



Dex

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Description: According to Addy, Dex has always been the king of his castle and she always wanted to be his queen. However, things don't always go to plan and she was left in the shadow of another queen. According to Dex, Castle Ink is all he has to live for since he lost his wife.

But the opening of his new castle brings a face from his past, a face that he never allowed himself to think about. Castle Ink is what brings Dex and Addy together and nothing is smooth sailing. In order to find a connecting path, Dex needs to embrace his future and Addy needs to forget the ghosts of their past. Will the king and queen be able to rebuild their castle?

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How the fuckam I supposed to live now?

Breathe.

Move on.

I just buried my heart.

Today has been the second worst day of my fucking life. The first...The first was the day my wife, my sweet, beautiful Fiona passed away. This cruel fucking world took the one reason I had to live and breathe. Sitting here watching her family and mine say goodbye for the last time is making my stomach knot so bad I feel physically ill. I catch my brother, Jay's face and all I see is his grief and pity. I don't want his pity. I don't want anyone's fucking pity; I just want Fiona. My beautiful girl. Her long blonde hair reaching her perfect arse. Her big grey eyes staring deep into mine, showing her love for me. There will never be another woman for me. No other woman will own my heart.

I can still remember the day I first saw Fiona Sutton. It had been in the local park in the area where we lived. It was pretty run down, but we all hung out there. I was walking over with my boys to where this babe was sitting on a swing, talking to another girl. Her long blonde hair was over the one shoulder and her smile lit up her face. She was wearing baggy jeans that I knew would sit perfectly on her slim waist and a cropped jumper type top on that showed her midriff to everyone who wanted to see. I strutted over to her without a care in the world; I was Dexter fucking Castle and all the girls wanted me. Fuck, even the older girls wanted me. But my Fiona put up a chase. Of course, I got her in the end. She completed me.

I raise a hand to my chest, trying to ease the ache there as the memories of the one person that has owned my heart for so long drag me to a time I wish I could go back to. The pain never leaves me. She has been gone only five days. Snatched from me by a fucking asshole who couldn't be bothered to phone for a fucking taxi to drive his drunk arse home. No, he had to drive his flashy car and slam into ours, killing Fiona instantly. I ended up with a broken rib and some cuts and bruises. Fi's side of the car took the full impact.

I lift my head once more and my eyes connect with my brother's, but his gaze slides to something behind me. I turn my head and see her. The other. Addison Cole, our Addy. She has been in our little crew for years. She has always been like a little sister to us, but I know that she has a crush on me. But me being me, I had always brushed her off as an everyday annoyance, which she hated. But with me being with Fiona, I couldn't admit that I stopped seeing her as a little sister when she was around fourteen; I was eighteen at the time. She walked into a party after being away on holiday for the six weeks school summer holidays, looking hot as fuck. Well, as hot as a fourteen year old girl could be. She was wearing a red checked skirt that was way too fucking short, a black t-shirt that was tucked into the skirt and black Doctor Martens boots.

My heart stutters in my chest as she makes her way over to me on the sofa. I haven't seen Addy in three years, she left right after I asked Fiona to marry me. Addy came to my house the next night and told me that she was leaving. She told me that she couldn't be around me and Fiona living happily together. It hurt her heart. She kissed me and left. I know that Jay kept in touch with her. But seeing her now makes my chest hurt ten times more. She is a completely different person. She is wearing a black lace, sleeveless dress that shows her tattooed arms. One has a complete sleeve and the other has a rose on her shoulder. I love them on her; my work being shown off. I watch as she stops in front of me; our eyes never leaving each others.

"Dex," she whispers, my name sounding so pained as it leaves her mouth. Her voice

sending a shiver through my body and I tense up.

“Addison,” I croak, my voice thick with emotion.

“How are you?” she asks, but before I can answer I hear her mutter “Stupid question” under her breath. Typical Addy trait. She always mutters under her breath. I chuckle, but it sounds foreign to me. I haven’t laughed since the accident. “Sorry,” she mutters.

“It’s fine Ads. Sit,” I tell her before I can stop the words. She slowly lowers herself onto the sofa next to me, carefully holding her dress around her legs. “Not something you’re used to, huh.” I nod to her dress.

“No. But today it was called for. I am so fucking sorry, Dex.” She sniffs, fighting back the tears.

“Don’t. Not you.” I shake my head in frustration. I don’t need her pity. I don’t fucking want it, not from her. She is the last person who should be sad about me losing my wife. Addy has wanted me for-fucking-ever.

“So, I can’t be sad that you lost her. You are one of my best friends, Dex.” She stands, eyes narrowed and her arms folded across her body, clearly pissed at me. “I know how much you loved her. You always will. Fuck. I shouldn’t have come here.”

“Clearly,” I mutter.

“I-I’m just gonna go. She will be missed, Dex,” with that she walks out the door. I drop my head and look at my shoes; my shiny black fucking shoes that I hate. I need to get out of these clothes, these shoes. Standing, I walk towards the stairs when I hear someone calling my name, but I blank them out. I can’t fucking breathe in this stuffy suit. Ripping the tie over my head I drop it on the floor, my suit jacket quickly

following. I enter my bedroom. Our bedroom. I stop and take it in, seeing Fiona's things scattered all over the place. She was a messy girl. Opening the buttons on my shirt, I kick my shoes off before I rip the shirt from my body and fling it across the room. My trousers soon follow. I yank open the walk-in wardrobe I built for us when we moved into this house and quickly pull on a pair of jeans and a plain grey t-shirt, before I slip my feet into my boots and walk back downstairs. I can hear everyone chatting away in all the rooms, but I couldn't care less at what they have to say. None of them know how I am feeling right now.

My chest tightens as I gaze at the photo of me and Fi on our wedding day that hangs on the wall in the hallway. Fuck, I can't breathe. I need to get out of here.

"Dex, where are you going?" I hear Jay call from behind me.

"Out," I state.

"You can't leave, brother. All the family is here."

"And?" I ask. I really don't want to get into this with him right now.

"Dex, listen-" But I cut him off.

"Just fuck off, Jay. You have no fucking clue how I am feeling right now. I can't fucking breathe. I need to go." I don't wait for his reply; I leg it out the door. I hear him call my name but I ignore him and keep running. I run and run until my legs give out and my lungs are burning, begging me to stop. The burn does nothing to numb the pain of losing my wife. I don't think anything will take that pain away.

I straighten up and look around me and I swear my heart fucking stops. I take in the house in front of me and close my eyes. My body shivers as the cold seeps through my clothes.

Well fucking hell.

It is the Cole's house. Addy's house.

I take in a deep breath and keep walking. I can't face her today, or any other day.

* * *

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It has been four weeks since I buried Fiona and the pain is still there, crippling me. They say time heals all, but fucking hell they are full of shit. I get that it has only been four weeks, but I can still feel her when I lay in our bed at night. I can still smell her. Hear her scream when we saw the car coming straight for us. I wasn't sleeping much. I have taken up running to help with the pain. I need to exhaust my body to help me sleep. Jay flipped his shit when he saw how much I was drinking. He sat me down and told me that Fi would be ashamed of me, and he was right. She would kick my arse if she were here. But she isn't, so running it is.

I run mile after mile but I still end up in the same place. At the Cole's house. The house where I have so many childhood memories. I stop and bend over, resting my hands on my knees, trying to catch my breath. I suck in the oxygen that my body obviously needs. The rain that, up until now had been a light drizzle, gets heavy against my heated skin.

"Dex?" I hear her voice. I keep my eyes closed and take a deep breath. So many emotions are running through my head and I feel as if it might explode. "What are you doing here?" Addy asks from the front door. I finally peel my eyes open and look in her direction. She is dressed in black leggings and a red t-shirt that says 'God bless this hot mess'. The over-sized cardigan drowns her slim body.

"I couldn't breathe," I admit. The rain hits my body harder, but I barely notice.

"Come inside, Dex, you're getting soaked." I keep my eyes on her but I don't move towards her. My feet are stuck; cemented to the pavement. "Dexter," she shouts, forcing my legs into motion. I open the gate and walk up the path towards her. And I can't help but take in her beauty; a beauty that should not be affecting me right now. I

just buried my wife for fucks sake. I reach her and she quickly pulls me into the house and shuts the door behind us. I let her lead me to the sofa and I take a seat.

“Let me get you a towel.” I nod my head, and Addy walks away. My eyes meet the raging fire in the fireplace and the flames hypnotise me. I am so engrossed by the flames that I don’t hear Addy come back into the room.

“Here.” She hands me a towel and a change of clothes, which I am assuming belong to her late father. Addy’s parents died when she was twelve, which is why she moved to our area, from Brighton.

“Thanks.” I stand up and strip the soaked tee off my head and I drop my jeans and kick off my boots. A quick intake of breath catches my attention and I look up and see Addy staring at me. Fuck. I am standing here in my boxers, not thinking about my surroundings.

“Oh Shit. Sorry,” I say and quickly reach for the towel. But Addy’s hand shoots out to stop me, her fingers reaching to touch the pattern on my right pectoral. The warmth spreading from her fingers to my damp chest makes me realize just how cold I am. She traces over the scroll there before she moves over to the cross on my left pectoral muscle. My body shivers from her touch. I grip her wrist to stop her movements and she gasps. Without thinking, I pull her to me and cover her mouth with mine. Her mouth is warm and soft, she moans into my mouth and I swallow her sounds. I hold her to me and deepen the kiss. I don’t know how long we kiss for but Addy pulls away.

“We can’t,” she whispers.

“We can.” I pull her back to me, kissing her neck.

“Dex.”

“Shhhh. Just a taste,” I say against her smooth skin. I pull her down onto the sofa and we are a tangled mess. Addy gives in to fighting me as I rip her clothes off and I remove my boxers. We make love right there on the sofa, in front on the blazing fire. After I feel her third orgasm pulsing through her body, I finally let go. The shame washes over me and all I feel is regret and guilt. Addy snuggles closer and we fall asleep wrapped up in each other. My pain temporarily forgotten. But I know the pain will come back ten fold.

* * *

I wake up with the feeling of dread in my stomach. I know where I am without opening my eyes. I can feel her against me. My heart rate spikes and the panic sets in. I fucked Addison last night. Oh God. What did I do? Fuck. I open my eyes and slowly take in the girl draped over me. I take in her beauty and my heart stutters in my chest again. I fucking hate feeling like this. I slowly remove my arm from under her and slip off the sofa. Scanning the room for my clothes, I find them in a pile on the floor. I slip into my jeans and as I am pulling my t-shirt on over my head, Addy wakes.

“Morning.” Guilt slams into me as I take in her mussed up look. A look that I put there. I did the unforgivable last night. I shake my head and reach for my boots.

“You regret it.” It wasn’t a question, but an obvious statement.

“It should never have happened, Ads.” She flinches at my nickname for her.

“Wow. Give it to me straight.” She leans over and picks her cardigan up and wraps it around herself, shielding me from her naked body. My dick jerks in my jeans, and I hate it.

I fucking hate her for making me feel this way. I ignore her words and walk towards

the door, stopping just long enough to hear her parting words for me.

“I know this fucks everything up for us. But just remember that I love you, Dexter Castle. I always will.” I open the door and step outside into the cold British weather. A shiver runs through my body and not in a good way this time. The wind whips around me, but I hear her. “Goodbye, Dex.”

I walk away and don’t look back. I know that I have just ripped out her heart and crushed it, and I have no doubt that Jay will rip me a new asshole when he finds out. But walking away from her now is for the best. I can never give her my heart and Addy deserves a complete man to love her. I will never be that man.

Without Fiona beside me it will be a long road, but I will get to where I need to be. One way or another, I will get there.

Maybe now is the time to open up that studio me and Jay have talked about.

Now is the time to start Castle Ink.

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(3 & a bit years later)

Sitting in my private room at our new Castle Ink studio, I sketch up the design a young lad wants tattooed on him. It's his first tattoo and it is a bloody big one. He's having a rib piece done, in memory of his grandfather that brought him up. Most people start off with a small design, but I guess he doesn't do small. To be fair, it is a pretty awesome design. The drawing takes my mind off of things. Well, not only things but someone. She still refuses to talk to me, but I know my twat of a brother is in contact with her. I don't think he has seen her but they text and talk on the phone. It kills me that she won't talk to me or return my texts. The day after Liam and Penny's BBQ, Addy came into the studio and packed up her room and left. Me and Jay got into a punch up because I tried to stop her, but he got in the way. He told me that I didn't deserve her and that I should let her go. He is right in the fact that I don't deserve her, but fuck it if I don't miss her. Not having Addy here has made me see my feelings for her are deeper than I wanted to admit. The night she left the studio, I hit the drinkhard, downing nearly a whole bottle of whiskey. I caught a taxi to her house and things went down.

"Addy, open the door. Now," I demand, hammering on the door. My fists should hurt but the whiskey has numbed my body. The sun is setting behind me, but the warmth is still in the air. I bang on the door again and wait for her to answer. "ADDY!" I shout. Seconds tick by until she finally swings the door open. Her scowl making her look downright sexy as sin.

"What the fuck, Dex?" she yells at me.

"We need to talk," I slur out. She looks over my shoulder, probably trying to look for

my car or bike.

“I got a taxi here. Now let me in.” She sighs and steps back, letting me into her house. I haven’t been in here for a few years, not since I walked out on her that night, the night I truly fucked up with her. She has changed the decor a little since the last time. It suits her.

“Why are you here, Dex?” she says from behind me. I spin around to face her and drink in the sight of her standing there looking at me. She is wearing a black singlet vest top with a faded moon on the front and some jean shorts. Her hair is up in a ponytail and her face is completely clean of any make-up she was wearing earlier.

“I’m sorry for being a cock earlier. I can’t seem to stop hurting you can I? I’m fucked up, Ads.” I know I push her away but it hurts me to be close to her, I always feel as if I am cheating on Fiona; even after three years.

“Then don’t hurt me, Dex. It’s simple,” she whispers. I shake my head and take a step back. Addy follows my movements and closes the gap between us. I close my eyes and will her away, even though I know it won’t work. I know that when I open my eyes I will see her deep green gaze that sucks me in every time. I feel her hand on my chest and I can’t stop myself from flinching. Her gasp forces me to open my eyes. Our gazes lock and all I see in her eyes is pain. Pain that I put there... again. Fucking hell. I shake my head again and wrap my arms around her slim waist, pulling her against me. Her perfect round tits press against my chest and I can’t stop my hands from seeking out her perfectly round arse. I lower my head and take her mouth with mine. Her warm, lush lips taste amazing. Just like I remember. I suck on her bottom lip and she opens for me, giving my tongue entrance to glide along with hers, tasting her.

“Dex,” she moans, breaking the kiss. I pull my head back and look down at her. Her eyes shine, filled with lust and love for me. She looks at me like she thinks I can give

her the world, but I know in my heart I can't. But at this moment, the heavy whiskey is racing through my blood, making me make these fucked up decisions. I know I should let her go but I can't, not yet. I need to taste her, feel her.

"I need you." I don't wait for her reply. I pick her up and walk us to her bedroom. Our mouths locked in a heated kiss. Fuck, this chick can kiss. I walk into her room, not bothering to close the door- we are here alone. No fucker will walk in on us. I lay her on the bed and waste no time stripping her naked. She is laid out for me, all soft and colourful; her tattoos covering her one arm and half the other. Fuck me, that is different. Sexy as fuck.

"You had your nipples done," I state. She nods her head and bites her lip. I fucking love them. I loved having mine done. Fiona loved them too. Guilt smacks me in the chest and I take a step back. Fuck, will this ever stop?

"Dex. We don't have to," she says, uncertainty evident in her voice. I shake away the thoughts of my dead wife. She is gone, but I am here. So why the fuck can't I move on?

"I'm good." Again, I don't wait for a reply. I strip out of my clothes, loving the way Addy's eyes follow my every move, even though at times I am seeing two of her as the alcohol blurs my vision. I climb up her body and don't bother with foreplay, I am pretty fucking sure she is ready for me. I lean down and kiss her again and slam into her in one hard thrust. She cries out my name. I pull out almost completely and slam back into her. In and out I move. Her fucking pussy is like soaking wet silk around my cock. The sound of our breathing fills the room, the noise of her juices spurring me on.

"Oh God, Dex. Harder. Yes!" she screams. My pounding never letting up, I put her legs over my shoulder and I slide in deeper. I fuck her harder and her cries and pleads fill the bedroom. I feel the tingle start at the bottom of my spine and I know I am

close to coming, so I release one of her legs and drop my hand to her clit and start rubbing. I need to her to come; I am that fucking close.

“Fuck, Addy you need to come. I am so fucking close.” I feel her walls clamp down on my dick and it sets off my own orgasm. I can feel the heat from her all over me as my cum fills her up. I collapse down beside her and close my eyes, trying to calm my breathing down. I can hear Addy’s heavy breathing next to me, but I don’t have it in me to look at her. The guilt comes back tenfold and I bolt from the bed. I don’t look at her as I get dressed, but I can feel her eyes on me and hear the odd sniffing. I know I have made her cry, yet again. My heart feels like it is being crushed in my chest.

“I can’t keep doing this, Dex.” I nod my head and pull my boots on. I get where she is coming from. I always seem to hurt her.

“I’m sorry. I drank too much and I used you.”

“How? I wanted this as much as you, Dex.”

“I needed to forget and you were there. Easy.” I hear her suck in a breath and I feel like the biggest cockhead going.

“Get out.” She doesn’t scream or shout. Her voice is filled with hurt and disappointment and it makes another crack in my heart appear. I freeze and look up at her. Her top is back on and tears are streaming down her face. I take a step forward, for what reason I don’t know. “GET OUT. I NEVER WANT TO SEE YOU EVER AGAIN.” She screams at me this time and her words gut me. Her face will forever be embedded in my head. The look on her face will fucking haunt me forever. She stands from the bed and marches to me, when she reaches me she pushes at my chest. “OUT.” I stumble back but catch my balance. She keeps hitting me until I snatch her wrists.

“Enough.” She rips her hands out of my hold and stares at me with pure hatred in her eyes. “I’ll go. I’m so fucking sorry, Ads.”

“Do not ever call me that again.” I nod my head, feeling the pain from her words. Again, guilt and regret seep into my body. I turn to leave and I hear her follow me through the house, to the front door where I pause with my hand on the door handle.

“I know that you won't ever believe me, but I am sorry. I should never have come here. I will stay away. You deserve a bloke that will love you. A man that will always put you first and that man isn't me.”

“I meant what I said, Dexter. Don't ever come here again. I never want to see your face again. You have hurt me for the last time.” That last part of my heart splinters and I walk out of her house.

That was the last time I had seen Addy. It has been months and I know that Jay says she is okay, but I want to see for myself. Addy has kept her distance from us, not even Jay knows where she moved to. That in itself fucking kills me. I hate not knowing where she is. I stalk her Facebook and Instagram account like crazy, but there is nothing with any clues on there about where she is or if she is okay. It is bittersweet when I think of the last time I saw Addy. I hurt her so badly that night and I hate myself for it, but I also get so fucking hard thinking about how her body reacted to mine. I push down on my dick in my tight jeans as Luke walks in. Luke is our new tattooist. Our work load almost tripled so we needed another set of hands, and I had met Luke at a tattoo convention in London a few years ago. He is epic with the shading but he also is a piercer. So he took over Addy's clients. He is the same age as me and is a pretty cool bloke. No wife, no kids, so it was a simple move to Bell Harbour.

“Hey, man. How's it going?” he asks while helping himself to a mug of coffee.

“Same old shit, different day. You know how it goes. Hey, is Dave coming in today to get that back piece finished?” Dave is an old army vet who is having a massive fucking Spitfire tattoo on his back. That man has a huge pain threshold. After four sittings it is almost complete.

“Yeah. He should be here by ten. Things still the same with you and Jay?” He knows the feud with me and Jay. I drank too much one night and spilled the whole fucking tin of beans to him.

“Yeah. Fucker just needs to let me talk to her on his phone. I know she will answer me if I call her from his phone.”

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“Maybe. But dude, did it ever occur to you that he is just protecting her and doing whatshehas asked him to do?” I do get what he is saying but, fuck me, I need to hear her voice. I thought I felt lost when Fiona died but in my head and heart, I knew she was never coming back. But knowing that Addy is here- albeit I have no clue where- she is very much alive, and that fact is tearing me apart. I started drinking again after she left this time. Jay and Liam kicked my arse. I haven’t had a drink in four weeks. It was Liam that made me see sense this time. He told me that he would need me when Penny had the baby. It was up to Jay and me to take care of Knox and Connie. Speaking of Liam- Connie’s voice comes from out front. I know why she is here and Penny will kick my arse for it, but it’s worth it to see the smile on that little girl’s face.

“Uncle Dex, where are you?”

“Backroom, CJ.” She asked me to draw some temporary tattoos on her for a party she is going to. It’s better than these stupid arse stick-on ones that irritate the kid’s skin and look really dirty after a few hours. She bounds through the door, completely ignoring Luke, and jumps into my lap. “You are the best uncle EVER, for doing this. The girls are going to be so jealous.” Her smile is so big I swear her face will split in two.

“Hey, I heard that,” Jay says, walking into the room. Connie giggles, then jumps down from my lap before running and hugging him.

“Well I love you too, obviously, but Uncle Dex is doing the temp tattoos for me. Who are you?” she says, finally spotting Luke in the room. He offers her a smile.

“I’m Luke. Luke Baker, I work here.”

“Since when?” That’s our Connie: straight to the point.

“Manners, CJ,” Liam scolds her, from the door. She doesn’t cower from his gaze, but most men would.

“Sorry, Dad. But I want to know why he is here. So?” She turns back to Luke, hands on her hips. Little bloody madame, that one. Luke never falters. He has three younger sisters so he knows how to handle girls.

“Well, I have been here for around five weeks now. I tattoo like Dex and Jay, but I also do the piercing. You are?”

“Connie. But you can’t do the piercing, that is Addy’s job.” I knew she would bring her up, Connie is a huge Addy fan. When she found out it was my fault that Addy left, she refused to talk to me for nearly two weeks. This is why I will do anything to keep this girl happy. I never want her to cut me out again.

“I am sure that when Addy comes back, she will pick up where she left off. Don’t panic. She will be back.”

“When?” She turns her eyes to me. Fuck me, I have been blown down by a freaking ten year old.

“Soon, CJ. She just needs to sort a few things out, okay?”

I can only pray that I didn’t just lie to her. I need Addy to come back as much as CJ does. I will find her, and I will bring her back to Castle Ink.

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Placing my phone down on the arm of the chair, I angle my body so it isn't touching the material of the sofa. My back is killing me. The new ink I had yesterday is stinging like a little bitch. Mike at the studio did not want to tattoo me but I convinced him. So he did it for me- at a discount I may add. I have no tattoos on my back so I wanted something for me, even though I can't see it. I had a Hamsa hand tattoo done. It's a red lotus flower just above the perfect eye, with the most beautiful green iris; Dex. The three fingers hold memories for me. The left one has a family tree in it, the middle one has three hearts in it and the right one has a tattoo gun in it. It is bloody beautiful and has so much meaning for me. I have been wearing a strapless top since. I tried putting a vest top on but it rubbed, so I will just wear this top for now.

The pain will wear off soon. I rest my feet up on the sofa and turn the TV on. I sit and watch an episode of The Fall. Come on, who doesn't love a bit of Jamie Dornan? I know I do, he was pretty damn sexy as Mr Grey. This programme is messed up, but in a good way. It is the only show where I will the bad psycho killer to go free. He is just too damn sexy for jail.

I laugh to myself, which happens often these days. Here I am sitting here like a pathetic, lonely cat lady watching a TV show, drooling over the bad guy. I reach over for my big bag of flamin' hot Monster Munch. I seem to be craving them these days. My phone chimes reminding me that I didn't answer Jay's text. It has been hard not seeing him or Dex, but I needed to get away. Dex's words and actions were hurting me. I had to think of me this time. I had always put his feelings first in the past, but not anymore. Things need to be done my way now. There are far more important things that come before Dex. The night I left was the worst he had hurt me. To tell me that he was using me to forget... That, right there, cut me so fucking deep. He has

literally punched me in the chest, ripped out my heart and set it on fire as we watched it burn to ashes.

The ache hurts more and more as each day passes, but I know that if I was to go back to Bell Harbour, I would feel his rejection all over again. He is simply not ready to let Fiona go. He is still in love with her and I can't blame him, she was his first love. He loved her with all of his heart and I would never ask him to forget her or stop loving her. But I had thought- over time- he would let me in and love me too; obviously not. So my life is here now, in Covertown. I work part-time at a studio where I got my new tattoo done. Mike gave me a job when I walked in after seeing a 'job vacancy' sign in the window. I explained the reason I left my old job and he hired me on the spot. He's become like a dad to me. He is fifty-five and he is fricking awesome. His wife, Wendy, is wicked, she keeps him in line. They both gave me this apartment for free. They told me it was their daughter's, but she moved over to America with a new job, so it had been sitting empty- until me. It is fully furnished which was handy to me.

I have been here for just over four months and things are changing drastically. My life is taking a new path and I really want my favourite boys here with me. I also miss Penny, Liam and the kids. I heard from Jay that Penny and Liam are having a baby. I am so happy for them, but it makes me miss them more. I won't see Penny's belly grow with the baby. I miss Connie and Knox so much. A lump forms in my throat at the thought. My phone rings from beside me. I guess Jay got pissed at waiting for me to reply. Sighing I pick up the phone and answer it.

"Hello."

"Why did you not get back to me?" Yeah, he is pissed. But a pissed off Jay Castle is fun.

"Sorry, I got sidetracked watching Mr Spector," I tell him.

“Who the fuck is Mr Spec- Oh, never mind, I know. Fucking hell, Addy, it’s a TV show, you can press pause you know.”

“I know, but I didn’t want to.” I shrug my shoulders. I know he can’t see me but I still do it. Reaction I guess.

“Fucking pleb. Okay, so I know that you said you didn’t want to see me but I really need to see you and make sure that you are okay. It’s fucking killing me not being able to see it for myself, Addy. Please?” I rest my chin on my chest, which tightens at the thought of what he will do when he sees me.

“I can’t,” I whisper.

“You fucking can, and you will. I am going out of my mind here, Addison.” I know he’s bringing out the big guns with the full name.

“Isn’t this enough? I told you that I am fine. I have a nice place to live and I have a great job with a fab bunch of people.”

“Fucking traitor. I can’t believe that you’re working in another studio. I should have Dex spank your arse for that.” At the mention of his name, my heart skips a beat. “Fuck, I didn’t mean to say his name. Sorry.” His voice drops and I can hear the sadness in it. I know that I have caused a rift between them and I hate myself for it.

“How is he?” I can’t help myself. I think on a deeper level I enjoy torturing my heart. I hold my breath, waiting for Jay to tell me how brother is. The last time we talked, Dex was drunk; again. I haven’t spoken to Jay in over a month; just a text here and there. The pain got too much at one point; that I was lying to him. Keeping a secret from the Castle boys.

“He’s good. He stopped drinking and he is back on track.” His voice drops again. “He

misses you, Addy. Fuck, we all do.”

“I know.” My heart fucking hurts so bad. Can I go back? Will he forgive me? Can he love me? So many questions. I shuffle to the end of the sofa, stand up and walk over to the window. The view is of the kids’ park. Seeing the kids running around makes me smile. I love seeing kids enjoying their freedom but the loud, high-pitched screaming gives me a headache. There are a few kids in there playing and enjoying their freedom. My heart squeezes again, thinking of Connie and Knox.

“Come home, Addison. Please?” Fuck is Jay crying? The emotion is thick in his voice.

“I can’t, Jay. Please don’t make me. It hurts.”

“Then come the fuck home, Addy. Jesus- shit, we need you here. He needs you here.”

Hearing that Dex needs me almost makes my resolve vanish, but I know I need to be strong, for myself. Where was Dex when I needed him? Off somewhere with some slag for the weekend and he has the fucking cheek to tell me that I got myself into the situation? A shitty situation that I should never have put myself in. Fucking men, making me fall for their shit. Arsehole.

“I can’t...” I hear a scuffle and then the voice that makes my body sing and my blood boil at the same time.

“Addy, babe. Are you there?” His voice is hoarse, like he is trying to hold onto his emotions. “Baby, please answer me.” Baby? Babe? Where the hell has this come from? He normally calls me shitty names. My throat tightens and I can’t bloody speak.

“Ads, please come home. I know I fucked up. Shit. Please, just come home.”

“I can’t, D-Dex.”

“Yes, you can babe. Please?” Jay is bitching in the background, telling Dex to give him the phone back. “Well, if you had just told me where she is, then I could go and see her and sort all this shit out. Thanksbrother,” Dex grinds out, sounding pissed at his brother. Shit, I caused this. “Addy, at least meet me for a coffee, I need to see you, babe.”

“No.”

“No?” he asks.

“I need to think of me right now, Dex. You only want to see me, to see that I am okay. Well, I can tell you that I am okay. You do not need to see me and quite frankly I don’t want to see you. I need more time.”

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“Ads, pl-” I cut him off.

“I said NO, Dex. For fucks sake will you listen to me? I need time. I need to sort my head out. I can’t do that with you being a moody twat all the time. Just know that I am safe and I am okay. I have a new job and a new place to live. If and when I come back, it will be on my terms. You don’t get to make demands with my life, Dex, I am not yours. Simple.” I am breathing heavy by the time I finish bitching him out, but fuck, it feels good to say it. My body starts to shake and the tears threaten to fall. How many more tears am I going to cry over this bloke?

“Okay. You promise me that you’re safe?”

“I am.” I need him off the phone. I wipe away the stray tears and clear my throat.

“Fucking shit. Ads, please don’t cry. I hate it when you cry.” So much for not letting him know how much he is affecting me.

“You made her cry, you fucking cock. Give me the damn phone,” I hear Jay demand.

“I have to go.” I end the call before either of them can reply. I throw my phone on the sofa and press my head onto the window, the glass cold against my skin. Fucking men. Twats, the lot of them.

I have no clue how long I cry for but my front door opening and closing makes me turn to see who has just come into my apartment.

“Bitch, where are you?” I take a deep breath and answer my new friend, Lauren.

"Living room," I yell back. I turn to see her walk into my living room. She stands about my height- which is five-five- and her strawberry blonde hair stops just at her shoulders. This girl is epic beyond all proportions. She has no filter; you either love her or hate her. Me, I love this girl.

"Who the fuck do I need to cut?" she states when she sees my puffy face and tear streaked cheeks. I shake my head and chuckle. "I mean it, Addy. Who made you cry, babe? I will cut off cock and balls if I need to."

"Jay phoned." I take a deep breath. "Dex snatched the phone off him and begged me to come home. But before you start, I told him to 'fuck off' in a roundabout kind of way. You know why I can't go home. I need to know for sure how he feels."

"But babe, you won't know until you talk to him face to face. I am pissed at the man, but he needs to know how you feel. How he made you feel at the time. Every fucking time. He is a cunt bag, I know, but he needs to know about this." I sigh, because I know she is right. Dammit.

"I know. Bollocks." I sit on the sofa and Lauren sits next to me.

"This can't stay hidden forever you know."

"I know," I say again. Lauren works in advertising and is married to a fantastic man called Joseph, and they have the sweetest little boy ever. His name is Alfie and he's four. I met Lauren when I pierced Joe's dick. Lauren has a thing for pierced men; just like me. Again, the thought of Dex makes my chest hurt. I take a deep breath and swallow down the ache.

"Come here." She pulls me to her but I wince in pain when she touches my new tattoo. "What the hell?" She nudges me forward a little to see what I have had done. "Holy shit, that is beautiful. When the fuck did you have that done?"

“Yesterday,” I tell her as she takes in the details.

“Okay, I get the tattoo gun. Dex, right?” I nod my head and bite my lip. “The family tree... No clue, babe; or the three hearts.” I take a deep breath and explain.

“The family tree is to remind me that I do have a family. Not blood, but a family nonetheless. As for the three hearts, they represent Jay, Dex and me. I have left room so more hearts can be added in later.” I look down at my knotted hands. Future hearts will be added, but I’m not sure when.

“Well, babe, it is lush. Now, how about we watch some films and have some wine? Haha, well, I will drink the wine for you.”

“Ummm, don’t you need to get home to Joe and Alfie?”

“Nope. The man is taking the boy to his gran’s, and like fuck am I going there unless there is a legitimate reason to go. I am not a fan of self torture.” She winks at me. I know that Lauren only likes her mother-in-law in very small doses, which makes me laugh. The things that Lauren says...

“Okay, bitch, let’s get this film-a-thon going. I need some girl time before the beasts come here to pick me up.” I giggle and sit back, careful of my sore tattoo.

Lauren makes things easier, because she helps me forget the pain. But she also helps me understand the things running through my head.

I will get through this huge bump in the road if it kills me. They say ‘what doesn’t kill you makes you stronger’, well I have to firmly believe in that at this moment in time.

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My head has been in an 'Addy fog' since I spoke to her on the phone. Jay is still refusing to tell me where she is. I have been on edge and feel like I will explode. I have been snapping at friends- and even clients- which is not fucking good at all. But fuck it. I want her back here where I can see that she is safe. I have to see her. Jay keeps telling me that she is fine. She is in a good place and that she will come back when she is ready. But they don't fucking understand that I need her to be ready now. I am a selfish bastard, it is something that Fiona always used to throw at me before she died. I stomp into Castle Ink and ignore the two lads sitting on the leather chairs waiting for fuck knows what.

I need coffee or brandy. Fuck no! I shake my head at the thought of wanting to drink again. I can't do it. Not again. Jay and Liam would kick my arse. I stomp over to the coffee machine and hit the button. Jay and Luke have been here for a few hours with clients being booked in early. I open the cupboard and take my favourite mug out and wait for the coffee to brew. It is the mug that Addy had made for us one Christmas. It says 'Captain Twat' on it. I chuckle when I look at it. But also, my chest aches. My feelings are bittersweet when I think of Addy; because I want to love her, but I think of my love for Fiona as well. I know that she is gone but she will always be with me.

"Hey, Dex." A sweet voice comes from behind me. I turn to see Penny standing there, fucking glowing with her pregnancy. Liam is one lucky bastard for catching her; they are the perfect little family. The family I wanted with Fiona. I love kids and we had wanted a house-full.

"Sit," I tell her and pull out a chair. She smiles and takes the seat. "Do you want a drink or anything?" I ask.

“A water would be great, thank you.” I nod and open the fridge door and get her drink. I walk over to the table and take the seat opposite her.

“So, what’s up? Have you figured out that I am sexier than Liam and you want to be with me instead?” I wink at her, making her laugh.

“You wish, Dexter Castle.” She winks back. She is such an awesome woman.

“Okay, so what’s up?”

“I just wanted to check in on you. See how you are doing,” she tells me, with no pity on her face. Can I tell Penny everything? Maybe she can help me sort through my shit.

“I miss her,” I start.

“I know. We all do. So what are you going to do?” Damn this woman is straight to the point and takes no shit from us boys.

“I tried talking her into coming home so we could talk. I asked her to meet for coffee but she flat out refused. I have no clue where she is, Pen. I don’t know what else to do except wait until she comes home. If she comes home.” I rest my elbow on the table and bury my head in my hands, taking deep breaths, trying to calm my racing heart. The thought of Addy never coming home is killing me. My mind is fucked up. One minute I want her to come home and be with me, but then other shit filters through my head, making my feelings get all mixed up like they have been thrown into a food blender.

“She will come home, Dex. She has to. Just give her time. You need to remember that you hurt her pretty bloody bad.”

“Just give it to me straight why don’t you. Pen, she has been gone for months. Fucking months. That is way too long for her to be away from everyone.”

“You, you mean?”

“Yeah. Fuck, what the hell am I doing, Penny? Every time I think of Addy, Fiona pops into my head. And then everything gets messed up. I know I have hurt her in the past and I am scared that I will hurt her again. I can’t keep doing it to her.”

“Dex, can I say something that might piss you off?” I nod my head. Dread filling my empty stomach. “You cannot love a ghost. Fiona is gone and is never coming back.” I go to speak but Penny puts her hand up to stop me. “Don’t say anything, let me finish. I get that you loved her with everything you are, Liam has told me. But what he also told me is that Addison has always loved you and was always there for you. But you brushed aside her feelings for Fiona. Addison is here. Addison is alive. Addison is in love with you. Do not throw that away. Do you honestly think that Fiona would want you to never move on? To never love again? You were both young when everything happened. Bloody hell, Dex, you are thirty years old. You are still young. Get the girl and have a family.” She takes a breath and lays a hand on her tiny bump. “Before someone else does. She is a beautiful, talented young woman, who will be snatched up in no time.” She smiles smugly at me. I know what she is doing, but fuck if it doesn’t make my blood boil at the thought of some prick touching what is mine. Fuck. Is she even mine?

“No fucker is having her but me.” She stands, smiling at me.

“Good. Then get it done.” She leans in and kisses the top of my head. “Bring her home, Dexter.” With that she walks out of the room. Who would have thought that, that little woman would have balls of steel to tell me how it truly is. She is one hundred percent right. But her words made my heart skip so many fucking beats I thought I was going to have a fucking heart attack. It was beating so fast against my

chest I was wondering if she could see it. I lean forward and rest my head on the table in front of me and take a few deep breaths, trying to calm my over-beating heart.

I meant what I said to Penny. No fucker is having her. It makes my blood boil to think of another touching her, tasting her, having her under them. The feel of Addy's body pressed against mine is one of the most amazing feelings ever. What I had with Fiona was completely different. She made my body sing, yes, but Addy, fucking hell my body burns with desire. Thinking about her touching me makes my dick jump. It is true that Fi would kick my arse for living like this. She would want me to move on. She adored Addy when she was around. It was my feelings for Ads that had me pulling back. How can a man love two women at the same time? Love? Where the hell did that come from?

I take a deep breath and wait for the guilt to settle in, but it never comes. I wait some more, but nothing. No Fiona flashing in my head, no racing heart. Fucking hell. What the fuck is happening to me? Could it have been Penny's straight-laced words that sorted my heart out? Well shit. I don't think she has sorted me out one hundred percent but it is a start. Jumping up I run out front to see my brother. I run to his room but it is empty, fuck. I keep the pace up and see him at the front desk with Luke and some chick I haven't seen before.

"Jay, I need your phone. Now," I demand.

"Why?" he asks, looking at me with narrowed eyes. Fuck, he looks like our dad when he does that.

"Because I really need to speak to Addy. Please, Jay. If you do this I will never ask you for anything ever again. I swear it."

"I don't think it's a good idea, Dex. You can't keep hurting her."

“You don't think I know that? I need to do this, Jay.” He frowns at me, the indecision clear on his face. I nod my head.

“Why can't you let her be? She seems happy.”

“She didn't sound happy the last time we talked, she sounded sad. Jay, bro, please,” I plead with him. He must see the desperation on my face because he cautiously hands me his iPhone. I let out the breath I was holding. Fucking hell, this isn't me at all. Acting like a chick and getting all breathy and shit. “Thanks, man. I swear I will be good. I just need to talk to her.” I go to take the phone from him but he doesn't let it go.

“You make her cry again and I will kick your arse from here to Kingdom Come, do you hear me?” I nod.

“I hear you.” I go to walk away but I feel someone snag my wrist. I look at who has it.

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“Hey, handsome. What’s your name?”

“None of your business.” I pull my arm out of her grasp and walk out of the studio. No other woman will ever meet up to Addy. I just need to convince her that I want her. I walk over to the bench on the other side of the road and watch as three boys play in the small patch of grass. They are playing rugby, running with the ball and tackling each other. I remember me, Jay and Liam playing rugby and football when we were younger. BH is a great place to bring up kids, I could see my kids running around causing havoc like me and Jay did. Little Addison’s running around beating the boys up. I chuckle to myself and look down at the phone in my hand. I am getting way ahead of myself now. Fuck, she won’t even speak to me, let alone let me near her enough to get my kid in her belly. I open the phone and look for her in the contacts and without hesitation, I click on her name. My breath gets stuck in my lungs as I wait for her to answer. She answers after four rings.

“Hey, Jay,” her sweet voice comes through the phone.

“It’s not Jay,” I say, praying like fuck that she doesn’t hang up.

“Dex,” she whispers my name, but she also hasn’t hung up on me. Score.

“Hey, babe. How are you?”

“I’m okay. You?”

“I’m okay, too. So what have you been up to?” I ask.

“What do you want, Dex?” She sounds reserved, which is not my Ads at all, but I have made her this way.

“I wanted to talk to you. I am not going to pressure you into coming home. I get it, you need time away from me. I hurt you pretty bad, huh?” Silence greets me. I hold my breath again and wait for her to answer me. I am sticking to what I said; I am not forcing her to do shit all anymore. This will be on her time.

“Okay.”

“Yeah? So how have you been?” I eagerly ask her. I sit on the bench crossing my ankles.

“I have been good. Work is work. There are only so many whiny bitches who want their ears pierced. Then the hard man who wants a Prince Albert but then chickens out when they see the needle.” There is my Ads. But I am fucked off that she is seeing other men’s dicks.

I know, I know it is her job but who gives a fuck. It should be only my dick she sees.

“Yeah, Jay did say you were a traitor for working in a new studio. Are they treating you okay?”

She chuckles and answers me, “Yeah, I’m in a new studio, but it is only part-time because...” She stops and my Spidey senses kick in.

“Because?” I ask.

“Nothing. They are treating me good. Mike is amazing, so is his wife Wendy. They have like six kids, mostly around my age. How have you been?” I love that even with all the shit that has happened, we slip into our so-called easy friendship. But it isn’t a

friendship I want with this girl. I want it all. But the words don't come easily to tell her that.

"That's good, babe. I'm glad that you have them there. I wish it was me."

"Don't, Dex." Shit.

"I'm sorry. I said I wouldn't do anything to pressure you and I'm not. I just really want us to try and get past this. So much has happened and we need to overcome it, Ads."

"Get over it? Are you serious? Dex, way too much has happened, things you don't even know." She abruptly stops talking.

"Like what? You have to talk to me, Addy. You can't keep cutting me out. Are you that okay with not having me in your life anymore? Well, I can fucking tell you, I'm not. I hate that you are not here with us. With me." I take a deep breath. "Ads?"

"Dex, I don't know what you want from me. You can't be with me. You told me that I will never have your heart because it belongs to Fiona. I can't fucking compete with a ghost for fucks sake. I can't." She whispers the last words.

"Baby. Listen to me. I-" The words get stuck in my throat again. Fuck. After a beat, she speaks.

"See. I can't compete. You're not ready for what's next, Dex. Sorry." I can hear the tears in her voice as she hangs up on me. I bury my hands in my hair and grip it. I fucked up again.

Why the fuck couldn't I just say the fucking words?

I am a total twat. Just like my mug says.

Will I always screw up with the women in my life? I failed Fiona and now I am failing Addy. I couldn't save Fiona the night of the crash. No matter how many times they told me there was nothing I could do, I didn't believe them. I am now failing Addy by hurting her every time we talk. I am what's keeping her away from her friends; from Jay and Liam.

I stay unfocused for fuck knows how long. It's Liam who pulls me from my dark thoughts of Fiona and Addy.

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“You alright, mate?” he says from beside me. I shake my head.

“Nope. I fucked up again.” I lean back against the bench and look at Liam. He had been a friend for years and had gone through some tough times of his own when he had been on the road with a band, but it was Knox that helped him through it. His son made him be a better man. Fuck, what I wouldn’t do to have a couple of kids by now.

“What happened? And don’t bullshit me, tell me everything.” So I do, I tell him every word that had been spoken between Addy and me.

Instead of yelling at me for fucking up again, Liam looked me in the eye and I knew that what he said next would resonate with me, would change things.

“Every woman was sent here to fucking try us, man. But every relationship deserves a second chance. You and Addy haven’t had a first, so my plan would be to get that first and fucking keep it. Don’t let ten years go by like I did with Bambi.”

Fucker knows what to say. He is a wise old wanker now that he has his little family.

I need to get Addison Cole, and I intend to keep her.

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Sitting in yet another Doctor's appointment, I survey the room. I hate being here, without him. The room is filled with pregnant women at various stages in their pregnancies. Some of the men are sitting proud as day sitting with their pregnant woman, others just really don't give a shit and haven't looked up from their phone yet. I look at one girl who cannot be much older than eighteen, the young lad sitting next to her is holding her hand and his knees are bouncing like crazy. I look from her to him and back and she smiles at me, sensing that I can work out his nervousness. Bless him, but at least he was man enough to step up. Hopefully he will stay by her and be a good boyfriend and dad. A pang of jealousy hits my chest as I sit here with my tiny, fifteen-week baby belly and wishing like fuck that Dex was with me.

I know some people will hate that I have kept the pregnancy from him, but I honestly don't think he is ready for this. I am not one of those girls who forces a man to be in my life just because we have a baby. He is still grieving Fiona and I can't make him want me. He has to want me for me. Maybe I should take Lauren and Joe up on their advice. They told me to try and build up a relationship with Dex over the phone and figure out where his head's at. I did a lot of thinking, and seeing these couples around the room makes me miss him more. I run my hand over my little bump and pray she is okay today. At my last scan the Doctors noticed that the baby was a little on the small side even at this early stage, but they did assure me that the baby's weight will go up and down.

Our baby. I never thought I would be a mum. My childhood wasn't exactly the best, but I will do right by this baby. She is now my entire world; with or without her dad in it.

"Addison Cole." Someone calls my name. I pick my bag up off the floor and walk

towards the door where the nurse is standing waiting for me. The worst that could happen, happens, when Liam and Penny walk through the door the same time I go for the handle. Penny gasps and looks down.

“What the fuck? Ads?” Liam says, looking between my face and my baby belly. I bite my bottom lip to stop it from trembling.

“Don’t say anything please, Li. He can’t know.”

“Are you shitting me right, now?” His voice is angry, his brow dips and his lips pinch together. I shake my head and look at my feet.

“Liam, enough. You’re scaring her. Addy, we will wait outside for you and then we will talk.” I nod my head and walk through the door without a backward glance. I try to smile at the nurse as she waits by the door for me but I fail epically.

“Are you okay, Addison?” I nod my head and answer.

“I’m good, just bumped into someone I didn’t want to see.”

“Old boyfriend?” she asks. I can’t blame her for being curious. I would be the same. I shake my head, no. “Okay, then. Hop up onto the table and we will see what this baby is up to today.” My heart flutters at the thought of seeing my baby. But then the guilt hits me when I look at the empty ‘dad’ chair. I pull my vintage green ‘Rush’ t-shirt up and push my leggings down over my baby bump. The nurse fiddles with the machine and then picks up the gel.

“This will be a tad cold.” She smiles warmly at me. She squirts the gel on my belly and starts to rub the wand over my bump. “Okay, there the baby is. It is looking good. Let me just measure the length.” I wait in silence, staring at the monitor. I can see my baby, well as much as the grainy black and white image lets me. Dex’s face pops into

my head and my smile drops. Would he be happy to be a father now? Would he want to be with me formeand not just because I am carrying his baby? Would he be pissed at me for keeping this from him? Would he actually be a good dad?

Fucking hell, so many questions.

“Well, Addison, the baby is measuring on the smaller side but like the Doctor told you, this may change again, but try not to be so worried. Babies are so unpredictable.” I nod and she looks back towards the monitor. She clicks the buttons a few times and then leans over to pick up my new images of my baby girl. I thank her and leave the room, dread hitting my stomach, knowing that Liam and Penny are waiting for me. The only thing that is keeping me from having a full-blown panic attack is the photos in my hand.

I step out of the lift and see Liam pacing back and forth in front of Penny. I stop in my tracks and watch him. His shoulders are bulging in anger. Fuck. I walk towards them and Penny sees me first. She snags Liam’s hand and nods her head in my direction. Lucky for me, Penny never lets his hand go as he tries to step towards me. My breath catches in my throat. Liam has never made me afraid of him, but right now I am fucking scared of the bloke. He angrily points to the main entrance and I nod my head. He helps Penny to her feet and she offers me a small smile. They don’t wait for me, they just walk out. I follow behind them, my heart beating a mile a minute in my chest. My palms are sweating like crazy. I am scanning the car park, half expecting Dex to come out of nowhere screaming at me for keeping the pregnancy from him.

Liam and Penny are standing next to his Jeep. Liam is looking fucking angry because of my secret. I don’t know what Penny is doing because Liam has me locked in a gaze that even Mike Tyson himself would cower from.

“What the fuck are you thinking?” he spits out. Okay, then, no ‘how are you, Addy? How is the baby, Addy?’ Dick.

“Liam.” Penny says his name, her voice lowering in warning.

“Don’t ‘Liam’ me, Bambi. She knows what she has done wrong.”

“She is still a pregnant woman, Liam. And I will not stand by and watch you scream and shout at her, getting her upset, it isn’t good for the baby.” Oh I love you Penny Miller.

“Fuck. Fuck.” He grips the back of his neck. This man took care of me when I was a little girl and here I am repaying him, by asking him to do the unforgivable.

“He can’t know, Li.” He spins around to face me and Penny gasps.

“WHAT?”

“He isn’t ready for this.” I motion at my baby bump. “He can’t let go of Fiona. What the fuck makes you think he will take on a baby with me? He will never let her go. And I am not going to be with a man just because we have a baby together.”

“True. Maybe he will just want the baby! But he deserves to know.”

Holy fucking shit. That one hurt.

Where the fuck did this pain come from? I stumble back at his words, like he just did some kind of expert karate kick to my chest. I lean against the car behind me, and take deep breaths.

“Oh my God, Liam,” I hear Penny screaming his name. I can’t see her, the black spots are filling my vision, breathing is becoming harder to do. My legs feel like jelly and I can feel them give way, but I never hit the floor.

“Fuck, I got you. Addy, look at me. Look at me, chick.” I blink a few times and bring my face up so I can see Liam’s face. “That’s it. Good girl. Breathe in for me, slowly breathe out. That’s it.” I do what he says, trying to regain my senses. Anxiety is a bitch. Liam smiles a sad smile at me and I take in one last deep breath. I struggle to get to my feet, so Liam and Penny help me. I smile at Penny as I pull away from Liam, his touch making my anger surface. I hate what I am about to do, but it needs to be done. This is about Dex, me and the baby. No one else matters.

I look him dead in the eyes and unleash my threat.

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“If you tell him, I will never forgive you. I will never speak to you again. I will tell Dex when the time is right for me. For us. I don’t think he is ready for this. I will decide when it is the right time to tell him. Me!” His face is pale and filled with pain. My chest aches but I need to do this.

“You can’t be serious?” His voice is filled with anguish.

“I am,” is all I say. The tears run down my face. I don’t bother trying to stop them. I can’t take my eyes off Liam’s, but I can hear Penny crying softly beside him.

“But-but, this is his baby, Ads. Please, don’t make me keep this from him. It will kill him.” I hear his words loud and clear, but he isn’t hearing mine.

“I can’t face his rejection again. You are right; he may want the baby but not me. I am not sure I am strong enough for that just yet.”

“But this is his baby,” he says again.

“I know. I was there when she was conceived, dude.” Penny chuckles quietly.

“She?” Penny inquires and I shrug.

“I think so. I feel like she is a girl.” I touch my belly and smile down at it. My baby is safe in there, not knowing the heartache that is happening around her and that is the way I will always keep it. She will never know heartache like I did.

“So, what are you going to do? I hate that you are threatening me with this. You are

making me choose between you both. I love you both. You're like my brother and sister. I am not sure who I would hurt more by keeping this a secret. Shit." He turns away from me and leans on the bonnet of his Jeep, his shoulders bunched up, making his t-shirt tighten over his tattooed muscles. I turn my head away, not wanting to see the pain that I am causing him. I love Liam like a big brother but I have to put me and the baby first.

Movement catches my eye and I turn to see Penny rubbing Liam's back, soothing him; their love flowing between them. I want that.

Fuck my life.

"I'm sorry. But you have to understand why I have to do this." Liam doesn't look at me, but Penny answers.

"I think he does in a way, Addison, so do I. But you have to see the pain he is in. You are asking him not to tell one of his best friends that he is going to be a father with another of his best friends." The guilt hits me square in the chest. "How are you going to handle this, Addison?" Penny always says my full name, and she always makes me feel like a child when she does. It isn't her fault I feel like this, it is just because I am so used to being called 'Addy' or 'Ads'.

"A friend gave me some advice and I am taking her up on it."

"Friend? Which friend?" Liam's asks, finally facing me again.

"Her name is Lauren. I met her when she brought her husband Joe into the shop to have his dick pierced. We've been friends since."

"So, she knows that you are pregnant but I don't. Well, fuck me, just kick me when I'm down, Addison." Liam saying my full name hurts.

“I am going to phone Dex and we are going to talk over the phone. Build something first before I tell him. I need to know where his head’s at, Li. Please, let me do this my way.” I move towards him and wrap my arms around his waist. He doesn’t waste a second, wrapping me up in his beefy arms.

“Fine. That fucker is going to go ape shit and kick my arse when he finds out I knew all along that his girl is carrying his baby.” Hearing him call me Dex’s girl makes my stomach do girly things. But it could just be the baby right?

“I’m not his girl, Liam.” He rolls his eyes in a ‘what-the-fuck-ever’ way.

“So, how is baby Bradley, today?” I add. A big arse smile spreads across Liam’s face, the dimple in his left cheek showing itself. Penny giggles.

“Baby Bradley is fucking amazing. But it looks like baby Castle will have a baby cousin to keep her company playing with dolls.” He winks at me. Yeah, it didn’t go unnoticed that he called my baby ‘Baby Castle’. Bastard.

I look from Liam to Penny. “Are you hoping for a girl then?” I ask.

“I will be happy with a boy or a girl. As long as the baby is healthy,” Penny says, while lovingly rubbing her tiny baby bump. The love shining through her eyes is heart warming.

“Poor Knox, if the baby is a girl.” I laugh.

“Yeah, he is not going to be happy if it is a girl. But he will take on the big brother role well.” And he will. Knox is an old soul, just like his dad. He takes care of what is his, even at his age.

“He will. Listen, I really have to go. I’m working this afternoon at the studio. I

promise I will get in touch with Dex. We will go from there. I am sorry that I threatened you but I didn't know what else to do. I panicked." Liam wraps me up in a big hug and kisses the top of my head.

"It will kill me, but I get it. Don't take too long, okay?" I nod my head and offer a sad smile. "And keep my niece or nephew safe," he says, as he lays his hands over my bump and kisses the top of my head.

We say our goodbyes and I watch them drive out of the hospital car park. I sit in my car and look at my phone like it will jump up and slap me in the face any second. I know I need to tell Dex. I will tell him face to face.

The ringing scares the shit out of me, but so does the name that flashes on the screen, telling me who is calling.

"Hello, Dex."

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“Hello, Dex.” Her voice comes through the phone and my dick jerks with happiness. Honest to God, I never expected her to answer to me but I am super fucking glad she did.

“Hey, babe. You okay?” I ask her.

“I’m good. You?”

“I’m just fucking happy to be answered, baby. The studio is doing good; the new bloke, Luke, is fitting in great, but a few of our regular clients are missing you. You remember Dave?” She giggles before she answers me. That sound alone could make me come in my jeans. I love her laugh. It is so feminine compared to her hard rocker exterior.

“I do. What did he have this time?”

“He had a naked pin-up girl on his calf, with the name ‘Daisy’ above it. This is girlfriend number five that he has had tattooed on him, this bloke is never gonna learn. Fuck head. Plus, he wanted his ball sack pierced, but when he learned that it was Luke doing it he bolted out the door screaming to let him know when you come back.” She bursts out laughing, making me laugh with her. I sit back on the sofa and soak up the sound of her voice. She snorts, making herself laugh even harder. I can actually see her bending over, clutching her stomach with laughter, tears running down her face. My dick is hard in my jeans, pressing against the zip.

“Fucking hell, that man cracks me up. Tell him when you see him next that I will sort his dick out when I come back.” My laughter stops, immediately replaced with anger.

“Not a fucking chance in hell,” I spit out. I stand and grip my hair. “Mine will be the only dick you fucking sort out, baby.” Jesus. Where the fuck has all this jealousy come from? I was never like this with Fiona.

“Dex. Calm the fuck down. I was talking about piercing his sack, for fucks sake. But if I want to sort out other dicks, it has nothing to do with you.” Her temper matches mine through the phone.

“The fuck it has nothing to do with me. You belong to me, Addison Cole,” I grind out.

“I belong to you? Are you fucking serious, right now? I belong to no fucker, Dex. Holy shit, I cannot believe you just said that.” I can hear her heavy breathing through the phone, but at least she hasn’t hung up on me. I know I need to back peddle.

“Shit, I handled that all wrong. Sorry. I lost my shit when you talked about sorting other blokes’ dicks out. The thought makes my blood boil, babe.”

“So, male ego then?” I chuckle and answer.

“Yeah, babe. Sorry. I think we need to move on from the dick talk, Ads. We need to talk about us.” I leave that last sentence hanging there. The wait is fucking killing. Why isn’t she saying something back? I pull the phone away from my ear to check that the call didn’t drop out.

“Addy, are you there?”

“I am. What do you want to talk about, Dex?” Her voice is a whisper, like she is too afraid to talk.

“I miss you, babe. Like, really miss you. My heart aches at the thought of not seeing

you at the studio every morning. I know that I have said some shit in the past, but, baby, you leaving brought the feelings to the surface. A lot of the things I have said weren't true. I was confused and I lashed out at you. You were the easy target for me. I am sorry for every-fucking-thing I have said to you that has upset you. That has made you cry. I swear if you ever give me the chance to be with you, I will make it my fucking mission to never make you cry again."

"Be with you?"

"Out of all of that, I am so fucking glad you heard that part." My heart stutters in my chest.

"Yeah. I don't know if we can be together, Dex. You aren't ready to let Fiona go. Like I said, I cannot compete with a ghost. I need you to find your peace before we can start something. If we start something."

"Don't you get it, Ads? I have let go. Fiona wouldn't want me to live my life like this. She would want me to move on. She thought the world of you, but I always pushed her feelings about you to the side through fear of my feelings for you coming through. I pushed down so much shit in the past, but it isn't fair to either of us to ignore these feelings now."

"I have never ignored my feelings, Dex. They were always out there, but you enjoyed rubbing it in my face that you were fucking every other girl but me, to what? Hide your feelings for me? That was a shitty way to do it. You could have just spoke to me and explained that you weren't ready to move on, not get your dick wet every fucking night."

"Not every night," I say, and I instantly regret it.

"Well, fuck me for getting that detail wrong." I love a pissed off Addy. She is sexy

when she's all riled up.

"You're right. I should have explained and not hurt you the way I did. But I am a bloke, Ads, I fuck up with the whole talking malarkey. Can we meet up and talk face to face?" I ask.

"Not just yet, Dex. I-I need to sort some things out. Soon though, okay?"

"It had better be sooner rather than later, babe. I miss seeing your face."

She giggles. "It is still the same face- no more piercings, but I did add a new tattoo."

"Oh yeah? So still just the nipples then. What did you get?" I ask her. I fucking love her nipple piercings. I have mine done as well, Ads did them and I helped her do hers.

"Yeah, just my nipples, but I have been thinking of getting my nose done and possibly the orbital and tragus done as well. We shall see. But I had a Hamsa Hand tattooed on my back, between my shoulder blades. Do you want to see it?" she asks. Do I want to see it? Of-fucking-course I want to see it.

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“Yeah, baby. Send me a pic of the new ink.”

“Okay, give me a minute to find it. I’ll send you the pic that Wendy took the day Mike did the design.”

As I wait for her to look through her gallery to find the photo, I get up off the sofa and walk into my kitchen. Opening the fridge I take out a bottle of beer and take a long drink once I open it.

“Sent,” her voice comes through the speaker. Then the ‘ding’ sounds from my phone.

“Okay, let me see this. This had better be a fucking epic tattoo, baby, or I am going to be one pissed off dude,” I joke.

“He did amazing,” she tells me. I put her on speaker and open the ‘attachment’ and take another mouthful of beer. The photo pops up and I spit the drink all over my kitchen floor when I see it.

Well fucking hell.

“Ads,” is all I can say.

I see the tattoo gun, the three hearts and the family tree. The whole tattoo is based on us; Liam, Jay, me and Addy. Holy shit.

“I needed it, Dex. It means a lot to me.”

“Yeah, babe.” Fuck, she has me speechless. A chuckle comes through the phone.

“Cat got your tongue, Dexter Castle?”

“Yeah, babe,” I chuckle. She truly has no idea how much this tattoo heals my heart. “I love it, Ads. It is truly something and from what I can see, your boss did a bang up job. I can’t wait to see it in person. Which will be soon, right?” I ask, hinting again.

“Soon. I promise.” She goes quiet for a few seconds. “I like this,” is all she says. I swear my man card is in jeopardy. If the boys could see how much her words have reduced me to a fucking puddle of mush, they would take the piss out of me. They would never let me live it down.

“I like it too, baby.”

“Why have you started calling me ‘babe’ and ‘baby’, Dex? You have never called me anything besides my name.” I knew this was coming. It just felt right calling her those names. I never did with Fiona. She was always my ‘sweetheart’, but Addy is different. Yeah, she is a sweetheart, but she is my baby.

“It fits. You are my ‘baby’. I want you to be my ‘baby’, my ‘babe’. Fuck, my girl, Ads.”

“I need more time, Dex. This is a lot to take in right now. For years you have pushed me away and now all of a sudden you want me? It’s hard to not think that this will end badly for me.”

“I can give you some time, Ads. Some,” I state more forcefully.

“Thank you, Dex.”

“Can we keep doing this? Talking on the phone and texting? Please, don’t shut me out anymore.”

“I’d like that. I have to go, Dex. I’m working this afternoon. But I will text soon.”

“So, what’s the name of this new studio you work at?” She laughs.

“Nice try, Dexter Castle. I will speak to you, soon. Bye, Dex.”

“Bye, Ads. Take care of yourself, yeah?”

“Will do. Bye.” She ends the call. Fucking shit, my heart is beating wildly in my chest. I am in and I intend to stay.

* * *

It has been four days since Addy agreed with me about seeing where things go, but it has to be done via phone calls or texts, no clue as to why but I'm not gonna fucking fight her on it. I have her- somewhat- back in my life and I need to make sure it stays that way. We have talked a few times but text more than anything. She makes me laugh, something she hasn't done before because I never gave her the chance. I always found a way to douse her sparkle. Well, not anymore. I plan on making her shine so fucking bright she will outshine Blackpool’s Christmas lights.

I am just finishing up on a girl’s tattoo when my phone dings in my pocket. I know who it is and I can't stop the smile that spreads across my face.

“What's got him all smiley over there?” The girl’s friend asks. Her two friends are sitting in chairs next to the table. This girl’s shoulder piece has taken me just over an hour. The three of them have flirted like crazy with me since they got here.

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“I just got a text and I know it's from my girl,” I explain. Yeah, I just called Addy my girl. So what?

“So, where is she? I haven't seen you with a girl before,” one of the girls says. She has been coming here for the past few weeks, having a large back piece done. I have normally flirted back a little, but nothing to lead her on. My head was always swimming with images of Addy.

“She's away at the moment, visiting some friends. She will be home soon,” I tell them, still not looking up from the design I am finishing up. I wipe away the excess ink and take a look, before touching up on certain parts.

“So, while the cat is away...” She leaves the sentence hanging.

“Yeah, this cat will only play with his pussy, no mouse can compare.” She huffs, obviously pissed at my comeback. I honestly don't give a fuck. I am not risking this thing with Ads for anyone. I reach over and pick up the cleaning solution to clean the ink and blood off the girl. I throw the paper towel in the bin and tap her arm.

“All done. Go and have a look,” I tell her and get ready to cover the new tattoo up. Her squeals make me lift my head and watch as she jumps up and down, not bothering to stop her big breasts bouncing all over the place. Normally I would be all over this chick, but not today - or any other day for that matter. I am a one-Addy-man.

“Oh Dex, I fucking love it.” She throws herself at me and I have no choice but to catch her. Her friends are laughing behind her, egging her on to kiss me. Did I not

just say a few minutes ago that I had a girl? Fucking sluts. Before I can push her off, Jay comes around the corner and looks at the scene before him. He looks down-right pissed. I gently push the girl off me by her shoulder and take a step back. I expect him to blow up at me but he doesn't.

"I knew it was too good to be true." He looks at me with such disappointment. My baby brother just gutted me.

"Hey, Jay. Wait up." I jog after him. "Hey, I didn't do anything. She was happy with her new tat and threw herself at me."

"Same old Dex, huh?"

"I'm fucking serious. Ask them!" I turn and point to the three girls now walking towards us. The girl I just inked up smirks at me and her two friends just smile. Bitches. "So, you're just gonna stand there and lie to his face? Do you know how much shit you just put me in? The three of you are banned from Caste Ink. Settle the bill and get out." I storm off, leaving three very pissed off girls whose voices carry through to my back room. Fuck them. Fuck them all.

I quickly clean up my station, not wanting to be around Jay anymore today. He can handle the fucking walk-ins for the rest of the day. I grab my stuff and leave my room. The three girls are gone, but I notice that Jay and Luke are standing by the door, talking in hushed tones. I have no interest in what they are gossiping about and I head for the door.

"I'm out," I throw over my shoulder.

"Where the fuck are you going?" Jay asks.

"Home. I have had a fuck-full today. You two fuckheads can handle the studio for the

rest of the day.” I don’t wait for a reply before I head to my car. I know the only thing that can calm the brewing storm in my head is Addy. I need to hear her voice.

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I am now two days away from being twenty-weeks pregnant. Things have taken a turn for the worse. I had a few cramps the other night and Lauren took me to the hospital. They monitored the baby and she or he is fine. The Doctor said that it happens with some women. But, if it happens again or I start bleeding then I need to go back to the hospital right away. Wendy pulled the mother duty and takes care of me on a daily basis now, so does Lauren when she can between work and taking care of little Alfie. I have almost dialed Dex's number so many times to tell him about the baby, but I have somehow stopped myself.

We have texted and talked on the phone and our relationship is growing. I miss seeing him, but hearing his voice soothes the ache a little. He hasn't asked to meet me again since the last time he asked while I was outside the hospital, the day Liam found out about the baby. He has been trying, I will give him that. The flirting has escalated big time. He often asks me what I am wearing and yes, I lie to him. I tell him I am in something sexy or something I used to wear, rather than the big ugly-arse t-shirts I have been wearing. He sent me an 'ab' pic the other day, something to tie me over, he said, until I get to see and touch the real thing. Of course, I didn't send a photo back to him to add to his 'spank bank'- much to his disappointment. He just jokes and says he will picture me in something he would like to see me in. Bloody pervert.

It is just after ten o'clock in the morning and I am in bed watching American Horror Story. This show freaks me the fuck out, but it is awesome and sick on so many levels. I lift the bowl of grapes off my bedside table and place them on my belly, my baby bump supplying the perfect table for my snack. My phone and the TV remote control are next to me. Easy and lazy day. My phone rings, so I glance down to the iPhone beside me and smile when I see Dex's name on the screen.

“Hey.”

“Hey, babe. What are you up to?” he asks.

“I’m good; chilling in bed watching some American Horror Story. Watching Matt Bomer and Lady Gaga have a foursome. Kinda sexy in a freaky kinda way,” I state.

“Nice. I love a bit of freaky,” he chuckles through the phone.

“Pervert. So, what are you up to?”

“Nothing. Just sitting on the sofa in Castle Ink watching Our Girl on BBC iPlayer. You get to ogle that Matt bloke and I get to ogle Michelle Keegan. She is rather tasty,” he explains.

“Eh, she’s okay, I would do her.” I bite my thumb nail to stop me from laughing out loud. One of Dex’s biggest fantasies has always been to have a threesome with two girls. In my desperate times I even offered him to have one with me and a friend, but he always turned me down, saying that he would never share me.

“Fuck, my dick just chubbed out. I can so picture me, you and Michelle Keegan fucking on our bed. Damn, now that is one sexy image.” I didn’t miss his use of ‘our bed’.

“See, bloody pervert. So, how is the studio? How are my boys doing?”

“Your boy is doing great. Missing his girl.”

“Okay, fine. How are Jay and Liam?”

“Liam is great. Amazing actually. Penny is pregnant, she’s fifteen weeks.” I swallow

the lump in my throat when I hear the excitement in his voice. Dex is truly happy for them.

“I heard. Penny text me. I am happy for them,” I force out. They get to enjoy their baby growing together. I need to pull on my big girl knickers and tell him. Face the possibility that he will hate me for keeping it from him.

“Yeah, it is awesome. Sorry to cut this short, Ads, but a group of lads just walked in, so I had better go and help my brother and Luke out. Can I phone you later tonight? Maybe we can try something sexy and naughty over the phone.” His voice drops low and sexy. I love when he does that, he used to make my pussy clench before the baby, but now the pregnancy hormones are kicking in big time. I feel like I am permanently turned on when I think of speaking to Dex.

“Yeah, that’s fine. I have no plans. I am just a lonely girl watching Netflix.”

“You are never alone, babe. We will talk tonight. Later.”

“Later.” We hang up.

I need to tell him.

I have to tell him.

I need a pep talk from Lauren. I need her to gear me up to tell Dex tonight. Maybe I can text him to come here and I can tell him face to face. I pick up my phone and text Lauren.

Me: Can you come over after work? I need some advice.

Lauren: Of course. Be there by five.

Me: Thank you.

I tinker around my small flat - not that it needs cleaning. It's only me here, even when Lauren and Joe bring Alfie over, there is never a real mess. I get a twinge in my lower belly and I stop in my tracks. Fuck, not again. I slowly walk over to the couch and sit down. I am holding my breath, praying that it was just a one-off this time. But no such luck, the pain comes again. I hold my belly with both hands, praying my baby is going to be okay. I scoot forward and I feel wetness between my legs. My heart stops in my chest.

NO!! This cannot be happening. I have been careful. I have been taking things easy. I can't lose my baby. I walk to my bathroom and pull my leggings and knickers down, the sight before me makes my heart stop in my chest.

There is a small patch of blood in my knickers. My nose burns and the tears fall freely down my cheeks, dropping onto my thighs. I take a few deep breaths and open the bottom draw and pick out a sanitary towel. Lucky for me, I always keep clean knickers in my bottom draw for when my periods hit in the middle of the night. I have a quick wash and change and walk back out into the living room. The pain is a dull ache in my lower belly and it is scaring the shit out of me. I pick up my phone off the arm of the sofa and find Lauren's number.

"Hey, babe. How-" I cut her off.

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“Lauren, I am bleeding and cramping. I need you,” I cry into the phone.

“On my way. Do not move.” She hangs up. I sit and wait for Lauren to come and get me. Turning my iPhone over and over in my hand, Dex’s face keeps running through my head. He should know about the baby. He should know if I am going to lose our child. I stare down at my phone like it has all the answers in the world, but it doesn’t. It offers me no comfort, no answers, no explanations as to why this is happening. My heart is breaking apart slowly. I am still crying when Lauren and Joe come bursting through the door. I see their faces and my own crumbles. I sob loudly against Lauren's chest as she hugs me to her.

“Ladies, we need to go now,” Joe says, with a note of authority. We both nod and we follow him out to the car. I notice that Alfie isn’t with them.

“Where’s Alfie?”

“With my mum,” Joe answers me. I nod at him. The drive to the hospital is silent, but fast. I watch as the hospital building comes into view. Joe parks the car and then hops out to help me out. Lauren follows. We rush into the maternity ward and Lauren buzzes the door.

“Can I help you?” Comes a soft voice through the speaker on the wall.

“Yes, my friend is twenty weeks pregnant and is cramping and bleeding.” I am shivering in Joe’s arms. The door buzzes and then opens. We see two nurses rush towards us with a wheelchair.

“Okay, what's your name, honey?” the nurse asks, as I sit in the wheelchair.

“Addison Cole. This is the second time this has happened.”

“Okay, let's get you into a room and we can see what is happening with your baby.” I just nod. The pain has subsided and I am thankful for that. I just pray the bleeding has stopped. I get wheeled into a room and the nurse tells me to hop up onto the bed. The two nurses go about getting what they need and Lauren and Joe are on either side of my bed, holding my hands. Their comfort is calming my nerves some.

“I wish Dex was here,” I whisper no one in particular. A woman in a white lab coat walks into my room.

“Hello, Addison. My name is Doctor Charles and I will be seeing to you today. Can we get you into a gown?” I nod my head and grab the hem of my t-shirt, pulling it off my head when I see one of the nurses eye Joe.

“He is my brother. He can stay.” She nods and helps me into the gown before I take off my leggings and knickers. I take a quick look at the sanitary towel I used and see that there is a small amount of blood on there. My heart sinks.

“Okay, Addison, I see that you have lost a little blood, nothing to be majorly concerned over, but we are going to do an ultrasound just to see if can we figure out what is happening and check on the baby, okay? I will be right back.” The midwife checks my heart rate and blood pressure. Both are slightly elevated.

“No shit, they are elevated. Okay, I need to calm down. I will go and grab us a tea. Be right back.” Lauren doesn't wait for us to reply before she is out the door, clearly upset with the situation. I look at Joe who just shrugs his shoulders.

“Do you honestly think I know half the shit that goes through her head half the time?”

“Good point. She is in her own little world.”

“Addy, we would like to take some blood, to rule out any infection that you might have.” I nod to the midwife. I am going to agree to everything they want to do as long as my baby is safe. I look at the table for my phone, because I know I need to phone Dex. I need to tell him and be prepared for him to hate me. I can’t see it.

“Joe, have you seen my phone?”

“Nope. Maybe you left it in the car. I will go check when Lauren comes back.”

“Thanks.” I keep my eyes fixed on the door, waiting for the Doctor to return with the ultrasound machine. I need to see my baby, I need to hear her heartbeat. They say mothers know what they are carrying and I believe I am carrying a baby girl.

I don’t know how much time passes. The door swinging open and hitting the wall shakes me from my dazed state. My heart skips a beat when I see who just came bursting through the door like a bull at a gate.

Dexter Castle.

“Addy?” His voice is a mixture of anger and hurt.

“I’m sorry.” I cover my face with my hand and sob loudly. There is no hiding it now. I think I need to take Lauren’s friendship card back. “I’m sorry. I’m so, so sorry, Dex.”

“Stop!” He storms over to the bed and cradles my face. “Look at me,” he demands. I shake my head no. I refuse to see the hate in his eyes. “Addison Cole, look at me right fucking now,” he booms. I jump and open my eyes and look at him. His face is full of hurt; the pain that I put there.

“I’m sorry,” I say again, looking deep into his eyes.

“Why? Why, didn’t you tell me? How far along are you?”

“I’m twenty weeks. I was scared that you wouldn’t want the baby. Want us. And now I may have lost her anyway.” I close my eyes and cry again. Dex pulls me tight to his chest and soothes me.

“Shh, the baby will be fine. Our baby will be fine. If she is anything like her mum, she is a fighter.” I can’t speak, so I nod against his chest. “Fuck,” Dex says, whilst still holding me tight to him.

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“Dex,” I whisper, but he doesn’t answer me. I try again, “Dex.” He pulls away slightly and looks down at me. His eyes are wet and I can tell he has been crying. I bite my bottom lip to try and stop it trembling.

“They are bringing in the ultrasound machine, so we can see the baby. They need to see what is happening. You get to see her,” I explain. His face morphs into something I can’t read.

“This wouldn’t be the first time I get to see her if you had told me, now, would it?” I flinch at his words. I do not flinch - ever. But I am an emotional wreck these days. I knew he would hate me once he found out.

“No. I’m sorry. I knew you would hate me. But please, let me explain my reasons before you leave me.” Before he can answer me the door opens again and the nurse wheels in the machine that will let us see that our baby is okay. Dex steps back from me and I feel cold without him. But, I am used to that I suppose. Even with how we have been the last few weeks. I now feel like I have lost him all over again. I always knew there was the possibility that he would want the baby and not me. Liam’s words still ring in my head from that day. I see Lauren glaring at Dex, I can only imagine all the ways she is planning his death in her head. Joe isn’t looking too happy either. The nurse covers my legs with the hospital blanket and it feels heavy against my limbs. I lift my gown and I hear a quick intake of breath from beside the bed. I chance a look at Dex, to find his eyes glued to my rounded baby belly.

“So is this Dad?” the nurse asks, pointing to Dex. A tear slides down my cheek and I answer her.

“Yes. This will be the first time he will see the baby.” I keep my eyes on Dex, but he never looks away from my stomach. My heart is breaking for him. For me. I caused this pain between us. I should have listened to Liam. But I can’t change that now. We all do things for a reason. Sometimes that reason is the right one and other times it is the wrong one, but in the end, it is our reasons that matter.

“This will be a little cold.” She drops some of the gel on my stomach and starts moving the wand-thing around. The screen flickers a little before the grainy black and white image of my baby appears. “Okay, let’s hear the heartbeat shall we?” Again, the most amazing sound ever fills the room. My baby. Our baby’s heartbeat.

I turn away from the monitor and look at Dex; tears fall from his face. My heart breaks all over again. The fear of him walking away from me is too much. A loud sob breaks from my chest, making Dex look at me. His eyes are filled with pain and hate. Hate for me.

“The baby looks fine, Addison. The umbilical cord is flowing freely. I think you may have just had a small period. Some women bleed all the way through the pregnancy. Would you like to find out the sex of the baby?” Without breaking eye contact we both answer, “Yes.”

“Well, congratulations, you are having a baby girl.”

“I knew. I could feel it.” I peel my eyes away from Dex and look at the monitor again. Dex hasn’t touched me throughout the scan. And that fact alone makes my heart crumble to ashes.

This is my fault. My reasons were right for me. I just hope the thick headed arse listens to what I have to say before he walks away.

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Addy is having my baby. A baby I knew fuck all about until her friend Lauren phoned me and told me to get to the hospital. My heart was breaking at the horrific thoughts that raced through my head. I thought I was going to lose her, like I had lost Fiona. But seeing her broken in that hospital bed, thinking the worst of our baby, almost killed me. The emotions running through my veins at the moment is enough to send me into a raging fit. I can't fucking believe she hid this from me. My baby - our daughter. She asked me to let her explain before I walked away from her, but I can tell you now, I am fighting with myself just to stay in this room with her.

"Dex." I don't turn around. I keep staring out the window. We have been here for an hour now. They are keeping Ads in overnight to monitor her and my baby. The bleeding and cramping has stopped, but they just want to make sure.

"Dexter, we need to talk." I spin around, my anger growing.

"Talk? Talk? Are you fucking kidding me? The time to talk would have been twenty fucking weeks ago when you found out you were carrying my baby. We have talked and text so much over the last few weeks. You had a plenty of fucking chances to tell me I am going to be a dad. I never thought you would do this to me, Addison." I spit out her full name. Tears run down her face but I ignore them. I need to cling to my hate for her right now.

"Hang the fuck on. Who the fuck do you think you are speaking to her like that? Yeah, she should have told you about the baby. Believe me, I tried getting her to do it. But I know her reasons and before you go half cocked and start spouting bullshit at her, you need to sit down and let her explain. Otherwise, see that little baby bump she is carrying?" I nod my head. "That will be the last baby that you ever father. Because

believe me you big fucker, I will chop off your dick and feed it to you, then you can brag that you have in fact had a dick in your arse when you are shitting it back out. Am I making myself clear?"

"You're a mouthy bitch, huh?"

"Dexter!" Addy yells at me. The woman's husband just smirks at me like he knows a dark secret about his girl.

"Hurt her again and you will see how much of a bitch I can be, boy," she threatens me. She takes a step forward, but her man stops her. I chuckle and turn to look at Addy, who is playing with the edge of the blanket covering her lower body. Silent tears roll down her cheeks and my gut knots up. I am torn over hating her and wanting to pull her into my arms to comfort her and never let her go. But she fucking hurt me. She kept my unborn baby from me. Fucking shit.

"You two can go. We need to talk." I dismiss her friends like they are nothing. Even though I know they have been there to support her through this. Addy still isn't acknowledging the room. She is lost in her little world, sitting on the hospital bed, looking like a little lost child.

"I'm sorry mate, but we aren't leaving her. If you think we are going to leave her alone with you, you have another thing coming. You can clearly see that she is upset and you are going to make it worse for her. She needs one hundred percent rest. No stress. When you've calmed down and had time to process this, you and Addy can sit down and talk about this - calmly. It's what she needs. What that baby girl needs." I get what he is saying, but I need to hear it from Addy now. I will go fucking crazy if I don't know why she did this to me. Here I was thinking that we had moved on from all our issues. Fuck, that was one big fucking lie.

"Nah, mate. You can both leave. I am calm and we will talk about this now. I will not

do anything that will harm Addy or my baby. This is between us. Thank you for looking after her and bringing her here, but this is about us,” I state, not looking away from him. He needs to understand this is my family, even if it is a bit fucked up at the moment. He shakes his head at me and walks over to the bed. He touches Addy’s knee and she looks up at him, the small smile on her face is forced. That one small smile almost breaks my resolve, but I stand my ground.

“If you need anything just text and I will bring it here for you. Love you, Ads.” He fucking didn’t.

“Don’t call her that,” I snap. All three of them whip their heads in my direction.

“Dex, don’t,” Addy whispers.

“I am the only one that calls you that and you fucking know it,” I grind out. The bloke nods his head in understanding.

“Prick,” the woman mutters under her breath, but I heard it loud and clear, which is probably what she wanted. “I don’t want to leave you with him.”

“He won’t hurt me,” Addy says, in a barely there voice. This is not my Addy. My Addy would be giving me a fucking mouthful of abuse for treating her and her friends this way. I have hurt her and I am not sure how to handle this shit anymore. It isn’t just us anymore.

“Fine. I am warning you, fucker. I get word from her that you hurt her and I am coming for your cock and balls.”

“I think your husband and your girl here would have a big problem with you coming on my cock and balls, love.” I smirk at her. Her face gets red with anger, only making me laugh more.

“Don’t twist my words, fucknut.” She turns to Addy and kisses her head. “Call me if you need anything, okay?” Addy nods her head and they leave the room.

The tension builds in the room, it’s almost suffocating. Addy refuses to look at me so I stay by the window, giving us space. My phone dings in my pocket and I know that it is Jay or Liam. I ran out of Castle Ink like my arse was on fire but didn’t tell them anything. I ignore it and look back to where Addy is sitting on the bed. They did the ultrasound to have a look at the baby but they wanted to monitor her heartbeat as well, so Addy has two thick bands around her bump, holding two discs in place, checking my girl’s heart rate.

Fuck me, I am having a daughter.

“Addy.” She looks over at me from under her wet lashes, her gaze guts me but she doesn’t speak. Her body tenses when I start to walk over to the bed and stand at the bottom, gripping the rail. My knuckles turn white with the force of my grip.

“I’m sorry, Dex.” Her voice is barely a whisper.

“Why didn’t you tell me? No beating around the bush, give it to me straight. You can’t hurt me anymore than you have today.” I regret my words as soon I say them. Fucking hell, I can’t catch a fucking break here. Her head snaps up to look at me. Hurt and regret fill her eyes. I close my eyes and take a deep breath.

“Welcome to my world,” is all she says. I look back at her and her eyes are locked on mine, I see my Addy slipping through. I smirk.

“Okay, I deserved that. Why?” I ask again.

“I was always going to tell you. Tonight in fact; when you came over. You have hurt me for years, Dex, and before you jump down my throat and accuse me of not telling

you just to hurt you like you hurt me, I would never do something like that and if you think I would, then you don't know me well enough.

“These past few weeks have been amazing. Us talking for hours on the phone, the texts back and forth made my day. I felt special. Me. Fucking special. I have never needed a man to make me feel special. But I was finally getting to see the Dex I fell in love with and he was seeing me for me. Not a little girl who he hated because she had feelings for him. I needed to know that you were over Fi and that you wanted to be with me, for me. Not because of her.” She says the last part softly, while touching her bump.

“I never hated you,” I say.

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“Maybe not, but it felt like it most of the time. I needed to put me and the baby first. You have rejected me so many times, Dex. I needed to make sure that you wanted to be a dad at least. It would have killed me if you walked away from me, but I would have handled it. But I wanted to make sure that you wanted her. You can’t be angry at me for that.” Fuck, she has me there. Why the fuck does she have to be right all the time? My chest aches at her words. I made her like this; I made her doubt me as a boyfriend and as a father-to-be. Fiona would kick my arse if she could. I bet she is turning in her grave. She knew I have always wanted kids and now here I am, twenty weeks or so from meeting my baby girl. And I am so fucking pissed at her mum for keeping her from me.

“I should have been told in the beginning, Ads. I get what you are saying but don't you think it was my decision just as much as yours? I would never turn my back on you or our baby. You should have told me.”

“We are never going to agree on the reasons why the decision was made. I think I did the right thing for me, you don’t. Well tough fucking shit, Dex, the decision was mine and I made it. Now we need to move on. Now our baby girl is coming soon. I have to get shit sorted. You can either be in her life or not, but if you walk away now, don’t come back. It is now or never, Dex.”

“There she is.” I smile at her. Addy frowns at me.

“What? There who is?” she asks.

“My Addy.” Her eyes go wide at my answer.

“But I am not your Addy, though, am I?” She quirks a perfect brow at me.

“No?”

“No, Dex. You have made that clear by the way you have spoken to me. I am not a fucking door mat. If you want me then say it, don’t beat around the bush, give it to me straight. I can handle it.” She throws my words back at me. Mouthy little witch. My mouthy witch.

“You say I hurt you, but you have hurt me back. You have had time to get used to the idea of being a parent, I haven’t. You have to give me time. I need to work through a few things. Maybe we can work through things slowly. Take one day at a time, until I have had time to process all this.” I wave at her baby bump.

“So, I have to sit and wait around for you to decide if you want me or just the baby?”

“I need time, Ads,” I tell her. My frustration growing.

“Time? I needed fucking time, Dexter, and you begged me to come home. You got pissy with me when I refused to come home. I was dealing with this-” I cut her off.

“Well, now I need time to deal with this. I have just found out I am going to be a father for fucks sake. Give me a break here.” I turn and walk over to the window again. The night has crept in and the city lights glow in the darkness. I take a deep breath, calming myself down. I don’t want to say anything I will regret. Plus, I don’t want to get Addy more worked up; it isn’t good for her or our baby girl. I know that I want Addy and our baby girl. But I need to wrap my head around all of this. I need to talk to Jay and Liam, they will help me deal with this. I know that they will support both mine and Addy’s decision. Her keeping the baby from me stings, but I do see a small part of why she did it. Fuck.

I reach up and squeeze the back of my neck, the tension pulling at the muscles. I need to hit something. I need to get a sparring session in with Luke. That guy is epic in the ring. I swear if he wasn't a talented tattoo artist he would be a professional MMA fighter. I turn to look back at Addy and she is playing with her phone.

"Who are you talking to?"

"Lauren." I pull a face, not knowing who that is. "The mouthy bitch. My best friend." That little jab hurts. Me, Jay and Liam were always her best friends. It was always the four of us growing up.

"What are you telling her? Telling her to come and cut my cock and balls off?" She laughs a small laugh but stops herself.

"No. I am holding her off for your sake. My daughter needs her dad." Daughter. Makes my heart flutter every time I hear it.

"Well, thank you for that. Listen, I'm gonna go. You need your rest and I need to get rid of this tension in my body. I -"

"Wow. Same old Dexter-fucking-Castle. Just go, Dex. Me and your daughter will be fine here." She grinds out the word daughter just for added effect.

"That's not what I meant, but if you want to help with that, here I am." I smirk at her.

"Captain Twat," she mutters under her breath. Fuck, I have missed that.

"I meant I need to arrange a sparring session with Luke. He fights like a beast. I will come by tomorrow. If you need anything just text me and I will get it. Are you okay, if I tell the boys?" She shrugs and looks away. What is she hiding?

“Tell me,” I demand.

“Tell you what?” she asks, innocently.

“What you are hiding. Now, Ads.”

“You can’t get mad. Shit, who am I kidding, of course you are going to get mad.”

“Tell me.”

“Liam knows. He saw me at the hospital. I made him promise not to tell you until I was ready.” She looks down at her phone again, twisting it in her hands.

“He fucking knew and didn’t say anything? I saw him the other day, I was happy for him and Penny and their baby. And he knew all along that you were hiding my fucking baby from me.”

“I- I kinda threatened him.” She is back to whispering.

“With what?”

“I told him I would never forgive him if he told you. I wouldn’t speak to him again. This is on me, Dex, not Liam.” Damn fucking right it is on her, but he is a fucking man and a father at that. He should have told me and dealt with her petty threats later. He should have known damn well that she wouldn’t stand by them. I turn and pick my hoodie up off the chair and stalk to the door. Before I walk out of the room, I look back once more at the woman carrying my baby. The woman that has held my heart for so long. The woman who knows how to fucking destroy me.

“I have to go. I need to get my head straight. Rest up.” I ignore the tears and walk out of the room, leaving a part of me in there with her.

Fucking shit to high heaven. I need a drink and to hit something.

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Yesterday was one of the scariest days of my life. The thought of losing my baby was heartbreaking. I feel for every parent that has to go through losing a child. I rub my bump, sending positive vibes that she is okay in there. A daughter. I am having a daughter. Well, we are. I know I hurt Dex, and I understand that he needs time to get his head around everything that I laid on him yesterday. I also need to deal with Lauren. That bitch had no right phoning him; it was my place to tell him. But, then again, I am glad she did. Fuck, my head is fried with everything that is happening. I feel the baby move and tears spring to my eyes. Shit, I hate crying. Dex isn't here to feel it with me. It's only recently that I have felt her move. The first time I cried so hard I almost threw up. Dex is missing this and it is my fault.

I thought he would come to visit me today, but I guess he is still hating me for what I did. I have thought so much this morning about texting him and asking how he is, but I've held off. He said he needed time, so I will give him time. I am not going to force him to be with me, but I want him in the baby's life. She deserves her father. She didn't do anything wrong, it is us that has caused all the pain. Placing my hands over my belly, I sit and feel my daughter move in there, trying to make herself comfortable. I chuckle at the feeling. Even if Dex wants nothing to do with us, I will be the best mum this little girl will ever have. Little girl. Shit, my daughter needs a name. I reach for my phone and open the Google app and type in 'girl's names'.

The website loads and I start scrolling through the names. A few jump out at me but nothing solid. I need to work out if the baby will have my surname or Dex's.

Cole or Castle.

My phone dings as I am scrolling through, so I make a quick mental note of where I

am on the page – the letter P – and check to see who has text me. My heart spikes and my body warms when I see Dex's name.

Dex: How are you feeling?

Do I be bitchy that he didn't check on me sooner? Or should I play nice?

Me: Fine.

Dex: Just fine? How is our girl?

Me: Fine. She moved this morning.

Dex: Fuck!!!!

Me: ??

Dex: I fucking missed it. What else have I fucking missed?

I knew he would find a way to take a shot at me. This is typical Dex. He says that he forgives you but he slyly takes pot shots at you. Bastard.

Me: Don't start Dex. I don't need this right now. If you are going to be a dickhead, then you can fuck off and not talk to me.

Dex: You can't be a bitch to me, Ads. You did this. You kept this from me.

Jesus fuck, it starts ringing. I see his face pop up and hit the 'decline' button. He can bollocks off if he thinks I am talking to him. If he wants answers he can get his tight, sexy arse down here and speak to me face to face. He rings again and again...

“Decline,” I sing the word as I hit the button, laughing to myself.

Google loads back up and I see that one name again. I say the name with my surname and Dex’s. I have to say, the name sounds fab with both of our names. I suppose we’ll see how all this mess plays out. My phone rings yet again and I smile when I see his face on the screen. I answer it this time.

“Yes?”

“Addison,” he growls.

“Why the sudden change of heart, huh? You seemed hurt yesterday, but I got the gist that you still wanted to talk to me. Now today, you are an angry fucking troll. What changed?” I am met with silence. I wait for him to gather his thoughts. I must be bloody mad, sitting here waiting for him to find the right words to bitch me out. I look down at the chipped blue nail varnish I have on my left hand. Great, I forgot to re-do them.

“I’m struggling with this, Ads. I really fucking am. I hate you and love you at the same time. I want to hate you so fucking bad, but I get why you did it.”

“So why the anger?” I ask him.

“I’m hung-over to fuck. I came home last night had a lot to drink. Luke couldn’t spar with me for some bullshit reason, so instead of hitting someone, I hit the bottle instead. Shit needs to be dealt with, Addy. We need to talk this through but I’m finding it hard to look at you right now.”

Like that didn’t hurt.

This baby is making me an emotional wreck. I bite my bottom lip to stop it from

trembling. But I fail. My chest feels like it is caving in and crushing my heart. I knew he was hurting, but not this much.

“Ads,” he whispers my name into the phone, emotion lacing his voice. This is hurting him, just as much as it is hurting me. His voice breaks my heart into a fucking million pieces.

“I get it. I will let Jay know when I am home, and I will pass on any information regarding the baby to him and he can tell you. I will let him know when the next scan is, and if you want to come and see the baby, then I guess that is up to you. I need to think of my health as much as this baby’s. Stay away, Dex. It’s for the best.” With that, I hang up. I cry into my hands. I cry for my baby. I cry for me and I cry for Dex. We will never be a family, that is clear - thanks to Captain Twat.

* * *

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Sitting in bed again, I think about the last week. I haven't seen or heard from Dex. I text Jay to let him know I was home and me and the baby were fine. He phoned me straight back and bitched me out for an hour, and then offered to kick his brother's arse for me. Liam and Penny have been around to see me. Liam was a little pissed at me, but that quickly changed when Penny told him that upsetting me could harm the baby. Then, before my eyes the six foot, hard, tattooed man softened like a marshmallow right in front of my eyes.

Lauren being Lauren wanted to hunt Dex down and pull his nipple bars out. I laughed so hard I almost peed myself. But I needed it; she knows exactly what to say to make me feel better. Like Dex, Jay and Liam were annoyed with me that I now have Lauren in my life. Well, they can suck it. She is here to stay; she will never let them push her out.

The one thing that has plagued me this week is Dex's reaction. I never thought he would react like this. I knew that he would be pissed at me, but to cut me off completely has broken my heart more than he will ever know. Even with everyone popping in to see me, I feel lonely. I need Dex here with me. With us. Baby Castle moves and tears spring to my eyes. Knowing that he is missing out on her moving makes the tears fall faster. I just wish he would phone me, text me - anything. I need to know that he doesn't completely hate me.

Well, if he isn't going to make the first move then maybe I should. I need to let him know that I have a scan in two weeks. I meant what I said on the phone, I will keep him posted on the baby. If he wants me then he needs to get his big arse here and fucking beg me to be with him. I pick my phone up and send Jay the text.

Me: I have a scan in 2 weeks. I will let you know the time and date when the hospital ring me. Can you let Dex know please?

Jay: How is my baby niece? How are you Mama?

Me: She is fine. Moving. I am good. Tired but good.

Jay: Glad to hear it. You need to rest now. No more working!!!

Me: Yes, Dad ;)

Jay: Fuck, don't say that shit. My brother will fucking kill me.

Me: He wants nothing to do with us, Jay. I have come to terms with that and so should you. Simple.

Jay: Are you fucking crazy? He has been a fucknut all week. Growling and snarling at clients.

I climb off the bed and walk out to the kitchen. I need a drink. I was told by the Doctor that I can't let myself get dehydrated. Drinking will help with the cramp I have been getting in my calves at night. I set my phone down on the counter and grab a bottle of water from the fridge, almost groaning as the cool liquid quenches my thirst, and wait for Jay to text me back. I know never to expect an instant reply sometimes with Jay because of the studio. I pick up my phone and head into the living room. I have to stay off my feet as much as possible, but that doesn't mean I should stay in bed.

Setting my drink on the coffee table, I pick up my Kindle. I need to finish this book. I left it at a steamy part and I can't wait to see what happens. I love a book with angst in it, I love the way it makes my stomach knot up and my skin break out in

goosebumps. But I also like the soppy books, the ones that make you ugly cry. Gotta love a bit of Molly McAdams, damn, that woman can make anyone ugly cry and send you straight into book therapy. My life with the Castle brothers has been an eventful one, and would make a bloody good book. Talk about angst with those two. The way that my heart ached for Dex for so many years, the issues that were thrown at us, Fiona and the age gap.

The things I saw when it came to those two boys... Well, Jay more so, that boy could never keep his dick in his jeans. He would leave a trail of broken hearts all over the place. Girls even resorted to phoning me to get him to talk to them - desperate much. Bitches need to learn that Jay Castle doesn't fuck the same girl twice. Well, unless your name is Rachel Cullen, but that girl has his balls in knots. Unfortunately, she can't see what an amazing guy he is. Yes, he is known for being a man-whore but once he saw her, I swear he was hooked. I've talked to Penny about my concerns about Rachel hurting Jay. All Penny has told me is that Rachel has some issues that aren't up to her to tell me and that Rachel should talk to Jay about it first. I agree, but like I told Penny, I will not stand by and see Jay get hurt by Rachel. I will slap a bitch.

Baby Castle boots my ribs again and I wince. She is getting comfy in there. I rub the top of my baby bump, mentally picturing Dex's large hand following my own. Showing his love for our daughter through his touch. His hand linking with mine, holding me to him. My chest aches a little. With Dex listening to me and staying away - it fucks with my head. I want him here to experience the feeling of the baby moving, but I also know that him being close to me will stutter my thoughts. A knock at the door brings me out of my moody thoughts. I have to stop getting stressed out over things that I can't control. I slowly climb off the sofa while the person at the door knocks again.

"Hold your horses, I'm coming," I shout at the door.

“You had better not be because that would be sick and my brother would kick my arse,” comes from the other side of the door. I smirk and pull the door open.

“Shut the fuck up, Jay,” I shout back. Jay stands there smirking at me, which is the typical Castle smirk that melts girls’ knickers all over England. He is wearing a Castle Ink t-shirt that I made the boys have made when they opened the new studio. It was good business and they do sell. Girls buy the vest tops we sell and the men buy the t-shirts. We did look at having mugs made, but Dex was in a bitchy mood because of the ‘Captain Twat’ mug I got for him, so he squashed that idea. Jay’s jeans hang off his narrow hips, just like Dex’s. They are similar in body size and they look like brothers. They share similar facial features. Jay’s hair is shorter than Dex’s but they both have the dark hair. Whiskey coloured eyes run in the family. Dex’s lips are a tad plumper than Jay’s.

“What’s up, my niece’s mama?” He leans in and kisses my cheek. Jay always greets me this way; he has for as long as I can remember.

“Nada. Just chilling, reading a book. Feeling baby Castle move.” The announcement makes him stop in his tracks. I shrug at him and move to walk towards the sofa. I place my Kindle back on the table and take my seat back in the corner of the cushion.

“She’s moving?” Jay asks, from the same spot he stopped. I nod my head. “And my twat of a brother is missing it,” he states. I nod again, my emotions - no doubt accelerated thanks to the pregnancy - have my throat closing up. Fuck, how can women do this more than one time? I am always flipping crying or getting choked up over random shit. I choked up over an RSPCA advert the other day. Jay takes his phone out of his pocket and swipes his thumb across the screen. Well, bloody hell, he is going to call Dex.

“Don’t, Jay. I -” He holds his hand up to silence me. “Oi!” I yell, but he ignores me.

“Brother. Get your fuckhead of an arse over to Addy’s flat, now. Shut up, she is fine. I will explain when you get here.” He doesn’t wait for Dex to reply again, he just hangs up on him. “There, now he will get to feel her move as well. He can’t keep missing out on this because he is too damn stubborn to see what is in front of him. Twat. Now, are you going to make yourself extra pretty for my brother? Because my guess would be you have one hour before he gets here.” Jay winks at me and sits in the big armchair that Lauren got for me.

“Bastard,” I mutter under my breath as I get to my feet and walk towards my bedroom. My heart is going bloody crazy in my chest at the thought of seeing Dex soon. As in one hour. Or, if Dex is freaking out, make that thirty minutes.

“You love me,” Jay shouts after me.

“That is debatable,” I yell back, and go about finding something nice but comfy to wear to face my baby daddy.

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Running out of Castle Ink, I race to my car, freaking the fuck out about what Jay just said over the phone. I know he said that Addy was safe and okay, but a shit load of things are running through my head right now. I press the key fob and my car unlocks, I rip open the door and jump in. Sticking the keys in the ignition I start the car. Young Guns 'Daylight' blasts through the radio, scaring the crap out of me. I turn the music down and pull out of the parking space. A shit ton of thoughts run through my head.

Is the baby, okay?

Is Addy, okay?

Did something else happen?

I am driving like a twat, trying to get to the woman I love and who is carrying my baby. Things need to fucking change between us. I am moving her sexy arse back home with me, where I will be there for her and our baby. Fucking hell, I am going to be a dad. My dad was a fuck up, so I know how not to be around my kid. This baby will want for nothing. She will have everything she wants. Fuck, Addy will have everything she wants. It takes me thirty minutes to get to Covertown, where Addy has been staying these last few months. But no fucking more. Her arse is coming home with me.

I pull up outside her building and turn the car off, before climbing out of the car and jogging up to the security door. The door buzzes before I hit the button, Jay must have seen me arrive. I pull the door open and run up the stairs, taking them two at a time. I am outside her door in no time. As soon as I reach her front door, I lift my

hand and knock. I wait a fraction of a second before my brother is there with a huge smirk on his face.

“Brother.”

“Jay. Where is she?”

“Pouting on the couch. She’s pissed I phoned you, but brother, you need to be here for this shit.” I frown at him, having no bloody clue what he is talking about. He nods his head in the direction of Addy. “I will leave you to it,” he says. He smirks at me and yells, “Bye, Addy.”

“Fuck off,” comes from the other room. I chuckle and shake my head.

“Later, mate,” I say to my brother, slapping him on the shoulder. “Thanks for calling me.” I close the door behind my brother, flicking the lock before turning around and heading into the living room.

I take in her home. She has photos of all of us planted around the room and lots, and I mean lots, of candles. Very Addy. I turn the small corner and smile to myself. My girl is sitting crossed legged on the couch, dressed in an oversized shirt. She is pouting big time. God help me if our girl follows her mum’s traits. She is going to be a fucking beautiful little girl that I will have to keep the boys from. It’s a good thing she will have three big uncles to watch out for her. I need to pray to the gods, sacrifice whoever I need, to make sure that I get my boy one day.

“Baby,” I say, startling her. I laugh when she scowls at me.

“You cock. You gave me a heart attack. Shit, cock is too good a word for you. Why do people use it as an insult? Cocks are bloody useful. And the same with pussies. Why you would call someone a pussy as an insult? A pussy is a very useful tool and

is a sexy part of the female anatomy.” She gabbers that out all in one breath. Well shit, my baby is nervous. I smile at her and walk over to the couch where she is sitting. I watch her watching me, smiling at her as her eyes track my every move. I lick my lips and take in her bare legs. She adjusts herself, pulling her knees up to her chest, guarding herself. I am surprised she can do that with her baby bump.

I see the ankle tattoo that Jay did for her. It’s a quote, it says. ‘Before Alice got to Wonderland, she had to fall’.

It wraps around her ankle in a script. She has a Moon Glyph for ‘light’ between the first and last word. It is perfect for her. I love her tattoos. She has little symbols on some of her fingers, and a crown on her right ring finger, and she has a thin string bow tattoo just above the first knuckle on her right index finger. God, she looks fucking beautiful. Her dark hair is piled up on top of her head in a messy looking bush.

“I like where this conversation is going, babe. Cocks and pussies. Sounds like my kind of thing.” I wink at her as I close the gap between us. Taking the seat on the couch beside her, bending my knee so my shin is resting against her barely covered thigh, I lay my left arm across the back of the couch and play with the fine strands of hair at the back of her neck. The TV plays in the background, but I have no clue what is playing. My attention is on the tattooed beauty next to me.

“You want to tell me why my brother phoned me and told me to get my arse down here, ASAP?” She just sits there staring at me. I watch as her eyes scan my face, before coming back to my lustful gaze. I sit and watch to see what she does. No words are spoken between us as she moves her hand over mine and lifts it up. She moves my right hand to her stomach, my rough hands on her smooth, warm skin. She sucks in a breath at the contact, and I feel it too. The electric jolt that runs between us, it has always been there but, like the twat I am, I ignored it.

“Wait,” is all she says. We sit in silence and stare at each other. The TV hums through the room, filling the silence between us. I run my thumb over her silky skin, causing it to break out in goosebumps. I smile at her, knowing the effect that my touch is having on her.

“Addy, what -” I don’t finish my sentence as I feel it. I stop talking and drop my gaze to her stomach where our hands are touching. “Is that...?” I ask, but the feeling cuts off my words and Addy nods at me with tears in her eyes, confirming what I just felt.

HOLY FUCKING SHIT.

I just felt my baby move for the first time. I feel my nose burn and my vision goes blurry. I look back at Ads and see tears running down her beautiful face. I glance back down at her belly and spread my fingers, hoping to feel the baby move again. Every father should experience this: feeling their baby move in its mum’s belly. My heart grows twice its size, making room for my baby’s love.

“Ads,” I whisper her name, emotion clogging up my throat. I cough and try again. “How long has she been moving?” I smile at her.

“About three weeks. I’m sorry I kept her from you. I -” I cut her off. I drop my left hand to the nape of her neck and give her a reassuring squeeze, before I shift closer and kiss the tip of her nose.

“I get it. But that is in the past. We are going to forget everything that has happened. We are moving forward. Me, you and this little girl,” I say, moving my hand over her belly.

“She will wrap you around her little finger, won’t she?” she asks. I smile and nod my head.

“Hell yeah. Babe, there is no way I will be able to tell her no. Oh, and can you imagine all the boys lining up to take her to the school disco? We are going to need a boy – soon - then he can look after his sister,” I tell her. Meaning everything I just said.

“What the fuck are you on, Dexter Castle? We are only now talking properly after you found out I am pregnant withher. What the hell makes you think that we are going to have more babies together?”

I smirk at her and twist a lock of her hair around my left index finger. “Because I said so. We will be together, Addison Cole. We will be a family. You are going to move back to Bell Harbour with me and we will raise this baby girl together. Simple.” I wiggle my eyebrows at her. She straightens her spine and moves back a fraction to look at me better.

“Simple. Are you high or something?”

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“Nope, you know I don’t do drugs, babe. What’s wrong?”

“What’s wrong?” she repeats.

“Yep,” I say popping the ‘p’.

“Dex, you need to slow the hell down. Bloody hell, I haven’t heard from you in a week. Seven fucking days. If Jay hadn’t phoned you, you wouldn’t be here right now. Would you?” I look away from her because she is right. I was still trying to wrap my head around everything that is happening. “Knew it.” She climbs off the couch and walks into the kitchen. I get up and follow her, needing to get my point across to her.

“No, I wouldn’t have. But I would have called or come to see you. Tomorrow, as it happens. Liam and Jay have been bitching me out about staying away. We have a lot to talk about, Ads. No more Jay being the middleman. You, me and our baby is the way forward. We need to move you back home so I can take care of you both. I hate that you are so far away from me. I need to be able to see you - everyday, when ever I want.” I fold my arms across my chest, staring at a pissed off Addison Cole. Her eyes blaze with heat and not the good kind. I love it when she gets like this.

“Home? With you? You have to be flipping kidding me. I am staying here, Dex. This is my home, this -“ I cut her off with a sharp reply.

“No. You belong at home with me, not here. You belong in my house, with our daughter, so do not throw that shit at me. Now, I will give you some time to let all this sink in, but believe me when I say this, Ads, you are coming home to me. I want to wake up with you next to me every morning and I want to go to sleep each night,

wrapped up in you. So deal with it.” I wink at her. Her eyes go from pissed to downright murderous when I finish.

“Like fuck am I moving in with you -” My movements stop her angry words from piercing the air. I step up to her and cup her face in my large hands. Her body sags a little, loving the feel of our skin to skin contact. I stare into her eyes and let her look into my soul. Music plays from the TV and we both chuckle. The Chainsmokers, featuring Halsey’s ‘Closer’ plays through the TV speakers. The song is perfect for us.

“Baby, I love you and I love this baby. Seeing you in that hotel bar was the best thing that had happened to me in a long time.” That night was the best thing that had happened to me in a while. Jay told me we were meeting a new girl who he wanted to work at Castle Ink. It turned out to be Addy.

“You know that was a setup, right? Jay asked me to meet him there.” I nod my head. I smile at her and lean in, running my nose along her perfect jaw-line.

“I didn’t know at the time, but Jay told me a few days later. I hadn’t seen you in a while, Ads, and you looked sexy as fuck sitting on that bar stool. That black dress hugging this,” I say, and lower my hands to grip her tight arse in my hands. “The fuck me heels you were wearing. Damn, babe. Every man in that room was eyeing you. But you ignored them all, because you know that you only have eyes for me. So how soon can you pack up and move back home with me?” I ask her. I look in her the eyes, making sure she can clearly see how serious I am about this. I can’t be away from them any longer. I need to see her belly grow with my kid. I need to be there for any and all midnight cravings. That is, if she has any. Not that it would bother me; I would do anything for her.

The boys are right, Fiona would be turning in her grave from the way I have been acting, but no more. I plan on doing her proud. I know that we didn’t have any kids, but we wanted them. She would want me to take care and love Addy and our baby,

and that is what I plan to do; even if it means pissing Addy off.

“Dex, I can’t just pack up and leave.”

“Why not?” I ask, leaning back just a fraction, so I can see her eyes better. But Addy takes that option away from me. She wraps her arms around me and drops her head to my chest. I kiss the top of her head and breathe in her scent.

This is what I live for, having Addison Cole in my arms. Let’s just hope she stays there.

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I breathe in Dex's manly scent. He always wore Hugo Boss, he never changed it up over the years. He would always smell woodsy to me. I loved it. One year I bought him a bottle and he just laughed at me when he opened it, saying that Fiona had told me which one he liked. That broke my heart a little; him thinking that I didn't know him.

"I live here now. I have a job. I have friends here, Dex. I think we need to chill for a bit. Slow this down." I know he won't listen to me; this is where we see the alpha Dex. What Dex wants, Dex gets. It has always been the same way with him, and the way with Jay. Dex had to take care of Jay when they were younger and he worked his arse off to give him the things he needed.

"Not gonna happen. You live in Bell Harbour with me. You have a job at Castle Ink with me. You have friends back home with me. Need I say anymore?" Damn him. I lift my hands and place them on his chest. I love the feel of his hard muscle beneath my hands; I can feel the heat pulsing off him. I slowly run my thumb over his right nipple, feeling the bar he has there. The bar that I put there. We pierced each others nipples, years ago. It was a very sensual time, but Dex being Dex, held back and left me cold after the job was done.

"You keep doing that, and I am going to need to be buried deep inside that pussy of mine," Dex grinds out. He sounds sexy as hell when he speaks like this.

"Your pussy? I believe it is attached to my body, pal." But I don't stop the moving of my thumb over his nipple. It hardens underneath my touch and I smirk up at him. But my plan backfires when Dex raises his hands and he cups my boobs, running his thumbs over my hyper sensitive nipples. Damn these pregnancy hormones. "Ohhh," I

moan.

“You like that, babe?” I nod my head, my arousal taking my ability to talk away. “Good. How about we move this to the bedroom? I haven’t tasted you in ages and I need to feel that tight little pussy of yours wrapped around my cock.”

“Get used to the tightness, boyo, because when your daughter comes into the world via that...” I angle my head down towards my pussy. “It is gonna be like sticking your dick into a mine shaft,” I jest. Dex throws his head back and laughs at me. I smile at the action; I have always loved his deep laugh.

He takes a deep breath and leans his head forward, laying a gentle kiss on my lips. Pulling his head back to see me, I lick my lips, savouring the taste of him there. That makes him growl and slam his mouth onto my mine, fusing us together. My gasp allows him to dip his tongue into my mouth and taste me the way he said he wants to, even though I know he didn’t actually mean taste my mouth. Dex slants his head, deepening the kiss and I take full advantage of the feeling. I have been crazy fucking horny. His hand squeezes my boobs and I throw my head back from the pleasure it gives me.

“Baby... bedroom. Now,” he demands. We have gone from naught to sixty in no time at all. I swear this man controls my sexual buttons. Damn him. I tend to lose myself around Dexter Castle, I always have, even from a young age and at times, looking back, I think he used that to his advantage. Dex steps back and I take a hold of his hand, leading him towards my bedroom. We walk in utter silence until Dex pulls me to a stop. I turn around and see him staring at the photos I have on the wall. I move my gaze from Dex’s face to the wall. The emotion clogs my throat as I watch him take in the photos. There are photos of all of us; Fiona included. Even though she had Dex, she was still a friend and never, not once, was a bitch to me. I could never hate her. She made Dex happy.

“Why?” he whispers, frowning at the photos.

“Family. Simple. We were a crew. Even though I love you, Dex, she loved you and held your heart. I couldn’t fault her for that.” He takes his eyes off the photos and looks at me. The pain is clear to me and my lip trembles. This just ruined our moment and I can’t even be pissed at him. His gaze drops to my baby bump and a small smile crosses his gorgeous face. I try to smile at him but the fear of him rejecting me again is just below the surface. Dex steps away from the photos and lays both of his hands on my belly, framing the baby bump in his big hands.

“She is our future. She will add to our crew, so will Liam and Penny’s baby. We may have lost Fi in body, but she is here in spirit. She always loved you Ads, always. I think deep down she knew the feelings that we both tried to bury. She never came outright and said it, but I saw the little smiles she would give me when you were around us.” He takes a deep breath and steps even closer to me, so that his stomach is pressed against the baby. “I really think she would be happy with this outcome.”

“Really?” I have to ask, it is killing me. I want to move forward with Dex, but I can’t do that with Fiona’s ghost between us.

“Yep,” he says, popping the ‘p’. I smile at him.

“I will love you the way she did, Dex, I promise,” I declare. Dex shakes his head at me.

“No, babe. You will love me your way and your way only. They are two different kinds of love. Two loves that I have been lucky enough to have in my heart.”

Well holy flipping shit.

You could honestly knock me down with a feather. His words hit their mark, their

target: My heart.

Dexter fucking Castle just melted the last piece of ice I had wrapped around my heart. He one hundred percent just fixed me. My heart is going freaking crazy in my chest, my breathing becoming erratic. Dex's gaze lowers before he arches an eyebrow at me. I frown and look down and snort. Yes, I snorted. My nipples are trying their damndest to break through my shirt and my boobs are rising and falling fast with my heavy, horny breathing. Damn his fucking heartfelt words.

“Perv. My room is this way. If you still want to?” I quirk a brow at him and he just smirks at me.

“Yeah, I want, babe. Lead the way.” I turn around and walk away from him and towards the room, before letting out a very un-sexy yelp.

“Ouch, you fucker!” Dex slapped my arse; hard I might add.

“Serves you right for swaying it all sexy like in my face, babe.”

“Whatever,” I mutter and walk into my room. I love my bedroom. I have a queen size bed with grey and red bedding on. Candles are spread over nearly all available surfaces; my dark wood bedside tables, matching dresser, the three shelves on the adjacent wall to my bed and even on the windowsill. I love candles, what can I say. I have two canvases on the wall; one is of a Skull Candy skull and one says ‘Be Brave. Be Bold. Be Awesome.’ An old client got it for me when he saw I was having a shitty day at Castle Ink. And yes, you guessed it; it was because of the sexy bastard standing by the door of my bedroom. The grey curtains hang but they are never closed; I have blinds that I use, that look like real wood.

“Typical you,” Dex says from the doorway.

“It is,” I reply, placing my hand on top of my bump. It is a habit now. Dex’s eyes follow the movement and he closes the gap between us. “Dex,” I say. He places his arm under my knees and one behind my back. He lifts me and I squeal. I fucking squeal; like a fucking girly-girl. He chuckles and lays me on the bed and climbs over me, being very careful of my bump. I smile at him, loving how gentle he is being. Dex is a rough bloke; Alpha, demanding. His strong arms brace his body over mine, his muscles bulging beside my head.

“I’m going to make love to you, Addison Cole. We have shagged in the past but now, now we make love. I need to show you how much you mean to me.” He leans in and takes my mouth in a kiss that ends all kisses. His tongue tastes mine, enjoying the flavour. He moans when I reach up and grip his tight arse in my hands, effectively pulling his erection into my heated core.

“I need you, Dex,” I pant out. Dex pulls back and sits back on his knees.

“You have me, baby,” he states, gripping the back of his t-shirt and pulling it over his head. His tattoos cover both of his arms. His chest tattoo spans from shoulder to shoulder, it can be seen peeking out from the top of his shirts. Unless he is wearing a v-neck, then it is clearly visible. He winks at me when our eyes finally meet.

“Like what you see, baby?”

“Eh, I’ve seen better.” I wink at him.

“Better my arse,” he chuckles. I watch as he climbs from the bed and takes off his jeans and boxers.

“Now, that I like.” I wink and laugh at his face. He looks shocked that I just said that. Neither of us are prudes, so I have no clue why he looks shocked.

“Damn, way to make a man feel wanted.” He mock pouts and covers his dick with both hands. Yes he needs both hands. I ungracefully get to my knees and make my way towards the edge of the bed. I start to slowly undo the buttons on my shirt as Dex rakes his gaze over me. He watches as each button pops open. I watch as his eyes fill with heat and he licks his lips. At the last button I pull the shirt over my body, leaving me in my knickers and bra. Which reminds me that I need new ones; these are getting too small for me. Baby boobs.

“Damn, you are one sexy chick, Ads. Come here, babe.” I inch forward, making sure that I don’t fall off the edge of the bed. His arms go around and unclasp my bra strap, like a pro.

“Someone has had plenty of practise in that department,” I say with a chuckle, but inside my stomach is churning at the amount of women Dex has been with since Fiona died. He used to flaunt them in front of me all the time. He knew how much he was hurting me but being the dick that he is, he ignored my feelings.

“Stop overthinking. There is only me and you here, no one else,” he states. I nod my head and lean in and kiss the shit out of him. I run my hands up over his bare arms

and around to his shoulders, holding him to me. Dex has the whole arm porn thing going on, it has been one of the things that I find most sexy about him, well that and his smile. Dex runs his hands all over my body, cupping my arse and tugging me closer, well as close as I can get with the baby bump between us. Dex breaks the kiss and laughs.

“She is cock blocking me already I see.” he motions down to my belly.

“I am only going to get bigger, babe.”

“A lot sexier. I swear I am going to keep you barefoot and pregnant all the fucking time.” He winks at me. I pull all the way back and look at him. Is he fucking serious? He looks serious.

Well fuck a duck.

“Funny,” I laugh.

“Do you see me laughing?” he asks.

“No. But I don’t see us having another baby anytime soon. I want to enjoy this one first.”

“We’ll see, babe.” He winks again.

“Fuck off with the winking. It isn’t going to get you what you want,” I tell him, and I bloody mean it. I want to enjoy this baby before I get pregnant and I have to share my attention. Plenty of parents like to have their children close together, and there is nothing wrong with that, but I want a few years between my kids.

“Baby, I always get what I want. Now lay back. I need to taste you.” Well, what girl

can say no to that? Not this one that's for sure. I lay back, still only wearing my knickers. I lay in the middle of the bed and watch Dex as he climbs onto the bed and settles on his stomach, between my legs. Thank the lord to high heavens that I had my wax last week. I go up onto my elbows and try to see what Dex is doing. Okay, I know what he is doing but I still want to see.

I hear him take a deep breath and groan. "Fuck, you smell so damn good," he says, kissing the inside of my thigh.

"Thank you for telling me that my vagina smells good. I had always wondered what I smelt like." I wink down at him.

"Witch." I giggle. Giggle? Where the frick did that come from? Dex lowers his head again and I feel him run his nose over my kickers. That slight pressure causes me to release a small moan. His head shoots up, a wicked look on his face. He bounces his eyebrows at me and slides one finger under my knickers moving them to the side so he can gain better access to my pussy.

"This pregnancy is making you super sensitive, huh?"

"Yes. I need to feel you, Dex," I tell him, sounding breathy. He adjusts his position and grips the sides of my knickers.

"Up," he instructs me. I lift my hips and he drags my knickers down my legs, dropping them over the edge of the bed. He lowers his head with no hesitation and lays a kiss to my swollen clit. It pulses against his lips. He runs his tongue from my clit down to my opening, swirling his tongue around, tasting me. "Fucking sweet. I need more," he breathes on my wet pussy lips.

"Dex," I pant.

“I got you, baby. I got you. Just feel. Feel my wet tongue tasting you. Your clit throbbing in my mouth.” My panting fills the room. My body fills with electric currents, running through every nerve ending. Sweat beads across my body. I feel Dex grip my thighs, holding them open as I try to crush his head with them.

“Dex, I’m going to come.” He gives one last bite on my clit and my orgasm rips through me. My body lights with the lustful fire. I barely feel Dex climbing up my body and thrust into me.

“Ahhhhh, Dex. Fuck,” I cry out. He doesn’t let up as another orgasm hits me. His cock slams into me over and over again. Filling me to the hilt.

“Again, Ads. Come again, baby. Fucking hell you feel amazing. Best ever. Shit, I’m gonna come. It has been so long since I felt you wrapped around my cock. Shit.” Two more thrusts and Dex is coming inside of me, filling me up. Our heavy breathing is the only sound I can hear. Dex falls to the side of me, keeping his arm draped over my body, holding me to him.

“I’ve missed you, babe. Come home with me,” he whispers against my ear, not in a question form.

“Okay, honey,” I breathe, feeling too blissed out to fight with him.

“Love you, Ads.”

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Today is the day we get to see our baby girl again. I am picking Addy up and we are driving to the hospital together. Even though she agreed to move back home with me that night, it has been two weeks and Addy being Addy, is stalling. But I will get my way; I always do. Driving to pick up my girl I listen to music, praying like hell that it calms me down. I didn't sleep much last night, the nerves making it impossible to settle down enough to fall asleep. Me: Dex Castle, nervous about seeing my baby on the screen again. The idea of becoming a father has settled in now and I am excited to meet our daughter.

Red Hot Chili Peppers song 'Californication' plays through the radio. The music soaks into my body, calming me. I love these guys, their music is shit hot. I have very similar tastes in music as Addy, but she also likes some random bands. I stop at a red light and take a glance at the shopping bag that is sitting in the passenger seat. I went shopping yesterday and saw the t-shirt and knew that I had to get it for Addy. It is perfect. The light turns to green and I turn into the road that leads to Addy's place.

I park outside the tattoo studio that Addy has been working in. They look pretty busy from what I can see. I see Addy sitting down on a stool behind the reception desk talking to a pretty redhead. I'm glad that she is staying off her feet as much as possible, she needs to rest. She explained to me what the Doctors told her at the hospital, and I agree with them, she needs to cut down on her working hours. But she told me that Mike and his wife are very strict with her and don't let her work much anyway, they are like surrogate parents to her. I can see that she cares for them by the way her beautiful face lights up when she talks about them.

The studio is a bit bigger than Castle Ink, but this studio is old school, where as ours is fresh and modern. I climb out of my car and lock it behind me. I walk towards the

door and smile when I see Addy throw her head back, laughing at something the girl has said to her. I pull the door open and smile at my girl. Her head lifts and the most beautiful smile crosses her face.

“Morning babe,” I say, rounding the desk and pushing her legs apart so I can stand between her luscious thighs. I lean in and take her mouth, laying a sensual kiss on her. I hear a heavy sigh to the side of us and I break the kiss and tilt my head to face the girl. Addy laughs.

“Dex, this is Sammi. She’s chatting with me while her brother, Daren, is getting a tattoo done by Jonesy out the back. Sammi, this is Dex.” I frown a little. That’s it? Sammi, this is Dex.

Why didn’t she introduce me as her boyfriend? I thought it was pretty obvious by now, where we were headed. I wink at her and then turn my attention to Sammi.

“Nice to meet you, Sammi. I’m Dex, the boyfriend.” I hear the intake of breath, but I ignore it. “Glad my girl could keep you company. I know how shit it is to wait around for someone who is getting inked and you’re not,” I say to her. She beams at me and winks at Addy.

“Swoon...So this is the baby daddy?” she asks Addy.

“Yeah, I did good, right?”

“Hell yeah. I can tell by your arms that you know a bit about tattoos, Dex,” Sammi says.

“I know a bit,” I laugh. Addy laughs with me and pinches my nipple. “Fuck, that hurt, babe.”

“Good. Dex owns Castle Ink over in Bell Harbor, with his brother Jay. I used to work there until...” She stops speaking, I see the flash of hurt cross her face and my stomach tightens. Sammi looks between us, confusion quite clear on her face.

“Until I fucked up. You can say it, baby. I know I fucked up. Captain Twat remember?” Addy nods and gives me a sweet smile. That is one of the things I love about Addy. She can be super feisty and then sweet in the blink of an eye. I know some people look at her with her tattoos and see a broken goth, but my Ads is nothing like that, yes she had a shitty childhood but nothing that would break her permanently. People are so fucking quick to judge these days, everyone has a problem with everyone and everything. Like we always say, ‘A person with tattoos, never judges a person with no tattoos. But a person with no tattoos, always judges a person with tattoos’. It’s a shitty thing but it is what it is and no one will change their mind.

“Are you going to introduce us?” a gruff voice comes from behind me. I turn and look over my shoulder and see an older man. His head is shaved close to his head and his hair is grey in places. He looks in pretty good shape for his age, which I would say is over fifty. I feel Addy move to the side to see behind me and a big arse smile covers her face.

“Hey Mike. Now why would I introduce you?” she smarts at him. Full of attitude my girl.

“Why? Because I want to know the name of the lad I will have to kill and bury somewhere if he ever fucking hurts my baby girl, that’s why!”

“Like you could do that shit. Stop acting all mafia and hard,” Addy giggles. I move my body, so I am standing by her side, her hip against my stomach. I put one arm around her shoulders and one over her baby bump. The bloke’s eyes track my movements but his face stays placid; showing no emotion.

“I know people and this boy needs to know that. I will not have anyone hurt you, baby girl. You are like a daughter to me. Now who the fuck are you”? He directs his question at me. I can play this game also; I give as much as I take.

“Mike. I can take care of myself. Plus, you already have a daughter,” Addy warns, but he ignores her.

“I have two daughters, Addison Cole. I told you that, didn’t I?” She nods her head and I hear her sniff. Damn, the man really cares for my girl. I kiss the top of her head.

“It’s fine, babe. I’m Dex, Addy’s boyfriend and the father of her baby. Who the fuck are you?” He quirks an eyebrow at my answer and returned question. Yeah, fucknut, I ain’t backing down, not where my girl is concerned. I know who Mike is. Addy has told me all about him and his wife, Wendy. We stare at each other for a few moments, the only sound is the buzzing coming from the tattoo guns around the studio. Addy is still sitting on the stool, she is looking between Mike and me and back again. A slow smile breaks across his face and I feel Addy’s body physically relax under my hands. I knew this fucker was testing me and by the looks of things, I passed. I could learn a few things from this guy about threatening boys being around my daughter. He clearly has experience when it comes to his daughter and knobhead men.

“I’m Mike, surrogate dad to this girl here. So I have an important question for you, Dex.” Addy buries her head in my chest and laughs.

“Oh God, here we go.”

“I can only guess that you have seen my handy work on her back?” I nod my head. “Now, I know that you have done some of her other work, and so has your brother.” I nod again. I know where he is going with his line of questions. “So, I want to know... Do you think your work is better than mine?”

“Yes,” is all I say.

“You do, huh?”

“Yes, I do. Your work on my baby, is pretty damn good, Mike. But mine is better, simple. I will never regret any piece I have worked on. My work is defined. My designs represent me. Each line, each fucking star and heart, every fucked up tattoo that I have had to cover up because some knob has had his girlfriend's name tattooed on him. Plus, I am a cocky twat who will always say that his work is better. Addy knows this.” I smirk at her and lean in and kiss her lips softly.

“I see the cockiness is a must have to be a tattoo artist then,” a lad says from behind Mike. His smile is directed at my girl and I inch forward, towards her. His eyes are filled with dirty thoughts, I can fucking tell. Bastard.

“Hey, Ads.” Oh, hell fucking no.

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“What did you just say?” I growl at him. Addy rests her hand on my stomach but I ignore her. He does not get to call her that, only I do.

“What? I only said ‘hi’ to Ads. What’s your problem, man?”

“My problem, man, is that only I get to call her ‘Ads’, it is my name for her and no fucker else. You get me?” I go to step forward, but Addy stops me.

“You don’t own her, mate, so chill the hell out.” He is looking for a kicking.

“The hell I don’t. See that?” I point to her belly.

“Yeah, so? She’s pregnant and looking sexy while doing it.” Yep, he definitely wants a fucking slap. Sammi looks worried and Addy just shakes her head at me.

“That baby in there was fucking put there by me. It was me buried so deep in her pussy last night. It was my name she was screaming while I was fucking her hard. Do you wanna say again that I don’t fucking own her? Because, boy, I will knock you the fuck out.” He takes a step forward, but Addy jumps in to save the little prick.

“Okay, that is enough boys. No more dick contests, put them away. Besides...” She looks at me and winks, then turns to Daren. “I know Dex will win. His cock is fucking huge.” Sammi bursts out laughing. Mike is pissing himself laughing, holding onto the desk to keep himself upright. Addy slowly slides off the stool and grabs my hand and pulls me from the studio.

“Later, gators.” She waves her over her shoulder. I salute Mike and follow my girl.

* * *

My legs have a mind of their own, bouncing up and down. Addy places her hand on my thigh and smiles at me. She leaves her hand there and looks through her phone with the other hand. I know she has text Jay; the impatient bastard won't leave her alone. They are all eager to see how the baby is growing. I'm sure I saw Penny's name pop up as well. We have been sitting in this waiting room for what feels like hours, even though it has been maybe thirty minutes. The room is packed; every chair has a pregnant lady in, or her man. The women are all at different stages of pregnancy. There is one woman who looks like she is twelve months pregnant, she is fucking huge. The poor woman has to push out a full-grown adult-baby. Her poor vagina, fuck that, her poor husband. He will never feel the inside of her pussy walls again; they will be stretched to the moon and back again.

"Addison Cole," someone calls out. Addy stands and I follow her. We walk down a short hall and into a small room. "Climb up onto the bed for me please, Addison. The technician will be with you shortly. We will do the scan first and then go through the regular check ups, okay?"

"Thank you," Addy replies. The nurse leaves the room, leaving us alone. I help her climb up onto the bed. Once she is lying down, Addy pushes her maternity jeans down below her bump and pulls her thin jumper up over her bump, tucking it under her juicy boobs that are begging to be played with. Well, I am a man after all. I lean in and kiss her bump. Taking advantage of the time alone, I slide my hands over the bump and up to the thin material and pull it up over her tits. I lick my lips as Addy says my name.

"Dex, what are you doing?" I ignore her and smile against her smooth skin. I flick the swell of her right tit and then drag my tongue across it, tasting her. She moans low in her throat, and that sound alone makes my dick hard. "We can't. Stop," she says, but she doesn't move to stop me.

“I just need a taste, babe.” I keep licking, sucking and kissing her tits; never removing them from her bra. She needs a new one, she is almost falling out of this one. The door clicks open and I quickly pull her jumper down over her breasts. I wink at Addy, who is scowling at me for almost getting caught. That is the fun in it all, right? The almost getting caught. “Dick,” she mutters under her breath.

“What was that, babe?”

“Nothing,” she says, and turns to look at the technician. She offers her a smile.

“Okay, so how have you been feeling, Addison?”

“Good. Been keeping off my feet as much as possible,” Addy replies.

“That’s good. Okay, so we are checking to see if the baby has grown some?” Addy looks up at me and I smile and nod my head. Addy nods at me and gives me a beautiful smile.

“Yes, please.”

“Okay, let’s see what the baby is up to then.” She pushes a few buttons and the room fills with the baby’s heartbeat. Music to my fucking ears, I tell you. The best sound in the world. More clicks sound. The technician lady looks over at Addy and me and smiles. “I am just measuring the baby. Everything looks good. Still a little on the small side but looking healthy.” I breathe a sigh of relief and bend over and kiss Addy’s lips. The lady turns the monitor around to show us the baby; I can’t believe that is my baby. She has grown in the last two weeks but I know that can change. Addy told me that the Doctors are hoping the baby catches up with the growth line, but as long as the baby looks healthy they aren’t overly worried.

“Let me show you. See this here?” She points at the screen. “That there looks like a

hamburger.” I tilt my head and chuckle. “That there shows me and you that you are one hundred percent having a baby girl.” Addy gasps.

“Dex,” she whispers. Our daughter again being confirmed as a girl takes my breath away.

“I know, babe, I know.” I lean in and kiss her head.

Well, fuck me sideways. A little girl like Addy running around. God help me.

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I knew that we were having a girl but having it re-confirmed today, made it finally sink in. We didn't stay in the room long before Dex drove us home. He wanted to feel me, he said. The ride home was filled with music; no words were spoken between us. I honestly don't think they were needed. Twenty-one Pilots 'Heathens' played through the car radio. I had looked over at Dex and saw him tapping the steering wheel along with the tune, seeing him happy while driving and thinking that I had finally got him. He finally gave me his heart. He had sensed me looking at him because he turned his head to look at me and gave me a smile that would make woman's knees go weak. I smiled back at him and then looked out the window.

Coming out of my reverie, I open the front door for us and Dex places his hand on the small of my back, pushing me forward, towards my bedroom. Heat rushes through me, knowing what he wants. Hell, what I want. I hear the door shut behind us, Dex must have kicked it shut.

"I want you in that bedroom, naked and screaming my name. We need to fuck. Then we will rest and then we are going out to celebrate with our crew. They need to know that our baby is doing okay."

"Okay," is all I can say. My body is literally burning for his touch. It has been since we left the hospital. But the little touches in the car have been doing naff all for my sexual need for Dexter fucking Castle. And the bastard knew what he was doing.

"I like you all compliant, baby." I chuckle.

"I am surprised you know what that means. I mean, all you do is draw on people all day." I wink at him and he growls at me.

“You are a bitchy bitch when you’re horny aren’t you? Fuck, you’re a bitchy bitch when you aren’t horny.” This time he winks at me.

“You have no idea. This baby is making me horny twenty-four-seven. I have to flick the bean when you’re not here to help me.” I smile coyly at him and turn to walk towards my room.

“Are you serious?” he asks from behind me. I nod my head and bite my bottom lip, praying like fuck that I am looking sexy right now. “Baby, I own all of your orgasms and I am in a giving mood. You can show me how you like it. I want you to play with yourself for me.” I stop at my bedroom door and look back at him. The sexy smirk is back as he closes the distance between us. “Get naked and get on the bed. Now,” he demands. Bossy bastard. I waste no time stripping out of my clothes, fuck going slow. I want his body over mine as much as he wants mine beneath his. Dex strips out of his clothes and joins me on the bed. He lies next to me, his naked chest pressed against my arm. He lays his hand over my belly, feeling our baby move. My excitement must be affecting her.

“I love feeling her move,” I say in a low voice.

“Me too. It’s her way of letting us know that all is fine. But no more baby talk. I need to feel you; every single inch of you.” Dex goes up onto his elbows and looks down on me. A beautiful smile graces his face. God, I love his smile. His single dimple winks at me and I want to lick it, I always want to lick it. I feel his hand moving down over my bump, in the direction of my dripping wet pussy. As soon as his fingers graze over my mound I shiver. The pleasure that Dex gives me is mind blowing. I have been with a total of three men in all my life, but it has been Dex that had always played my body the best. It’s like he knew how to touch me and when. Unless he was like that with Fiona.

“So wet for me,” he says. I nod my head, effectively shaking my thoughts from my

mind. His talented fingers slide through my outer pussy lips and down to my entrance. He dips a finger inside of me and drags my juices up and over my throbbing clit. The small, strong circles he does with his fingers sends thick, heavy, pulsing desire through my body. I jolt when he hits an extra sensitive part of my pussy. These baby hormones are going to be the sexual death of me.

His finger dips into me again and I am so fucking wet for him that he slides in another finger with ease. This man can make me wet by just looking at me or saying just my name. He has always had the power over my body, even when we were younger and I didn't know what it was like to feel turned on. It was Dex's name that I called out during my first orgasm. Let's just say that the guy that gave it to me was not pleased at all. He stopped talking to me after that night. Dex's fingers speed up and the sound of my panting bounces off the walls.

"That's it baby, come for me. Coat my fingers with your juices. Fucking hell, baby, you are beautiful," he exclaims, while bringing me closer to my climax. His wet, warm mouth latches onto my nipple and he sucks hard.

"Ahhhhhh," I cry out. The heady sensation fills my mind. Dex's touch is taking over my body and there is nothing I can do to stop it. Dex takes what he wants, and he wants me. He wants my cries of pleasure, he wants all of me. My arse cheeks tighten and my orgasm builds. The intense desire spreads through my body until every muscle locks up in pleasure. My silent cries get caught in my throat. Dex's fingers slow, dragging every ounce of pleasure from my body. My breathing starts to slow and regulate as Dex peppers my neck and collarbone with light kisses.

"You are the sexiest thing I have ever seen. Baby, you were born to orgasm from my touch," Dex says against my sweaty skin. He licks my collarbone and I shiver again. He chuckles and I slap his shoulder. I lick my dry lips and wiggle my body against him, causing him to groan against my skin.

“You need to get that beast inside me, Dex. I need to come some more,” I say sweetly. Dex laughs and moves his body above mine and looks down at me. He just stares at me, his eyes flicking back and forth between mine. He takes in every inch of my face, like he is seeing me for the first time. My heart rate picks up and the overwhelming sense of love floods my body. I raise my hand and cup his jaw, the prickly hair of his stubble scratching my palm. I love the feeling, especially when his head is between my thighs. I bite my lip and his eyes track the movement and he mirrors me. God, why does he have to look so fucking sexy biting his lip?

“You do know that this sweet talking isn’t going to work on me,” he explains. I move my thigh so it rubs against his very large and very hard dick.

“I need you, Dex. Don’t let me down, babe. Make me scream your name,” I say, and turn on my side. I wiggle my arse over his dick and he growls behind me. He slides his hand over my arse and down the back of my thigh. He grips the back of my knee and hooks his arm under it. He maneuvers himself, so his cock is at my wet core. I squirm a little and feel the head of his cock enter me. Slowly. Very fucking slowly. His other arm snakes under my neck and curls around to grip it. He holds me still as he slides in the last inch. The heat rises in my body as Dex moves slowly in and out of me, my wetness making it easy for his cock to slide through me.

“Damn, baby. You feel so fucking good; wet and warm,” he whispers. His breath fans across my heated skin. I reach behind me and cup his head, holding his lips to my neck. His slow thrusts make me moan a breathy moan. Even though he is behind me, this time feels different. He is taking his time with me. Every other time we have had sex, it has been fast and intense. Dex is showing me how much he loves me, I can feel every ounce of love he has for me. As if he can hear my thoughts he speaks.

“God, I fucking love you, Addison Cole, soon-to-be Castle.” His dick jerks inside of me. “Fuck, Addison Castle. Sounds fucking perfect.” His thrusts falter. His words rattle around my head.

Did he just say what I think he said?

His fingers find my clit and he rubs slow, hard circles, making my pussy tighten around him. He growls a painful growl, like he is trying to fend off his own climax until I find mine. Which, believe me, I am desperately searching for. I can't help but push back on him. Feeling his dick go deeper and pulse inside of me excites me more. I feel my pussy gush with juices and Dex moans behind me again. The whole feeling of being with him makes my heart beat with absolute love and pleasure. To know that he is finally mine... can't now be described with words. I am not even sure actions can show how much this means to me.

"Dex!" I scream his name as my orgasm shoots through me, surprising me. One second I am enjoying the sensation, and then boom! Fireworks go off in my brain, sending streams of intense pleasure through every single nerve that runs through me. Dex's slaps my arse and I yelp. His pace quickens as he chases his own orgasm. Skin hitting skin; our sweat mixing together. Our breathy moans filling the room. His hand tightens on my hip and he slams in one last time, his body goes rigid as he comes inside of me.

"Fuuuuuuck," he growls. I grip his hand that is so tight on my hip I am pretty bloody sure it will leave a bruise. His chest heaves behind me, touching my back with every inhale and I rub my thumb across the top of his hand. We stay quiet for a few minutes, taking in the connection flowing through us. Dex's hand ever so slowly leaves my hip, and slides over my baby bump, my hand still on top of his. We feel our daughter move together and I can't stop the sloppy smile that crosses my face. God, I feel like I am in some cheesy Hallmark baby film.

"Perfect. Fucking perfect," Dex says into my neck.

"Yes, I was. Thank you very much." Dex bursts out laughing and I can't help but join him. His laugh does something to me. It's deep and throaty; makes me twice as wet.

Bloody pregnancy hormones. I move to lie on my back so I can see his handsome face. His perfect cheekbones, straight nose, perfect jaw. His eyes make you lose yourself. I lost myself years ago and I knew I would never find myself, until he found me. I raise my hand to his face, dragging my thumb across his bottom lip. His tongue slips out and licks the pad of my digit and I shiver. Dex smirks at me. Cheeky bastard knows what he does to me. Our eyes never stray, locking in words that don't really need to be said but I know they will be.

“So, we are doing this?” I ask, still touching his jaw. He huffs a small laugh and moves his hand on my belly.

“Hell yeah we are. You have my baby in your belly and I was introduced to your friends as your boyfriend. Even though I feel I am too old for that title, but I will take it.” I laugh, but his earlier words come back into my head.

“Speaking of title...” I quirk an eyebrow. “Addison Castle?” Dex lets out a little laugh and leans in to kiss my lips.

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“You caught that, yeah?” I nod my head. His face loses its smile and he looks at me with all seriousness, but with love in his eyes. “I meant it, Ads. I want to marry you, the sooner the better. I think we have wasted enough time, don’t you?”

“We have. But I need to know, Dex.”

“Know what?”

I take a deep breath and answer him. “I need to know if you want this because of me, and not because of the baby. Don’t get pissed at me. I need to know, babe.” Dex goes up onto his elbow again, cupping my jaw, moving his thumb over my cheek. His eyes shine with love and adoration. For me I hope. He smiles down at me. God, say something. His silence is deafening. I start to squirm and feel uncomfortable. Me: Addison Cole, feeling uncomfortable. I have a load of tattoos over my body, which I need to add to. I don’t ever feel like this. Only Dex can make me feel like this. Everyone else I just tell to ‘fuck off’. I am who I am and I will never change.

“Baby, I was trying to get together with you before I found out about the baby. Of course I want this. Fuck, I have wanted this for years but I suppressed my feelings, like the twat I am.”

“Captain Twat,” I snigger.

“Exactly. Captain Twat. And fuck if I don’t own that name. Do you know why?” I shake my head. “Because you gave it to me. Babe, my heart, body and soul belongs to you. And if you ever tell the boys what I have just said, I will deny the shit out of it.” I start to laugh but Dex cuts my laughter off with his mouth. I touch my tongue to

his and he groans into my mouth and I am all too bloody happy to soak in his pleasure. My body starts to tingle again, I squeeze my thighs together to try and ease the pulsing sensation.

“My baby needs my cock again.” It isn’t a question. It is a statement; a true statement. He gives me his cock, over and over again through the night.

Dexter Castle leaves his mark on my body and my heart. A mark I am all too happy to leave there.

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“We need to pick a name for the baby,” I tell Addy, as she helps Penny load the table up with food. I am forever telling her to sit her arse down but she never fucking listens to me. Today marks her thirty weeks of pregnancy. Penny is sitting in at twenty-five weeks and a few weeks ago, she and Liam found out they were also having a baby girl. They have already chosen a name, but Addy and me are still at loggerheads over a name for our mini Castle.

I love seeing my girl and my best friend’s girl carrying our kids together. It’s something I have wanted but I had always pictured my future with Fiona. But a wise man once told me ‘Shit happens when you party naked. You can’t stop it, you have no control over it. You have to take each new day as it rolls in.’ I had just laughed at him at the time, because his advice was wacky as shit. He was getting a tattoo of a skeleton mermaid with the name ‘Doreen’ resting on the mermaid’s outstretched hand. That tattoo has always stuck with me because four days after I did the blokes tattoo, I lost Fiona.

“Well, I have told you the names I like and you keep whining about them. So don’t blame me when our little girl is born and we have no name for her and we call her ‘baby’ for Lord knows how long,” she shoots back at me. She twirls a strand of hair around her finger and smirks at me. She re-coloured her hair last week. Gone was the two-tone hair I am used to her having. Now she is a blush-rose colour, Addy corrected me when I told her that her hair looked a reddy-brown. It suits her perfectly.

“Baby, I have picked perfectly good names as well. But you being a stubborn woman refused every one of them,” I smart off.

“Of course I did, they were bloody stupid names, Dex. For crying out loud. Who the hell names their daughter ‘Luna’? Can you imagine her being picked on in school - ‘Luna Castle’. Give me a break, Dex. Our daughter will have a pretty but bad arse name. Simple.” She turns around, fussing with the plates on the table.

“I like ‘Luna’,” Jay chimes in. Addy huffs but doesn’t turn around.

“Fucking typical. Side with your brother.”

“What names do you like, Ads?” Liam asks her from the seat next to me.

“I have a few that I like. But shithead over there doesn’t like any of them,” Addy replies as she turns back to face us.

“We have to pick one that we both like. I am not settling on a name just because we can’t decide. We have 10 weeks, maybe less, so we need to get cracking. Plus, we need to sort the nursery out at my place.” I wink at her. She pokes her tongue out at me and crosses her arms, pouting. She still hasn’t moved back to BH, but she does sleep at my place a few times a week, it is a start but I fucking hate it. I had a run in with Lauren one day and she made a few threats.

I was walking out of Addy’s bathroom to female voices. I pulled on a pair of running shorts once I dried off and I was running the towel over my head as I walked towards the girls. One I knew as Addy but I couldn’t place the other, until I saw her. Lauren. Addy’s new best friend. That woman had the mouth of a sailor and the attitude to match. But, in a way, I was glad because she was very protective of my girl. They are talking about going baby shopping, getting things for the nursery. Addy stops talking when she sees me. I wink at her and she licks her lips.

“Nope. Turn around and put more clothes on, right now, Mr,” she tells me. I smirk at her and shake my head slowly.

“Nope. It isn’t my fault that you can’t keep your hands to yourself. You are lucky I threw on the shorts, babe.”

“She isn’t the lucky one, bud, because believe me, if you had walked out of the bathroom stark naked and forced me to see the goods, then you, Mr Castle, would be missing a few goods.” She air quotes the word ‘goods’. “In fact, give me an excuse to make some ‘goods’ disappear. I haven’t had a good cock and ball cutting session in a while. Just ask my sister’s ex-boyfriend.” She smiles sweetly at me and I shit you not my balls and my cock drew up into my body. This woman scares the ever loving fuck out of me. I think every man should be scared of her. I see Addy cover her mouth with her hand, trying to hide her smile from me. Little shit. But with me being the guy that I am, and the guy that almost most women love, I grip the ends of the towel and hook it around my neck, making my biceps bulge more. Addy’s eyes fill with lust as always. That girl could never not love my arms. She loves arm porn, as she says. I smirk at the two ladies standing in front of me.

“The last thing on your mind would have been to cut off my cock and balls, Lauren. You would have been drooling and on your knees in a shot.” Addy gasps.

“DEX!” I keep my eyes locked on Lauren. She cocks an eyebrow at me and holds my gaze. My smile falters a little when she steps towards me. Our eyes stay locked in a challenging way, each of us daring the other to look away first. She stops inches from me but I don’t get a chance to say anything. Her hand shoots out and she grips my dick in her hand, she squeezes just to make a point.

“I get on my knees for one man, Mr Castle, and it is most certainly not you.” She adds another squeeze and my breath catches. “Now don’t get me wrong, my girl here is a lucky bitch, because even soft, I need two hands to cup you fully. So I can only imagine how much you like your ‘goods’. So treat her right and you will get to keep them and make more mini Castles.” She looks between us and adds, “But you both need to decide where the baby’s nursery will be, because it is shitty that you are

living apart.” She winks and turns back to my girl. Effectively letting my dick and balls go. I watch as she kisses Addy on her cheeks and walks out of her apartment. I just stand there and watch her go. What the fuck just happened? Addy walks over to me with a big smile on her face.

She pats my cheek. “You will get used to her.” With that, she walks into the kitchen.

“DEX!” I hear my name being yelled, snapping me out of my thoughts. I blink a few times and look towards Liam who is calling my name. Everyone is smiling at me.

“What?” I ask casually. Like fuck if I will ever admit to being scared of Addy’s friend.

“We were talking baby names and you zoned out, man. You okay?” I nod.

“Yeah, I’m fine.” I look over to Addy. “Baby, you need to move home full time. This part-time shit is bollocks. It is time for you to come home.” With that, I get up and walk into the house. I need another drink. I have told her a shit load of times that I need her home with me. I asked her once if she didn’t feel comfortable living in the house that Fiona and I bought. She made it very clear that living in Fiona’s house didn’t bother her. She told me she would never expect me to cut Fiona’s memory out of my head. I just don’t get why she won’t move in with me.

“Babe?” Addy’s voice comes from behind me. I brace my hands on the worktop and drop my head. Taking in a deep breath, I tell her how I feel.

“Baby, it is killing me not having you with me at home. I fucking hate not going to bed with you every night. I fucking hate not going to sleep with you every night. I want to feel my daughter move, every time. But I know I miss out on loads when we are apart. I fucking hate it.” I try to control the pain in my voice. I feel her soft hand on my back. Her hand rests on my bicep.

“Okay,” she whispers. My head whips around to face her.

“Okay?”

“Okay,” she says again.

“Okay. As in ‘Okay, I will move back home with you, Dexter. The man in my life. The man who makes me come like no other man can.’ type of okay?” She smiles and nods her head.

“Yes, Dex. The type of okay that says ‘I will move home with the man that can make me scream his name in orgasm like no man has before or ever will again.’”

I growl. “Don’t talk about you being with other fuckheads.” She rolls her eyes at me.

“You are mine, Addison Castle.” I wink at her.

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“WHAT THE FUCK? Did I miss something?” Jay bellows from the doorway. Both our heads snap in his direction. Everyone comes barreling through the door after him. I pull Ads to me, her back to my chest. Everyone is staring at us like we have grown extra heads or something. Jay, Liam, Penny and the kids. Adrian, Claire and the kids are here too. Rachel stopped by but left when her phone rang, much to my brother’s annoyance. Things need to change between them, they have played that back and forth malarkey for months now, well, she has. Jay wants all in.

“You didn’t miss anything little brother. Just trying on the name for when I ask Addy to marry me,” I state, loving the sound of her having my name.

“Fuck, you scared me, fella. But I have to say, it does have a nice ring to it.” He winks at Addy. She chuckles in front of me and I tighten my arms around her. I love the feel of her against me. She fits just right. I kiss the side of her head and she leans into me more. I hold my girl and watch our friends talk in the kitchen. Connie and Knox come into the kitchen, pushing their way through the group of adults. Connie opens the fridge and digs around for her favourite drink. Knox stands there looking between Addy’s swollen belly and Penny’s. I can only imagine the thoughts running through his head.

“So, how does this work?” he asks the room.

“How does what work?” Penny asks back. Oh fuck. I know the next question coming out of the boy’s mouth. He is a curious little shit; always asking questions about everything and anything. He has a mind like his dad. Always has to know things.

“Those things.” He points between the two pregnant chicks. “How did the babies get

in there? Because come on, Mum, the babies are getting pretty big.” Penny’s face goes beet red and she looks towards Liam with a ‘help the fuck out’ look on her face. He just laughs at her and steps up to her side.

“Dude, you are a tad young to know these things. Give it a few more years and I will tell you everything,” Liam explains.

“I know,” Connie pipes in. Everyone snaps their heads in her direction. “When I went to a sleepover, I overheard Lydia’s sister saying that her friend got pregnant, even though she only had sex one time.” She shrugs her shoulders like she is talking about an everyday topic. Not about the fact that she knows that you have to have sex to get pregnant.

“You-you know about sex?” Penny asks, whispering the word ‘sex’ like it is a taboo word. Connie shrugs again and takes a drink of her Fanta before she answers, leaving the question hanging in the air.

“Weeeeelllll, not all of it. I am only ten you know. Come on, Knox, let’s go out back.” She walks off with Knox and the other kids in tow. Kids these days.

“Well fuck me running. What the hell just happened?” Liam whines, leaning back against the kitchen units. Everyone chuckles at him. Addy steps away from me and walks over to him. She pats his chest and says.

“Dude, it is only going to get worse the older she gets. And just you wait until girl number two arrives, you will have to do it aallllll over again,” she sings in a sweet voice.

“Fuck no! My girls are gonna stay sweet and innocent. Besides, you two are having a girl, you are gonna be in the same boat as us,” Liam answers back. Thinking he had one up on my girl. But there is one thing I love about Addy, and that is that she can

stand up for herself.

“Ha, that is fine, Li. Because our girl is gonna be bad arse. She is going to be kicking boys’ arses all over town when she is older. She will have a mouth like me and her dad’s attitude, so there.” She pokes her tongue out at him before walking back into my arms. I wrap them around her, holding her tight to me.

I drop my hands as Addy turns to face our friends. My hands drop to her swollen belly, and I feel my daughter kick against my hands, like she knows it is me. My baby will be a bad arse just like her mum, and I wouldn’t want her any other way.

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I am fucking huge.

I am a beached whale.

I fucking hate being pregnant right now.

My feet hurt. My back hurts. Bloody hell, everything hurts. Dex is being an overbearing twat. He is a controlling twat. I went shopping with Lauren and Penny three weeks ago, we bought a few things that I need for the nursery, plus a few things I will need after the baby is born. I came home to an empty apartment; we were only shopping for three fucking hours. Captain Twat decided that enough was enough and he moved me back home to Bell Harbour. To say I was pissed would be the understatement of the entire fucking year. I was livid. My body was buzzing with anger, even Lauren was impressed.

So I, Addison Cole, refused all contact with one Dexter Castle for two days. He knew I was safe, but he didn't know where I was. Lauren booked me into a spa getaway and it was bloody bliss. I was waxed to an inch of my life, being pregnant is no joke to a woman's bikini line. I now have baby smooth skin and I smell like vanilla. Dex's favourite.

But back to the now. I am sat in the back of a taxi on my way to Castle Ink. Not seeing Dex in two days has put a dampener on my mood, I need my man. I have missed him, but he needs to know that he has to stop trying to control everything in my life. He went and told everyone that we were naming the baby 'Primrose'. I soon put a stop to that. Don't get me wrong it is a pretty name but not for our baby girl. I have two names that have stuck with me and I am hoping that Dex will like one of

them.

The taxi pulls up outside and the driver jumps out. He runs around the car and opens my door for me. Offering me a hand, he helps me out of the car.

"Thank you." I hand him the money for the fare and he bids me a goodbye before driving off. I smile up at the big lettering above the studio windows; the bold black font against the stark white background. Dex had the design in his head for years until his dream became his reality and he made the huge jump to open his own studio with Jay. I push the door open and walk in, noticing the bell above the door no longer tinkles. Thank fucking Christ, I hated that thing. But I hate what I am seeing before me more.

Dex is leaning against the wall, ankles crossed. He has one hand tucked into the front pocket of his jeans. He looks sexy as hell, but it is the fucking slut that is touching him that is killing the sexual need. He does nothing to brush off her touch, he is smiling at her as she touches his forearm, tracing the tattoos there. The smile is inviting and it hurts my heart to see it. That smile is normally reserved for me.

I look down at myself and check out my dungarees. They stretch over my baby bump, I have rolled up the legs, so they come just above my ankles, and I have on my black Converse. I look back towards the girl and Dex and see that her jeans are painted on, and her boobs are spilling out of her t-shirt. She looks sexier than me. I am a fucking beached whale. I am never this insecure about my looks, but this baby is doing a number on me.

I walk up to them and watch every move they both make. My stomach is churning and is ready to expel the chicken pasta dish I had for lunch. My fists curl and uncurl in anger, disappointment and hurt. My heart is literally breaking apart. After everything that was said over the last few months, he is willing to chuck it all away because I needed time away from his bossy arse. If this is how he is going to react

after we fight, then he is not worth the heartache.

“Didn’t take you long did it, Dex?” I ask, as I stop behind the girl. She spins around and looks down at me. She chuckles and backs up against Dex’s chest. He takes a step back, but that single act is a little too late. “A bit late for that move, don’t you think?” I say. His eyes stay on mine, hurt, frustration and regret shines back at me.

“Two days,” is all he says.

“Do you mind, we were having a conversation. Now scurry on away and let me talk this fine piece of man into tattooing me, somewhere where only he will see.” She turns her head and winks at him.

“Well, I can see that you are very busy, so why don’t I scurry along and go find a man that truly appreciates me for me. One that won’t turn around and walk into the first pair of open legs of a willing woman, thatisn’t this girlfriend.” With that, I walk towards the front door, my heart beating wildly in my chest. Tears threaten to fall but I will myself to hold them back until I am alone.

“Addy,” I hear Dex calling me. I don’t stop. I hurry along the road, having no bloody clue where I am going. “Addy, for fucks sake. STOP!” he yells at me. My feet stick to the pavement, like someone just threw some tar down on the floor to stop me. I don’t turn around to face him. My nose burns with the sensation of tears building.

I will not cry in front of him.

I will not cry in front of him.

I feel him come up behind me, but I stand my ground and keep my eyes on the floor. This man makes me feel every emotion. He has always had the ability to make me feel things that I hate feeling. I am so fucking mad at him, but at the same time I want

to turn around and hug him to me. I have missed him.

I feel his hand touch my hips and I flinch from the touch, his hands drop like I have burned him. I regret the action, but it is too late to come back from it now. I have always hated him touching me after I have seen him touch another woman. I step away from him and finally build up the courage to turn and face him. The pain is clear as day on his handsome face. Regret slams into me. I close my eyes, trying to block out his face but it is impossible. My heart aches for the pain that I have put on his face.

“Two days.” He repeats his earlier words. I know that my actions hurt him and pissed him off at the same time but, Jesus Christ, he pissed me off too.

“Yeah. Two days. I had to, Dex. You were taking over everything in my life and I couldn't breathe. I told you to back off. I asked you so many times to leave me to move back home when I was ready. I needed to wrap my head around moving home with you. BH holds some painful memories for me, Dex, but you being the bossy prick that you are, pushed.”

“Is it so fucking wrong that I want you at home with me”?

“No it's not, Dex.” I sigh. “Dex, you know I don't like being told what to do. So when you push me, I push back harder. You are overwhelming me sometimes. I needed those two days away. Yes, it was to punish you a little, because you didn't listen to me. You never do.”

“Yes I do. It's just that you are a stubborn bitch and refuse to let me in all the way. If you loved me like you say you do, then you would move home with me, now.” His words are like a slap to the face. First the ‘bitch’ comment and then the ‘if you loved me’. What a fucking prick. I stare at him, my mouth opening and closing. The words running through my head not making it out of my mouth to give this twat of a man a

piece of my mind. The words he just said sinks in when he sees the look on my face. He steps forward and I take one back. I shake my head at him and hurt flashes across his face.

“I will go and stay with Lauren tonight. I need some time to think.”

“No, you are coming home with me. We need to talk. I have just had to spend the last two-fucking-days without you next to me. I am not doing it again.”

“See, you aren’t listening to me, again. Fucking hell, Dex. Just listen to me. I need time to think.”

“No you don’t. Let me get my car keys and we will go home now.” He turns to walk away but my words stop him in his tracks.

“Do you know how much you hurt me in there?” I point to Castle Ink. “Seeing you let that girl touch you. Seeing you smile my smile at her. I would never let another man touch me while we were together, Dex. But you. You couldn’t fucking wait to have another woman’s hands on you. So what, we had a fucking fight. Does that give you the right to go and shag any girl you want? Is this how our relationship is going to go? Because if it is, I want no bloody part of it.” We stare at each other, and I now feel the tears running down my face. When did I start crying? Well bloody hell.

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“I always listen to you, I just like to push you a little. You would have never moved back home with me unless I did it for you. And don’t lie to my face and tell me, yes, you would have.”

“I would have, Dex.” He just shakes his head at me. I sigh, exhausted from today's shit.

“As for the girl in there... She was touching me. I was being polite by not causing a scene in the studio.”

“So when I go out and some random lad touches my arm, I can let him touch me and not make a scene. Good to know, Dex, I will remember that the next time some bloke touches me,” I say smugly.

“Do not even go there, Addy.”

“Why?”

“You belong to me and only me, Addy.”

“That’s funny, because I thought that went both ways. But you seemed perfectly happy to let some skank touch you. And you were more than happy to tattoo her, ‘where no other man will ever see’,” I say mimicking the girl’s voice.

“Jesus - fuck.” He runs his hands through his hair, making his arm muscles tighten and look sexy as fuck. My core clenches; treacherous bitch that she is. It’s these pregnancy hormones, that is my excuse and I am sticking to it. I look towards the

studio window and see the bitch standing there with her arms crossed under her fake tits and a smirk on her face. My stomach rolls again at the thought her touching Dex. I bring my gaze back to Dex.

“I’m going to go. You have a skank to tattoo. I will have Lauren or Joe come and pick me up.” I pull out my phone to text Lauren. I hear Dex mutter ‘fuck’ under his breath. I look up and just see him looking away from Castle Ink.

“No.” He snatches my phone out of my hand.

“Dex. Give it back. I am way too bloody tired to fight with you anymore. This baby is going to be here before we know it and I need all the sleep I can get.”

“Baby, you loved sleep before you got preggers, so don’t use my baby as an excuse.” I would normally smile at his reply, but I don’t. I swear mini Castle is sucking all of the energy out of me. How can women do this more than once? They are my heroes, I tell you.

“Please, let me go home. I want to power nap for an hour... or twelve,” I whine. Dex steps forward and wraps his arms around me; I don’t stop him this time. He is using my tiredness to his advantage. He steers me towards the door of Castle Ink, but my steps falter. I don’t want to go in there wheresheis waiting for him. I shake my head, but Dex keeps pulling me with him. He is way stronger than me so I don’t stand a chance against this tattooed beast of a man. Dex shoves the door open and the girl’s face brightens when he walks in behind me. She completely overlooks me, but that is okay with me; I don’t want her skanky eyes looking at me. Without looking at her, he pushes me forward towards his room.

“Dex, are we going to do my tattoo today, babe? I can go and wait in your room for you.”

Dex stops walking behind me, he hooks his fingers into the belt loops on my dungarees to stop my path. Pulling me gently back to him, he hooks his arm around my waist. He looks at the girl and then at me. He smiles down at me before lowering his head and he takes my lips in a bruising kiss. His tongue delves into my mouth, tasting every inch of my gums. He pulls his head back and winks at me. My breath literally goes with him. He looks at the girl and smirks.

“Sorry, I will get Luke to get you sorted. I need to take my girl home and get my fill before our baby girl arrives.”

“So what was that before? You flirted with me; you made it sound like we were going to hook up later.” I pat Dex’s chest and smile at him and then offer the skank my most sugary smile ever and say.

“Sorry, it was a total lapse of judgement on his part. Believe me it won’t happen again,” I wink at her and pull Dex to the back of Castle Ink. Laughter fills my ears but I just smile to myself and keep walking, pulling my man with me. I walk into Dex's room and wait for him to close the door behind him. I turn to face him and put my hands on my hips, and glare at him. The nice girl act can stop now.

"Just so we are clear, Mr Castle. You ever and I mean ever let another woman touch you again. I will take Lauren up on her threat and have her cut off your cock and balls. I am perfectly happy with this baby being an only child. You hear me?" I say, cocking my eyebrow. He steps closer but I stop him. "Do. You. Get. Me?" I repeat. He stares at me and nods his head. Then slowly, a cocky smirk appears in his face.

"My girl is scary as shit when she is threatening me. Sexy as fuck, though. But since I love my cock and balls, I will listen to her. I need to father more babies with her."

"You just remember what I said and we will be fine," I state and sit down. My back is killing me. I know he didn't do anything major but I still didn't want to see it.

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Finishing up the bloke's tattoo on his back, my own back aches but his ink will look epic. He's having a big arse back piece done. He has two Samurai in fighting stances, one on either side of his back, with wind and leaves blowing around them. This is the last of four sittings that we have done. This man is a fucking legend if you ask me. I tap him on shoulder to get his attention.

"You feeling okay? Do you need a break?"

"Yeah, man, that would be cool. How much more to get done?" I do a quick glance over his back and guesstimate.

"I would say another hour. That good with you?"

"This is your work, fella. I just lay here for you to play with." He winks at me. I chuckle and pull my gloves off. Phillip stands and picks his phone up from the little table beside his chair.

"Fuck off, man. Go and have a smoke, then we can finish this beast off," I tell him. He nods his head and walks towards the back door that leads to where everyone goes for their smoke break. I walk over to the sink and quickly wash my hands. Once I dry them I stretch my back, it clicks in a million places, like I am a hundred years old. The t-shirt I am wearing is one that Addy bought for me. It says 'Best three minutes of your life'. She loves getting these shirts made for me. I walk to the front of the studio to see Luke. The man has been working like crazy here the last few months, trying to build up his clients. He brought a few with him and the ladies love him. It is a plus side to having him here, plus Jay is a total fucking flirt with the women.

“Sup, dude?” I ask him. I stretch again and someone wolf whistles at me. I snap my body back into place and see Addy walking through the door. Her smile makes my heart skip a beat like a girl at a One Direction concert. I lean on the desk and watch as she slightly waddles over to me. The past week, she has really started to waddle, when her baby bump seemed to grow overnight. We are due to have another scan next week to check the size of the baby again.

“Hey, baby.” I open my arms and move my stance wider so she can get closer to me; her belly touching me before any other part of her body. I wrap my arms around her and hold her to me. She winches a little but smiles at me. I lean in and kiss her, tasting her cherry lip gloss. Our tongues touch and play and the studio fades away. There is only us here in this moment. Addy pulls away and winces again.

“Baby, what’s wrong? Are you and the baby okay?” She looks around the studio and then back to me. I feel her body tense up and then relax after a minute or two. I wait for her to tell me what is wrong, to stop the million fucking things running around my head.

“It’s time, honey,” she says. “You need to get Jay and Liam. Baby Castle is coming.”

“Oh fuck. Umm. Luke. JAY,” I scream. My heart is pounding. It will break through my chest at any fucking moment. I run to the back of the studio and pick up my wallet and phone. I run back through the studio and out to my car. My mind is racing. Will the baby be okay? She is two weeks early. We were due to have a scan next week, to check her size. How will Addy cope with the pain? I jam the keys in the ignition and start the car. I put the car into first gear and then hear a tap at the window. I turn my head and see Addy standing there smiling at me. I blanch at seeing her. I push the button to open the window.

“Why the fuck are you out there? You should be in here with me and on our way to the hospital. Our baby is coming for fucks sake.” I throw the door open and run

around to help her into the car.

“Oh, I know she is coming, Dex. I can feel the bloody contractions. Baby, slow down. It will take time, Dex. My waters haven’t broken yet. Labour can take hours.” I shut her door and run around and jump back into my seat. I start to pull away from the studio when I see Jay running out and running towards his car. Panic clear on his face, it matches mine. I drive to the hospital in a blur. Addy strokes my leg the entire time, calming me like I am the one that is in labour and feeling excruciating pain every few minutes. She is handling the contractions like a champ - I think. Like I said it is mostly a blur.

I park the car and dart around to help my girl out. Her feet hit the floor first and she stands up. No sooner has she leaned in to kiss me when there is a gushing noise from below us.

“Fuck. What the hell is that?” I screech like a fucking girl. Water fills the little dent in the road beneath our feet. Addy chuckles at my response.

“My waters broke, babe. Calm down. Now come on, let’s get upstairs.” My feet decide that they don’t want to function right now. I stare down at my feet, taking in the discolouration of the liquid there. My heart is going crazy in my chest, beating fast like a pack of Wildebeest doing a stampede. My skin is buzzing from the excitement and nerves clash throughout my body. The soft touch on my cheek makes me lift my gaze from the floor, to Addy’s eyes; the love and adoration clearly shining through.

“We will be fine, babe. Our daughter is excited to meet us. I am excited to meet her and introduce her to our family. I know you are going to be a bad arse daddy to her. You will protect her something fierce. You will be scaring the boys away who want to date her. She will be loved by us both, until we take our last breath.” Her words make my heart swell with love for her. I love her with all of my heart, but she just

took every ounce of Dex Castle I had to offer. I lean in and kiss her gently on the lips. A contraction hits and she pulls her face away from me and leans down, gripping my t-shirt in her fists. Her body almost doubles over in pain and it kills me that I can't do anything to take the pain away.

"If you didn't want me to kiss you, all you had to do was say so. You didn't have to fake a contraction." I wink at her and she mutters 'arsehole' under her breath. "Okay, let's get you upstairs and get this show on the road. I need to meet my daughter."

"We will be fine, Dex," she says again. I nod and kiss the side of her head.

We make it up to the maternity ward and there is a midwife waiting for us. She smiles at Addy and helps her into a wheelchair. I follow behind like a lost puppy, having no clue what to do or say. I watch as my girl has painful contraction after painful contraction. We get put into a room and the midwife helps Addy onto the bed. I drop her bag next to the bed and walk over to her. The midwife is pottering around, asking questions, getting wires all ready and set up.

"Okay, Addy, how long ago did your water break?"

"About five minutes ago. I got out of the car and they went. Luckily I wasn't in the car, I think Dex would have well and truly had a fit." The two women chuckle. I stay stoic, yeah, she is fucking lucky that all that messy liquid shit wasn't in my car. I have heard that it stinks to high heaven. Addy winks at me and I smile back.

"How about I let your man here help you get out of the wet clothes and into clean pj's? Then we will get you hooked up to the monitor and see how the baby is doing. This monitor will also monitor your contractions." I don't wait for her to reply, I start digging through her overnight bag and take out what she needs. I help Addy off the bed and walk into the small bathroom that joins onto her room. I slip off her shirt and go for her bra.

“I can leave that on,” she says.

“Nope, I read that your boobs are going to hurt while in labour, so baby, let them beauties hang free.” I wink at her. I take in her perfect tits that have gotten bigger during the pregnancy. She kept her nipple bars in.

“Fine. Oh and, Dex?” Her saying my name drags my attention from her beautiful tits sitting there, begging me to play with them. I drag my eye away from her tits and I meet her gaze. Her beautiful smile stares right back at me.

“Yeah, babe,” I answer her.

“I am thinking of taking the bars out. I might want to try breast feeding. Are you okay with that?” Am I okay with that?

“Of course I am, baby. You get to feed our daughter, fresh from your body.”

“But that means that while I am feeding our daughter, you can’t play with them.” She smiles wickedly at me. What the fuck?

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“Says who?” I ask, pulling back slightly.

“Well, me and everyone out there. You will get milk in your mouth, Dex. Milk that is for your baby.” She smiles at me. Well fucking hell.

“Bollocks. She can have powder milk. We can pick up some tins on the way home. No one is taking my tits away from me,” I say seriously. Hell fucking no.

“But breast is best, Dex.” She pouts at me, jutting out her bottom lip. Oh fuck, I knew she would pull this shit.

“Fine,” I say, pulling her closer to me. Her body tenses and she leans her forehead against my chest and moans. My hands go to her back and add pressure and rub up and down. She sways through each contraction and I keep the pressure up. Once that bad boy is over with, I finish helping her get out of the wet clothes and into clean pj’s. We make our way back into the room where the midwife is waiting for us. I help Addy climb back up onto the bed and the midwife starts adding the little round monitors to Addy’s belly. Big elastic bands are placed over them, to keep them in place. Once they are in place, the midwife explains to Addy that she needs to check her. Like, down there. I am mortified for her. I wouldn’t want some stranger looking around my cock while I was in some God awful fucking pain.

“You are doing brilliantly, Addy. You are six centimeters and doing great. The baby should be here in the next few hours. Have you guys picked a name out yet?” Addy smiles up at me and I match her smile.

“We are still fighting over two names. I want mine and he wants his, obviously. So

we have said we will see what she looks like and go from there. But I think I will win.” She winks at me and I kiss her head.

“We’ll see,” I say back. Another contraction comes and goes in a matter of seconds, but it feels like minutes and I’m not the one feeling the pain. I rub her back through each one; it is all I can really do. I have never felt so helpless in all of my life. Not even when Jay and me had a shitty time when we were kids.

“Dex, it hurts. Bad.”

“I know, baby. But it will be worth it. I swear.” She nods her head but doesn’t say anything. I bend over and find the small wash cloth and walk over to the sink and make it wet. Walking back to the bed, the door opens and my brother walks in. I take a deep breath and let it out. Seeing him here makes me feel like I can deal with this situation better. He sees my face and nods his understanding. Besides Addy, Jay is my lifeline. We have been through so much in our lives. He walks over to my girl in the bed as she has a contraction. She grits her teeth and a small growl leaves her beautiful lips.

“Holy fucking shit. Has Addy been taken over by the ghoulish thing from Ghostbusters?” he chuckles. Addy shoots him a death glare and he backs away, raising his hands in surrender. “Just messing with you. Damn, woman. Breathe; you are looking a tad red there.” He points to her face.

“I swear to Christ I will rip your fucking balls off, Jay Castle, if you do not SHUT. THE. FUCK. UP,” she growls at him. I shake my head and sit on the edge of her bed.

“I think you should listen to her, brother.” I smirk at him. He looks shocked by her words and I have to say, slightly terrified.

“Oooooo, fuuuuck. Dex,” Addy cries out. I soothe her with my voice. She told me

that it helps.

“You are doing great, baby. Just think what we will have at the end of all this pain.” I brush her hair off of her forehead and lay soft kisses over her face.

“Shit, who the hell are you and what have you done with my brother?” Jay says from beside the bed. I smile over Addy’s head at him and answer his question.

“Prick. My girl needs me and I will do whatever I can to make it better for her. You wait until Rachel gets knocked up; then I can take the piss out of you.” He shakes his head and picks Addy’s hand up, he starts massaging her fingers and her body visibly relaxes, well fuck me. I take the other hand and mirror his movements.

“This thing with me and kitten, isn’t happening how I wanted it to, man. She is blocking me at every turn.” I look from Addy, towards my brother. His shoulders sag and I can see the pain etched on his face. I hate seeing him hurting, but I know he is a grown man and can handle his shit himself. He needs to sort this shit out with Rachel or he will be the one with the broken heart. Maybe I can sic Addy on her, my girl can be a total fierce bitch when one of her boys are being hurt.

“It will get sorted, brother. Just give it time. It worked for me,” I tell him, believing my own words.

Finally.

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“Ifucking hate you,” I scream at Dex, who is standing across the room. He is right not to be near me right now. I have been in active labour for six hours and I am at nine centimeters. I am contracting more than I am not and by fucking Christ it hurts. “This is the only time you are planting one of your beast babies inside of me, you fucker.” I tense up as another wave of excruciating pain rips through my body. I love this baby with all my heart but fucking hell, she needs to come out... NOW!

“You love me, Ads. It’s the pain talking,” Dex says. Jay chuckles from beside his brother.

“Fuck loving you. Give me the fucking drugs. I need something for the pain,” I wail. Lauren is next to me, running the cool, damp cloth around my face. I know I can’t have anything for the pain, I am way past the point for that.

“Man the hell up woman. It’s too late for painkillers now. You need to try and relax, this baby will be coming out of your minge in no time.” Dex groans and so does Jay.

“Nice, Lauren. I am now not picturing Addy’s pussy stretching and my niece's head popping out.” Jay shudders at his words. “Ouch, you fucker.” I look across the room and see Jay rubbing the back of his head.

“Well, that's what you get for talking about my girl’s pussy, you prick. You should never be thinking about her down there at all.” I chuckle and another contraction hits.

“Ahhhhh big, fat, hairy monkey balls,” I scream. I vaguely feel the midwife checking between my legs, my poor baby cannon. It is going to be the size of the bloody Grand Canyon after I push her out. Even though they told me she was on the small side, it

still feels like I am birthing a beach ball.

“Baby, can I come closer?” I can hear the anguish in his voice and the tears start to fill my eyes. I nod my head and in two seconds flat he is by my side. He lays kisses all over my face, whispering how much he loves me.

“I’m sorry I have been a bitch,” I tell him through the tears.

“It’s fine, baby. You are doing great.” The pressure builds and I feel like I need to poop.

“I need the toilet, Colleen,” I tell the midwife. She shakes her head.

“You are fine, Addy, that pressure you are feeling is the baby. You are ten centimeters and you are ready to push. So how about you start. Chin to your chest and push like you are having a bowel movement.” I do as she says and push through the contraction. I can feel my body tighten up and I feel like I am going to burst a blood vessel. I take a deep breath and push again. The burn makes me scream.

“You got this, baby. Push, Addison,” Dex says from my side. He is holding one of my legs and Lauren has the other.

“Okay, again, Addy. One more and her head will be out.” I push through the burn and I feel the pressure lessen some. “That is the head out. Look, Dad. She has your hair.” I watch as Dex moves his head so he can see our daughter’s face for the first time. He takes a deep breath and his eyes fill with tears. I get a second of reprieve and then the next contraction hits. This is it, I can’t take much more. I need to push my baby out. I grind my teeth together and push for all that is holy. My lungs burn from the lack of oxygen, but nothing matters as the first sound of my daughter’s cries fill the small hospital room.

Fuck, I did it.

“Baby, you did it. She is here, baby. Fuck, she is here. God, I love you so fucking much.” I barely feel Dex kiss my mouth, then my eyes and my cheeks. My body is deflated, exhausted from all the physical pain and lack of sleep. I lay back and take in the sound of my daughter’s cries, she really doesn’t like being outside of her warm, comfy bubble in my belly. Dex chuckles next to me. “She is perfect. She has a good set of lungs on her.” He kisses me again.

“Mouthy, just like her mum,” Lauren says from my side, and I laugh. I turn my head so I can see Dex. He isn’t hiding his tears. He is wearing them with ‘daddy pride’.

“I love you Dexter Castle. I love you so much. It was worth the wait.”

“I love you too, Addison Cole. And yeah it was. We got here in the end.”

“Does Mum or Dad want to hold her first?” asks the midwife, dragging us from our declaration of love for each other. Sappy, I know, but fuck it, we are riding the ‘baby high’.

“I think her mum, can have her first,” Dex says. She lays the baby on my chest; she is wrapped up in a light green hospital blanket. I move the material away from her face to see her more. My breath catches in my throat at how much she looks like Dex. She is beyond beautiful. Her eyes are still closed but she is trying her hardest to open them. I chuckle and kiss her nose, which she wrinkles a little.

“She’s perfect, baby. Thank you so much for her.” Dex says beside me, emotion laying claim to his voice.

“I’m gonna take off. I will pop to the house when you guys are home. Congrats to you both,” Lauren says quickly, before leaving us.

“I’m gonna shoot also. I love you guys and congrats on my niece.” Jay comes over and kisses me and the baby, before man-hugging his brother.

He leaves quietly, and then there were three. I look down at the squishy bundle in my arms. Dex moves closer and rests his arm around mine, holding the baby to me. His other arm moves around the back of my neck, rubbing his thumb over the skin. The pain has been forgotten, but the tiredness is seeping in. I rest my head on Dex’s shoulder but force my eyes open, keeping them on our daughter. My heart grows twice its size from looking at her, she is pure perfection.

Her hair is dark like Dex’s, her little button nose and full lips are his too. Damn, I didn’t get a look in. Her eyes flicker open and I gasp, seeing my own eyes stare back at me. The same clear blue as my own. Thank the Lord there is some of me in her. Dex will be lapping up the attention that our daughter is a spitting image of him. Her eyes move slowly, like she is trying to focus. I smile and run my finger over her smooth cheek. She needs a bath because she still has some of that white stuff all over her skin.

“She is perfect,” Dex whispers beside me, his voice low in an attempt not to scare the baby. I nod my agreement. I pull the little beanie hat off her head, needing to see and feel her hair. Dex chuckles when her hair sticks up in all directions. His large hand comes up and smoothes her hair down. “Damn, it’s so soft, but thick. I am dreading brushing that when it gets long enough. You are going to have to show me how to style her hair. I want to be one of those dads that help with their daughter. Or I could do the same as that YouTube video, you know, the one where the dad uses a Hoover to suck the hair and then push the hair tie down. That was wicked,” he laughs. The midwife chuckles from the bottom of the bed. I shake my head at him. The thing is, I truly believe he would do that.

“You would try that wouldn’t you?” I tell him.

“Hell yeah. My girl is gonna look bad arse all the fuc- flipping time. I guess I need to watch my swearing now, huh?” I nod my head.

“Yeah, babe. Can you imagine her first word being a swear word?” I can’t stop touching her, but I know that Dex needs his fill too. “Your turn, baby.” I nod towards the baby. His face pales a little and my heart soars at his reaction. He is this big arse alpha bloke and he is scared to death of holding his tiny daughter.

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“What if I hurt her? Or drop her? Fuck, Ads, I don’t know if I can do this.” He sounds so unsure of himself.

“Dex, you will be fine. You would never hurt her. Do you want to sit in the chair?” He twists his body to look at the chair and then looks back to me. He shakes his head.

“I want to stay here; you can help me hold her.” I nod my head. I move to hand the baby over and the midwife comes around to help him adjust his position a little. I copy his actions from earlier and lay my arm around the baby, over his arm, holding her to him. My nose burns as the tears arrive and decide to stream down my face. I am already a fucking hot mess, so what are a few thousand tears to add to the mix? Dex does the same as me; he kisses her hair, her face. He counts her fingers and slowly kisses each one in turn. My tears are coming fast and hard and a sob escapes my throat, drawing his attention me.

“Baby?” I wave him off and lean my head on his shoulder, looking down at the precious gift in my man’s arms.

“Happy tears. We have had a hard few years. I honestly never thought we would get here. I had to believe that one day we would but, Dexter Castle, you can be a bloody pain in the arse when you want to be. I had resided to the fact that we would never be and then this little one comes crashing into our lives, tipping it on its head. She is the reason we are here. Like the name I want for her, she made things clear and brought the brightness back into us. She showed the way. And holy shit I sound like one of those bloody Hallmark movies that Penny loves so much.” We all laugh.

“I will be right back, you two,” the midwife says. I nod at her and she offers me a

smile.

“So, what are we going to name her?” Dex asks. “We both want completely different names. It is going to be hard to chose, babe.” I shake my head at him. I know what she will be named. She looks like the name I have chosen for her.

“My name suits her, but I have one alteration to it.” My heart rate spikes. I’m not sure how he going to react to my decision. I take a deep breath and move my head so I can look at him head on. I brace myself and tell him what I want to name our daughter.

“I want to name her Phoebe Fiona Castle.” I hear him suck in a breath. I close my eyes and will the tears to stop. I know how much he loved Fiona and they had always wanted children, so adding her name to my daughter’s name is in honour of her. Well, that’s what I think. The bed moves and my eyes snap open; I look at Dex who is now standing next to the bed, holding the baby close to his chest. He looks between me and the baby. When his gaze catches mine, I see he has tears in his beautiful eyes, my heart aches for this man standing before me.

I look down at my hands in my lap and pick at the cracking blue nail varnish I have on, I change the colour up all the time. My toes not so much; the belly got in the way.

Seconds, minutes, hours pass, I have no bloody clue how much time. But I do know that Dex is still silent. At least if I have a heart attack from my over-beating heart I am in the right place to do so. I rub my chest to try and alleviate the pain that is there. My head snaps to Dex when he clears his throat. His face wet from his tears.

“Dex,” I whisper his name, my emotion clogging up my throat.

“Have I told you how much I fucking love you?” I nod my head and wipe the tears away, stopping them from dripping down my chin. “Good, because you bringing Phoebe into my life made the love triple. But giving her that name? Fuck, Ads.” He

clears his throat again, fighting through the emotion. “You have made me the happiest man on the planet. We planned for kids, but you know how that turned out. But putting her name in our daughter’s... Damn, that is perfect, but only if you are sure. Baby, I would never force you into anything you don’t want to do.” I cock an eyebrow at him and he chuckles. “Okay, fine. I won’t try and force you anymore. Besides, I have pretty much everything I want, so there is no need to force you into anything.” He winks at me and I smile. We are both on cloud nine and above right now.

“So you like her name then?” I have to ask, I know it sounds stupid. But I need to clarify he is on board with her full name.

“Baby, it is perfect for her. Phoebe Fiona Castle.” He leans in and kisses her head. His smile fills his face when he looks back to me. “Plus, you will be Addison Castle soon, so your name will match ours.” He bounces his eyebrows at me. He has been hinting for the last few weeks for us to get married. I would fucking love to be Mrs Castle but we need to take our time - take one step at a time. His words from just a second ago come fluttering to the front of my loved-up, gooey brain.

“Pretty much everything?” I ask, tilting my head.

“You caught that, yeah?” I nod with an ‘umm-yeah’ look.

“Well, I have the woman I love. I have a beautiful daughter that I love. Now I would like a son to complete the package.” My heart stutters and so does my speech.

“I-I’m sorry what?”

“You heard me. As soon as we can get back to it, I want to try for a boy. Phoebe needs a sibling. I love how close me and Jay are. I want that for our kids.” He shrugs like he just asked for the TV remote.

“How about we wait a few years? Let’s enjoy Pheebs first, okay?”

He nods his head but the cocky smirk on his face shows me that he has no fucking intention of waiting. God help me and my baby cannon.

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The last two weeks have been fucking amazeballs. My baby girl is fourteen days old today. If these two weeks has flown by, I can only imagine that in a blink of an eye she will be eighteen and leaving home and shacking up with some prick that I don't think is good enough for her. Shit, no lad will be good enough for my Phoebe. She is my little tink, as I like to call her. My little pixie. She is so small. She weighs just four pounds and fifteen ounces. She lost three ounces in the first few days but she is gaining it back.

Sitting here with Phoebe lying on my bare chest is the best thing ever. I often do the skin to skin thing that was suggested to us in the hospital. Phoebe couldn't regain her body temp, but they said that skin to skin contact would help and it did. Being like this with me calms her, as well. Addy is pottering around in the bedroom, rushing to get ready to have some girl time with Penny and the girls. I have made it very clear that she is not to over do it, she has to remember that she had a baby two weeks ago. Liam is going with them as Penny only has a few weeks left.

Phoebe stirs on my chest and I kiss her soft hair. Her smell is heart warming. Not much beats newborn baby smell. The best thing next to her mum's intense sexual smell. Her tiny, little nappy covered bum sits in my large hand; just like her mum she would rather wear nothing, or next to nothing, around the house. Even though it is summer here, you can't guarantee the weather to be nice. So every now and then we put the heating on. My house is warm anyway, Fiona had under-floor heating added to the kitchen and bathroom, and we had a heating panel added in front of the fire.

I hear the front door open and close, then heavy footsteps getting closer. I know they belong to my little brother; he has been visiting a lot since my girls got out of the hospital. I know that something is bothering him, he has been quieter than normal and

anyone who knows Jay knows that it is out of character for him. He walks into the living room and his eyes light up when he sees that Pheebs is awake. I shake my head at him.

“Nope. Dad and daughter time. You can have your fix later, man,” I tell him. He fake pouts and leans back against the doorframe, cocking his head back slightly to shout up the stairs.

“Addy, your man won’t let me hold my girl. I need my Pheebs fix.” Phoebe startles and let’s out a high pitched screech. Jay’s gaze snaps to where my little tink is crying. “Shit, sorry,” he whispers, as he comes over to where we are sitting on the sofa and he touches her head, running his hand over her black hair.

“Just lower the volume, dude. She startles easy, especially if she is chilling with me like this.”

“I know. Sorry.” He takes the seat next to me and fixes his eyes on the TV where Scorpion is playing via Netflix. I can tell straight away something is off with him. He is being quiet again. Big brother duties are a must.

I turn my head to look at him. He has dark circles under his eyes. “You okay?” I ask him, concerned. This is not normal behaviour for Jay.

Without taking his eyes off the TV, he answers, “Yeah.” He takes a deep breath and after a few seconds he turns his head to meet my gaze. I can see the anguish in his eyes. Jay always was one to wear his heart on his sleeve. “What?”

“Talk to me. What’s up? And do not say ‘nothing’ Jay, I can fucking see it.”

“Stop bloody swearing around the baby,” comes my baby’s voice, from behind us. I tilt my head back slightly to see her walking into the living room. I smile when I see

my girl. Fuck, she looks sexy as hell. You never would have thought that she had a baby two weeks ago. Being a mum looks fucking good on her.

She has her hair down with some soft waves added. I still love the new colour on her. She is wearing a long black and white striped maxi skirt with a white thin-strapped vest under a sleeveless denim waistcoat. She walks around the sofa and I can see the black sandals she is wearing. God, my girl looks fucking hot. I smile up at her and she mirrors my smile.

“You all ready to go?” I look up at her and ask.

“Yeah, babe.” She leans in and kisses tink on the head and then offers her lips to me. And who am I to refuse them. “Are you sure you are going to be okay? I can stay here.” I love that she is thinking of me, but her life doesn’t stop just because she has a baby. No one’s lives should come to a halt just because they have kids, yeah their priorities change but shit, they are human as well. We need to let loose once in awhile, otherwise shit builds up and then explodes, which is never good.

“How are you going to feed her? Did you pump the boobs or what?” And he is back; for now.

“Piss off, Jay. Do not talk about my girl’s tits like that, man,” I growl next to him. Addy looks a little upset; she has been so worried about the feeding thing with the baby.

“No, Jay. Tink is taking baby milk, I couldn’t breastfeed. She didn’t want to take from me.” I see the anguish flash across her face. She tried for a few days but tink was getting hungrier, she refused the boob. The midwives tried helping but the baby wanted none of it. They explained to Addy that it wasn’t her fault, that some babies don’t like the breast. No woman should be made to feel bad about not breastfeeding. Yeah, breast milk is better for the baby, but powder formula milk is just as good these

days.

Dude,” I say to Jay, and hand over a sleeping Phoebe. He takes her without hesitation, he knows his question has upset Ads. He settles Phoebe on his chest and he looks up at Addy. He sees her pain and he looks upset himself that he has made her feel crappy.

“Shit. I’m sorry, Addy.” She offers him a small smile.

“It’s fine, Jay.” I stand and wrap my arms around my girl. Her arms go around my waist and she holds me tight to her. She fits perfectly against me, always has. I still struggle with the fact that I waited so long to be with her; the fact that I hurt her for so many years. But we are here now, so no more looking back. We have each other, we have Phoebe and we have the perfect family surrounding us. The love and support is overwhelming.

“I love you, baby. Me and Pheebs with be alright. I’m not sure about my brother because, come on, he has never been quite right. Has he?”

“Hey, fuckhead. I will have you know I am perfect in every way.” Addy laughs against my chest and just like that, her worries lift. I will do everything in my power to make sure she feels no more pain.

“That is very much debatable, Jay,” Ads says, as she pulls away from me a little, still laughing.

“Laugh it up people. You still love me.” He stands with Phoebe in his arms. “Now, if you’ll excuse me, I need to go and spend some quality time with this perfect little lady and change her nappy because she has an arse like her dad.” He pulls a face of disgust after he sniffs her little nappy covered bottom. “Damn, baby girl, what are these people feeding you?” he asks the baby as he walks out of the room.

“Jay, wait,” Addy calls after him. “I want kisses from my girl first.” Addy walks over to where he is standing and lightly runs her hands over Phoebe’s head and her back, laying soft kisses over her head. “I will miss you, baby girl. See you later. Now go and make Uncle Jay wretch.” She winks at Jay before walking back over to me. Jay leaves the room and I pull Ads back into my arms.

“Kiss your man before you go.” She leans into me and takes my mouth; I will never get enough of this woman. Her warm mouth covers mine, sweet and intoxicating. I swear she takes control over my body when her lips touch mine. I hold her tighter to me and she moans into my mouth. I know we should stop but I can’t drag my mouth from hers. Thank fuck, she pulls away.

“I really need to go, baby. The girls are waiting.” She kisses me once more before picking her iPhone up from the coffee table. I walk with her to the front door and watch as she walks outside. She runs back to me quickly and gives me one more lasting deep, sensual kiss.

“Baby, go now, or my brother can watch Phoebe for a few hours while I fucking devour you.” She sniggers at me and walks towards her new car. When Phoebe was a few days old, I went out and bought her a brand new Audi Q3, in red. She flipped out when I bought it for her but it was better than the shitty Rover she had. I blow her a kiss as she backs out of the drive, before I walk back into the house and shut the door behind me. I can hear Jay talking to Phoebe when I enter the living room.

“You are going to break hearts all over the world, Phoebe Castle. You are going to be loved by many and you are going to live and love. Do not let your heart settle, you find the one and hold on flipping tight.” I chuckle at his choice of words, I am glad he isn’t swearing around her, but I do, so I can’t really bitch about it even if he did. But Jay’s words let me know something is really bothering him. It’s time for a brother to brother talk.

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“Hey, we need to talk,” I say, as I walk in and sit in the chair next to the sofa. He just looks at me and settles Phoebe against his chest, like he is using her as a shield. Yeah, that is not going to happen, we are going to have this talk.

“What about? I told you I’m fine.” He looks back at the TV, which is now playing *Whitechapel*. God, he doesn’t half watch some shit.

“Jay, something is going on with you. Spill, boy.” I give him a look that shows him I am not fucking around. We stare at each other for a few seconds before he concedes. He shakes his head and leans in and kisses Phoebe’s head. My girl has everyone hooked already.

“She is talking about leaving,” he whispers. I know who he is talking about; Rachel Cullen, the woman who owns my brothers heart but she refuses to give hers to him. She comes across as a hard arse sometimes but she really isn’t, it is all a mask. Liam once told me about her issues. She won’t let people get too close to her because they always leave her. But she has plenty of people around her who love her, but her head just won’t let it go. So in the meantime, she is ripping my baby brother’s heart out.

“When is she thinking of leaving?” I ask.

“She said just after Penny has the baby. Bro, she only has a few weeks left. What the fuck am I going to do? Sorry,” he apologises for swearing. I chuckle.

“It’s fine, Ads isn’t here to slap us on the back of the head. Plus, this conversation calls for a little swearing. It helps get the point across.” I wink at him.

“She is killing me, Dex. I don’t know how much more my heart will take. Jesus Christ, I sound like a chick. Don’t say anything to Ads, she will never let me live it down.”

“Hey, this is brother time; my woman won’t hear anything from me.”

“I haven’t touched her in weeks. She won’t let me near her. I have called and text a few times, but she gives me one word answers. Am I wrong for trying? Should I stop being a pussy and try and move on? She has made it clear she wants nothing to do with me, but then she flirts when we are all together. Fuck. She is confusing the hell out of me.” He stands and walks Phoebe over to her moses basket and lays her down gently, before taking his seat back on the sofa.

He slumps down on the cushions and scrubs his hands over his face. His stubble is looking a bit longer than he usually likes, so yeah, she is really getting to him. I sit and wait for him to talk, there is no use in forcing him; he knows I am here for him. He is just lucky that Addy didn’t catch onto his mood; she would never have left otherwise. I have always taken care of Jay, even from a young age I was his protector. The shit we used to get into in school was beyond funny, well, it was at the time. But I was always there when his mouth got the better of him and some knobhead wanted to smash his teeth in. I was always the one that stuck up for the little kids. I was bigger than most kids my age. I fucking hate bullies with a passion.

“I honestly have no clue how to move forward with her, Dex. She is blowing hot and cold with me. It’s fucking with my head. Tell me what to do, bro,” he begs.

“Jay, I can’t tell you what to do about Rach. You know her better than me. But I want you to really think about if she is the one you truly want - and holy fucking shit I sound like a chick as well.” We both laugh. “Okay, how about this. Leave Rachel alone. Go to town, pick up some girl. Or maybe chat someone up at the studio, but be careful who you pick. The girls are doing a baby shower party-thing for Penny next

week. Bring the girl. Oh fuck, I have the perfect girl who can help. Her name is Cassie, she came into Castle Ink the week before Phoebe was born. She had a kick arse thigh piece done. I will give her a call now, if you want.” I sit forward, excitement racing through me at the brilliant plan. Don’t get me wrong I like Rachel, but she is stringing my brother along and that is not okay with me. If she doesn’t want him then he has every right to find someone that does want him.

“I’m not going to try and make Rach jealous, Dex. I am not that type of bloke.” He winces as soon as the words leave his mouth. “Fuck, man, I’m sorry, I didn’t mean that.”

“Yeah you did, and you’re right. You aren’t that type of bloke, you are nothing like me. I fucked up for years with Ads, but I am making up for it now. So what are you going to do?” I ask him.

“Piss all, brother. I am not going to beg her to be with me. I will give her time. If she leaves then she leaves. It will hurt like fuck, but I am not going to beg.” I nod in agreement with him. See, this is why Jay is the sensible one. If it was him and Addy, he would have been with her years ago, not like me. I know that when he settles down with the right girl, he will worship her. Yeah, he comes off as a big flirt but that boy loves with his whole heart, always has. He was different from Liam and me, I was happy to fuck around in school, well, up until Fiona stole my heart. But even after she passed I stuck my dick in any woman that would spread for me, but after a while that shit got old. Jay would always leave me to sort my head out. I know that Fiona wouldn’t want me living the way I was. He always had my heart in his best interest.

“Hey, what do you say once Pheebs wakes up in an hour, we pop over to Liam’s and disrupt the girls coffee morning?” I smirk at him. Jay returns my smirk and nods his head. Yeah, I like where his head's at.

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“So, how is that hunky man of yours adapting to being a dad?” Rachel asks me. I smile at the group of girls. We have been sitting here for just over two hours, chatting about boys and babies. I say boys; all of our boys are actually men. Very sexy, tattooed men. Mine is the sexiest, but I am pretty biased. Dexter Castle can charm the knickers off any woman, and he knows it.

“He is fab actually. He helps feed her at all times, changes her nappy. He is loving it,” I explain, and all my words are true. I never thought that Dex would take to being a father so naturally, but he has. He loves his daddy-daughter time. They sit and watch TV together, well, he watches, Phoebe just chills on his chest. And believe me when I walk into the room and see my man, resting our daughter on his bare tattooed chest, it makes my ovaries go boom all over again. Every bloody time.

“I think Dex is doing a pretty good job,” Penny says. She rubs her big baby belly and sighs. She only has a few weeks left, but I don’t think she will go full term. To be honest, I would say in the next week. She is all fidgety and can’t sit still. Liam has been running around after her, not letting her lift a finger. She went on maternity leave a few weeks ago, because a drunk lad fell into her. Liam flipped the hell out, demanding that she stop working, so she did, she saw the risks that night of being a heavily pregnant A&E nurse. I love Liam to bits and seeing him act like he did that day was so heartwarming that I cried like a baby. That earned him a punch in the shoulder.

“He is, Pen. He shocked the shit out of me, I really thought he would hold back, you know. It took him years to finally see how things were with us, so I thought that him having a baby with me would bring up memories and feelings of Fiona. It scared me if I’m honest with you girls.” I look towards Penny. “And before you say anything,

yes I have talked to him about it, we don't hide anything anymore; it only hurts us in the end." I finish my sentence and cut my gaze to Rachel. She holds my stare for a few seconds and then looks away. She knows how she feels about Jay, but she is hiding her feelings. She will be shocked one day if he chooses not to wait around for her to sort her head out.

"I think my threat put Dex on the right path. I mean, what man wants to lose his cock and balls. And from what Addy has told me, Dex very much likes his package, and he knows how to use it." Lauren winks at me. Fucking blunt as ever is my girl. Penny chokes on her tea at Lauren's words but I just laugh, I am used to her crude mouth now.

"Our men are banging, I can tell you that. We all have men with bodies like tattooed Greek Gods and we are some lucky bitches," Lauren pipes in and takes a sip of her drink. "God, I am all tingly thinking about what Joe did this morning with his tongue. Fuck me sideways." She licks her lips and we all laugh.

"Laugh it up, bitches. I wish I had a man to drool over. I am going to be the scary, old cat lady that the kids are scared of on Halloween," Rachel whines from her seat. Did she really just say wishes she had a man? Well fucking hell. I turn in my seat to face her. The girls must sense something is up because the room goes quiet.

"If you would just open your eyes for one second, you'd see that you have the perfect man right in front of you. But you are too bloody stubborn to see him for what he is," I snark at her. She can be a bitch when she wants to be, but I normally keep my mouth shut because of Penny. But she is hurting my family.

"You don't know what you are talking about, Addy, so butt out." See? Can't open her fucking eyes.

"Really? So you have no feelings for Jay whatsoever? He is fucking perfect, Rach.

He is kind, sweet, loyal and honest. He tells you like it is. He has told you plenty of times how he feels and you throw it in his face.”

“Well why don’t you shack up with him then, if he is so fucking perfect?” She goes to stand but I cut her off.

“I have Dex and you know it. I love Jay like a brother. He has always had my back and I have his. He deserves someone who wants him as much as he wants her and from what I can see,” I pause and take a deep breath, “he is better off without you. You will always hurt him, not on purpose sometimes, but most of the time. You have a lot of shit to sort through, Rach, but do not drag my brother down with you.”

“Brother?” I hear from behind me. I spin around to see Jay standing there, arms at his sides, fists clenched, breathing heavy. Dex is behind him with Phoebe in his arms, looking like a freaking sex god.

“Yeah, brother.” I nod.

“God, I love you Ads.” He comes into the room and wraps me up in his big arms. The girls ooo and ahhh at him. Most men would suck it up, like my man would, and he does.

“Hey, ladies, sexy tattooed bloke over here holding a baby.” He gestures towards him and Phoebe.

“Way to ruin the sentimental moment, Dexter.” I say his name with a shit load of sarcasm.

“I didn’t, I improved it.” He winks. “It was getting way too mushy in here anyway. Love you baby.” He walks into the room and over to me. He leans in and kisses my lips, tasting me like he always does. “Fucking delicious, babe. Here, your daughter

was missing you.” He winks at me again.

“Just her daughter?” Lauren says.

“Well, her man too.” He hands Phoebe over to me and I laugh when I see what she is wearing. Dex smirks at me and everyone else looks at me like I am crazy. I hold onto Phoebe with one hand and wipe away my tears with the other. Bloody men. I turn Phoebe around so everyone can see the t-shirt she is wearing over her cute, little black baby leggings.

“Oh, Dex, really? Not you, too.” Penny chuckles as she says this.

“What? It is fucking perfect for my baby.”

Phoebe is wearing a pink t-shirt that says ‘18 years until my first tattoo’ in a white funky font, with a white candy skull under it. The girls in the room all gush over how cute she is. Dex even put a small pink bow in her hair. I love running my fingers through her soft, jet black hair. While the girls fawn over Phoebe, I chance a look at Jay and Rachel. They are in the corner having what looks like a heated conversation. Jay lifts his head and looks at me and shakes his head before he pulls her out of the room. I bring my gaze back to Dex and he shakes his head as well, he feels the same as I do. We both want what is best for Jay and at this moment, I don’t think it is Rachel.

I keep my gaze on the door, until I feel the sofa dip next to me. I turn my head and my eyes meet Dex’s. He smiles and leans in and kisses the tip of my nose. God, I love this man with all my heart. My smile matches his. I drink him in; his dark eyes, his perfect bone structure. I can clearly see that he has stamped Phoebe well.

“I love you, baby. More than you can ever imagine. You and Phoebe hold my heart, and you hold the power to fucking obliterate me. I beg you not to do it. I beg you

hold onto me forever and I will never let you go. I will cherish you until my last breath.” He leans in and places a feather light kiss on my lips. I can’t help but lick my bottom lip, hoping to savour any trace of flavour he has left behind. His words hit me in the heart, right in the center. Bullseye, baby.

“Okay, are you going deep again?” He has laid these words on me a few times now and each time takes my breath away.

“You like me deep, babe.” He winks at me.

“Ha. Ha. Okay, you got me there.” I wink at him as Lauren gags. “Piss off, you like Joe deep. You have told me, on more than one occasion, just how deep that man can get. And believe me, it is so bloody hard to look that man in the eyes after the things you have told me. You should really write a sick, twisted sex book.” I wink at Lauren and we burst out laughing.

“Oooo I could totally fucking do that,” she says, pulling her phone out of her bag. She swipes her finger across the screen and starts tapping furiously.

“What are you doing now?” I ask her. Truly scared at what she has planned.

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“Taking notes, bitch. This is way too good to pass up.” She looks around the room, looking at all the girls. “Okay, bitches, give me the dirtiest, sexiest sex stories you can. Then I will twist it and make it better,” she says, sliding forward in her seat, wait patiently for the girls to cough up their juicy stories.

“I am saying nothing. Liam would flip out if I told you our bedroom activities.” Penny is the more reserved one of our group, but I love her all the same. We all laugh at her because we know that she is full of shit, Liam would be more than happy to tell us how he makes her scream his name every night.

“Bollocks,” Dex coughs into his hand, trying to hide the word. Penny turns her icy gaze to him. I love the ‘mum glare’. I am going to have to learn that, not just for Phoebe but for these boys as well. Damn, I wish I had learned it years ago; I could have done so much damage with them. I giggle to myself and snuggle into Dex’s side.

“What are you giggling at, bitchface? I am pretty sure you and that beast have some sexy stories to share with us.”

“Well, there was this one time when...” I elbow him in the ribs to shut him up.

“Dex, really? Our daughter is in the room. Get a grip will you.”

“I will if you come upstairs with me.” He wiggles his eyebrows at me and grips his dick.

“Bloody pervert,” I mutter. Dex leans in and kisses my cheek. I snuggle back into

him and watch as Penny talks to my daughter. She rubs their noses together, and Penny talks to her in a baby voice which is funny, but cute at the same time. She places Phoebe on her shoulder and gently rubs her back, burying her nose in the baby's hair. Yeah, my baby girl smells amazing. I love to use the lavender baby powder. Dex loves it too. Penny sighs and settles herself into the cushions and snuggles with my baby girl. Her gaze catches mine and she smiles back at me. The love pouring out of Penny shows clearly on her face. She may be small, but she loves fiercely. Liam, Connie and Knox are evidence of that.

“God, I can’t wait to meet this little girl. I remember when Connie was born. As bittersweet as that day was, I fell in love with that baby girl as soon as I saw her. Jody would be so bloody proud of her if she was here to see her. Even the late night feeds and all the illnesses were worth it. You will see that with this little girl. Treasure every second with her. They grow up in the blink of an eye.”

“Yeah, and her first boyfriend will be knocking on the door to take her to the cinema. In a dark room where no one will see him stick his tongue down her throat,” Lauren chimes.

“Like fuck will that happen!” Dex all but bellows from beside me. Phoebe lets out a shriek at the loudness of her dad’s voice. “Shit.” Dex jumps up and carefully takes Phoebe from Penny’s arms. He rocks back and forth, soothing her; one large hand under her bum and the other holding her head to his chest.

“Shhh, baby. Daddy’s got you. Shhhhh.” I swoon. Can I still swoon over my man? I should be used to him by now, right? I can’t take my eyes off him while he soothes our daughter.

“Boom. Exploding ovaries over here. Damn it, Dex the Flex,” Lauren says, in a dreamy voice that is way out of character for Lauren. I laugh out loud. I have never seen Lauren like this; she is normally a hard, cocky and mouthy bitch. But here she

is, gushing over my man being the perfect dad.

“Oi, wench. Get your own man to make your ovaries explode. He is mine.”

“Oh I will. Joe is in for one hell of a night.” She bounces her perfectly plucked brows at me. I’m not surprised really. Poor Joe’s dick.

A door slamming drags us from our moment. Heavy footsteps come down the stairs. Jay appears at the living room door, looking flushed but pissed the fuck off. His hair is a tad messy which means that someone, meaning Rachel, has run her fingers through it. He has the ‘just-fucked’ look going on. Rachel stops behind him but says nothing. He senses her, that much I can see, but he doesn’t move out of her way. She huffs and barges past him. She walks over to Penny and kisses her head and whispers in her ear. Penny nods as Rachel picks her bag up and leaves without a word.

“She will never fucking learn,” Dex says, from his position over by the window, overlooking the water.

“Leave it, Dex,” Jay says. “I’m gonna go. I need to shower and pop into the shop to see if Luke needs a hand. Oh and Ads, that girl rang again, she wants to know when you are back because she wants her piercing done.” I nod my head.

“Okay, I will ring her tomorrow and set up an appointment. Jay...” I say his name in a tone that makes the room temperature chill, and his eyes snap to mine.

“You deserve more.” The words hit their mark. He nods his head and leaves the house.

I look at Penny and she offers me a small smile. I look towards Dex and he has a look that a concerned brother would be wearing. Our eyes speak volumes to each other. No words are needed. Jay needs to let this one go, for his own sake.

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“Yessssss,” Addy cries out as I brush my thumb over her very overly sensitive clit. My girl needs to come - hard. She has been in a bitchy mood lately; we fought over her going back to work at Castle Ink. I think it is too soon, but she doesn’t. I need her to climax so fucking hard that she sees stars or blacks out again. That made my fucking whole life, seeing her climax so hard that she passed the fuck out for over ten minutes. I actually thought I had killed her. Death by orgasm.

“You like that, baby? You like my cock pounding into you?”

“YES,” she screams out. Thank fuck we put Phoebe in her own room, or my baby girl would be cock-blocking me right now.

Baby monitors: best invention ever.

I keep my rhythm up, our breathing getting heavier with every thrust. I pull almost all the way out and slam back into her. My death-grip on her hips is going to leave a bruise, I am pretty bloody sure of it. Her walls clamp down around my dick and I can’t stop the growl from leaving my throat. “Fuuuuuuuck.”

“Oh, God. Yesssss,” she cries out again. I press harder as she convulses around my shaft. My hips snap and I slam into her over and over again. My tempo falters as my balls decide now is the time to empty into her wet, hot pussy. Nothing feels as good as her sweetness wrapped around my cock. Our breath mixes together as I lower my body over hers, but not enough to crush her. But my Ads has other ideas. She finds the energy to pull my body down on hers, her amazing tits pressed against my solid chest. Most girls don’t like sweaty men, but Addy loves it when I am sweaty, especially when we are in bed. She says that it makes me hotter. Fuck, knows if that

can happen but I will take her word for it.

“What time is your first appointment today? I told Luke I will pop in early and do his piercing for him,” Addy says. Fucking really?

“Baby, I really don’t want to talk about Luke when my cock is still buried inside you.” I slowly pull my semi-soft dick out of her warmth and lay next to her. Resting my head on my hand, I look down at her. “Now that’s better. I am going in by ten-thirty. What time did you tell Luke?” I ask her, tracing the waves on her left arm. I love her tattoos, just like she loves mine. We talked last week about having Phoebe’s name tattooed on us. We both want the same design. So Addy got drawing and came up with the perfect design. We are having them done today, but Addy doesn’t know yet. Luke doesn’t need help with anything; it was just a ploy to get her to the studio. What Addy doesn’t know is that we are having our matching tattoos done as well.

“I told him I would come to the studio by nine-thirty. You may as well get a lift in with me. I am taking Phoebe in with me today, and I think you would want to be there the first time your daughter goes to her first tattoo studio.”

“Hell yeah, I want to take her to her first tattoo studio. Are you sure you are not rushing back to work? You can take all the time you need, Ads,” I tell her. She doesn’t need to work, but I know she loves her job. There is no harm in us taking tink to work with us, between all of us she will be watched over all the time. But I just feel like she is rushing back too soon. She had a baby just seven weeks ago. It takes its toll on a woman’s body.

“I will be fine, babe. I will take it easy okay? Plus, I am only going in to pierce Luke’s client. That’s it, just one. So I will be fine. Come on, we need to shower before Pheebies wakes up.” I stay exactly where I am and watch the woman I love climb out of our bed, naked as the day she was born; her perfectly round arse bearing my hand print from our earlier shag-fest. My dick stirs under the blanket, telling me

that I am far from finished with my woman. So shower sex it is. I jump from the bed, my now hard cock bobbing as I make my way over to Addy. She squeals when I grab her around the waist and carry her the short distance into our en-suite.

“Shower time, babe. Let’s get you all clean so I can dirty you up all over again.” Addy giggles as I lower her to her feet. I lean over and start the shower, adjusting the temperature to what I know Ads loves. I turn to face her and find her eye-fucking me, biting her bottom, already swollen, lip from or earlier kisses. I step towards her, noticing her breathing has picked up again. I love seeing her tits rise and fall when she is panting over me, but our tiny, little cock-blocker decides to let us know she is in dire need of her parents’ attention. Addy laughs and climbs into the shower. Yeah, I see how it is. Witch face.

“Your turn, Daddy,” she winks at me. I fake scowl at her and walk out of the bathroom. I pull open the second drawer down on the chest of drawers and pull out a pair of cotton pajama trousers. I can’t exactly go and get my baby girl with my dick at full salute. I try and think of things to make it go down.

Dead puppies.

Zombies.

Margaret Thatcher.

Old people kissing.

Yeah, that does it. My dick is going to hate me later. I walk out of our bedroom and towards my girl’s room, the plush carpet feeling soft under my feet. I wanted hardwood flooring but nope, Miss Addy put her foot down. I slowly open the door to Phoebe’s room, her little whimpers coming from her cot. I love her room, between me and the boys we did fucking good.

I painted Phoebe's name in bright pink on the one white wall. Jay added a glow in the dark wall. He painted clouds and stars on the wall where tink's cot sits. In the light, it looks white and blue with a dash of pink. The rest of her room has a star and princess theme. Addy and Connie added a shit load of fairy lights around the room, it looked amazing, but then Luke came in and added his touch. He added a black princess crown to Phoebe's name, that I painted. He added some black birds to Jay's clouds. Black stars and hearts were added around the room. The best thing he did was add a family tree over by the bay window. It is fucking stunning. Everyone's names have been added, including his own. He is part of the Castle Ink family now.

Walking over to Phoebe's cot, I see her whimpering. Her eyes filled with unshed tears, but she settles some when she sees me. She has this uncanny way of knowing when one of us is close to her. I bend over and pick my baby girl up.

"Ooo Daddy's girl wants attention, huh?" I cradle her to my bare chest; it is one of her favourite things to do. Phoebe loves skin to skin contact. It soothes her. "Let's get you ready for your first trip to Castle Ink. Maybe you can spend some time with uncle Jay while I get some ink down on Mum."

* * *

I pull up outside Castle Ink and turn off the car. Both Addy and me climb out and Addy gets Phoebe out of the car while I go to the boot and get her pram out. We are not those type of parents that constantly hold their child. Don't get me wrong, if that works for you then great, but I want my daughter to learn that she can't get away with everything. She has to learn that we, as parents, are in control. So she will lie in her pram while we work. We don't jump the second she makes a noise, we wait. If we react every time she whimpers then she will learn that we come running when she makes a sound. There is no way my daughter is turning into a spoilt brat. I click the pram into place and put the baby bag on the handle. Addy carries Phoebe into the studio and the cooing starts. There are a few clients waiting around for us, and I love

it. I fucking love seeing Castle Ink busy with clients, it fills my body with pride to see that the risk that Jay and I took is finally paying off.

“And who is this beautiful little girl?” one girl asks, she can’t be more that twenty-one.

“This is Phoebe. Mine and Dex’s daughter,” Addy says, with so much pride in her voice. The girl strokes tinks head, and does that baby-talk thing that women do. My daddy pride beams with all these women fawning over my daughter.

“Oh my God, she is so bloody adorable. You two did good. Dex, she looks just like you,” she says, without taking her eyes off my baby. Well, not only is my daughter a cock-block when it comes to her mum, but now she is blocking my attention from the ladies. Damn it.

“I do not look adorable. I am downright fucking sexy. As in, manly sexy. Alpha male sexy. Just sexy, damn it,” I pout and walk over to the reception desk. I hear chuckles coming from behind me but I ignore them. Bloody woman, calling me adorable. Bollocks to that shit. I spin the appointment book around to see how the day is looking. I see that we have very little spaces left for walk-ins, which is fucking epic. I see the black that Jay added for me and Addy, so I quickly turn the book back around before she can see it.

I feel a hand slide around my waist; her body flush to my back. Her hands slowly slide under my t-shirt. Today I put on our newly designed Castle Ink shirt, courtesy of Addison Cole. Her hands are warm and soft as they glide over my abs. Her fingernails scrape over my heated skin, causing shivers to ripple through my body. Her smell takes over my senses; it is a natural smell and all Addy. She doesn’t use a lot of perfume or body spray but when she does, she uses FCUK, Friction. I place my hands over hers, halting her movements.

“I really don’t think you should be doing that. My girlfriend is here today and she will beat my arse if she sees you touching me. She can’t know about us,” I say, acting all serious. Her fingernails scrape across my abs again, making my dick jump in my jeans. But now is so not the fucking place to turn me on.

“Well, I am pretty sure I can take your girl on in a fair fight. You’re worth it, Dex. So, what do you say we slip into the back room and christen the couch back there?” she whispers against my back. I don’t think about answering her, I take her hand and lead her to the back room. I love playing this game with her; it gets her all hot and bothered.

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“Watch, Phoebe for me, dude,” I say as we pass Jay, who is holding Phoebe, surrounded by a gaggle of gushing women. “And stop using my daughter to pick up girls.”

“Hey, that’s what uncles do,” he shouts back. Knobhead, using my daughter to get pussy. I push open the door and all but throw Addy onto the black couch. She is panting again and I fucking love it. Her tits are almost popping out of her black vest she is wearing with her slogan on it, yet again. Damn, she loves them. Today hers says. ‘Big boobed and tattooed’; I fucking love it. Her long black maxi skirt will only deter me for so long.

“Skirt up. Arse out, baby. I need you from behind. I need to pound into you,” I say, unbuckling my belt and opening my jeans. I don’t bother taking them off, just pushing them down far enough to release my cock and balls. “Fast and hard, baby. Bend over.”

“But, what about your other girlfriend?” Addy says, trying to look all coy.

“Game time is over, baby. Bend the fuck over,” I growl out as I step up to her. I push her skirt further up her back, showing me her perfect arse. The arse that I am about to spank the shit out of.

“Lock the door, Dex.”

“Nope. They would be fucking stupid to walk back here when they know what I am about to do to my woman.” I pull her knickers to one side and slide my fingers over her wetness.

“Already wet for me, baby. You want this as much as I do.”

“I can’t get enough of you, Dex. Fucking hell. Fuck me,” she moans, as I strum her clit. But I know we don’t have time for our kind of foreplay, so I line my cock up at her waiting pussy and slam home. Because that is what Addy is for me. Home. Sounds of our skin slapping against each other fills the space of the back room, this room has seen plenty of shag-fests before today. I lift my hand and bring down on her creamy bare arse. The sound from the slap and Addy’s loud moan resonates through the room, and my dick jerks inside of her. I am close; this is how much she gets me riled up. Her walls tighten around my dick and my release hits like a wrecking ball. Fucking hell.

“Fuuuuuck,” I growl. I rest my forehead on Addy’s back, our breathing matching in intensity. I take in a few more deep breaths and slowly pull myself out of Addy, her little whimpers make my softening dick react. Damn, will I ever get enough of this woman? I hope the fuck not. She is going to make my dick jerk until I take my last breath. Old and rocking together in the nursing home, me being the horny old bastard that will have his grandkids bring him little blue pills to get it up and fuck their grandmother. I chuckle to myself and walk over to the storage cabinet. I dig around and find a pack of baby wipes. Opening it I take a few out and clean my dick off. Then I walk over to my girl who is still in the same position, except she is now kneeling in the floor.

“My legs gave out. Bloody hell, Dexter.” I laugh. I love her saying my full name. Also, I fucking love seeing the state I leave her in once I have made her come hard. I kneel down behind her and clean her up, once I have done that I throw the used wipes in the bin next to the couch.

“Baby, what do you say we go and see what the boys are doing with our daughter?” I say, standing and tucking myself away and helping Addy to her feet. I stand back and watch as she rights her clothes, loving the way she looks thoroughly shagged. She

runs her hands down her skirt once and looks up at me, her smile takes over her face and I can't help but fall in love with her more.

“Yep. Let's get it done. I think we need to save our daughter from being used by her darling uncle.”

“Good point.” I take her soft, small hand in my rough, large hand and pull her back out the front to get Phoebe and to get our designs started. Addy still doesn't know what my surprise is yet, I seriously can't wait to see her face. As soon as I open the door, the applause starts. Addy wraps her free arm around my bicep and buries her face my shoulder, laughing.

“Fuckers,” I say to the crowd of friends that are standing there clapping like a bunch of stoned Sea Lions. I pull on Addy's hand and we make our way down to the guys. I see that Luke is now holding Phoebe. Jay is leaning against the reception desk, smirking at us. I shake my head and stop a few feet from my brother. I look down at Addy and wink, then back to my brother and Luke.

“You're welcome, fuckers. You could learn a few things from me.”

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I look between the three lads standing in front of me. All three of them are smirking at each other and then they all turn their attention towards me. Now if I was a normal woman, which I am clearly not, I would be weirded out by these three sexy looking guys staring at me like they have big plans to devour me. But fuck they look hot. Now, that would be super wrong for me to think that about Jay that way, but come the fuck on ladies, he is as fine as his brother, and so is Luke. It just so happens that Dex is sexy as sin and he makes my pussy twitch. I am one lucky bitch that I get to work with these three every day.

“What’s going on?” I ask the three. Jay and Luke turn their upper bodies and twist to look at Dex. I pop my hip and cross my arms, waiting for him to explain. But I get a smirk as a response. Yeah, I don’t think so. “Dexter.” I say his name in a tone that he knows I mean business. I have no bloody clue what is going on. But I know that with Dex, it can’t be that bad. I hope, anyway.

“Luke didn’t need you to help out with a client today. It was just a ploy to get you here.” He reaches up and rubs the back of his neck. He is nervous. But why?

“What has got you all nervous, Dex? Wouldn’t it be better to tell me rather than prolong the agony?” He looks confused, but Jay and Luke cough and splutter, trying to hide their laughter.

“Agony?” Dex asks.

“Yep. I can tell you now, if you don’t tell me the real reason as to why I am here, then Dex, you will suffer great agony.” I drop my eyes to his crotch. His hands automatically go to that area. I honestly can’t work out why we are here, he is being

super secretive. Does he think I won't like the reason? Luke nudges Dex with his shoulder, prompting him to just tell me. Dex scowls at him and then takes a deep breath. He looks at me and offers me a small smile, this is so not my Dex. He is worried.

"You know how we talked about getting Phoebe's name tattooed on us." I nod my head. "Well, we are getting them today." He stops talking and looks at me, waiting for my reaction.

"Okay, and?"

"Fucking hell, this shouldn't be this scary but I have never done it before. I designed us matching tattoos and I want us to have them done today. They aren't big or anything but it is something for us. We don't have to or anything but-" I cut him off.

"Matching tattoos? Are you serious? Oh my God. I thought you would never do that. I love the idea." He keeps mumbling so I say his name again. "Dex." I say his name loud enough to stop him this time. He has never been like this. Ever. Dex is always the hard one. The cocky fucker of the boys. He never gets nervous and rambles.

"God, I hope you never stumble over your words when we get married." I slap my hand over my mouth and my eyes widen in shock. Dex's shocked eyes meet mine. Jay and Luke choke from the side, but I pay them no attention. I stare at him but he doesn't say or do anything. My heart kicks up a notch and beats crazy fast in my chest. I shake my head.

"I didn't mean that. Fuck. Dex, I'm sorry." I go to reach for Phoebe; I need to get away from him. My fear of rejection washes over me and I need to leave. The need to run is taking over. Dex's arm shoots out and stops my steps. I gasp and turn my head to face him.

“Did you just ask me to marry you?” His voice is throaty.

“I don’t think I-” He cuts me off.

“Did you just ask me to marry you?” he says in a more demanding tone. I see movement out of the corner of my eye. I turn to see Jay and Luke walking away. Luke still holding Phoebe.

“I don’t know.” I shake my head.

“You don’t know? So you don’t want to marry me? The man you love and who loves you. The man who is your child’s father,” he states. Tears burn my eyes, but I don’t let them fall. This is not how I saw my day going.

“Umm,” I force out. The emotion is stopping me from speaking.

“Did I fucking stumble?” he says. I still haven’t brought my gaze back to his out of pure fear of what I may see. Rough fingers grip my chin and turn my head so I have no choice but to look him in the eyes.

“Do you love me?” I nod my head.

“Do I love you?” I nod my head again, with no hesitation.

“Did we create the most perfect baby on the fucking planet?” I nod.

“Do you want to make more perfect babies with me?” I nod my head. Fuck, I feel like a nodding dog.

“Do you, Addison Cole, want to marry me, Dexter Castle?” I try to look down but he stops me. He raises his eyebrows at me in question.

“Yes,” I whisper.

“Well, if Carlsberg did proposals...” he responds. Huh? What the fuck?

“You bastard!” I clench my fist and go to throw a punch, but he catches my fist before it connects with his jaw. He knows I will clock him good, he and Jay taught me how to defend myself years ago.

“Whoa, what the fuck, Ads? I was joking. Damn, woman.” I fume in front of him. I step back, pulling my hand out of his firm grasp. The tears build again out of anger. I take another step back and confusion spreads across Dex’s face.

“Fuck you, Dex. This is not some fucking game to me. This is my fucking life,” I scream at him. He steps forward but I lift my hand to stop him. “Stop. Just don’t. How could you hurt me like this? I’m done.”

“What the fuck is going on out here? When we left you two were all lovey dovey and shit,” Jay says, jogging over to us.

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“Ask your fucking brother. I’m going to get Phoebe and then we are leaving.” I step around Jay, but Dex snatches my hand. His grip is solid; there is no getting out of this.

“I was proposing to Addy here, but she took something the wrong way and blew the fuck up. Showing her distrust in me,” he growls. I took something the wrong way? What a fucking twat.

“Are you seriously blaming me?” I fume.

“Yeah, I am,” Dex states, putting his hands on his hips.

“Tell your brother what you said to me.”

“Dex, what the hell did you say?” Jay prompts. Dex explains what he said and Jay bursts out laughing. He punches Dex in the shoulder and shakes his head. Both Dex and myself look at Jay like he has grown another head. What the hell is he laughing about? His brother just fucking hurt me and here he is laughing at us.

“Hey, knobhead, this is my life you are laughing at. Do you know what? Fuck it. I’m out.” I try ripping my hand out of Dex’s hold but he tightens his grip. Shit. “Let me go,” I grind out.

“No. Ads, I meant what I said, well not about the Carlsberg thing. Fuck, I was joking about that bit. Of fucking course I want to marry you. Jesus, woman, I fucking love you.”

“Well, blow me down,” Jay mutters.

“I will blow you, Jay,” comes from behind me. I turn my upper body to see a very slutty looking chick standing there in painted-on jeans, yes, they are that tight. And a top that I am pretty sure was sold in Mothercare, it is that small on her.

“Ewwww. Get some self respect,” I say to her.

“Bitch,” she mutters under her breath.

“You can leave on your own accord or I can kick your skanky arse out if you prefer,” I bitch at her. She doesn’t reply, she just leaves the studio. I turn back to the boys. Looking between the two, Jay has a weird smile on his face but Dex is still looks a little angry and confused.

“Are you going to say something, babe?” Dex’s voice is strained, like he is deciding between being angry and upset. Well join the fucking club, fella.

“What do you want me to say, Dex?”

“Yes, would be a good start.” Oh fuck, he said that he wanted to marry me and make more babies. Well hell. I close my eyes and let everything run through my head. My words have gone from a miss-slip, to a full blown argument to a fucking proposal all in the space of five-fucking minutes. My head hurts, I reach up and rub my temples. I know I want to marry this man, I have for so many years that I was so bloody close to giving up the notion that it would happen. But here we are, standing in Castle Ink talking about marriage and the possibility of having more kids together. What I wouldn’t give to be Addison Castle.

"I thought you were joking," I whisper.

“Baby, look at me.” Dex’s voice breaks through my head-space. I shake my head, signaling I don’t want to look at him. “Addison.” His tone doesn’t leave room for ignorance. I slowly peel my eyes open and see his perfect grey eyes staring back at me. He smiles at me and I mirror him.

“Baby, we haven’t exactly come together the traditional way have we?” I shake my head.

“No, Dex.”

“So why would our marriage proposal be any different?”

“Bloody hell woman, just say yes. Put my brother out of his misery. Pleeeeeease,” Jay begs, making me and Dex laugh. Luke walks out of the back room carrying a wide awake Phoebe. I smile when I see this hulk of a man carrying a tiny baby. He will be a great father one day, because he is brilliant with my girl. Once he reaches us, he hands over my daughter and I smile down at her.

“Hey, Pheeb, How’s my baby girl, huh?” She doesn’t answer, well that is obvious. But hey, we all talk to our babies right? I feel Dex close in and he leans into Phoebe. He kisses her head and then kisses the side of my head.

“Hey, baby girl. I am trying to ask your mum if she will marry me, but she is being a pain in the arse and not answering me, so how about you have a little word for dad, yeah?” I can’t help but chuckle. I lean in and pretend to whisper in her tiny ear.

“Why don’t you tell Daddy that he needs to work on asking Mummy better,” I say, looking into her blue eyes.

“Then why don’t you turn around.” I lift my head at Dex’s voice, but he isn’t standing next to me, I gasp when I see him kneeling on the floor next to me. Jay

quickly takes Phoebe from me and Dex takes hold of my two hands. I never thought I would get Dex to get down on one knee for me. Never in a trillion freaking years, but here he is.

Holy fucking shit.

“Addison Cole, we have had one hell of a journey to get here, but fuck, babe, we got here. You have always been in my head and heart, even though we went down different paths, but again those two roads came to a big arse crossroads and it brought us back together. Yeah, again the pain was there, but I am thankful that you forgave me and we got her.” He points to Phoebe in Jay’s arms. “I love you with all of my heart, Ads, and I want you to share my name with me and our daughter. Annnnd many more kids to come. Just putting that out there - again.” He winks at me.

“So what do you say? Once and for all. Addison Cole, will you marry me?” I see my tears land on our joined hands. When did I start crying? I look back into Dex’s eyes and see them shining with love and adoration.

“Yes. Yes. Hell fucking yes,” I all but scream. Dex jumps to his feet and wraps his big, beefy arms around me. He picks me off my feet and swings me around. I squeal for him to stop and he does. Taking Dex’s head in my hands, I force him to look at me. I bring my lips to his and taste the man I am going to marry. I feel like I am tasting and feeling him for the first time. I have no clue how long we kiss for, the studio fades away behind us as we get totally lost in each other. Dex’s hands lower from my waist and they grip my arse, he cops a good feel until someone coughs rather loudly. I pull my face from Dex’s and we both turn our heads to see Jay and Luke standing there with matching smirks on their faces.

“Umm, hello, children in the room.” Jay points to Phoebe.

“You two are really lucky we have no clients in at the moment, you put on a mini

amateur porn show. So I take it you are now officially engaged?” chimes in Luke.

“Damn right we are. She will be Mrs. Castle soon enough.”

“You think huh?” I ask him.

“Yeah, babe. The sooner the better. Now, how about we actually go back there and get these tattoos done?” He motions towards the back where his room is and so is Jay’s and Luke’s, aka: my old room. I am not going to make Luke get out of the room as he tattoos and he pierces, so I told Dex that we will have to make another room for me. We have plenty of space, so I fluttered my eyelashes until I got what I wanted. That man can’t say no to me.

“My room,” Dex says. We all walk towards his room, Jay talking softly to Phoebe in his arms. He was a goner when he first met her. Even at seven weeks old she has him wrapped around her little finger, just like she does with Dex and Luke. God help the men in Bell Harbour.

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Thank God for the second pram we bought especially to keep at Castle Ink. I thought it would be easier to have one here, rather than having Addy pull Phoebe's out of the car every time she came here to see me or when she had a client. Jay lays her down in her pram and she coos at the little toy thing that is dangling from the hood.

"You just lay there and look beautiful while I go over here and inflict some pain on Mummy and Daddy." He chuckles to himself as he walks away. I lean over the pram and touch my daughter's cheek. God, she looks like Addy. But Addy says she looks like me. Who fucking cares, we made a damn beautiful baby.

"Oh, Pheeb, Uncle Jay should know by now that I enjoy a bit of pain, and so does Mum." I turn my head and wink at a laughing Addy. Turning my gaze to Jay who looks horrified makes me laugh and straighten up.

"Bro, I did not need to hear that. How about you tattoo your girl and she can tattoo you? You can get each other off that way and I am nowhere near either of you." He shudders. He knows Addy can't tattoo.

"I was joking, dude. Chill out." I wink at Addy who chuckles and removes her thin cardigan. I can't keep my eyes off her; she is the sexiest woman I have ever met. It feels freeing to see Addy like this and not feel guilty about missing Fiona. Plenty of nights we have stayed up talking about her. Addy won't let me forget, not that I would, we added her name into our daughters name for fucks sake. I watch as she places her cardigan on the hook on the wall before she walks over to the black leather seat and slides into it with ease. She crosses her legs and her feet poke out from the bottom of her skirt. The chunky wedge shoes she is wearing finish off her outfit. Addy will never change who she is, and why should she? Just because she became a

mother, that doesn't mean she should change the way she dresses or the way she is. Addy is the perfect mum. Phoebe always comes first.

"How about you tattoo Ads, and then do me," I say to my brother.

"Hey, only I get to do you," Addy protests. I smile at her and she winks at me. Yeah she does. The one and fucking only.

"Ditto, baby." I smirk at her and she laughs. "Let's do this, man. So we can do Phoebe's name tattoo first. We said we would have it in the same place. Are you still okay with that babe?" I turn and ask Addy. She nods her head in agreement.

"Yeah, babe. All good." I watch as Jay lowers the seat so that Addy can lay down. Before she settles on her side, she removes her t-shirt, leaving her in her pale blue lace bra. She is goddamn lucky that it is my brother and Luke in the room, otherwise I would flip my shit having another man see her tits like this.

"Babe," I say with a slight undertone to my voice, but I can't keep the small smile off my face.

"Oh shut it Captain Twat. I see these two boys as brothers and come on, how many pairs of boobs have they seen?"

"Good point. Plus, I think Luke has seen ten times more since he started working here. God, women from all over are coming here to have their nipples pierced by him, or have a tattoo in a very intimate area. If you know what I mean?"

"Well that's good for Castle Ink, right?" she adds.

"Fuck yeah, good for me too. Tits galore, honey. I am in my element," Luke pipes in from the doorway. He bounces his eyebrows at Addy.

“Okay, that's it. Luke needs a Captain title. Mmmm let me think it over.”

“Captain Man-whore?” I suggest.

“Captain Big Cock,” Luke quips.

“Doubt that,” Addy adds. “It will come to me. Give it time.” Jay turns around from the counter and pulls the small trolley over to the chair. Addy lays on her side and Jay leans over her and places the stencil over her ribs. The tips of the crown start just below her tit. Phoebe's name will run along her ribs, facing inwards. The crown and the name will be in black with some pink shading added. I am having the same tattoo in the same place. It is our tribute to our baby girl.

“Dude, come and have a look at the placement,” Jays tells me. The door chimes and Luke bends his body back slightly to see who just came in. A big arse smile spreads across his face. Girls.

“And I'm up. Later fuckers.” He rubs his hands together and a pervy smirk appears as he walks to the front of the studio. Definitely a man-whore. I shake my head and walk over to see if the placement is right. I put my hand on Addy's hip and lean in, feeling her hand on my thigh makes my dick swell in my jeans. Nodding my head, I lift my eyes to see Addy staring at me, lust in her eyes. Yeah, my baby is turned on. I didn't technically lie to my brother about Addy and me liking some pain during sex, because we do, just not hardcore stuff.

“Looks good man.” I step back just as Addy's hand reaches my crotch. She smiles a wicked smile at me. My wicked girl.

I take a seat next to the tattoo chair and watch as my brother tattoos my daughter's name on my girl's body. Addy's skin is flawless. She has been griping about two tiny stretch marks on her lower belly from when she carried Phoebe, but I think they are

sexy as hell. They are proof that she carried my baby. I sit and watch as the tattoo takes form, the black outline standing out against her pale skin. She doesn't flinch, she is used to the pain; she craves it at times. I remember doing her sleeve a few years ago, it should have taken four or five sittings, but it took three. I would have done it in one, just to have her close to me, even if she didn't know that little fact. I was still grieving Fiona. I was super fucking pissed when I found out that Jay had done the rose on her shoulder. I love that rose, I love biting that rose as I take her from behind. My dick stirs in my jeans again and I adjust myself. Addy notices and smirks at me. She mouths 'later' to me and I wink at her.

It takes Jay an hour and a half to finish the tattoo and I have to say it looks fucking bad arse. The slightly red, swollen skin raised around it makes the back ink pop. But that will settle down by tomorrow. I nod my head in appreciation for my brother's work. Damn, I taught him well. I chuckle to myself as I watch Addy stand and walk over to the mirror. I walk over to her and place my hands on her hips, holding her in front of me. We both admire the design. It sits perfectly on her body. Mine will be a little bigger, due to my size.

"I love it. It is bloody perfect," Addy says in almost a whisper, but I hear her. I rest my chin on her bare shoulder and run one hand over her bare stomach. Addy lays her hand over mine and we stare at the name on her side. 'Phoebe': our very own Princess who owns her very own Castle. I bite her tattooed shoulder, the one with the multi-coloured rose.

I move my thumb over her stomach and the notion hits me that Addy is standing out here in just a bra for everyone in the studio to see. I quickly say.

"My turn. Back in the room. Now." I slowly back away from the mirror with Addy still in my arms. She giggles but doesn't stop me. We back into Jay's room to find him standing there smiling at us. He shakes his head and motions to the chair.

“Ads, why don’t I do the matching tattoo while I have your needle ready.”

“Okay, but do I get to see it before I have it?” I shake my head.

“Nope. You have to trust me. You do trust me, right?”

“Stupid question,” she snipes back.

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“Well, okay then. Let my brother tattoo you while you stare at my handsome face for a bit.” I wiggle my eyebrows and she laughs.

“I will stare at you all day, babe. Maybe you should lose the shirt as an added incentive.” She winks at me and I laugh. I grip the t-shirt at the back of my neck and pull my it over my head. The lustful gaze in Addy’s eyes does not go unnoticed. It is crazy how quick she gets turned on just by looking at me.

“Better?”

“Fuck yeah. Jeans, too?” I quirk a brow at her. “Too much? Worth a go I suppose,” she says shrugging.

“Yeah, babe. Okay, keep looking at me and my brother will ink you up. Mark you as mine, baby. Give him your left wrist.” She does it without hesitation, all the while keeping her eyes locked on mine. Her eyes bore into mine, I think the idea of marking her as mine as her all hot. I am so going to get some tonight. I bite my lip, and give her a look that lets her know that we will be getting all sweaty later.

It doesn’t take Jay long to finish her tattoo. My heart gets wild in my chest, I know she will love it because of what it symbolises. I drop my eyes just as he is cleaning the last bit of blood and ink off. I smile at how it turned out. It is fucking perfect.

“Take a look, baby.” I keep my eyes on her face as I watch her lower her eyes to her newly tattooed wrist. She gasps when she sees what has been tattooed. I felt it was the perfect tattoo for us. Her eyes lift to mine and I see the tears slowly rolling down her face. I smile, because I can see the love shining through. She loves it. Boom. Score

for Dex.

I designed a thin rope that forms a loose knot on the top of her wrist. The rope looks like actual rope, Jay did fucking awesome.

“Oh Dex,” she whispers through the tears. “It’s perfect.” She covers her mouth with her free hand, trying to hold the sob in.

“When I get mine, it means we are tied together forever.” She nods her head.

“We have always been tied together, Dex. It just took us a long time to get here. But now that we are here, we are bound forever. Not only by this tattoo but by the precious gift sleeping there.” She points to a sleeping Phoebe in her pram. She has been a gem today. She is more like Addy than she realises. Addy climbs to her feet and walks around the chair, she flings herself into my arms and kisses me deeply. I latch my hand onto her arse and hold her tightly to me. She winces and pulls back a little. Fuck, her new ink.

“Shit.” I place her back on her feet but I take her head in my hands and take another taste of her. Our tongues play and dance together in her mouth. She grips my neck, forcing me closer to her, it’s like she is trying to climb up inside of me.

“Okay, fuckers. No shagging in the studio. Well, not when there are kids here,” Jay says, nodding at Phoebe in her pram.

“Bollocks,” Addy mutters under her breath and I smile. I kiss the tip of her nose and step around her. I sit my arse in the chair and lay on my side; my turn to get inked up by my brother. Addy sits next to me and watches while I have my tattoos added to my ever growing collection of skin-art. People get tattoos for all different reasons and each person is within their right to display their tattoos however they want. Each piece shows a side to them, no matter how big or small. I watch as Addy tends to

Phoebe when she wakes up. She changes her nappy and then feeds her. My girls are my world. I lay here and watch my reason for breathing and I smile. Feeling Jay tap my back, I twist my head around to face him and see a look of pure happiness on his face. He is just as happy as I am. He loves Addy and Phoebe.

“Do it,” is all he says, and I know what he means. I snap my gaze to Ads but her full attention is on our daughter. I look back to my baby brother and nod my head. He nods and gets back to finishing up the rib tattoo. Once he has done that he gets started on my wrist tattoo, the one matching Addy’s; this gets my girl’s attention. She’s watching with locked eyes on my wrist. Watching as the needle etches the matching design into my skin, marking me as hers also. Jay finishes up and taps my shoulder. He knows what’s coming next.

“Ads, any chance you can go and get your favourite bloke a drink and maybe a bite to eat. I am wasting away,” he says in a weird accent. I shake my head chuckling at him.

“Fine, but only because I’m hungry as well. Do you want anything, babe?” she asks me.

“Where are you gonna get food from?”

“I’ll pop to the cafe on the corner. They do take-away,” she explains as she lays a newly fed and changed Phoebe in her pram.

“Leave her, I’ll watch her. I will have a steak pie, chips and gravy, babe. Oh and grab a drink as well, please,” I ask her.

All this time she has sat there in just her bra and jeans. She turns and pulls her t-shirt over her head, adjusting her hair. She then pulls her cardigan on. I pull my wallet out of my back pocket and hand her a twenty. She leans in and kisses my lips, leaving me with a quick taste of her.

“Hummm.” Jay taps his cheek, asking for a kiss. Little fucker, those lips belong to me. But Addy being Addy, gives him what he wants.

“Be back soon.” With that, she leaves us in the room. I take a deep breath and look at my brother again. I nod my head at his questioning look.

“Let’s get it done, before she comes back and throat punches me.”

“Well dude, you do go for the feisty woman.” Jay chuckles.

“Fuck yeah, I do. Feisty and wild as fuck in bed. Just my type. And Addison Cole is just my type.”

She is and will always be perfect for me.

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I can't believe we had matching tattoos done today. It was one thing I swore I would never do. But having it done with Dex meant so much to me. To us both. I know that it is something that he always wanted to do. Him and his lover marking each other, but Fiona never liked tattoos, even though Dex got addicted to them. She never once complained about his ink, she just never wanted any.

I'm sitting here waiting for Dex to come out from putting Phoebe to bed, she has been really good this past week. She has been sleeping six-seven hours through the night, so we get to catch up on sleep and some us time. I flick on the TV and search through iPlayer to find something to watch. I come across a new episode of Sherlock and leave that on.

"So, what are we watching?"

"Cumberbatch," I say, wiggling my eyebrows at him.

"What is the obsession you have with this, dude?"

"He is freaking amazing. Leave Benedict alone."

"Okay, I'll give it to you, Sherlock is pretty fucking awesome." He shifts next to me and I can see him pull at his shirt a little, I know that it has to be irritating his new tattoo. As soon as we came home, I changed into a sports bra because my t-shirt was rubbing against my new tattoo.

"Babe, why don't you take the shirt off, I can see it's bothering you." His head snaps to mine. Fear clear on his face. I shift my body so I can face him. My knees sit

against his thigh.

“What did you do?” I know this man inside and out so I know he has done something that will quite possibly fuck me off. He reaches up and rubs the back of his neck, his muscles bulging, they are quite distracting. Fucking arm porn.

“I didn’t do anything, baby.”

“Like fuck you didn’t, Dexter. Now again. What did you do?” I cross my arms, careful not to touch my new ink. I sit and stare at him, even though he won’t meet my eyes. I poke his thigh, edging him to come clean with me. “Dex.”

“Fine. But you have to promise not to get pissed off.”

“Show me.” I knew he had more work done when I left. I fucking knew it. The Castle brothers think I am stupid, but I am onto them. Always have been and always will be. He takes another deep breath, exhaling slowly as he stands up. He grips the back of his shirt and pulls it over his head. My gaze lands on a large name running down his ribs. I smile when I see our daughter’s name there. He uncovered his wrist with me, but Phoebe woke up when he went to uncover his rib tattoo, so I left him in the bathroom to clean up.

I let my gaze travel up his body and gasp when I see the fresh ink. Dex has already had his collar bones tattooed. So that left both his pectoral muscles ink free, well until today. Right there, over his heart, he has added a script ‘A’ with a tiny crown sitting on top. I move to stand in front of him. My gaze meets his and I fall in love with him all over again. I go up on tiptoes and kiss him. He deepens the kiss and we get lost together. To see my initial on him makes my heart feel love for this tattooed, bossy man. I know that he has an angel on his right arm for Fiona, plus he has a purple flower on the inside of his right forearm for her.

“I fucking love you, Addison Cole.”

“I fucking love you, Dexter Castle.” Dex picks me up and turns and sits on the sofa. I shift my legs so that I am straddling his thick thighs. I cup his face and devour his lips, they’re one of my favourite things about him. I suck his bottom lip into my mouth and nip at it with my teeth. He hisses and grinds my pussy down on his solid cock beneath me. I start rocking back and forth, my body heating up with the motion. One hand comes up and squeezes my breast. He pulls his mouth away and lays kisses all over my jaw and down my neck. He bites down on my shoulder and I grind down harder, my knickers are soaked to the point of uncomfortable.

“God, baby, you-” We get cut off by Dex’s phone ringing. “Leave it,” Dex grinds out.

“We can’t, it will wake Pheeb’s up.” I lean over and pick his phone up from the arm of the sofa. I see Liam’s name and quickly swipe my finger across the screen to answer the call.

“Liam?”

“Penny is in labour. Fucking hell, Ads. What the hell do I do? Shit. I need you both.” I squeal and jump off Dex’s lap.

“Shhhh, Phoebe is sleeping,” Dex whisper yells at me.

“Penny is in labour,” I whisper back. “Liam wants us at the hospital. I need to get someone to come and babysit Phoebe. Oh Luke can do it. Liam, we will meet you at the hospital.” I hang up and dial Luke’s number. It rings and rings. Bloody men. I hang up and try again. He answers on the third ring.

“Hey, what’s up man?” he asks, panting.

“Ewwwww, did I just interrupt you shagging some slut?” I ask him, feeling dirty just at the thought of Luke shagging some faceless bimbo again. He needs to find a good girl to calm him the hell down, before his dick falls off.

“Come on now, Addy, you know I don’t shag sluts. Well, normally anyway.” He chuckles when a girl says “hey” in the background. Yeah, what the fuck ever, he will shag anything that will open their legs to him.

“Well anyway, I need you to finish up and come over to here to babysit Pheeb. Penny went into labour and Liam wants Dex and me there. Can you do that?”

“Yeah, chick, I will be there as soon as.” I sigh in relief. “You have to go. I got important shit to do,” he says to the girl before I hang up. Well, there you go then. Dex is pushing down on his hard-on and he is shaking his head.

“Fucking cock-blocked by an unborn baby. Fucking brilliant. Glad this is Liam’s kid and not mine.” He chuckles and pulls his t-shirt back on. God he is sexy, his muscles pull tight under his skin at the movement. My eyes following every inch of him, I could seriously watch him move all day.

“Baby, keep looking at me like that and I say Liam can fucking wait. My cock hates me enough as it is.” I laugh and run over to him. I kiss him hard and quick, I know I need to keep it short otherwise we won’t be leaving and I want to see baby Bradley being born.

“Fine,” I huff, pretending to be annoyed that I have to wait.

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“Go and get dressed, I will throw some snacks into a bag for everyone. No doubt everyone will get hungry and thirsty, especially if Connie and Knox will be there.” Swoon. God this man.

I walk towards my bedroom and get into some comfy clothes because Lord knows how long Penny will be in labour.

* * *

We have been at the hospital for three hours and Penny is slowly getting there. Dex made the good call of bringing a load of snacks and drinks. Both Connie and Knox didn't want to leave the room. Dex thought it was weird that the kids wanted to be in the room when their sister was born, but it is what they all wanted. Each to their own, I suppose.

I am currently behind Penny rubbing her lower back as she has a contraction. I am giving Liam a break, his poor arms. He is sitting on the floor playing cards with the kids and Dex. I feel Penny's body start to relax, so I know her contraction is fading. Boyce Avenue is playing softly from the music dock on the window. Penny needs the music to soothe her. I keep rubbing her back, even though the contraction is finished, but I know she will have another one soon. Her contractions are close together but she isn't dilating fast.

“Well that's a very pretty sight to see when I walk into a room. A bit of girl on girl never hurt anyone,” Jay says as he walks through the door. He winks at Penny and me and I chuckle.

“Bugger off, Jay.”

“Awww, you love me, Pen. How are you chick?” He leans in and kisses her forehead. One of his hands comes up and rubs her back. That little act makes her melt into him. I step back and Jay takes over, putting pressure on her lower back. This lad will make a pretty good husband one day. I just hope it is with a girl who loves him back just as hard as he loves her. I walk over to sit on the floor with Liam and Dex, when the door swings open and in storms Rachel. The whole atmosphere in the room changes. I snap my gaze to Jay and see his body go rigid.

“I got here as quick as I could. How are you feeling?” Rachel all but pushes Jay out of the way to get to her best friend. Jay just stands there, staring at her in disbelief.

“I was standing there you know,” Jay says. You can hear how aggravated he is. He puts his hand on his hips when he is pissed and he has done that now.

“Your point? I am here now, so you aren’t needed.” Jay goes to bitch back but I get there first.

“Excuse me.” I start climbing to my feet.

“Don’t,” says Dex, but I ignore him.

“He has every right to be here, Rach. Bloody hell, just because you have known Penny longer doesn’t give you any extra rights over us. We love Penny as much as you do. Now back off, Jay was helping Penny through a contraction.”

“He was helping, Rach,” Penny pants out, as another contraction hits. God I feel her, they hurt like a motherfucker. Liam comes over and moves both Jay and Rachel away from Penny.

“You two can take your shit outside. She doesn’t need this right now,” Liam warns.

“He’s right,” Jay says. He leans in and kisses Penny’s head. “Now is not the time or place for our shit to be aired.” He nods to Liam and walks over to sit with Dex and the kids.

“Oh my Goooooooood. Liam.” Penny cries out in pain. “Oh bugger,” she calls out. Liam steps back rather quickly as Penny’s waters break.

“Now comes the pain, lady,” I call to her. Rachel snaps her head up to look at me and scowls at me. “What?” Yeah me and Rachel are going to fall out very fricking soon. I smirk at her and wait for her to answer.

“She doesn’t need to be reminded how painful it’s going to get, Addison,” she bites out.

“I bloody know that, as you can see she is freaking feeling it. Get a grip, Rachel. You aren’t her only friend here. Oh and just remember, I know how she is feeling right now. Do you?”

“Piss off, Addy.” She turns her back to me and helps Penny get up onto the bed. One midwife cleans up the floor and another checks on Penny.

“Well Penny, you dilated rather fast there hun. You are at ten centimeters. Do you feel the urge to push?” the midwife asks.

“I feel the need to go to the bathroom and have a number two,” Penny replies.

“That is the baby pushing down, Penny. She wants out of there.” We all stand around watching and waiting for the baby to arrive. Penny does a cracking job at bringing baby Bradley into the world. Dex wraps his arms around me from behind as we watch

the tiny baby girl being placed on Penny's chest. Liam is crying and kissing Penny's face. Connie is wrapped around Jay and Knox is standing strong like the big brother he will be. I wipe the tears away and smile at the growing family. Connie and Knox join their parents and meet their baby sister. Thanks to Penny working at the hospital and the staff loving her, she was able to have all of us present at the birth, which was a big issue for her.

"Guys, I want you to meet my daughter. Isla Grace Bradley," Liam says proudly.

They all look so happy. These people are my family, well, excluding Rachel-stuck-up-Cullen. Our little crew is growing and I couldn't be more happier, well I could if I had my baby girl with me right now, but she is tucked up at home with Mr Luke Baker, the man-whore who will be knocked off his arse one day, and I will be there to laugh in his face and go 'I told you so' in a very childish voice. I look at Jay who is looking between the happy family and Rachel, a mass of emotions show on his face. He is really torn about what to do about her. I really hope they both sort out what will happen in the future, it is not good for either of them.

"Ilove you, Addison Castle," Dex whispers into my ear.

"I love you, Dexter Castle," I whisper back.

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I start the engine to my car and pull away from the house. Addy is sitting next to me and Phoebe is strapped in her seat in the backseat. She is ten weeks old today and she has found her voice. She babbles all day long, as long as she is awake you can hear her. Exactly like her mum. Her jet black hair is getting thicker and Ads always puts these stupid arse bows in her hair. I take them out and blame Phoebe. Today is a surprise day for Addy, I have been planning this for the last four weeks, only Jay and Liam know what I have planned today.

“Where are we going, Dex? You know I hate not knowing what is going on.” I know she does. Addy is a planner.

“Babe, you will know when we get there, now stop asking,” I tell her. She huffs next to me and I laugh at her, which earns me a poke to the ribs.

“Meany.”

“Yeah baby, that’s me. Dexter ‘meany’ Castle,” I snark back. She mutters “piss off” under her breath. I drive for about two hours before we get to our destination. Addy sits up straight in her seat, looking around - taking in her surroundings. I drive up the drive to the farm. Mr and Mrs Phillips breed dogs. They breed three different types of dogs, but they bred the one dog I wanted. I want a dog that will protect Addy and Phoebe. Who can protect the house, but also who can play with Pheebies and our other children.

“Why are we here?” Ads asks wearily. I smile at her and lean in and kiss her. I pull away and bounce my eyebrows at her and climb out of the car, ignoring her questions. I round the car and open the door and pull my baby out who is chatting

away. I look down at her and smile.

“What are you bumping your gums about, huh?” She just babbles away and smiles a gummy smile at me. I kiss her head and walk to meet Addy who is standing at the front of the car, looking around. You can’t see much from the front of the farmhouse, everything is around the back.

“Come on, babe.” I take her hand and lead her around the house. The kennels are all legit. These guys take care of their dogs, they don’t over breed or mix breed. They have fields that allow the dogs to run free and get plenty of exercise, not only that but they train dogs as well. They will train our dog also. I needed a mean motherfucking dog to match my mean motherfucking character. Addy wanted a puny little fluffball of a dog, yeah I stamped that fucking plan down straight away. I am no way in hell walking a fucking cloud on four legs.

“Are you fucking serious?” Addy stops, still holding my hand. I look back to her and see her eyes are wide like saucers. She now realises where we are. I smile at her and tug her with me. I can see Mr and Mrs. Phillips standing by the small puppy pens, with six pups going crazy in there. Yapping and climbing all over each other. We continue to walk towards the older couple with big smiles on their faces. I have been here a few times but today is the day we get to take our champ home. I remove my hand from Addy and extend it towards the couple; Mr Philips first, then Mrs. Phillips.

“Hey, Dex. Good to see you again. And who is the pretty little thing?” He comes closer to have a look at Phoebe.

“This is my daughter, Phoebe. And this sexy little thing is my fiancée, Addison.” Mrs. Phillips smiles at us both.

“Well honey, if I was twenty years younger I would give this young lad a run for his money.” He winks at Addy, and she chuckles.

“Well Mr Phillips, if you were twenty years younger, this guy here wouldn’t get a look in.” She winks back at him. We all crack up laughing. Phoebe tries to laugh but it all comes out as a garble. I lift her and kiss her head.

“Come you two, let’s get you your furbaby,” Mrs. Phillips says.

“Furbaby? Dex?” I smile at her and kiss her lips gently.

“Come on.” I take her hand and lead her over to one of the other puppy pens. There are four pups; Doberman Pinscher pups, and one of them little shits is ours. I look at Addy who is kneeling down by the cage petting the four over-boisterous pups. I kneel next to her, adjusting Phoebe so she is resting on my shoulder.

“So, what do you think?” I whisper in her ear.

“They are bloody beautiful, Dex. Can I hold one?” She asks Mr Phillips for permission.

“Of course.” Addy looks at all the pups and picks up the little brown and black ball of energy that is wearing a red leather collar with the name ‘Deuce’ printed on it. I smile at her choice.

“Do you want one?” I ask her in a low voice.

“Really?” Addy says, shocked at my question.

“What did you think I brought you here for, baby?” She just shrugs. “See the little guy you are holding? He is ours, Ads. I bought him a few weeks ago.” Her eyebrows shoot into her hairline and I can’t help but laugh at her. I shake my head and pull her to me. I kiss her head, while I hold our daughter to my chest and she holds our new addition furbaby to her chest. This is the new, extended Castle family. It is growing all the time, I couldn’t be more fucking happier.

For the most part, us growing up was good, it was filled with good memories, not all from our parents but from Jay and Liam. After our parents died, everything went to shit. But one day that little ray of sunshine came into our lives and she planted herself there. Now here she is, well and fucking truly planted inside my heart and I have no fucking intention of letting her go.

Addison Cole is my queen and I am her king, and together we will rule our very own Castle.

The End