopped right at her ass.

I’d already gone in there once, but too much anal was never a bad thing.

I watched her throat bob, knew she was probably recalling it. I’d fucked her tight little ass bloody, and then made her suck the mess off my dick.

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Such good times we'd had together in this short amount of time. I planned to have many more, starting right this moment.

Instead of using my fingers to spread her cheeks apart, I used the side of the knife, pulling to the right as I pushed the dildo in.

She shut her eyes, biting down on her lower lip in discomfort. I shoved it in as far it would go, pushing the blade into her globe just to hear the pained cry that spilled from her mouth.

A trickle of crimson ran right down her ass crack, dripping onto the brown vinyl.

I left the dildo where it was, and freed my cock. She wasn't ready for me, but I didn't care. I pushed inside her and remained there until every drop of semen was emptied from my balls.

—Chapter Eleven—

Harper

-12 weeks-

The sound of silence was overwhelming.

Darkness penetrated everything around me. I saw it when my eyes were open, and when they were closed.

I breathed it into my lungs every time I inhaled, expelling it back out into the cool air.

I lay on the mattress, vacantly staring up at the ceiling with no motivation to get up.

There was no point.

Nothing ever changed. The hours were endless, and I didn't know when the day was over or beginning.

I missed my family. I missed my home. I missed my fucking cat. I missed my life the way it was.

I said I'd been here a month, one, two, maybe even three weeks ago.

Wasn't it after forty-eight hours that hope began to diminish?

I didn't want to be an unsolved case file tossed in the back of a cabinet.

My worst fear was that I became nothing more than a memory. One that caused pain and kept those I loved up at night.

My heart ached, splintering into pieces every time I thought about it.

I was alive, living in fucking hell, forcing myself to be compliant and playful with a man I hated with every fiber of my being just to gain a grain of his trust.

I hadn't given up yet; I was going to get out. I'd be home again one day.

I prayed my family knew that.

—Chapter Twelve—

J

-6 months-

“I need to hurt you.”

I had to say it twice, the second time a little louder, for my voice to penetrate her sleeping brain.

She jolted awake, dark lashes sweeping upward to reveal those precious brown eyes of hers.

They could be so expressive, holding so much hatred.

I had my fingers between her legs already, working her swollen nub in rapid circles.

Her pussy was tender and puffy from being fucked raw almost once a day.

Today, this made three.

She sucked her teeth in obvious discomfort.

I smirked, watching the way she tried to lie there and accept it like a good girl.

She hadn't been with anyone in months before I took her, and now I used every hole she had whenever I wished.

I'd gone home to be with Minnie. I stayed long enough for her to fall asleep during a movie, and left before she could ask any questions.

After the day I'd had, it was either go to Malignant and fuck a whore bloody, or come

to the cabin and play with my new toy.

Lately, Harper won every time.

She didn't say much, but she listened when I talked, and I liked that. Sometimes after I wore myself out, I stuck around and told her about my day.

Occasionally, she commented.

None of the others behaved as she did. They never got as much of me. It almost made me care, and then I thought better of it. Harper was my whore, a toy, here to appease my sexual desires.

I couldn't let myself do something reckless like get attached to her, but I could keep her around as long as I wanted.

She fascinated me because there was one thing she had that showed no signs of going anywhere.

Hope.

The day I took that would be the day I was done with her.

I didn't bother carrying her to the chair, or to remove the chain from her ankle. I'd allow her to be fucked on a mattress this time.

She stared up at me, looking pretty as ever, even with the raccoon eyes she was sporting.

I slid my hands beneath her ass and flipped her onto her stomach, loving her small yelp of surprise.

Grabbing her legs, I spread them wide and dragged her back over my thighs.

“I’m taking this ass again tonight,” I announced.

Her breath caught briefly, and I smiled. Gripping my already freed dick, I placed it at her puckered hole and knotted a hand in her hair.

I took hold of one globe and pulled it away from the other, shoving Harper’s face into the mattress as I drove into her tight little hole, tearing right through her resistance.

She screamed in pain. I pulled out and drove in again, seeing a bit of blood on my tip.

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I rode her body into the mattress, fucking her ass so hard she was sobbing silently before I was halfway done.

“Good girl,” I praised, tightening my grip on her hair.

By the way I had her face pressed into the bed, I knew breathing was a bit of a task.

Her muscles clenched around my dick, more blood running down my shaft.

I pulled out and lifted her up by the hair, brown eyes bulging as she was forced to double back.

Fresh tears were coating her cheeks when I shoved my dick in her face.

“Suck it,” I demanded, pulling her hair until her eyes were merely tiny slits.

Her lips parted, and I shoved myself down her throat. My balls swung into her chin as I fucked her face.

“Take it,” I growled when she tried to pull away, gagging and choking. She had foam damn near coming out the sides of her mouth.

My balls tightened, my release a few thrusts away.

“Fuuuck,” I groaned, pulling out and coming all over her face, chest, and hair.

Having got what I came for, I wiped myself off using strands of her hair, leaving her

sputtering in the dark, covered in my come.

I drove home listening to soft jazz crooning from the stereo of my Mercedes.

Tapping my fingers and bobbing my head, I felt ten times lighter. That's what Harper was meant for.

I could use her on my bad days, my good days...any day I wanted, however I wanted.

Father always told me, "Never fuck your wife like a dirty whore. That's what pretty little toys were meant for."

If you broke your wife, well, that wasn't someone you could easily replace. A toy, however, was fixable, disposable, and replaceable.

As exceptionally special as my sweet Harper was, she still wasn't an exception to the rule. One day, her body would be worn, her pussy and ass too familiar, the flicker of light in her eyes snuffed out.

One day.

Then, I would have to move on, for Minnie's sake.

Or maybe not. I would still very much like to keep her around until her body withered into nothing, but Minnie wouldn't understand that.

Father knew; he understood.

Mother knew; she understood.

They had nurtured my darker perversions.

Father was the one who taught me the correct way to obtain and detain the women I wanted.

Sometimes, I thought I missed the old bastard.

I had him and my mother to thank for my upbringing. If it weren't for them, I'd never have turned out as well as I did.

—Chapter Thirteen—

Harper

-Present-

I drew the blinds and double checked that all four locks on my front door were in place.

My mom had a bad habit of waltzing right into my house without knocking.

I went from the living room right into the kitchen. My home was an open concept, with a loft style bedroom I could see from anywhere.

I didn't like enclosed spaces; the bathroom and my den were the only exceptions. After pissing and shitting in buckets, the toilet became a holy grail. The other room kept my secrets within it.

“Get down, Toby,” I chastised, shooing the chubby tiger cat off my counter.

He hopped down, giving me a mean case of resting bitch face.

Ignoring him, I grabbed my frozen dinner of Salisbury steak, and made my way into

the den, sliding the door shut behind me.

The room looked inconspicuous enough. There was a desk in the corner for my Mac, a black futon against one wall, and a coffee table with a vase of fake flowers on top of it.

Sitting my plastic tray down, I approached the thick butterfly canvas hanging on the wall. I'd made it myself to conceal things too easily found.

Running my fingers down the side of it, I found the nearly invisible latch and pushed it in, opening the canvas like I would the cover of a book.

I scanned over the contents.

A list of male names that started with 'J' hung in the upper corner.

Another one with all those names, plus addresses of those that matched in the area, hung beside it.

The majority were crossed out.

A bottle of Cool Water cologne sat on the ledge. I'd never forget what J smelled like, but I had a permanent reminder just in case.

Multiple other gatherings were inside, including a reward flyer with my face on it. My old face, the one with the sultry make-up, long hair, and wide smile.

Sometimes I looked at all I'd accumulated over the last few months and felt utterly defeated.

Then, I looked over at the silver stopwatch.

I could still hear it ticking even in the silence.

It reminded me of the vow I'd made to myself.

I would find him.

I never wanted another person to endure what I or any of the other girls had.

It had to be me who found him, not the police. The kind of justice we all deserved wasn't one the system would approve of. Jail wasn't good enough. A quick death was too merciful. He deserved to reap everything he'd sowed.

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Peace through vengeance.

It was all I had to keep me going. Nothing was going to stop me. I wanted him to know pain like I did. I picked the watch up, turning it over in my hand. It was ironic to me that the only time I'd gone back to that pile of rubble, this was right on top, glinting in the light.

It had represented the countdown on my life, and the true beginning of the end of my stay in hell.

—Chapter Fourteen—

Harper

-1 year 4 months-

Time passed differently without the rising and setting of the sun.

I tried to keep track of the days by tearing little strips of paper from the mints I was given in place of toothpaste, but eventually, everything bled together.

My diet still consisted of two bottles of water, a sleeve of saltine crackers, and occasionally beef jerky. When I was extra good, I got Bugles and root beer. I now loathed both of them.

I'd lost enough weight that I could count my ribs if I sucked my stomach in.

Leaning against the wall, I clicked on my flashlight, aiming it around and pretending the light still worked.

The smell of urine and feces assaulted my senses with every breath I took.

It overpowered the stench of menstrual blood trickling down my legs. I wasn't given pads or tampons. It'd been a long while since I'd seen either or.

I looked at the five days my period lasted as a blessing every time it came. It let me know I wasn't carrying J's spawn. There was a downside to this, though. It meant sleeping on the floor, so I didn't further stain my mattress.

I bounced my knee up and down, wondering if he would show up today. I needed him to.

I was ready now.

I continued waiting.

I'd hear him the second he turned the doorknob.

My senses had changed over time. The silence made me hear everything. The darkness made me see differently.

The loneliness was sometimes the worst of the three because it made me crave the very thing I despised.

Hearing a soft click, I sat straight up.

When a low groan from the wooden door followed, my heartbeat doubled.

The bright light flickered on, and his dress shoes came down the stairs. I turned my imaginary flashlight off and placed it on the floor.

I squinted from the change in lighting, watching J's form come into view. "There's my favorite girl," he grinned, unlocking the cell door right away.

I used my best impression of an excited grin, impatient to put my long-awaited plan in motion.

I'd done nothing but preserve my energy and do what I had to to gain bits of trust, which was why the chain was no longer around my ankle.

I'd become exactly what he wanted: the best little fuck toy he could ever ask for.

If he wanted his cock sucked, I sucked it dry. When he needed to take his frustrations out on my pussy, I held perfect posture and let him completely dominate me.

I stopped feeling sorry for myself the third time he made me come. Fucking for freedom was a small price to pay to escape this shithole.

"I brought you something." He walked in the cell and held up a Wendy's bag.

"All I wanted was you," I replied, lying through my teeth.

The burger I could smell inside that paper bag was ten times more appealing.

"That's good, because you'll have to eat this cold. We have to be quick today; I have a dinner party to attend, and Minnie insists on being early, as always."

I nodded sympathetically like I gave a flying fuck.

“I’d never make you do anything you didn’t want to do,” I said, looking down at my lap.

He came closer, lifting my chin with his knuckles.

“You know you mean more to me than she does,” he sighed, stroking my cheek.

I gazed into his eyes, pulling my lower lip between my teeth. He honestly believed I wanted him to leave his wife for me.

He was also full of shit. I knew I was easily replaceable.

We continued our drawn-out game of fucking with each other’s heads.

His eyes zoned in on the blood, more brown than red in the poor lighting.

“Stand up,” he said suddenly, carelessly tossing the burger on the floor.

I rose to my feet, and he was instantly on me, pushing me back against the wall.

“Take me out,” he rasped, spreading my legs apart.

My hands went to his belt, quickly undoing it. I tucked a finger in the elastic of his drawers, pulling them down just over his hips along with his slacks.

His cock jutted up, pressing against my thigh.

He grabbed the base, hooking one of my legs over his hip, swiftly forcing himself inside me.

I dug my nails into his forearms, rising slightly on my tiptoes as he went straight into

a rapid, hard pace.

There was never any foreplay, not on my end. This wasn't about any of that. This was about him fulfilling his sick needs.

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I was explicitly here for his sexual gratification.

He never made me come because he wanted me to feel pleasure; he made me come to prove he had the power to do so.

Pressing my face into his chest, I focused on the feel of his cock moving in and out, rolling my hips to hurry him along and find my own release.

I moaned for him, purposely clenching my walls until he fucked me harder, and I no longer had to fake it.

The way we used one another was vile. I wanted to know how a man like him could lock a woman away and fuck her like an animal, even though she was filthy, even when the smell of piss and shit flowed into his lungs every time he breathed.

How he could fuck her even as she balanced herself in a small puddle of the same blood now coating his cock.

It was revolting.

I wondered when I started getting off on it.

Digging my nails in deeper, I spread my legs a little further to take in more of him. He grunted, sweat dripping from his forehead onto my heaving chest.

I was going to come. The climax hung just out of reach; I needed him to push me over the edge one last time.

“J,” I moaned as he brought me a little closer. When I finally went over, I said it again, feeling my legs quiver.

He pulled out and shoved me to my knees before I could fully come down. I knew from multiple previous experiences that he was irritated he hadn’t come yet.

“Suck it clean,” he said gruffly, hitting my face with his cock.

I hid a smile and wrapped my fingers around the sticky base, holding eye contact as I began to stroke him up and down slowly.

He pulsed against my palm, his smooth skin the warmest thing I ever got to touch anymore. I continued until pre-cum dribbled.

I opened my mouth, closing it around the head of his cock, tasting my come, blood, and juices on my tongue.

I lowered my head even more, beginning to suck him, slow but hard.

“Just like that,” he soughed, pushing me down even lower. He thrust his hips, hitting my gag reflex.

I relaxed my throat and tried to breathe, blinking the water from my eyes. Moving my hands up, I moved them over the back pockets on his slacks, going up to grip his ass. My heart sank when I felt no sign of my father’s hunting knife—only the faint outline of the key to the cell.

How could he carry it with him every single time but this?

He used it on me often.

I dropped my hands, cupping his balls and gripping him around his base more firmly before he could catch onto what I'd been searching for.

There was no way I could lift the key; I'd have to reach all the way inside the pocket. The knife had been big enough that I'd been confident I could grab it while he was preoccupied with my mouth.

Peering up at him through lowered lashes, I saw his head was tilted back slightly, and his eyes were closed.

He disgusted me.

The longer I stared, the more my pulse elevated. I could feel adrenaline begin to course through my body.

I wanted out.

I had to get out.

I knew he was close; his balls were beginning to tighten.

And I knew the cell door automatically locked when it was shut, unlocking from the outside.

I'd have to move fast regardless, but that would buy me some time.

I was doing this.

My nostrils flared as I sucked in a deep breath. I pulled my lips back as if I were baring my teeth, and then I bit down as hard as I could on his fleshy cock with a guttural growl. I dug my fingers into his balls and twisted as hard as I could.

He screamed, releasing his hold on my hair and shoving me off him. Something inside me was deeply satisfied by his pain.

He practically fell backward, grabbing himself with both hands.

Not waiting another second, I took off. I grabbed the cell door and slammed it shut on my way out like he'd done countless times before.

"Harper!" he yelled after me.

I ran as fast as my legs would carry me, taking the stairs two at a time.

The door opened with no resistance; I was so relieved I could have cried right then, but I wasn't free yet.

I shut it behind me, turning the simple lock on the handle. The only way I could go was straight; the door had opened into a narrow hall.

Taking off again, I directly entered the main area of the place he was keeping me. The furniture was covered in clean white sheets, and the few windows were boarded up with plywood.

I saw one single, deep green door and charged for it. My fear that it may have the same locking mechanism as the cell was diminished with the easy turn of the knob.

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I bolted through the opening.

My retinas instantly began to water, burning as warm sunlight beamed down on me.

I covered my brow with my forearm and stumbled sideways, slamming into someone who had come from the back of the cabin.

Sucking in a surprised breath, I inhaled the strong scent of Cool Water.

—Chapter Fifteen—

Harper

How the fuck did he get out?

“That was very stupid,” he said, way too calmly. His chest was heaving up and down. One partial look in his darkened, rage clouded eyes had me stumbling away from him, blindly beginning to run.

His footsteps sounded behind me, making me pour on speed.

“Help!” I screamed as loud as I could, hoping to god someone heard me. My eyes continued to water as I ran. Startled birds took off from where they’d been perched in trees.

I zig-zagged, having no idea where I was or where I was going. There were trees everywhere, and I couldn’t spot a designated path.

His breath was on the back of my neck, and I knew he was right behind me.

I darted sharply to the right in an attempt to throw him off and gain some distance. Twigs and dirt pushed up between my toes, digging into the soles of my feet.

My lungs were already beginning to burn from exertion. I realized too late that just because I felt fine, it didn't mean I was.

"Help me!" I screamed again.

"You stupid bitch," J seethed, slamming into me from behind.

I landed flat on my stomach; all the air I had left whooshed out of my lungs. I threw an elbow, catching him in the corner of his eye.

He cursed and straddled my back, struggling to get a firm hold on me.

Unable to buck him off, I turned my head and bit down on his lower wrist, the only part of him I was able to reach.

"Dammit," J cursed, punching me in the back of the head.

I let go as spots swam in front of my vision. Temporarily stunned, J used it to his advantage, standing up and grabbing me by the hair.

I went over his shoulder, and he started back towards the cabin.

"I can't go back," I cried to myself.

Everything inside me said death would be better than being his fuck toy for another day longer.

I pounded my fist into him, tossing my weight around, but he refused to let go.

We rounded the cabin, and a pair of cellar doors came into view.

“You’ve ruined it all,” he growled when we reached the opening.

Time seemed to slow as he lifted me up, and hurled me between the doors.

I bounced, and missed the first stair altogether, banging my elbow on the second when I finally landed.

Pain radiated from my tailbone. I did my best to ignore it.

I stared at the place the industrial shelving unit always sat, never knowing this was behind it.

My brain urged me to run away, find somewhere safe, but that wasn’t possible.

There was nothing safe here.

I scrambled to get to my feet, ignoring the various throbs on my body.

I was on me before I could stand all the way up.

“You told me you’d be good!” he yelled, shoving me across the room.

I caught myself, gripping the bars.

He slammed my head into them before I could turn.

I cried out in pain, feeling one of my top teeth knocked loose.

“Fuck you!” I whirled around as strands of my hair pulled from the scalp, and spat a mouthful of blood into his face.

He blinked like he couldn’t believe I’d just done it, backhanding me when it registered.

I spat out another , colliding with the bars again when he slammed me backward. He wrapped his hands around my throat and squeezed so hard, I began sinking down.

“You were special,” he repeated over and over.

My chest felt like it had been set on fire, my lungs unable to get the oxygen they needed, as my vision blurred.

A fluffy sort of feeling washed over me a few seconds later.

I never tried to fight him off.

When I passed out, I prayed I’d wake someplace far away from here.

—Chapter Sixteen—

J

I watched the blood wash down the drain, bracing my hands on the vanity.

I’d lost control.

Not only did I feel shamed, but emasculated and humiliated.

She bit into my dick like it was a chicken wing.

I couldn't tell anyone that.

My friends had already doubted my ability to pull this off for so long.

I'd told them Harper would be different, and she had been.

She'd gotten more than any of the others—so much so that I'd contemplated moving her upstairs, setting up the cabin for her to be more comfortable.

Only to her, it was all a lie.

A fucking joke.

Lifting my head, I stared at myself in the mirror.

Aside from my sore dick and throbbing balls, I wasn't bothered by what I saw.

I was an attractive thirty-three-year-old man, with a majorly successful real estate company, and a charming smile that got me almost whatever I wanted.

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I had more than enough money to buy hundreds of the kind of women I wanted, and I had—multiple times—but there was no excitement in that.

The thrill came from this. The kidnapping, the torture, and finally the bittersweet ending. It was delayed gratification after watching them for so long.

When I bought women from Malignant, they all begged for death in the end.

They'd gone through hell already, and just wanted everything to be over.

They were always so complaint, happily spreading their legs for me with the promise of freedom.

"J," Minnie's voice called through the door, bringing me back to the moment.

I checked the hamper, making sure I closed the lid before replying.

"It's open," I said, wiping my hands on a towel.

She opened the door and stepped inside, dressed in a tight yellow sundress.

"Are you okay?" she asked, her hazel eyes scanning the side of my face.

"I'm fine, Minnie," I replied. "Are you ready to leave yet?"

"So you bit yourself then?" Her voice dripped with dry sarcasm.

I saw where she was looking and irritably rolled my sleeve down, brushing past her.

“It’s the Lane girl, isn’t it? Why haven’t you gotten rid of her yet?” she demanded to know, following after me, heels clicking on the newly shined hardwood. Leave it to Minnie to hit the nail right on the head. Regardless, her nagging was starting to piss me off.

“You’re getting sloppy again, aren’t you? She has to go, Jayce. You need to get rid of—”

I spun around so fast she almost collided with my chest. “You and I don’t discuss Harper. We discuss when you want extra money to splurge, or a rare night in my bed. Now get your shit, and go wait in the car.”

Looking only slightly taken aback, she placed her dainty hands on her hips and glared up at me.

“I’m just looking out for you. For us.”

“Are you?”

“Yes! I know you need to fulfil your...other needs, and I support that, but I’m also your wife. I love you, and you love me. So you should know I’m looking out for our best interest.”

I almost laughed. Loved her?

The only person I loved was myself. I used her to maintain an image to the outside world. Love was a major stretch of the imagination.

Of course, I couldn’t exactly tell her that.

“I’ve got everything under control. Now please, go get in the car.”

She puckered her glossy lips like she had a lengthy response she was ready to spew.

Fortunately, she only nodded and turned back around, walking her prissy ass out of my bedroom.

I sighed, scrubbing a hand over my face. This wasn’t the first time we’d almost discussed my newest toy.

I never spent as many nights buried inside them as I did this particular brunette, and Minnie had started to notice. She didn’t care what I did to the girls, how I fucked them, or how badly they suffered, but she did care about protecting her claim as my wife.

I couldn’t have her jealous and bitter—which begged the question: what the hell was I going to do with Harper Lane?

I couldn’t keep her long-term, I knew that now.

Walking to my closet, I opened it and retrieved the little black box I kept on the top shelf.

I sat down with it on my bed and lifted the lid.

The first thing I saw was my golden cross. Growing up in the church ensured I always had one somewhere.

Beside it was a round silver stop-watch that used to belong to my grandfather. It had a bit of wear on it, but otherwise still worked.

I lifted it out by its silver chain and clutched it within my fist.

An idea began forming in my head.

I started to shut the box, stopping when I saw a picture of my mother.

She looked youthful here, her doe brown eyes and matching long hair healthy.

This was taken a short six months before cancer won—the same damn disease that took Father.

We'd been extremely close in every way possible. She helped me explore some of my darker interests, and told me every day that not a damn thing was wrong with me.

Losing her was unexpected. However, I wasn't upset. Death was a natural part of life. When it was time, it was time.

Beside her picture was the folded flyer with Harper's smiling face on it.

She looked just as my mother did when the picture was taken: youthful and happy.

That was all gone now.

Letting the lid shut, I sat on the bed until I heard a horn honk from out front.

—Chapter Seventeen—

Harper

“Time to wake up.”

My eyes flew open and stared right into J's. He had his hand wrapped around my throat, pinning me down on the floor.

It took my sleepy brain a few seconds to realize he was burning me. His other hand was between my legs, pressing the butt of a cigarette against my labia.

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I cried out and tried to squirm away from him, arching my back and kicking my legs out.

“Are you awake?” he asked, lifting the cigarette away to take a drag from it.

“Harper, you have to wake up,” he cooed, blowing smoke into my face.

He pressed the butt of the cig a little higher than before.

I cried out again, my hoarse voice echoing around the room.

“I’m awake!” I screamed up at him.

“Oh,” he chuckled, immediately letting my neck go and removing his cigarette. “Why didn’t you say that a minute ago?”

I shut my eyes and pressed my trembling lips into a firm line.

“I asked you a question, Harper,” he stressed. Not a second later, the heel of his hand uppercut my nose.

Pain ricocheted.

I cried out, bringing my hands up to catch the blood now rolling over my lips, a metallic tang sneaking its way into my mouth.

Eyes now wide open, I stared up at him through tear blinded vision, willing him to

stop hurting me.

He tilted his head to the side and smirked. “Get up. I come bearing gifts.”

I let my head loll, and watched him walk back out of the cell.

Chest heaving, I pushed myself onto my elbow, and then slowly got to my feet. Instantly, I wanted to sink back down to the ground, but I knew he’d just hurt me even worse.

Stiffly making my way across the room, I glanced down at the freshly formed blisters on the left side of my labia. They were ugly, swollen welts I felt with every step. My nose throbbed, pain intensifying if I dared touch it.

J was at the sink, running water into an orange bucket by the time I reached the door.

As soon as I saw the brunette passed out inside the dog cage, I stopped.

“Hop up on the chair,” he commanded, lifting the bucket from the sink.

I cautiously shuffled forward and did as he said. I studied the woman from my peripheral as I went. She didn’t look much older than me, and physically she wasn’t hurt in any way.

Her tanned skin and clean hair had me taking notice of how much mine had changed.

It wasn’t something I paid any attention to anymore; seeing the sickly color beneath all the grime, blood, and bruises had my heart twisting painfully in my chest.

My hair was a bushel of snarls and knots now J didn’t brush it anymore.

She was in a sundress.

When I was taken, I'd been wearing a winter coat.

How many months had I been here?

I was barely able to prepare myself for the cold water J dumped over my head.

I closed my eyes briefly to keep them clear, crossing my arms over my chest. The low temperature in the room had my teeth chattering.

He set the bucket down and swiped a few wet strands of hair out of my face.

"I spent the last few nights trying to come up with how long I should keep you around. After your reckless actions, I'm beginning to think you're not stable, Harper. And, sweetheart, you kinda let yourself go."

I tucked my chin into my chest and hugged myself a little tighter.

I didn't have the mental or physical energy to spar with him, and for once, I didn't want to.

"Hey, there's no need to feel down about it. That's what this is for." He pulled a shiny, slightly scuffed stopwatch from his pocket, and flipped it open.

I watched the black hand move in a full circle, then finally looked at J for an explanation.

"I'm going to hang this on the wall right outside your cell," he began, pointing to a hook I'd never noticed before. "When the timer stops, so does your life." He stepped back and went to do just that, slipping the thin metal chain over the hook.

“Nothing?” he inquired when I remained silent. “All right then, lie down.”

If he was surprised by how easily I complied, he didn’t show it. I knew the cigarette burns were just the start of what he had planned.

He was too calm. I could have spat out a few snarky remarks, maybe spat on him again. Honestly, though, it didn’t matter what I did.

He’d just assured me I wouldn’t be making it out of this alive. I thought I wanted to die; I never accepted that I was going to.

He secured each of my legs in a nylon stirrup, and then my wrists.

Once he was done, he stepped away, returning with the rusted spreader bar and a gag. Curling my hands into fists, I dropped my head back, knowing for certain now that the cigarette burns had been child’s play.

He secured the bar and shoved the gag into my mouth without saying a word. His lack of taunting increased my gut-gnawing anxiety in the form of cold sweat.

Using one hand, he gripped one of my ass cheeks and pulled them apart. He cleared his throat, spitting a glob of saliva right in the crevice.

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He moved away again. I lifted my head to see what he was doing now. With eyes wide, I watched him stand at his shelf of toys and select a dark purple dildo.

Silver nails were melted into the rubber on all sides.

I shut my eyes, knowing how bad this was about to hurt, and how much he was going to enjoy it.

—Chapter Eighteen—

Harper

My legs were splayed wide open, strapped down to steel plated stirrups, and slightly lifted in the air.

Tremors wracked my body with fear of what came next. My arms were painfully stretched on either side of my tearstained face, each tightly secured in their own restraint.

I shook my head rapidly back and forth, begging and pleading around the gag he'd angrily shoved in my mouth.

He was unmoved, enjoying every minute of my fear and discomfort.

I wanted to look away, but couldn't. I needed to bear witness to everything he did, no matter how fucked up it was.

I tried to brace myself for the pain I knew was coming, inhaling deep breaths through my bloody nose.

He looked at me with a sinister smile on his angelic face, inserting the dildo fully into my ass.

I squealed like a pig at slaughter, trying to breathe through the excruciating pain.

“You like that?” he asked, ramming the toy in and out of me.

The tips of the nails felt like razor blades digging into the sensitive tissue inside me.

Blood began to leak, as my body rejected the foreign object, insides trying to force it out. Something in my anal cavity tore, and more blood flowed from the decimated hole.

I felt myself slipping away.

He left the dildo inserted when he shoved his cock into my pussy.

I didn't get a reprieve.

He fucked me like he did every other time before, taking everything he wanted, continuing well after I slipped beneath a blanket of darkness.

He didn't let me stay under for long, waving a smelling block beneath my nose.

No, he wanted to ensure I felt exactly what happened next.

The brunette was out of the dog cage, struggling against him much like I had during our first encounter. She didn't get taken to the mattress, though; instead, he brought

her to me.

“P-p-please don’t—”

“Shhh,” he soothed, running his knuckles down the woman’s tear-stained face.

She looked to me then, dark eyes taking in the massive dildo still embedded in my ass, nails digging into my anal tissue.

“What is that? Why am I here? Why are you—”

“I’m not in the mood for one-hundred questions,” he said, dragging the terrified woman the rest of the way to the chair.

She cried and yelled, quickly deciding to beg as he bent her over practically right on top of me, reaching beneath her dress and tearing her underwear clean off.

“I’m going to fuck you now, and you’re going to keep your face buried in my pretty toy’s pussy the entire time,” J explained, reaching for the chain above me.

“I have money. I have—”

“I don’t need your fucking money,” he sneered, slipping the noose-like chain around her neck.

She continued to panic until it no longer mattered. J shoved her face between my legs, pushing the dildo into my ass a little further.

Dropping my head back, I breathed in quick shallow breaths as he proceeded to fuck her, forcing her arms to stay locked behind her.

Her cries were muffled by my pussy each time she was forced to press her mouth against it. I was in too much pain to care. When J reached up to tighten the chain around her neck, there wasn't a thing I could do to help her.

Still tied down, the gag stopping me from speaking, I could do nothing but watch as she started to suffocate.

The whites in her eyes turned a faded red before rolling back into her skull; ugly blotches broke out across her skin.

J remained thrusting inside her limp body long after she looked at me with a fixed, blank stare.

All I could think about was how I'd never got to ask what her name was, and the lifeless face that seemed to say her death was all my fault.

—Chapter Nineteen—

Harper

-Present-

Fate can be a tricky thing.

I didn't believe in it much until I managed to save my own life.

I was a firm believer that everything happened for a reason—even the bad things.

I'd come to the conclusion that I was taken for a purpose, and that purpose was to find the man responsible for all my suffering and rid the world of his disease.

I still tried to live my life.

Once every few weeks, I ventured to the Winn Dixie and got a fresh carton of Moose Tracks ice cream.

Maybe I went in my pajamas, but at least I was going somewhere.

It was fate that had me standing right beside the model-like blonde in the middle of the ice-cream aisle at nine-o-clock at night.

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“What are you getting?” she asked me suddenly.

“I always get the Moose Tracks. I just pretend I’m going to choose something healthier.” I shrugged and pulled open the freezer door.

She scrunched her nose up and leaned forward, reading the carton I pulled out.

“Oh, that does look good. My husband doesn’t like me to have sweets, so when he goes away on business, I get to indulge,” she laughed.

I wanted to ask if he didn’t let her have sweets for health reasons, or because he was a controlling asshole.

I played nice for the sake of not offending most strangers I tended to meet nowadays.

“Mm, well, enjoy.” I forced a smile and dropped the ice-cream in my basket, continuing down the aisle.

“I’m Michelle, by the way,” she called after me.

I continued walking. My ability to interact with strangers was rusty. Besides, the only time I’d witnessed a grand friendship being formed in places like a grocery store aisle was in movies or on television. I didn’t need friends; I had a cat.

“But most people just call me Minnie,” she added just as I was about to turn the corner.

I almost stopped dead in my tracks, choosing to turn around naturally and play off the fact that her name was ingrained in my brain.

I'd searched for a Minnie when I failed to find a J. Most of my results were the Disney character and a few social media profiles that didn't match what I was looking for.

It could have been a wild coincidence that she just so happened to have that nickname, but I didn't believe in those.

"Harper," I replied, forcing some pep into my voice.

Her smile faltered just the slightest bit. If I hadn't been watching her so closely, I would've missed it.

Did she know who I was? Is that why she came down this aisle?

I took a few steps towards her, instantly picking up on her sudden nervous energy. Her hazel eyes regarded me cautiously.

"Are you sure you want that ice-cream? We know how your husband can get."

Her whole expression soured, my words hitting a chord.

I didn't wait around to see what else she might or might not have decided she needed to say to me.

Turning on my heel, I hurried down the aisle. I set my basket on a doughnut display, anxious to get out of the store, nearly jogging to my Jeep.

I slipped inside and immediately began scanning the parking lot for Minnie.

The only person I saw was a mom loading her baby carrier into the back of a minivan.

I watched the store doors without looking away once, clenching the steering wheel so hard my knuckles turned white.

When she finally came out, she appeared to be in as much of a hurry as I just was—only she'd bought her groceries.

She had a cell phone cradled to her ear, talking rapidly into the speaker.

I slid lower in my seat, trying to stay hidden so I could eavesdrop on her conversation.

Her heels carried her by quickly, but I was able to hear exactly what she was saying. "I need you to call me back, Jayce. Now. You fucked up."

My stomach turned over in response. She sounded highly pissed off and even more worried. I'd always assumed she didn't know about his extracurricular activities.

I couldn't fathom how another woman could sit by and let her husband sexually torture people as a hobby.

It was infuriating on a whole new level. How many of us could she have saved if she'd spoken up?

J—no, Jayce—was just a man. He was human. He felt pain and bled just like anyone else, and she didn't seem to be that afraid him.

Hearing an engine start, I peeked over my steering wheel just in time to see a dark blue beamer pull right past me.

I knew who the driver was.

I wanted to ram the bitch right off the road. The last time I saw her husband, he'd left me to die, and therein lay their problem: I wasn't supposed to be alive.

It took less than sixty seconds for me to decide what I was going to do next. I started my Jeep and proceeded to follow her home.

—Chapter Twenty—

Harper

-2 years-

I'm losing my fucking mind.

I had the same thought multiple times a day, or maybe it was night.

I didn't know how long I'd been here.

I'd forgotten what it was like to feel the sun. I couldn't recall the last time I'd breathed in something other than bleach, feces, and death.

I was excessively exhausted and constantly starving. J gave me food when he felt like it, not as I needed it.

Sometimes I talked to the other girls he brought in. I think there had been a total of four. Most of the time they didn't speak back, just cried and begged me to help them.

They were never around for long.

I'm not sure what he did with their bodies once he killed them, and that was always by strangulation as he buried his cock in either hole.

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I knew my time would come soon. He was bored with me now. There was disgust and disdain in his eyes when they drifted over the body he'd ruined.

J and I didn't form some Stockholm connection. I didn't fall for the sick fuck who kidnapped me because he was something pretty to look at it. Which is why the day he stopped the clock, I wasn't caught off guard.

When the cell door opened, I remained in my fetal position, facing away from him.

I waited for him to approach. When he didn't, I peeked over my shoulder, seeing him stopped just a few feet away.

"You really were special," he mused, more to himself than me.

"If you hadn't tried to escape that day, I was going to move you upstairs, make you a bit more comfortable."

And then we'd play house?

I waited for his speech to commence.

"You know why you've outlasted all the others? You never once asked me to kill you. I wondered how long it'd be before you begged for death by my hand. You never did."

"You kept me alive because I didn't ask to die?" I tried to make sense of that, but this was J. Most things didn't equal two plus two with him.

“That, and because you had hope. Now you don’t; I see in your eyes that you’ve given up.”

Sitting up now, I studied his profile.

He almost looked sad.

“I’m moving on, gonna take a break for a bit before I start over again,” he continued.

“Why are you telling me any of this?” I asked, disinterested.

He shook his head and turned away, beginning to walk out of the cell. “It’ll be fast if you don’t struggle.”

“What will be fast?” I asked, genuinely confused.

He smiled at me, and started up the stairs. When I heard the door shut, I scrambled off the bed.

He’d left my cell open; he never did that. Hurrying across the stone floor, I entered the main room and looked around.

Nothing appeared to be any different. The stopwatch hung on its hook, no longer ticking.

I waited to see if J would come back, but he never did.

Had he left me down here to starve?

I’d pick a hundred deaths before I chose that one.

Taking a quick breath, I crept up the wooden staircase and listened for any sign that would tell me what was going on.

A funny smell reached my nose before I made it all the way to top. It took me a few seconds to place it; by then, smoke was slipping beneath the crack of the door.

He was going to burn this shithole down, with me trapped inside it.

I stumbled down the stairs, mind racing with how to get myself out of this. I didn't want to burn alive.

If the flames didn't kill me, the smoke inhalation would.

I was in no shape survive something like that.

Eyes darting wildly around the room, they came to rest on the industrial shelving unit.

I ran towards it, shoving the side repeatedly in an effort to get it to move. The damn thing scooted just a fraction of an inch.

Flipping around, I slammed my back into it, shoving with every ounce of strength I could muster.

It grated on the floor, finally beginning to slide. The smell of smoke grew stronger; a low groan came through the ceiling above me.

If this place collapsed, I'd be crushed.

When there was enough space for me to fit through, I squeezed my way into the tiny passage beneath the cellar doors.

Balanced on the top step, I pressed my palms against them and pushed upward.

They lifted, letting in a stream of sunlight before snagging from the outside.

“The fucking lock.” I cursed J to hell and back, shoving the doors repeatedly.

They wouldn’t give.

I began to panic now, swearing I could feel heat searing into the basement.

Holding the doors with one hand, I forced the other through the light gap between them.

Ignoring the pressure, I felt for the whatever it was keeping me in.

Grasping something rusted and metal, I tried to tug it free. My grip was too weak. My fingers reached again, and I forced my wrist out further.

Certain now that heat was filling the place I’d called home the last two years, I started to claw, desperate to reach the latch.

My nails dug into the wood, a splinter going into my pinky, my ring and pointer fingers stripped of their nails completely.

They tore out with surprising ease, but that didn’t lessen the pain. I cried out, immediately wanting to draw back and examine my injury. Instead, I persevered. I was close.

Heat found its way into my passage, and I began to sweat. The smell of smoke made my eyes water. I let them.

“Come on,” I pleaded, grinding my teeth against the pain.

Finally clutching the latch, I tugged and wiggled until it popped.

The doors could finally be lifted.

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I sucked in a breath of smoke-filled air and rushed out. Sunlight engulfed me, momentarily paralyzing my legs.

The cabin burned at my back.

If J was watching nearby, I didn't want him to see me.

I started running straight.

My eyes stung, my lungs burned, and my body threatened to expel vomit from my empty stomach, but I still didn't stop.

I found a dirt road and followed it, wheezing in and out, feet bloody. I stopped when through a gap up ahead in a cluster of trees, I saw the back of the Metric gas station.

—Chapter Twenty-One—

Harper

-Present-

They had a beautiful home.

I could admit that.

Sitting outside of it, parked a few houses down, I browsed on my cell phone.

Jayce Charles Haywood owned a real estate company, had zero kids, and still looked the exact same way he had two and a half years ago.

Lucky him.

Seeing him in photographs didn't move me in any way. His face was a constant image on display in my head.

I didn't care to know any personal details about him; I just needed to know who he was.

Reaching across my seats, I popped open the glove box and removed my little black handgun and my bright purple riding gloves.

The lights inside his house had gone out thirty minutes ago. All except one.

Watching my surroundings, I got out of my Jeep and quickly darted across the street. His house looked even bigger up close.

I didn't bother with the front, or the back door. I walked right into the open garage and tried that one.

It swung right open, taking me back to when he'd told me that my house needed a security system.

It seemed Jayce didn't practice what he preached.

I stepped into a family room and shut the door behind me, hearing the sound of running water upstairs.

Bypassing an all white sofa, I paused and studied a large self-portrait hanging above a

massive fireplace.

The woman in the painting could have been one of my late relatives. Our resemblance was eerie.

I shuddered and left the room, looking for the kitchen. It wasn't hard, given that it was almost the size of my whole cottage.

This room was white, too.

I hated it.

The cleanliness of the home was almost offensive. How could he live so luxuriously, yet fuck in such squalor?

I tucked my gun in the pocket of my cow pajamas before going over to a knife block, pulling each one out and examining the blades carefully before making a choice.

There was never a moment where I wondered if what I was about to do was right or wrong.

I wasn't afraid of being caught. After all, this would be doing society a huge favor.

I walked up the stairs, careful where I placed each slipper so I didn't hit a creaky floorboard.

Light from the bathroom poured out into the hall. I approached the open door and peered inside.

The soaking tub faced the opposite direction, giving me a view of Minnie's back.

She had a glass of red wine on the ledge, head leaned back and eyes closed. Poor thing looked a little stressed.

It was her own fault.

There was nothing she could say that would make her silence okay.

She wasn't quiet because she was terrified; she was quiet because she didn't give a fuck.

I ensured my purple gloves were on tight, and strolled forward. Not experienced with stabbing people, I did what all the Google articles had said.

I crouched down and cupped a hand over Minnie's mouth; apparently, this helped with air flow or something.

Her hazel eyes flew open, and she immediately began to struggle. The wine glass hit the floor, shattering into pieces. Sudsy water splashed out of the tub as I pinned her in place.

I couldn't remember how or where to stab someone. The adrenaline rushing through my veins had my hands slightly shaking and my thought process solely focused on ending this.

I jabbed her in the side of the neck first, fascinated by how easily the blade sliced clean through her flesh.

She cried out behind my gloved hand.

I stuck her again, a little lower, and then once in her chest beside her silicone tit before letting go.

Blood turned the water red, staining the porcelain tub. She croaked a little, like a frog, and her body twitched a few times before going completely still.

It was anti-climatic.

I'd expected more blood.

After tossing the dirty steak knife into the tub, I grabbed her cell phone off the vanity.

Careful that no sign of me could be seen in a mirror, I snapped a picture of her partially submerged body with a sunny day filter, and sent it to her only contact saved under Jayce.

I looked at her closely, wondering how she'd ended up with him in the first place. She wasn't anything like the girls he seemed to have a penchant for.

Oh, well. Now, they could burn in hell together.

I tossed her phone in the water and made a quick exit.

—Chapter Twenty-Two—

Harper

His wife's murder made the local news.

The local freaking news. I didn't understand how we could live on two separate ends of the same town, and I'd never figured it out.

I supposed I had ice-cream to thank for my great triumph.

It took me some time to prepare for what I was going to do next.

By time, I mean I had to haul boxes, stop at a garage sale, a hardware store, and ultimately a pet store. Everything else I needed was ordered online—like the dildos.

I made sure to keep tabs on Jayce the entire time, wondering if he knew it was me who'd killed his wife.

I couldn't imagine he didn't.

Then again, the sick fuck probably had his fair share of people who despised him.

When everything was set, I followed him for two solid weeks, day in and day out. I went as far as swapping my ruby red Jeep for a rental car to blend in a little better.

Wherever Jayce went, I went.

His auburn hair looked thicker, and he had a bit of scruff, but otherwise, he looked the same as he always had.

For a man who'd just lost what should have been the love of his life, he didn't seem too distraught. He was more pissed that he'd been a suspect.

If the cops only knew the half of it.

They wouldn't hear about it from me, but I had an anonymous letter ready to go that I'd hand typed after I was found.

I felt the other girls, wherever they'd wound up, deserved some form of peace for their families.

If they had any.

There weren't any missing persons reports filed in our area, which led me to believe Jayce took girls who had nothing and no one, or who weren't from around here.

That didn't change anything on my end.

I learned rather quickly he led a ridiculously boring life.

Breakfast with the same group of men on Tuesday.

The pool hall on Thursday.

I'm sure he knew I was following him; I stopped trying to hide it three days in. I wanted him to see me.

I made my appearance on Sunday.

Leaving my rental in front of a shopping complex, I slipped on my signature purple gloves, grabbed my gun, and walked the few blocks to Holy Trinity Church.

I couldn't understand why, or how this man could be religious in any way. Maybe it was another role he played.

He came out alone, just like he had the week before. I waited until his car was unlocked before coming up behind him.

"Get in," I demanded, pressing my gun into his back.

"Harper," he mused, turning his head to the side. "I was wondering when I'd see you again. I know you've been following me."

"That's nice. Now get the fuck in the car. And please don't make me ask again," I added sweetly.

We didn't have an abundance of time to stand here like this. I cocked the gun to hurry him along, and it worked.

"Okay, okay, calm down. No one needs to get hurt." He slid into the driver's seat, and I got in behind it.

"Give me your phone," I said, keeping the gun trained on the back of his head.

He wordlessly handed it back to me.

"Now pull out of this parking lot and make a right."

"This is entertaining," he laughed, doing as I said.

“If you think this is fun, wait until you see what comes next,” I quipped.

That made him shut up for a minute—but only a minute.

“You know, if anything happens to me, I have friends who will come looking.”

“I find it extremely hard to believe that you of all people have friends. Are they as fucked up as you are?”

“Actually, they’re a lot worse,” he chuckled.

Now it was my turn to shut up. How could anyone be worse than J? I made it a top priority to look into these friends of his.

“You know, you look just as pretty as you always did.”

“Shut up, J.”

“Now that Minnie’s gone, we—”

“Shut the fuck up!” I yelled, whacking him on the side of the head.

“Dammit,” he cursed, touching a small gash.

“Don’t say anything else. This isn’t a social call.”

He remained quiet as I instructed him all the way to an old farm road.

Digging into the satchel I had looped across my chest, I retrieved a cool syringe and popped the cap off.

“What are you planning on doing with me way—ah!” He smacked at the back of his neck where I’d just stuck him through the headrest.

“Don’t worry, it’s not life-threatening,” I laughed, instructing him to pull over and cut the engine.

“What did you give me?” he questioned, already slurring his words.

I chose to look out the window at the cornfields instead of responding.

When I looked back in the front seat, J was slouched down.

I couldn’t believe I was this close to him again, and how calm I felt in his presence.

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It was satisfying in a way, not to be afraid of him. He was just a man. Nothing more. Nothing less.

I sat for a few more seconds to clear my head and get ready for what I was going to do next.

When I'd reassured myself this was what I needed to do, I got out of the car.

—Chapter Twenty-Three—

Harper

He came to just as I was about to go back upstairs.

His muffled, emasculated screams brought a smile to my face. I'd removed his clothes, already burning them in my firepit, and chained him up.

I had to dose him again in the midst of dragging his heavy ass to my basement. Thank god I didn't have neighbors.

“You're awake,” I said, walking back towards him.

He squeezed his eyes shut, clearly not liking the feel of the vibrating dildo hanging out of his ass.

“I know it's not comfortable, but I didn't have time to add any nails yet.”

I also didn't have the desire to spit between his asscheeks, so I used the rubbing alcohol in my medicine cabinet.

"Do you like your new home?"

He yelled some more—nothing that sounded very nice.

I looked around my basement, satisfied with how it had turned out.

It had no windows, and the only door led straight into my closet.

It wasn't listed on the blueprint of the cottage, so technically it didn't exist. That's what the realtor had told my parents, anyway.

It was perfect.

Buying bars to build a makeshift cell was a little out of my expertise, so I'd settled for a dog kennel from the pet store.

I had no idea where to get a gynecology chair, and was using an old weight bench from the garage sale instead.

Given that he was stronger than me, I used chains in place of nylon.

"I'll remove the gag once you've calmed down a bit. Then you can yell as loud as you like. No one will hear you; this room is soundproof. You can beg, too. I think I'd like that."

He looked at me with the same hatred I imagined he saw reflected right back at him.

It was so easy to break him down to nothing. His power was nothing more than what I had now. The upper hand.

We'd see how well he liked being a fuck toy, having the tables turned on him before I put a bullet in his head.

His obnoxious yells followed me out of the kennel. I shut the gate and clicked the padlock in place.

Just before I went up the stairs, I hung the silver stopwatch on the wall, and started the timer.