



Dirty Filthy Billionaire: Part 2

Author: *Paige North*

Category: Erotic, Romance, Billionaire Romance

Description: "I don't know anything," I say, "about...sex."

"It's okay," he says roughly. "I can teach you. Would you like that, Mia?"

When I scored the interview at Blush magazine, I assumed I'd be interviewing with some random HR person.

And then they bring me into his office.

Weston Bridges, CEO.

He's twenty-eight-years old, a self-made billionaire, and a totally notorious playboy who just so happens to be super sexy. I know his reputation — player, totally arrogant, richer than God, and completely full of himself. I bet he's a total a-hole — and by the way everyone is racing around the office when I show up for my interview, I'm sure I'm right.

Of course, the bastard is even hotter in person than he is in his pictures. He's like some billboard model or something, his dark hair perfectly combed with the slightest bit of curl, and his suit that just fit him flawlessly. For some reason, every move he makes grabs my attention. Just seeing him sitting there behind his desk makes me feel like I want him to take me and kiss me, which is so not like me.

Then Weston drops the bombshell.

The magazine I want to write for is getting makeover. A sexier makeover.

No problem, I tell him confidently. I can write about sex. (Just because I've never had it doesn't mean I can't write about it, right? Of course, I keep my lack of experience a secret.)

Weston offers to discuss it further.

He tells me he'll pick me up that night.

He tells me to wear something sexy.

What he doesn't tell me is that he's taking me to a sex club. The kind

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Mia

This doesn't make you nervous, does it?" Weston asks once he's locked the door.

I shake my head no, even though my body quivers with anticipation. There's a million things he could do to me right now, all of them enticing.

"You still want to move forward?" he asks, taking slow steps toward me as I try not to squirm in the chair across from his desk. "I'll teach you everything you need to know, as long as you never question me. You're agreeing to this, correct?"

I swallow hard, wondering what the hell I'm doing here. Am I crazy to get into a physical relationship with Weston Bridges, so hot, so rich, and so totally the owner of this whole publishing and media empire?

Yes, I am crazy. So crazy that I can't help myself. I'm curious and I'm more than attracted to him. He leans back on his desk, standing right in front of me.

I look up at him, his smooth face and hard jaw, his eyes never hesitant when he looks at me. I know I'll never get last night out of my mind; I need more.

"I agree," I say.

"We'll see about that. Mia, tell me: have you ever had a man's tongue on your pussy?"

I almost gasp—in fact, I think I do make a shocked little sound.

“You can’t be shy with me,” Weston says. “Only honest. Have you?”

“No,” I manage to say. I want to bury my face in my hands from embarrassment. Instead I slip them under my thighs, my body stiff with nerves. This is heading in a direction I won’t be able to turn back from.

“Then it looks like I’m about to be the first,” he says.

His words sail through me, filling me with excitement and anxiety all rolled into one.

He stands from the desk, and I think he’s going to lean down to kiss me. Instead he walks away. “Come stand over here,” he says. He’s in front of the giant glass wall, the view out over Manhattan grand enough to give anyone a mild case of vertigo.

I go to him and stand facing him, feeling a little like a soldier ready for inspection—especially when he circles me, shamelessly looking me up and down. I can feel my palms sweating, and I shift on my heels to keep from falling over from nerves. I’m wearing a skirt that’s not as short as the one I wore last night to the BDSM club Weston took me to under the guise of doing research. The skirt may be longer but it’s possibly tighter, hugging all my curves. My heels are as high as any long-time city girl can wear, and this time I carried them in my bag here and wore flats on the subway ride in from my apartment.

Weston moves away from me to take a chair from the corner and drag it over to where I’m standing. He parks it five feet from me and sits down like he’s about to settle in to watch the game on a Sunday afternoon.

“Now,” he says. “Strip.”

“I’m sorry?” I ask, even though I heard him perfectly clear.

“Everything,” he says. “Off. Now.”

I look around the office, and toward his door. I know he locked it but...it's the middle of the day. Light is streaming in through the big windows, and even though we're high up—sixty-five floors high, to be exact—I feel like others in buildings a few blocks away might be able to see inside.

“Right here?” I ask. I'm standing in the middle of the room with nowhere to hide, not even a chair to stand behind.

“Right here, right now. Mia,” he says, leaning forward, elbows on knees. “Do not make me tell you twice.”

With my heart hammering in my chest I reach up to unbutton my blouse. I know I'm going slowly, but it's not to try to tease Weston—it's because I'm so nervous. I've never been naked in front of a man in my life.

I take off my blouse and drop it to the floor beside me. Then I unzip my skirt and step out of it. I can't quite look at Weston, now that I'm practically naked. I want to keep going, but it's not an easy thing to be asked to stand naked before the country's most eligible billionaire bachelor.

I reach behind me to unhook my bra when Weston says, “Wait. Stop.”

He walks to me, and even though I'm nervous to shaking I'm also clenching in my panties, my body wet with desire. I think of last night outside the club, when he used his finger to send me into the throes of orgasm. I want him to touch me like that again—with his fingers, his dick...his mouth. I can hardly breath picturing it, wanting it.

Weston stands frustratingly close to me. He's looking down at my cleavage, pressed

up nicely in my lacy bra. Of course today, my panties match, since I got dressed knowing I'd see him. But that was a fantasy—I certainly didn't expect this.

Weston clasps his hands behind his back and walks around me. He stops behind me; I shift to face him but he says, "I didn't tell you to move. Face forward." I do as he says, waiting eagerly for him to touch me. But he doesn't. "Now the rest."

I know he means to take off the tiny remaining bits of clothing—my bra and panties. He's behind me, and it feels a bit easier to undress when he's back there, not seeing my front. I drop my bra to the floor with the rest of my clothes, and then I carefully lower my panties and step out of them. I start to take off my shoes but he says, "No. They stay."

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Weston circles back around to the front. He moves the chair closer to me, sits on the edge and looks me over. My pussy is so eager for him it's practically throbbing. My heart pounds under his intense gaze.

His eyes inspect me like I'm a piece of art. He rubs his hand across my belly, and I suck in a gasp of air, the fire of his hand alone making me even wetter. He traces his hand across my stomach, over my hip and down the side of my thigh. I stand perfectly still, perfectly quiet. He leans forward and kisses my stomach, my ribs, my hips. He trails his tongue lightly across my skin, sending shivers through my body.

When he drops to his knees in front of me, my breath catches in my throat. I can't look down at him directly—it's all too much, too overwhelming. He takes my hips in both his hands and digs his fingers into me.

"Are you wet for me, Mia?" he asks.

"Yes," I whisper.

He runs his hand over my mound but goes no further.

"You're wet just standing naked for me? What a horny girl you are." He takes my hand and places it over me where his hand just was. "Do you ever play with yourself? Use your finger on yourself until you come?"

"No..."

"Oh, honey," he says, and I can hear the smile in his voice. "I have a lot to teach

you.”

He lets my hand fall by my side. He reaches behind him and drags the chair closer to his side, and then he begins kissing me again but more aggressively, holding my body close to his face.

“You’re so soft,” he mutters, his hands rubbing my naked ass while his tongue tastes my skin. The closer his mouth and face travel to my sex the wetter I feel, the more nervous I feel. His breath is hot on my skin, and when his mouth kisses my mound I feel my head spin.

He takes my knee and gently lifts and spreads my leg. He rests my foot, still in my high heels, on the chair beside him. My hand instinctively goes to cover myself up.

“Why would you do that?” Weston says. “Did I tell you to cover that beautiful pussy up? Come on, baby. Move your hands. Let me taste you.” He takes my wrists and moves them away, exposing me again. My knee is turning in, trying to minimize my exposure but Weston puts a stop to that too.

“I’m going to need to get some restraints for you,” he says. “Keep you under control. For now do you think I should tie you up?” He moves my hands behind my back and easily clasps them in one hand. He holds them tight, firm in his strong hands. “Tie your hands behind your back? Maybe tie your legs wide open so I can get a good long look at you?” With his free hand he strokes my soaked pussy with his fingers, and I have to concentrate on not making a sound. It feels like a release, finally having his hands on me, slipping in me. Suddenly I don’t care that I’m opened up before him.

“You’re soaked,” he says. “I knew you would be.” He slowly slides his finger in and out of me, and I can feel myself clenching around his finger. “I bet you taste so sweet. Keep these legs spread for me. I want to taste all of you.”

When his wet tongue touches my wet pussy, I feel like the world stops. I have never felt such heat and intensity in my life. He drags his tongue across me, and I hope I don't disappoint him. He goes across me several times, each time ending with a firm lick on my nub. He buries his face in me sucks gently, then a bit harder on it, making my head spin like crazy. I'm not sure how I'm still standing, but I'll do anything to keep this feeling going.

Weston pulls back and says, "This pussy needs so much attention." He uses his finger to pump me hard. "You need to get fucked, young lady." He continues to use his finger on me as his tongue works my clit, flicking over it with the same intensity as his finger inside.

I'm breathing harder and harder the more he gives me, little whimpers coming from deep inside me—I can't help myself. I've never felt such pleasure in my entire life. All my senses are screaming for more; I'm trying to stay quiet but I want him so much, my body needs him more than air. My hips buck into his face and he goes deeper inside me, pressing his face closer to my cunt, his tongue working wonders on me. Soon I can't help myself; I dig my hand into his hair, holding him tight as my body tenses. My pussy clenches and I want to cry out as my body explodes and I pump hard onto his mouth.

"Jesus," I mutter once the delirious wave passes over me and my senses slowly come back into focus. Weston gently lowers my leg from the chair and I stand on my wobbly feet. He helps to hold me steady with one hand as the other pulls the chair back in front of me. Weston sits down in it, holding my hand as he looks up at me. He's so beautiful, so sexy that I can't believe this man just did that to my body.

"Just as I imagined," he says, and crudely wipes his hand across his mouth. "So sweet. So sexy. Now." He leans back slightly in the chair. "Are you ready to return the favor?"

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Weston

I watch Mia's face settle down from her epic, not to mention tasty, orgasm. Her mouth is hanging open, her breathing heavy. As sexy as she looks standing naked and wet before me, there's only one way she'll look even sexier.

"Now get on your knees," I tell her.

Her face flashes surprise, and maybe more nerves. It's so hot to see her look both horny as fuck and also nervous to do the very things she knows she wants.

When she hesitates I say, "Mia..."

That's all it takes, and she's bending down on her pretty little knees.

"Come closer," I say. "Put your arms here." She rests her forearms on my thighs, and her tits look so full and delicious, her nipples hard little pebbles that I really want to suck on. I stroke her soft cheeks, flushed pink from the orgasm I gave her. "Have you ever sucked a man's cock before?"

She slowly shakes her head no, her eyes flashing down to my zipper of my suit pants, my cock hard inside.

"It's okay, baby. I'll teach you." I run my thumb across her bottom lip. "Open wide. That's good. Stretch your jaw, and show me your tongue, just a little bit." I place the tip of my thumb on her warm wet tongue. She closes her lips around me. I push it past, into her mouth and across her tongue. I slowly my thumb push in and out,

feeling how much she can take. “Like that,” I tell her. “And watch your teeth.” She drops her jaw a little, moving them away. Watching her lips wrap tight around my thumb, I can just see her mouth around my cock, so hard and in need of her soaking me. Mia is watching me, wanting to be good at this task, and it’s the sexiest sight I’ve seen. But I need the real thing. I need her sucking my cock.

I unzip my pants and take my cock out, holding it tall and firm in my hand.

“Come here, baby. Scoot closer.” Mia’s eyes on my dick—they’re so wide, taking the sight in. “Sit back on your heels.” She does as I say, and now she’s even lower in front of me. “Open your mouth. Now stick out your tongue.” I take my dick and place it on her tongue, the warm wetness of her making me want to shoot come all over her. I wipe the wet head of my dick across her tongue, and I can see the nervousness in her eyes. I thump my dick on her tongue, and her eyes close, accepting what I do to her. “Now come here.” I take the back of her head and pull her up. “Wrap your lips around the head—just the top. That’s a good girl. Lick the top, Mia. Soak me with your tongue. That’s a girl.”

Her mouth is so warm on me. I move her hair to the side so I can get a better look at my stiff rod in her mouth.

“Take more of me in.” I gently push her head down, watching her jaw open up more. I can feel myself nudge the back of her throat, and she gags slightly, pushing back. But I hold her head. “It’s okay. Open up your throat. You can take more of me. Do it, Mia. Take me down your throat.”

She does as she’s told, and soon she’s bobbing her head slowly up and down over my cock. She looks so fucking sexy on her knees before me. I run my hand down her bare back, loving the sight of her.

“Look at that ass,” I say, the heart-shape of her ass pushing back. “You look like you

want to get fucked while you suck my cock. Would you like that?" I push her hair back again, loving watching her mouth and jaw work over me. "No, I need you all to myself. Sucking me. Taking me deeper. Come on, Mia. Keep sucking me." I push her head down a little more, and she lets out a moan that makes me want to come. Her head bobs faster, and each time she takes me a little deeper. She's so good, already she's so fucking good to my cock.

"Now put your hand on me. Hold me in your hand," I tell her, and she wraps her tiny fingers around my fat dick. I don't have to tell her more; she knows to pull on me as her mouth goes up and down. "Christ," I say, as I fill her mouth. Her hand goes tighter, and I have to tell her ease up. I hold her head over my dick, guiding her, pushing her, making her take me deeper. Fucking her mouth is the most beautiful, intense thing I've done in longer than I can remember. I can't hold back anymore, and without giving her any warning, I shoot come down her throat.

I hold her head down over my spraying cock, pushing myself as deep inside her as I think she can take. Her back convulses a little, her gag reflexes fighting her, but she takes it all down like the good little student she is.

I sit back in the chair, putting myself away as Mia sits back on her heels and wipes her mouth. The view is perfection.

"Come here and kiss me," I say, and instead of leaning toward her, I make her come all the way to me, stretching up, her hands on my thighs. I take her face in my hands and kiss her deeply, the taste of both of us mingling together in our mouths. I take control of her mouth, my tongue on hers. When I pull away her eyes are heavy and dazed.

"Now put your clothes back on."

I stand up and walk away from her as she gets dressed. I sit back behind my desk. I

check my email, seeing that fifty or so have come through since I locked the door.

“Shit,” I mutter. At least ten of them are urgent and need immediate attention. I start back to work.

“Everything okay?” Mia asks from across the room.

“Work,” I say.

Mia walks back to the front of my desk, now dressed. I’m already deep back into work so I barely glance up at her. I’ve got meetings lined up throughout the rest of the day that weren’t scheduled when I arrived this morning. There are issues with our distributors who want to renegotiate now that there’s a new guy at the helm, more staffing concerns in upper management (people either quitting because I’m here, or want a raise that was supposedly promised to them), and questions about censorship in the Asian market. And everything has to be resolved by the end of the day, apparently.

“Rachel,” I say into my intercom. “Find out who scheduled the distribution meeting and make sure Eileen Hightower is in it. Then call Mark and find out who are the three people who most need to be in that meeting. No more than three. I don’t want it to turn into a bitchfest. And get Kin and his team ready for a video conference.”

“Yes, Mr. Bridges,” she responds.

I’m not a hundred percent sold on this assistant’s abilities but she came with the office so I’m willing to give her a shot.

I look up and see Mia still standing in front of my desk. She is fully clothed—she could use an upgrade in wardrobe—and she’s looking at me like she expects me to order her a cab or something.

“Yes?” I ask.

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She darts her eyes away from me—nervous, now that my dick’s not in her mouth, I suppose.

She looks embarrassed and I feel a bit bad. “Nothing,” she says. “I guess I’ll go.”

“You should start researching the language of the clubs, more than just what BDSM stands for.”

“No, yeah,” she says. “You’re right. I have a lot of research to do.”

“Great,” I say. When she doesn’t move I add, “Let us know if you need anything.”

She turns to leave. “Okay. See you later...”

I watch her walk toward the door. It’s a beautiful sight, her backside. I definitely should have given it more attention. Next time, I think.

She forgets I locked the door and tries to jerk it open. It’s cute, actually. She finally gets it open and gives me a little wave goodbye.

I look back to my computer. Already another twenty-five emails. It’s going to be a long day.

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Mia

I manage to unlock myself from Weston's office, which I thought would be the most embarrassing thing to happen to me today. God, was I wrong.

As soon as I exit his office I see Jen, the receptionist. She shuffles away and goes to Rachel's desk as if that's what she was there for all along.

"So, yeah, that's great, send it to me and I'll make sure he gets it," she says to Rachel, her eyes darting at me. "Or, um, here are the papers he wanted. You want me to give them to him or...?"

Rachel, who is clicking away at her computer, tells Jen to just set the papers on her desk and she'll take them to Mr. Bridges in a moment.

"You sure?" Jen asks, her eyes darting to me. "It would really suck if he didn't get them now. He might come over to my desk and really ream for me not giving him what he wants. Oh, hey, Mia," she says, finally looking at me as if she just noticed me. "Looks like you were able to snatch some time with Mr. Bridges. What's he doing now—having a smoke?"

"What? No," I say, my face turning hot. "He was just telling me about my first assignment."

"Telling or showing?"

"Excuse me?" I say, horrified at what she's not very subtlety implying.

“You look a little flushed, Mia. Are you okay? Getting sick?”

“God, if you are stay away from me,” Rachel says, not looking away from her computer. “Go drink some orange juice or something.”

“Or something,” Jen says. “She looks like she’s already had her fill.”

I’m feeling super rattled and I just want to get away from these girls.

“He’s in there if you need anything,” I say, walking past them.

“Yeah,” Jen says, a devious little laugh in her voice. “I heard.”

Oh my god. Oh my god. She heard. She knows. Shit, what am I going to do?

Not stay here, that’s for sure.

With my bag in hand I rush to the elevators and punch the button. I just need some fresh air. Or New York City air, whatever I can get.

As the elevator whisks me to the lobby I think, What did I just do? I walk at a quick pace down the street with no direction or idea of where I’m going.

Holy crap. What did I just do...with my new boss? What the hell was I thinking? I wasn’t, that’s the problem. Weston is just so...everything he does is sexy. He makes checking email look sexy. But I should know better. Getting involved, like that, with my new boss should have been a no-brainer.

I can’t believe the things he did to me. No man has ever done those things to my body...and I’ve never done those things to a guy. Oh my god, I can’t believe I did all that. And right in the middle of his office. I look up at the buildings. Could anyone in

a nearby building see into his office? Did someone see me? Take video of us? Jesus.

And Jen. What the hell was up with her? The way she was talking and looking at me. She had to know. There's no way she didn't, not with the way she was talking. I tried so hard not to make a sound when I was with Weston but it was really hard. He made my body feel like it was on fire, like I was having some sort of epic, almost out-of-body experience. But had I made noises? Embarrassing, yes, but if she or anyone heard me embarrassment would be the least of my problems.

I just can't believe I somehow landed my dream job—writer at a top magazine—and on day one I may have royally screwed it up. I risked everything for a guy who couldn't even look at me once I'd put my clothes back on.

My stupidity knows no bounds. Weston was only using me. I was thinking we had some sort of connection that maybe went beyond physical. There was an energy between us that I'd never felt before. But then again, I'd never felt a dick in my mouth and it doesn't exactly add up to love. The only energy between us was good old-fashioned horniness. Weston wanted to get off with someone inexperienced so he could dominate me. It doesn't matter that I liked it. The point is, he used me, and I'm a fool for letting it happen.

I go into a coffee shop to try to clear my head and figure out what to do. I sit at the counter and order hot tea and a muffin when I see Weston right next to me.

His face is huge on the cover of a discarded newspaper. He's smiling and looking dapper in a suit. Playboy Billionaire Owns the Waves the headline reads. Beneath that it says, "It's His Prerogative...to Make Media Sexy."

No one can accuse Weston Bridges of playing it safe. The twenty-eight year old former farm boy has taken over Prerogative Media, one of the country's biggest conglomerates, with television stations, book publishers, and magazines under its

very large umbrella. It's a move that is sure to affect the way we communicate and seek information, but Mr. Bridges assures us it'll all be for the best.

"There's nothing sexier than knowledge and information," he says, his signature smile dancing delightfully on his tanned face. "My plan is to take what was already great about Prerogative—their management, distribution—and ramp up the volume. This was once the gold standard of media, and I intend to put it back on the mantle where it belongs."

If only he can concentrate on spreadsheets and projections and not on international yacht trips and supermodel stunners—something Mr. Bridges is better known for at this point in his career, aside from his seemingly endless piles of money.

"There are three things Wes Bridges loves," says Merrill, a former girlfriend. "Money, power and women. Anything else just bores him."

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Another leggy beauty echoes those sentiments. “He’s very generous with his...”

I push the paper away. I can’t read anymore. I’m just another one of his women, a score. I can’t believe I was so naïve. And now my job...

How can I ever go back there again? I’d have to be a masochist to walk back through those halls again. Jen. What does she know? It’s driving me crazy, wondering if she heard us or if I’m just, well, being crazy.

My phone pings a text. My heart races when I see it’s from him.

Where are you?

It’s curt so I can’t tell if he’s worried or annoyed or just curious. I sit staring at it for a moment, trying to decide what to do. I look back at his face on the cover of the paper he now owns.

Looking for you, he texts. Can’t find you.

God, what if he asked Jen if she knows where I am? What if Jen told Rachel that she heard us in his office? And what if Rachel then told someone else, who told someone else...

I write him back, deciding to just be honest.

Sitting in coffee shop humiliated.

?

Pretty sure Jen overheard us at the door to your office. No way can I go back there.

Get over it, he writes back, and I'm taken aback by how swift he is. Doesn't he care that someone in the office probably overheard us? Doesn't he have any shame? You have work to do. Calm down. Come back.

I take a bite of my muffin. It's dry and heavy. I take a sip of tea to wash it down but that's gone cold. Knowing the muffin will fill me up later when my stomach has settled down, I ask the waitress for a box to take it home. Maybe if I nuke it then slather it in butter it'll make it edible. If I ever eat again.

I know I don't have it in me to go back to that office and face Jen and anyone else who may know by now what I did. Or even face Weston. God, what were we thinking? It was the sexiest encounter of my life but now it's nothing more than a new hire's skank move. The entire office will know by the end of the day—and Weston wants me to just calm down?

I hold my phone and think of my words carefully. I just need to get it out and get it over with. Tomorrow, once again, I'll regroup.

Can't, I write.

You're overthinking this. I left some articles on your desk that suit the tone I want you to use in your piece.

It's not just Jen, I write. It's you too. How I feel when I'm around you.

What does that mean?

But I can't tell him. Not even through text messages. He makes me feel like I'm losing my head. He makes me feel sexy. He intimidates me but he makes me feel like I want to please him more than anything in the world. More than starting my career in publishing.

So I can't go back there. For that and so many other reasons.

Thank you for the opportunity, I write. I really appreciate it, and I'm sorry it didn't work out.

I hit send then turn my phone off. I take my muffin and head back to the apartment. Still unemployed and broke.

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Weston

Ididn't know her just a couple of days ago but when I realize Mia is not here in the office, I get upset. She should be here. She's part of the team and I need her here working. I had articles to share with her and was prepared to guide her on starting her new assignments. When I realized she'd disappeared, I felt the loss, which sort of pisses me off.

I don't know that any of the girls in the office know anything but if anyone gives me shit, they know they'll be fired faster than the express elevator can make its way up to my floor.

It's a busy day with meetings about the new state of operations. I hardly have a moment to think about anything but the task at hand. Still, Mia wiggles her way into my mind at odd moments that have nothing to do with anything remotely related to her.

I'm pretty sure she has zero idea how sexy she is. Her pussy is the softest, sweetest thing I've ever tasted. Throughout the day, when I least expect it, her face flashes through my mind, or her lips or neck or legs. I have a hard time concentrating over spreadsheets and profit and loss statements as I think about her—I'm shifting in my chair trying to delicately smooth down my pants. I don't get a total hard-on in the meetings, but my dick is well aware of my dirty thoughts.

"Is that agreeable to you, Weston?" Alistair Brockton from the London office asks me. I look at him for a moment, trying to formulate a thought. "Merging departments? I really think it'll help streamline things."

“Yes, of course, Alistair,” I say. “Whatever you think. Just make sure you run it by Margery before notifying staff.”

By the end of the day, I’m fried. My brain can hardly take in another statistic, pitch, recommendation or financial projection. I want a stiff drink and something more to relax my mind.

I’m standing at the window of my office, taking in the view. The buildings all glitter below me, and I feel the weight of all I’ve achieved in such a short amount of time. Not bad for a corn-fed farm boy from the Midwest. I’m sure if Dad could see me now he’d be so proud, and Mom would pat my cheek and tell me she knew all along I’d do big things. My heart aches at the thought of them, and the flames that took them down, along with my sweet Samantha... She came to us because she needed protection from her own father who took pleasure in smacking her around. I didn’t intend to fall in love with her. I also didn’t intend to let her and my entire family die in that fire.

I should have been home that awful night, but I’d gotten in a fight with my parents about dating Samantha. They didn’t think it was a good idea but I was already falling in love with her—they chided my feelings, calling it puppy love. I stormed out alone to go to a buddy’s and drink some beers. By the time I got back to the farm it was ablaze, and everyone inside was dead.

I’ve always known, deep down, that it was Samantha’s scum father who did it. He was never charged, though. He had money, and I’d bet this company that he paid off the Podunk sheriff’s department.

I force memories of how they died out of my mind, focusing only on the good people they were. They taught me hard work, and after that terrible night I had to learn resilience and sheer determination. That’s how I got here, standing high above Manhattan with an empire all my own. I have power. Everyone who doubted me,

who said I was too young or arrogant, or didn't have enough experience, they can all look at me now and suck on my dick. I did it, everything I set out to do and years sooner than I planned. I have everything I want.

"Mr. Bridges?"

I turn to see Rachel at the door. She's a good executive assistant as far as I can see so far, professional with not a lot of bullshit. There are pictures of young kids on her desk, and I assume they're hers. "Yes?"

"Just wanted to know if you need anything else this evening."

"No, that's all," I say, keeping my eyes on the stunning view.

"Okay, I'm heading out then." She pauses at the door. "Any plans for the evening? Big celebration or...?"

I turn to look at her. I know what the papers say about me, especially the ones I don't own. And I know what I did in the office this morning—I've hardly been able to stop thinking about it. But I don't discuss personal plans or affairs with anyone in business. Not ever. That's one way I've gotten as far as I have as quickly as I have. My adventures from the Hamptons to the South of France may be splashed across the tabloids, but I don't like anyone in the office even asking how my weekend was. Because it's none of their business.

"Have a nice weekend, Rachel," I say.

Her face falters for a moment, and she says, "You too." She shuts the door on the way out.

I go back to my desk and sit down, staring at my cell phone. I do hope Mia is okay.

She was clearly upset. I don't give a fuck what anyone thinks of me but I suppose she doesn't have the same thick skin. I don't want her to feel worry or angst. And Rachel, nosey as she may have been, may also have a point—I haven't yet celebrated my enormous success.

I pick up my phone. "Gerald? Get the car. I'll be down in ten."

Gerald tells me he'll be waiting when I'm ready. I put my phone in my pocket and go back to the window. It's all for me, everything down there. I can do or see whatever or whoever I want. For tonight, I know exactly who that is.

* * *

Frankly, her place is basically what I expected it to be—a dingy little walkup with terrible lighting, a narrow stairway, and decades of paint thickening the walls.

I knock on the heavy door, the echoes filling the hall. When the door swings open, I'm stunned. Mia looks amazing. Her face is practically glowing, her hair pulled back to show it off all the better, and she's wrapped in a short robe. I take a moment to look her over, her legs and waist and cleavage peeking out. She's gorgeous.

"What the fuck are you doing here?" she asks. "And how do you know where I live?"

I look in her eyes, feisty and glaring up at me.

"You look beautiful," I say. Corny maybe, but true.

She tightens her robe around her neck, closing off the view. Her eyes flick across my body but she recovers quickly. "What are you doing here?" she asks again.

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“I’m here to take you out,” I say, as if we’d planned this all along.

“Excuse me? How do you even know where I live?”

“Funny thing about owning a company,” I say. “Access to files and records and such. Wasn’t hard. So. Is that what you’re wearing? Not that I mind—you look exceptional but I wonder if the maître d might have a problem with sleepwear in the dining room.”

“Maître d? What are you talking about?”

“At the restaurant,” I say. “Of course, we’ll have the private dining room so it’s not like many people will see you. We still have to walk across the restaurant and I guarantee all eyes will be on you. Mine certainly will be.”

“Would you stop it already,” she says, and I can tell she’s softening up to my shtick.

“Can I come in?” I ask.

She considers me for a moment before relenting. “Sure. Come on. But no judgment on my place.”

“I think I got a sense of it walking up the stairs. Seems like you have a neighbor who has an affinity for overcooked vegetables?”

She swings the door open. “Ugh, that woman. She’s really skinny and wears plastic flip-flops. Her feet are always black. It’s disgusting.”

“Charming,” I say, as I step inside her tiny apartment. She shuts the door and squeezes past me, and it takes all I have not to take her by the waist, undo that tie that’s keeping her clothed, and ravish her body.

She walks across the room and turns to look at me, as if she’s trying to keep a safe distance from me. Which is fine, because it gives me a great view of her entire body, even if it is mostly covered up.

“Seriously, what are you doing here?” she asks.

“I want to take you out,” I say. “I know you had a rough morning once you left the office. I thought a little fun and good meal would perk you up.”

“Yeah, that’s just what I need,” she says. “Considering I have to start again tomorrow looking for a job.”

“Let’s not worry about that now,” I say. “Come on. I want to take you out for a good meal. Don’t turn me down. Besides, I already saw the stale muffin on the counter. That’s not your dinner, is it?”

She sighs, looking so cute as she crosses her arms over her beautiful chest. “Fine. I’ll go to dinner with you. But only because I’m hungry and don’t feel like making anything.”

“Good,” I say.

“Just give me a second to get dressed.”

“Too bad,” I say.

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Mia

I know what I'm doing. As wild and confusing and a total rollercoaster the last couple of days have been—highs and lows in work and emotion—when I follow Weston out to his chauffeured car I know exactly what I'm doing.

I'm getting a good meal with a hot guy.

Beyond that, my plan is to try not to think too much. This morning was one of the most erotic moments in my life; then the most humiliating when I opened Weston's office door and saw Jen's face, looking as if she knew everything. I figure it's been a crazy day, so when Weston Bridges shows up at my door saying he wants to take me out, why should I bother asking why?

"So where are we going?" I ask as the driver heads down the streets.

"Some place you've never been," Weston says.

I look at him. "How would you know?"

He grins. "From the looks of the food containers scattered on your kitchen counters, I'm going to guess you don't eat out much. And I know you haven't been here in New York too long, and money is tight with you..."

"Excuse me?" I say, feeling a bit offended, even if it's true.

"Therefore," he continues, "I'd wager a thousand dollars you've never been to any

place I could take you.” I shift, trying to act offended but we both know he’s right. Weston places his hand on my thigh. “But if you’ve been to this place before, just tell me. I’ll take you someplace else.”

He gives my leg a light squeeze before dragging his hand away. It’s not a coincidence I wore a skirt. Being around Weston makes me want to wear a skirt—to show him my body, and to feel his touches more easily and readily. His fingers are like silky fire scorching my skin.

“Surely you could have found a better date than me, though,” I say, and instantly regret it. I sound childish.

Weston shifts his body to really look at me. “I didn’t like that you were upset today. I don’t want to cause you any...emotional pain,” he says carefully, like he’s trying to find the right words. “Besides, I couldn’t dream up a better date than you.”

“Now you’re just being a flatterer,” I say, because no way am I some great date for playboy Weston Bridges. He’s been with some of the most beautiful women in the world.

“I don’t lie,” he says. “I find it’s a waste of energy. Besides, I’ve got enough going on in my life and don’t need to add trying to remember any lies I told. I’ve got enough to remember on a day-to-day business without adding any bullshit to the mix. So yes, I’m very happy to be out with you tonight.” He takes my hand, which is resting on the buttery leather seat. “You do look stunning, Mia.”

The way his eyes penetrate me makes me feel suddenly shy, and I can hardly look at him—especially when his hand is squeezing mine.

“Thank you,” I manage to say.

“It’s going to be hard to keep my hands to myself for very long,” he adds, rubbing his thumb along my hand in his. I dare to give him a little squeeze back, and hope he knows that I feel the same way.

When the car pulls over, I look up at the bright blue awning and gorgeous people filing in and out of the restaurant.

“Hey,” I say, looking up through the window. “I do know this place.”

I look back to Weston and he gives me a look like he doesn’t believe me.

“I haven’t been here,” I clarify. “But I read about it in New York Magazine. How’d you get a reservation? Wait, am I your backup date or something?”

“First of all, no more reading magazines from competing publishers. And second,” he says, taking my chin in his fingertips. “You are not my backup. You are who I want to be with tonight. Didn’t I already tell you?”

I feel myself blush, and try to control the big goofy grin that’s eagerly playing on my lips.

Weston leans in and lightly kisses my lips. It’s a soft, gentle kiss that stops me in my tracks. When his tongue pushes past my lips and brushes against mine, the world seems to stop.

When he pulls back, my head is spinning, my eyes heavy. He gives my thigh a firm little smack and says, “Let’s go. I’m starving.”

The car door magically opens—it’s the driver—and just before I step out, Weston puts his hand on my arm. I turn back to him. “And Mia? I don’t need reservations, at any restaurant.”

It's unnecessarily cocky, but I have to admit that it's also pretty sexy, especially because it's true. Tables all over the city would be cleared the moment Weston Bridges walked in.

Inside the dark, heavy wood reception, Weston speaks briefly to the hostess, who smiles a lot and nods knowingly. Her smile slips when she looks at me, and I shift uncomfortably in my DSW shoes.

Another beautiful woman ushers us through the crowded restaurant, which is lit on the sides and in corners with blue bulbs, giving the whole space a dreamy vibe. We're taken to a table up a few steps, on a platform, with drapes hanging on all sides. We have an incredible view of the restaurant but are mostly hidden to the other patrons. And definitely no one can hear us. It's like having a private room but still being a part of the crowd.

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Weston orders a bottle of wine and escargots for appetizers, which I have never had. They are buttery delicious and have a similar taste to clams but are somehow far superior.

Once we're both about halfway through our first glass of wine, I'm feeling more relaxed—with Weston, and in this crazy fancy restaurant. He seems to know I'm feeling better, too, because he says, "You look good. You've looked good every time I've seen you, but you look more relaxed than you did when you opened your apartment door earlier."

"I can't believe you showed up at my place," I say. "You want the last one?" I use my tiny little fork to point to the last escargot. He shakes his head no, and I gladly spear it. "And yeah, I was feeling terrible all day long. That Jen—"

Weston leans forward and places his hand on my wrist. "No. I don't want to talk about her, or anyone at work. We can talk about work, but no one in the office. Okay?"

I nod slowly. "Sure."

"I just," he shakes his head. "I don't want you to be upset. That's all."

"Okay," I say. "I'm not upset."

"Good," he says. "I'm glad you're feeling more relaxed. And I'm glad you like the escargots. These are the best you'll find outside of Paris. Have you been?"

“To Paris?” I shake my head. “No.”

“I’ll take you,” he says, as easily as if he’s saying he’ll get me a clean fork. Like it’s nothing, no big deal. But he’s probably taken lots of girls to Paris.

Weston had insisted on ordering our meals—he said he knows what’s best, and what the chef is particularly adept at cooking. It felt a bit strange to have him order for me but I went with it, and he was totally right. The lamb was perfection—as was everything else about the dinner.

When I stand and excuse myself to the ladies’ room, Weston takes my wrist and nods for me to lean down close to him.

His hand slides over my backside, and his fingers run along the edge of my panties. “Leave them,” he says. “Throw them away.”

In the bathroom, I debate this. For about three seconds. Then I lower them all the way past my shoes and stuff them in the trash.

As I walk back to our table, I feel exposed, like everyone knows—but in a way that’s got me turned on and feeling a little naughty.

“Ready?” he says when I get back to the table. “I need to make a phone call upstairs first.”

“Doesn’t your cell phone work?” I ask as I follow him to a corner of the restaurant and up a flight of near-hidden stairs. It’s a narrow passage, and the boards creak as we go.

“The general manager is a friend,” he says. “He came by the table when you were gone.” Weston stops on the stairs and turns to look down at me. “Did you do as I

asked?”

“Yes,” I say, thinking of my panties tossed away in the bathroom. I really couldn’t afford to ditch a pair like that, but with the way Weston’s looking at me, I’d gladly ditch my entire dress if he asked.

“Good,” he says, then continues up the stairs.

He opens an office door. It’s neatly decorated with hardcover cookbooks and chef’s books, and the art on the walls is of food—one of asparagus, another a loaf of bread. There’s an arched window that looks across the buildings and rooftops.

Weston turns on a lamp on the desk. Over his shoulder he says, “Shut the door.” I do as he says, my body tingling with anticipation of what might happen. The rumble of noise below us from the packed restaurant reminds me that there are many people around us, but the creaky staircase reminds me that we’ll surely hear if someone comes upstairs.

Weston leans back on the edge of the desk.

“Lift your skirt,” he says, “and show me your pussy.”

For a moment I can’t move—it’s so crass and demanding. But sexy. I can’t believe myself as my fingers reach for the bottom of my skirt and slowly begin to lift it up. Finally, like a Parisian showgirl, I pull up my skirt to give Weston a full view of...myself.

His eyes stay locked on me, on what I’m showing him. He crosses his ankles, and if I took a picture of him right now people would think he was just listening in on a business meeting, especially when he crosses his arms.

“Now touch yourself,” he says.

Showing was one thing; doing is another. I hesitate and get this shy grin on my face.

“Why haven’t you ever touched yourself?”

I shrug a shoulder, too embarrassed to answer.

“You don’t ever make yourself come?” he asks. When I say nothing, he slowly shakes his head and says, “Oh, Mia. You have so much to learn.” He takes slow steps toward me. “I want to watch you pleasure yourself. I want to watch you finger your wet pussy. I want to watch you make yourself come. But not right now.” He leans his body against mine, pressing me against the door, the steel of his need pressing into me. “Right now I just need a little piece of you, because you are making me crazy. Did you know that?” His face is close to mine; he brushes his lips across my cheek. He puts his hand beneath my skirt on my upper thigh. He lets it rest there as if he’s not going anywhere. “Do I do anything to you?”

I nod my head, trying not to show just how eager I feel because I do—I feel so eager because he does everything to me.

“Let’s see about that,” he says. His hand pushes between my thighs, and when his fingers slip between my folds, we both let out a sigh. “Look at you,” he says. “You’re soaked.”

Weston

I've been watching her closely all night, all the while trying to control my cock from becoming rigid right there at the private table. But Mia does something to me that no woman has ever done—at least not in years. She takes me to the edge of losing my senses.

My finger slides into her warm cunt, up inside her. Her breathing is heavy and I can tell she's trying not to moan. I finger fuck her a bit more, slowly, letting her feel every passage of my finger before coming down again. She puts her arms around my neck, and I know she's unsteady on her feet—I can see it in her eyes.

I kiss her soft neck, trailing small bites along the way. She smells amazing, a sweet floral scent mixed with heavenly dinner, and her pussy. I add a finger, needing to feel more of her, and she rewards me with a moan, her arms squeezing tighter around my neck, pulling my face closer. But I need more—and I want her to have more.

“Hold up your skirt,” I tell her, and she obediently moves one hand down to her skirt, holding it up for me, showing me her gorgeous pussy. I just want to eat it, and I might. For now, I watch as my fingers disappear up inside her, stepping back to get a better view of her face and her trimmed little cunt. When I use my wet finger to circle her clit, Mia sucks in a breath, her eyes widening. This woman needs so much more, and I intend to give it to her.

After circling her clit a few times I let myself enjoy the wetness of her, feeling her walls, knowing how much attention every part of her needs.

“Have you ever tasted yourself?” I ask her, knowing full well the answer. This is a girl who can’t even bring herself to masturbate. God, that’s a sight I’d love to see. With her eyes closed she shakes her head no. I circle her clit again, then slowly bring my fingers to our faces. She looks at my wet fingers warily, like she’s not sure. “Suck yourself off my fingers, baby. Go on,” I say. I ever-so-lightly brush her bottom lip with my finger; her tongue instinctively reaches out to the mark I left there. “You taste delicious,” I assure her. “Come on. I want to watch you suck my fingers.”

Mia’s mouth falls open. With her eyes on mine, she moves her head toward my middle and ring fingers. She reaches her tongue out first then covers the tips with her lips, wrapping them around my digits more easily than she did my cock earlier today. She dips her head down, sucking my fingers down whole, and lets her tongue drag hard up my fingers as if she’s getting every last drop from them. I can’t believe what I’m watching. She’s so assured, her eyes on me the whole time. She goes back down for a second time, and when she does it a third I know she’s just fucking with me. It’s like she wants me to come in my pants.

“Jesus Christ,” I mutter.

She slowly pulls her mouth from my fingers and leans her head back against the door. She’s emboldened now, and as horny as I’ve been all night.

“Now what, Mr. Bridges?” she asks.

“Now,” I say, trying to get my breath back and sound like I’m in control, “you straighten your skirt. When we walk through the restaurant, try not to look like the best thing you ate tonight was your own cunt juices.”

Shock flashes across her face at my being so crass. When I’m with Mia, I want to have her any way I can; I also want to protect her. I want to push her out of her comfort zone but I don’t want to make her feel uncomfortable with me. So I push her

hips back up against the door and kiss her deeply, taking in her delicious taste coating her tongue. I could eat her all day and night.

I rest my forehead on hers and hold her there for a moment, looking down at her lips while smoothing down her skirt between us. What I really want to do is fuck her upside this door until both of us come screaming. But I know that, despite the things she's shown me she's willing to do, I still need to go slow with her.

I hold her hand as we cross the restaurant; as expected, eyes follow us but no one is crass enough to snap a photo in this place. Plus management knows I'd never come back if photos of me ended up online or worse, in a rival publication.

As we settle back into the car, Mia says, "Thanks. For dinner, I mean."

She gives a nervous laugh; it makes me want to take her face in my hands again and kiss her until she moans. She's so adorable.

"You're very welcome. Thanks for the great company. Feeling up for some dessert and a nightcap?"

She grins. "Yeah. Sure."

"Great," I say, because I already told Gerald where the next stop is.

The next stop is a little place called Open—small bar, great pastry chef, dimly lit, and it always has a great band playing some tunes. After two in the morning the volume gets turned up but around this time it's a great place to people watch, get a great scotch and sit close to a beautiful woman.

We walk down the steps into the darkened bar, the sound of horns and smooth guitars filling the doorway as we approach. With my hand on the small of Mia's back, I

guide her to a table I like, close enough to the band but also far enough away that we don't have to yell at each other. Although I could handle just watching Mia all night long and be pretty happy.

And she seems happy. Her face has a sort of perma-smile, a wonderment at all the things I've shown her tonight—public and otherwise. She really is experiencing everything for the first time, and her eyes seem to miss nothing. She's taking it all in—sexy, and also good for a budding journalist.

“You know all the places, don't you?” she says once we've sat down and ordered some drinks, plus a slice of chocolate cake for her. I'd rather slather her body in chocolate and eat it up but...maybe later.

I shift my chair to get it closer to hers, and drape my arm across the back. I let my fingers lightly touch her skin. “I get around,” I say.

“Ha,” she says. “So I've read.”

“Oh yeah?”

“Just this morning I read about you in the—”

“Don't even say the name,” I say, holding up my hand. “Don't want to hear it. Besides, anyone who speaks about me publicly, especially to a journalist or, more likely, a tabloid reporter, is not someone who knows me well. Might be someone I met one weekend and spent a little time with. So you can be sure, Ms. Cassidy, that whatever you read was likely a lie.”

“One woman said you were very generous,” she says.

“Well. That's true,” I concede, my fingers caressing her skin. “Wouldn't you say?”

She tucks her chin to her shoulder and nods, looking at up through her thick lashes. That one little movement is enough to make me want to take her right now. Instead I lean into her and tuck my face between the veil of her long hair and her neck, and bury my face there. I give her soft kisses, then hard kisses, and I can feel her squirming with pleasure. She takes my hand and pulls it onto her lap.

“Still need more from me?” I whisper in her ear as the band starts up a quick jazzy number. Mia nods again. “What do you want?”

She squeezes my hand and keeps her eyes averted. She thinks about it, then finally says, “More.”

It’s such a simple statement left open to so much interpretation that I can hardly control all the scenarios running through my mind. More. I can definitely give her more.

I flatten my hand on her thigh and rub her slowly, letting my fingers dip behind the fabric of her skirt. I watch her eyes get heavy; I feel her breath get heavy. Close, so she can hear me, I tell her, “I can give you everything. You just have to be willing to take it. Are you willing, Mia?”

Mia

Yes,” I say, finally managing to get a word out to Weston. His lightest touch sucks all words from my voice. My purpose in life seems to be absorbing his every touch, and in the moment it’s a job I take happily. Willingly, even, just as he said.

The “everything” part of his statement? I don’t know what all he can give me—I may still be out a job, but that’s my decision—but I’m eager to find out. I’m just going to stay on this ride a bit longer because truthfully? More of everything is what I want.

I wonder if he’s going to do something right here in this little club, but instead our drinks and my chocolate cake are delivered, pulling the moment back. Part of me is glad, and not just because the cake looks like something straight out of Paris—because I know how experienced Weston is, and I don’t quite know where he’ll take me. One thing I do know is that I’m willing to follow him just about anywhere, as I already demonstrated by following him into an office and (how could I forget) an alley?

Totally worth it, both times.

Weston leans back in his chair, a little smile on his lips like he’s the most content person in the world.

“What’s going on in your mind?” I ask as I take a bite of the cake.

“I want to know how that cake is,” he says, although I bet he was thinking about more than cake.

“Rich,” I say. I take a sip of the cabernet sauvignon I ordered. The velvety red with the decadent chocolate are an amazing combination.

“A word I understand,” he says, a bit cocky.

“I read you grew up on a farm,” I say. I watch him as he holds my gaze, and I wonder if that one word—farm—is unpleasant for him.

“For once the papers got it right,” he finally says, and flicks some imaginary flint from his pants.

“What was that like?” I ask, taking another bite of cake.

“Dirty,” he says. “It where I really learned to work with my hands.”

I set down my fork. “Let me see.” I hold out my hand for his. He lifts it from my thigh where it was still resting. I hold his rather large hand in mine, running my fingertips over the smooth surface of his palm. I turn his hand over and let my finger dip into the pockets between his knuckles. His nails are clean and shiny. “Mr. Bridges,” I begin, “do you get manicures?”

He bristles, but only slightly. “Polish-less, but yes.”

“By the feel of these hands, I’d say you haven’t participated in any sort of manual labor for the better part of a decade.” I let my fingers continue to trace his hand.

“Nowadays these hands do a different kind of job.”

“Lucky for me.”

“Mia, honey, you don’t even know the half of it yet.”

I squeeze his hand. If I kiss him, I'm not sure I'll be able to stop. When he attacked my neck earlier I wanted to climb right on top of his lap. My body needs him like nothing I've ever experienced.

I slap his hand. "Tease," I say.

"Only in the best sense," he says.

The band plays another lively song, and the only way to get myself through this dessert without straddling him is to get up and move.

"Come on," I say, taking the hand I just slapped away. "Let's dance." He shakes his head no. "Why not? It'll be fun!"

"No," he says, although he looks humored by me.

"Why not?"

"Do I need to recite the one rule back to you, Ms. Cassidy? Do not question me."

I pout, only partly faking it. "You're no fun."

His hand squeezes my thigh. "I promise, you don't even know how fun I can be." His touch sends sparks all through my body. He really is such a tease.

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He sits back in his chair, his hand leaving my thigh. He motions out to the dance floor and says, “But you go ahead.”

“I’m not going to dance without you,” I say.

“I want you to,” he says. “Go on. The dance floor is crowded.”

I look at the dance floor and it is pretty crowded. Maybe I could disappear into it, work out some of the jitters in my body courtesy of Weston. I’m having such an amazing evening that I go against instinct—who dances alone?—and decide to do it.

“Fine,” I say, tossing down my napkin. Weston looks slightly surprised too. “I’ll go. You sit here and be boring. And old,” I add, and he laughs.

I tug down my skirt and go to the small square of parquet. I face the band and start slow, feeling the music in my bones. People around me—all couples—are laughing and moving together and alone, and it’s all one big energy ball. Once I let my inhibitions go, realizing that no one is watching me, I really get into it. The band is great, filling the air with brassy sounds and a little bit of funk. Before I know it I’ve worked up a little sweat, and only then do I turn to look at Weston.

His arm is draped over my empty chair, his glass of Scotch resting on his knee as he watches me—closely, and with a look of such fascination you’d think I was performing surgery. I turn my back to him, mostly because now I’m embarrassed, but when I look over my shoulder his eyes haven’t left me.

“Come on,” I mouth, motioning for him to join me, but he shakes his head no. I pout

again and turn my back on him.

When the band slows it down and everyone couples up, I turn back toward our table, but I'm suddenly gathered up in Weston's arms—he's here.

"Care to dance?" he asks.

"I thought that's what I was doing."

"And beautifully."

He holds me so close, his hand low on my waist—basically on my ass but I love it. He holds my hand in his against his chest, and we move together to the music. It all falls away. It's like there is nothing, not even music, only Weston and his arms that hold me so close and sure. My forehead is against his cheek, his breath light on my skin. I close my eyes and memorize the length of his fingers, the solid mass of his back and all the muscles that I just know lay beneath the lush fabric of his jacket.

Weston shifts, and I look up at him. The hard lines of his jaw and the softness of his lips draw me in—I need to kiss him. But Weston bypasses my lips and goes for my ear.

"Let's get out of here," he says, and I nod yes. "If there's anyplace you don't want to go, speak now or forever hold your peace."

"Home," I say. "I don't want to go home."

"Then you won't," he says. He takes my hand and leads me off the dance floor. He drops three twenties at our table—more than enough for our two drinks and piece of cake—and leads me out the door.

Like I said, where he goes, I'm willing to follow.

Weston

Gerald has barely shut the door on us inside the car when my mouth is covering Mia's. It's like I'm suddenly starving for her, but I know there's nothing sudden about it. She got me going at dinner, gave me some pleasure afterward, and watching her dance and shake her ass as I watched had me thinking I was ready to take her. But dancing so slow and close to her—that's what pushed me to the edge.

I don't just need her—I need her now, and more of her.

I kiss her recklessly, and she opens up her mouth for me, tackling my tongue with the want of her own. Her hands rake through my hair, tugging slightly, making me fucking crazy with desire for her. My hands run down her front, over her breasts and to her thighs. I squeeze her skin there and she parts her legs, which is just what I want—for her to think I'm going to give that to her right now. But I have no intention—not right now, and not here. Instead I grope her like a horny teenager until we arrive at my building. Gerald is a smart guy, and after he exits the car he gives us a moment to straighten ourselves before we get out and walk through my lobby.

As we head to the elevators, I hold Mia's hand in mine—not something I often do with girls. It always seemed so juvenile to me, but since Samantha and high school, I haven't held a girl or woman's hand. And now I refuse to admit how good her small hand feels in mine. I don't want to let go.

In the private elevator to my penthouse I press her up to the wall and ravish her mouth some more. I roughly take her tit in my hand and squeeze before sliding down to her waist and around to her ass, tugging her into my bulging front. I've turned into

a full-on groper and could not care less. The only thing that matters is Mia, and touching, feeling, seeing more of her.

When we enter my apartment I'd like to throw her over my shoulder and take her upstairs to my bedroom—I need her, and now. My dick has been standing at full attention since the door shut on the car outside the club. But Mia is looking wide-eyed around the penthouse like she's just entered Versailles. I know my place is exceptional—the best money can buy even in a town like New York—but I'm not really in the mood to give a tour right now.

“Wow,” she says, looking around the large open entrance that leads to living space, surrounded by eight-feet tall windows overlooking glittery Manhattan. “I think I saw this place in Architectural Digest.”

“You did,” I say. “Last April's issue.”

She looks at me. “I was joking.”

“I wasn't.” They did a nice six-page spread, but it's not like I designed or decorated the place. I hire people to do shit like that.

“It's huge,” she says, and I laugh. She looks at me and rolls her eyes. She stands there, out of reach but looking so beautiful, a smile on her face that could melt a dictator's hearts. “Will you give me a tour?”

“No,” I say. “Not now, anyway. But why don't you?”

She looks at me curiously. “Why don't I what?”

“Give me a tour.”

She looks up at the high ceilings and deep hallways. “I’m pretty sure I’d get lost.”

“Not of my place,” I say. “Of you. Show me. Again. But this time, let’s take our time.”

She doesn’t say anything as I walk past her into the living room, but she follows me. I sit in a chair—some leather Swedish thing the decorator picked out—and she looks confused, like she expected me to sit on the couch so we could continue making out like voracious teenagers.

I reach out for her hand and she offers it to me. “You’re beautiful,” I tell her. “I want more of you. Tonight. I want to make you feel better than you’ve ever felt. I want you, Mia.”

She swallows hard, saying nothing in return.

“Come here,” I say, patting my thigh. “Sit.”

She turns and sits gently on my thigh, wrapping her arm around my shoulders.

“Now give me your foot.” She pauses but then lifts her foot to my hand. I remove her shoe, then the other. “Stand up,” I say, and she complies. “Turn around.”

I unzip her slim skirt and push it down around her ankles. Her pussy, naked from when I told her to toss her panties, is so pretty that I want to cover it with my mouth. But I wait.

“Keep going,” I tell her, nodding to her top and bra. Finally she’s standing before me totally naked. Her shoulders are hunched up and she’s got her hands clasped in front of her. “I told you. No hiding. Move your hands or I’ll tie them behind your back.” She may think I’m joking, but I’m most definitely not.

I rake my eyes over her body, taking it all in. Her smooth curves and full breasts, her hard nipples and full ass—it's all so beautiful and I intend to touch every millimeter of her body.

“Touch yourself,” I tell her. She hesitates before moving her hand to her breast, holding and massaging. “Keep going,” I say, because it is such a beautiful sight. She slides her hand down over her stomach, over her hip and across to the front of her sex. She cups herself, but lightly—I know she hasn't really touched herself. She looks like she's tipping between turned on and shy and it's a pretty sexy combination.

“Mia Cassidy,” I say. “I am going to make you come tonight, and not just once. Again and again. When I'm done with you, you won't even know your name. Now tell me,” I add, “is your pussy ready for me?”

With wide eyes she slowly nods to me. She has no idea...

Mia

I am nervous and aroused and shy all at once. When Weston's eyes are on me, it is the most intense thing in the world. He looks hungry, and my body is his meal.

He decides the bedroom is the most appropriate place for us to go. "I need space to take over your body," he says. He has me walk up the stairs in front of him—totally naked—and guides me into his bedroom.

"Get on the bed," he says, "and show me your body."

He stands on the edge of the bed and slowly unknots his tie. I lay on my back.

He puts his hands in his pockets and observes me. He instructs me to bend my knees—"I want your heels touching your ass"—and spread my legs before him. I do as he says, hoping I look okay.

"Now touch yourself," he says. I move my hand to my breast. "No. Your pussy. Touch your wet pussy, Mia."

I slowly move my hand between my legs, my finger sliding up and down on my folds. It's not something I really ever do, but I remember what his fingers feel like, and his tongue. That's enough to make me try harder—and Weston seems to like what he sees. "Keep going," he says as he unbuttons his shirt. I still have not seen him fully naked, and the thought of that has me feeling more eager than a kid at Christmas. Our eyes are on each other's bodies, and when he shucks the shirt to the ground and his bare chest is on display, my body reacts. My fingers move faster, and

I am wetter.

He removes his pants, leaving his boxer briefs on but clearly showing me that he is hard and horny and wanting me. I curl my hips up into my hand more.

Weston crawls up on the bed and stations himself between my knees. He covers my hand with his. "This pussy is mine tonight. Do you understand me?"

"Yes."

"I will do to it what I please. You will like it. Do you understand me?"

"Yes."

He inserts a finger inside me, and I let out a soft moan. He quickly adds a second finger, surprising me, especially when he quickly pumps me. He removes his fingers and roughly wipes them across my lips. "You like that taste, don't you?" He clasps my face in his wet hand and licks my lips without ever kissing me.

Weston moves back down between my legs, and the anticipation of him eating me is almost too much. My hips are moving up closer to him, wanting him to do it already, give me that need that I clearly want so bad. He pushes my knees open so I'm fully spread before him and licks the length of me, long and hard. He eats my pussy with gusto and soon I'm bucking my hips into his face because I want it so much, and I want more and more.

But then he stops, just before I think I'm going to come. He wipes his mouth and says, "You need to slow down, young lady." His hands rub the tops of my thighs. "You're too eager. We have all night. Turn on your stomach."

I want to cry for the need I want so bad, forgetting any intimidation I felt. Still, I do

as he says.

“Ass in the air, facing me,” he says and yeah, now I’m really self-conscious. He slaps my ass, a hollow pop that stings in a way I never knew could feel so good. “Do as I say or you get spanked again.” I purposely don’t move, and he rewards me with another pop. Then I push myself up on my knees. “Spread,” he says, pushing my knees. “More,” and I do as he says. He pushes my chest down, and I am exposed in a way I never imagined. I can’t see him, but I can feel him.

Weston runs his hand over my back and ass, down my thighs and up the innermost parts of my thighs. Like before—no warning, and roughly—he inserts two fingers in my pussy, making me yelp in glory. With his other hand he holds me firm, and I know he wants me to stay still—a Herculean effort. He pumps me several times and the new, extreme position he has my body in makes the sensation even more intense. When he removes his fingers I know not to be upset for missing the touch, because I know he’s going to give me more. And God, does he.

His tongue licks me, from the front of my pussy all the way up, even over my asshole. I’ve never felt that and my instinct is to move away but when I shift Weston says, “No,” and smacks my ass again. “I will take what I want. Understood?”

“Yes,” I say because honestly, he can have it as long as it feels this good.

He licks me again, his tongue pressing into my wetness, raking up my pussy hole and to my tight little bud. His tongue plays there for a bit, putting pressure on me, dancing on the edge of going in. I’m moaning and crying and he inserts his fingers into my pussy again, giving me even more pleasure. He finger fucks my pussy while he licks my hole. Just as suddenly, he shifts again and it’s just his mouth and my pussy. His face must be positively buried in my cunt, shoved up under me to get to my clit, which his tongue works over before it fucks my cunt hole. Weston eats me out like he’s never had anything as delectable in his life and I have to work hard not to shove

my ass harder onto his face as he licks my walls and fingers my clit.

“I’m going to come,” I tell him, and he doubles his efforts, licking and fingering me until I explode on his face and hand. He slows his efforts, and when he moves back from me my hips fall to the side like a building collapsing.

As my world spins and I try to catch my breath, Weston moves over my body, his hands on my skin. When his mouth covers my tit, I gasp and grab onto his head, my fingers digging into his thick hair and pull him closer. Without missing a beat he moves my hands away from him, pinning me to the bed while he sucks at my tits, dragging his tongue across the hard nubs, sucking them between his teeth.

“Jesus,” I moan out. I haven’t even recovered and he’s already got me on fire again. He covers my body with his, his hard dick pressing into my soaked pussy. He kisses slowly, his tongue going deep inside my mouth like he needs to taste all of me. I open up for him as much as I can, wrapping my arm around his neck, fingers buried in his hair. This time he lets me, and I’m scraping and clawing at him with as much need as he’s showing me.

“Need you,” he says, kissing my neck, squeezing my tits. “God, you’re beautiful.” He pushes his covered dick back into me. “I want you. Mia, I want you.”

“Yes,” I breathe. “Please, yes.”

“I’m going to take you.”

“Yes,” I say, my fingernails digging into his back.

“I’m going to fuck you.”

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“Y-yes,” I say, but my eyes have opened, and I’m trying to clear my head. My body has a mind of its own, and with Weston’s deft hands and tongue and mouth, all I’ve felt is want. I may be writhing around like an experienced woman, but I’m nothing more than a virgin.

Weston sits back and looks down at me, moving his hand over the thin fabric covering his dick. Just before his hand moves inside, I stop him.

“Wait,” I say, feeling ridiculous. After all we’ve already done together... “I just...I’ve never...I haven’t...”

“You’re a virgin.” It’s a statement, not a question.

I nod yes. This man is going to run for the freaking hills. He needs a woman who knows what she’s doing, not someone who is basically being touched for the first time.

His eyes are soft, and he slowly rubs my thigh. “Are you scared?”

“No,” I say. “I just don’t want to disappoint you.”

He leans over me, brushing back my hair. He traces my face, and when he speaks he’s looking at me so deeply I feel like he can see my soul. “You could never disappointment me. You keep surprising me, Mia. Don’t you know how sexy you are?”

I turn my face to the side, embarrassed. He turns me back to look at him. “You are

incredibly sexy. I want to have you.” He kisses my lips. “It’s okay.”

“Okay,” I say, because I know he will be good—and gentle. I just don’t know if I’ll want him to be too gentle.

Weston

My dick is straining. I don't think I've ever been this hard in my life. When I finally wrap my fingers around it, I feel like I could come right then and there. But no way. I will force my body—my dick—to go slow with Mia. It's what she needs, and it's so fucking sexy to go slow until you can't go slow any longer.

I quickly discard my boxer briefs and place myself between Mia's legs. She's watching me closely, and I know she's nervous. With my dick in my hand, I press the head to her opening. It's so wet that I just want to plunge inside her.

I watch as the head of my cock is slowly sucked into her cunt. Mia's mouth is open, her eyes wide. I move on top of her, closer to her, and slowly push in deeper, eyes on her the entire time. She lets out a little whimper and closes her eyes. She moves her hips into mine, and so I begin to move out and slowly back into her. I push back into her as deeply as I can, feeling her inner walls. Her pussy is so tight, and so wet. It is even better than her mouth.

The more we move, the more she relaxes. The more she relaxes, the better it feels—clearly for her as well. She's moving her hips faster, trying to make me go harder. I place a hand on her hip, holding her down. I keep the pace.

I pump her harder and faster, kissing her neck as I go. Her hands are deep in my hair, tugging at me, needing me.

“Weston,” she says, and hearing her say my name nearly makes me explode. I go harder, seeing how much she can take. She's moaning, digging into me, and knowing

how much she wants it, and that it's her first time, makes me feel like I'd like to make loving her my full-time job. I fuck her like it's the only thing I know how to do. I stretch that pussy of hers with my big cock, past all resistance. The more she moans the more I give her until we're fully clinging to each other, both of us sweating and panting. Soon I can feel her walls contracting around my dick, squeezing me in ecstasy. I explode into her, the need I've been holding back shooting into her like a rocket. We cry out together, clinging to one another.

I collapse half on her body, my dick still rigid inside her—doesn't want to leave.

"Are you okay?" I ask.

"Mmm...yes..."

"Do you need anything?"

"More," she says.

"You horny little slut," I tease, and she laughs. Softly I say, "That was not your first time. No way."

"Stop," she says, her hand covering her face.

I take away her hand and kiss her eyelids. "Never."

We get under the covers, and I hold Mia close to me, our limbs entangled, skin pressed against skin. I hold her like that all night, until I wake up to the soft sunlight streaming through the large windows. When my body realizes that I am pressed up to a gorgeous naked woman, my dick goes hard for her. I press into her thigh.

"Morning," I whisper in her ear. A smile fills her lips. I push into her again.

“Mmm, good morning, Weston.”

My hands begin exploring her body as if they’ve never touched her before. Her skin is so warm it’s almost hot, like a fever. Her hand reaches between us and wraps around my dick. She slowly pulls on it, sending waves of relief and more need through me.

“Can I try being on top?” she asks, and the question makes me want to explode in her hand.

“God, yes,” I say.

She slowly moves on top of me, straddling me as the sheets fall away and expose her body in the morning sunlight. She holds my dick and positions her pussy above me before slowly lowering herself. She’s wet, God, she’s so wet for me already. I look down and watch as my dick gets swallowed up by her tight cunt until she’s properly sitting on me. I hold her hips as she lets me stretch her, fill her. She gets used to the full sensation. She must decide she can’t take it all like that because she raises up slightly.

I grab the back of her thigh, wrap my arm around her back, and flip her onto her back. We bounce as we land back on the mattress, and she looks surprised but delighted.

“There’s plenty of time for getting used to that,” I say. “Just let me have you for now.”

She responds by taking my ass in her hands and pulling me closer. I don’t go slow this time. I fuck her as hard as I think she can handle. Her tits bounce, and she moans and cries my name, the sweetest thing on her lips. I fuck her until I can’t see straight, then I hold on a bit longer until I can feel her tense and tighten around my cock. She

squeaks out my name, and we come together in a furious explosion of deep satisfaction.

Once our minds are somewhat clear again, Mia buries herself back under the sheets.

“I live here now,” she says. “Forward all mail to Mia Cassidy, Under the Sheets, Weston’s Place.”

I laugh. “You need to get up, lady. A work day awaits.”

“Not for me,” she says. “Maybe looking for work.”

“Mia,” I say. “Stop with this childishness. Why won’t you come back to Prerogative?”

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She looks at me as if I've lost a marble or twelve. "Hello, because of yesterday. Because of Jen and what she heard or knows." She shakes her head. "No way can I show my face there again. Humiliating." She raises the sheets and truly buries herself beneath them. I yank them off in one tug. "Hey!"

"Up, young lady. Stop looking for excuses."

"I'm not!"

"No one knows what happened between us. I promise. If it'll make you happy, I'll talk to Jen to make sure there's no misunderstanding."

"Ha, please," Mia says. "She's told half the office by now."

"If she has she'll be out of a job," I say. Jen is no one to me; Mia, on the other hand, has definitely become someone. Someone I already want to protect. "If anyone hears any tales about you—from Jen or anyone else—I will bring down the full extent of my wrath."

"Your wrath?" Mia giggles.

I kiss her. "Get up, get dressed, and get your ass to work. That's an order."

Mia

When I walk into the offices of Prerogative Media—again, for a third time—my guard is up. I’m really trying to be trusting and open-minded that Jen doesn’t know and that Weston is right in that she doesn’t know, but I’m still on edge.

“Oh. Mia. Hello,” Jen says when I get off the elevator. It’s the same slightly terse manner she’s had with me before. Maybe it’s just her personality.

“Hi, Jen,” I say. “Reporting for duty!” Jen stares blankly at me. God, what a stupid remark. It’s like I’m kissing up to her or something. “Um, I was told that there’s an office for me?”

“You mean a cubicle?” she says.

“Yeah, that’s what I—”

“Hang on, I’ll get someone to show you back.”

After a quick call, a girl in a slim black skirt and strappy heels comes out.

“I told you it’s not my job,” she says to Jen.

“I can’t leave my desk.”

“You do often enough.” She turns her eyes to me and says, “Let’s go. I’ll show you back.”

I follow her through the rows of cubicles, offices lined on the sides. Everyone seems to watch us, hopefully just checking out the new girl and nothing crazier than that.

“Here,” she says at a desk right in the middle of everyone. It feels like total exposure. “The last person left without notice so you’ll have to clean it. We cleared all the files from her drawers and also rummaged the good stuff she left behind. The rest is trash. If you need cleaning supplies they’re in the break room. Your temporary username and password are here. Set up your own once you log in. Any questions, try to figure it out on your own first. If you must, I’m just three down.”

“Thanks, I appreciate it,” I say but she’s already sighing and walking away.

I will do this. This job is too good to be beaten down on my first day. I don’t know how other offices work but maybe there’s just a couple of bitchy girls here and the rest are cool. Or I don’t have to have any friends here. It’s work, after all, not social hour.

I set to cleaning up the desk. It’s dusty and cluttered and it does look like it’s been thoroughly rummaged. Dried pens and broken pencils, half-used notepads and loose paper clips and rubber bands fill the drawers. I toss a bunch of old office supplies in the trash then head to the break room for paper towels and cleaning spray to wipe it all down.

There are several people getting coffee and chatting. They all turn to look at me when I enter. I give a little wave.

“Hey,” I say. “I’m Mia, the new—”

“You’re Mia?” someone says, and then a light chuckling goes through the room.

I steel myself. “I’m looking for a cleaning spray or something? To wipe down my

desk.”

“Over there,” a guy says, pointing to a cluster of cabinets near a bulletin board.

I go to the get the cleaner, find it, then look at the articles and notices posted on the board. Lots of legal work stuff cluttered around pictures from the magazines and some articles. One catches my eye.

It’s an article from a past issue of Blush titled “Top Ten Ways to Get Ahead at Work.” Except all the ten ways are crossed out in black Sharpie, and in their place reads, Blow Your Boss.

I stand staring at the defaced article in disbelief and total, absolute humiliation. I can hear the others behind me—they’ve gone quiet, seeing what I’m looking at. I rip the article off the board and walk out of the break room. As the door shuts behind me I hear laughter and lots of, Holy shits.

I go straight to Weston’s office, bypassing Rachel, who tries to stop me at his door. I throw the door open; he’s on a call but quickly gets off when he sees my face.

“Excuse me!” Rachel says behind me. “I’m so sorry, Mr. Bridges. She just barged past me.”

“It’s fine, Rachel,” he says. “Please close the door.”

She turns to leave but shoots me a look first which could mean so many things that I can’t even begin to interpret them.

“What is wrong with you?” he asks. “We’re going to need to set some boundaries if you’re just going to bust in here whenever you feel like it.”

“This is what’s wrong with me,” I say, tossing the article on his desk. “I told you. I told you, Weston. They all know now. How can I possibly stay here if the whole fucking office knows about this? Do you know how embarrassing this is? How dirty and disgusting it makes me feel?”

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“Okay, try to calm down,” he says. “I know you’re upset but...”

“No, you don’t know. You told me no one would find out. You promised me. How can I possibly stay here when everyone knows?”

“You are not going anywhere,” he says. “And I’m going to take care of this right now. Where was this?”

“In the break room.”

He stalks across his office and throws open the door.

“What are you doing?” I say, trying to follow him—to stop him or see what he does next, I’m not sure.

Across the floor I see two of the people who were in the break room just leaving. When they see Weston their faces go white and they start walking faster to their cubicles.

“Uh-uh, nope. Stop right where you are,” Weston says, pointing to them with the article in his hand. They freeze. “Anybody want to fess up to this?” He raises the article in his fist. Everyone is watching—him, us, the whole nightmare scene. “Anyone? Whoever did this, great job. Stand up and let us admire how clever you are. No one wants to cop to it? You sure? Don’t have the guts?”

The entire office is dead silent. No one else speaks, no one even moves.

“When I find out who did this,” Weston says, “your ass is fired and I’ll make sure you never work in New York media again. And if anyone else says anything else remotely like this, you’ll be joining them. So keep that in mind when you’re all standing around gossiping instead of doing your fucking jobs.”

He turns on his heel, walks right past me to his office. The door slams, and that’s it.

I stand there for a moment—we all do. We’re all stunned. A few people dart their eyes at me one last time before scuttling back to their desks and getting back to work. I go back to my desk to hide from everyone and everything.

Later, Jen walks by my desk and hisses, “Did you have to run and tell Daddy? You’re going to get someone innocent fired.” She keeps walking, not looking for a response.

I spend the day working on my BDSM article. I keep thinking he’s going to call me, or email or text, but I don’t hear a thing from him. He doesn’t come out of his office all day, so I keep focused on the article. By the end of the day, once most everyone else has left, I’ve got a pretty good draft completed. I wasn’t told who my editor is or what I’m supposed to do with the article once I’ve finished it so I email it to Weston just before I leave. I have no idea if or when I’ll hear from him.

When I get to the apartment I throw my bag on the floor and immediately go digging through the cupboards and refrigerator.

“Hey, you,” Brody says, coming out of his room. “You okay?”

“Do we have any alcohol in this place?” I need a drink, and I need to vent.

“Not that I know of,” he says. “Hey, slow down. What’s wrong?”

I stop my searching and take a deep breath. “I had a really shitty day.”

“Then we will change that. Get your bag. I’m taking you for a proper drink.”

At the bar, we order Moscow mules and eat the free pretzels from the dish.

“I mean, I’m happy for the job but the people there are super bitchy,” I say. “I hope it’s just some sort of new girl initiation but damn.”

“Just do good work,” Brody says. “You’re not there to make friends. You’re there to make a career.”

“I know. That’s what I told myself. But still...”

I don’t tell Brody everything. I don’t tell him about Weston and me, or the real reason why today was so awful. I can’t bring myself to admit all that, not yet anyway.

“What’s that boss of yours doing in all this?” Brody asks. “Did he stand up for you?”

“He went nuclear. Yelled at the entire office, which was possibly even worse than the teasing I got today.”

“What a dick,” Brody says.

My phone pings a text, and my heart races to see it’s from Weston. I thought he was too busy for me today.

Where are you?he writes.

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He'll love this, I think as I type back a reply: At The Well having drinks with Brody.

The text bubbles start almost immediately, just like I knew they would.

Who the fuck is Brody?

Friend.

Come to my place. No friends allowed.

Maybe after, I write.

I put my phone away, not wanting to read any more texts about why I'm not at his penthouse yet.

"How about a shot of Fireball?" Brody suggests.

"I'm in."

He orders two and we toast to being awesome bosses as soon as we have the chance.

I ask Brody about the girls he's been seeing but he tells me they're nothing special.

"Like, I could never get any of them to do Fireball with me," he says as if this is the measurement of a good girlfriend. "They'd totally turn their noses up. No one is fun like you are."

“Don’t worry, you’ll find someone. I mean, probably not as cool as me,” I say. “But you can give it a try.”

“I could never find someone as cool as you, Mia,” he says.

“Aw, you’re sweet.”

He wraps his arm around me and rubs my shoulder. “The best girl in all of New York.”

“Cheers to that!” I say, a bit drunk from all the drinks. As long as the day fades away, I’m good.

Until I’m not.

Weston

What the fuck?" I say, because seriously. What the actual fuck is going on here?

When I walk into The Well the first thing I see is Mia leaning on some guy, who is rubbing her back and like she's his. I head straight to them to end that shit.

"Mia," I say, standing behind them at the bar. According to the empty and half-empty glasses, they've been drinking quite a lot. "What are you doing?" I cut my eyes to the guy.

"Weston? What are you doing here?" she asks, turning to look at me.

"I'm wondering the same thing," I say.

"We're drinking!" the guys says. He claps my arm and says, "Join us."

I slap his hand away and they both pause and look at me.

"Come on, Mia. Let's go."

"I haven't finished my drink."

"I think you've had enough," I say.

"She can decide when she's had enough," the guy says.

I look to him. “Brody, is it? Who the fuck are you, Brody?”

He turns to fully face me, like he thinks I really want an answer.

The dumb fuck.

“I’m her friend. And roommate.” He gives me this little grin like all that might mean more for him if he plays his cards right, but no fucking way will he get whatever slimy shit is on his mind.

“Well, Brody the friend, I’m Weston Bridges, and I’m Mia’s boss, and I’m taking her home. She’s had enough to drink, and we still have work to do. Let’s go, Mia.” I hold my hand out to her, and she slowly reaches for it.

“Hey,” Brody says. “You don’t have to leave just because this guy says so.”

“That’s not why I’m leaving,” she says. “I’m tired. And I do have work to finish.”

She takes my hand and slowly stands up. “I’m maybe a little buzzed.”

“You’re fine,” I say to her quietly.

“But you can’t just go,” Brody says, a bit pathetically.

I clap him on the shoulder. “Thanks for the help, boy. I can take it from here.” I toss a hundred dollar bill on the bar. “Drinks on me.”

We leave him there silently, wondering what the hell just happened. It feels pretty good.

I get Mia settled in the car. She is pretty buzzed, but not too bad. Her eyes are glassy,

but when she looks at me she smiles, so all can't be bad.

"Where are we going, Mr. Bridges?" she asks.

"Home. My home."

"Gonna give me a tour this time?"

"If you like," I say.

"You went all crazy back there," she says.

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“With that Brody guy? I bought his drinks.”

“No, at the office. You yelled at everyone and now everyone knows I’m teacher’s pet. Now they really hate me.”

“They don’t hate you, and anyone who acts the way those people who put up that sign did will be fired immediately. It’s a policy of any business. We can’t have a hostile work environment.”

“So I should thank you?”

“You can if you want,” I say. “But you don’t have to, honey.”

She looks at me and smiles. She scoots closer and rests her head on my shoulder and wraps her arms around mine. We both take a deep breath and, in unison, let it out slowly. I close my eyes and hold her like that for the rest of the ride. I feel calm and good and—Jesus, I feel fucking content.

“Mr. Bridges,” Gerald says from the drivers’ seat. His voice has a note of urgency to it.

I open my eyes and look at the window. We’re half a block from my building, and there are fire trucks covering the street.

My skin goes cold.

“It’s okay, Mr. Bridges,” Gerald says. “It’s the building next door. It looks like

they're close to containing it. It shouldn't affect your..."

I stop listening. I get out of the car, roughly waking Mia.

"Oh my god," she says, looking at the flames licking out the windows, some of them twenty stories high. "I hope no one is hurt."

I'm looking at the flames too, but it's not this building I'm seeing. It's my old home, the farmhouse, engulfed in flames that are too far gone to do anything but stand back and watch with utter horror of knowing what has happened. Knowing that everyone I loved was trapped inside and would never get out. That it's all my fault. If it hadn't been for me, Samantha would never have been there, and her insane father would have never started the fire that killed his own daughter and my entire family.

"Lucky it's not your building," Mia says beside me. She links her arm through mine. "Hey, you okay? I'm sure your building will be fine."

I shrug her arm off me. Having her near me makes me realize how careless and selfish I've been.

"Christ, Mia. I'm not worried about my building. I'm worried about the poor people in the one that is actually burning."

"No, I know," she says. "Of course. I'm just saying that...it's okay. You look really freaked out."

"Should that be so surprising?" I snap, looking at her.

"No, I..."

"Put it in the papers: Weston Bridges is actually capable of concern for victims

burning to death in high rise fire.”

“Sir,” Gerald says, “they’re saying they got everyone out safely. They’re just trying to contain the damage now.”

“See?” Mia says, rubbing my arm. “It’s okay.”

“It’s not okay. Are you listening? Smell that fire? It’s not okay.”

“Weston,” Mia begins carefully. “Seriously, what’s wrong?”

I don’t answer, because if I do I will explode. I wanted her to be here at my place tonight. The thought makes me sick. I feel like I am the cause. If she stays too close to me, she’ll end up hurt again and again.

When will I learn?

“Talk to me,” she says. “Tell me what’s wrong. You can tell me anything, Weston.”

I turn to her and say, “What did I tell you? Not to question me.”

“Hey. I’m not playing games. This is different...”

“No. You do not get to question me. Do not ever do that again. Do you understand me?”

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Her eyes fill with tears. “Don’t talk to me like a child. You’re not my father. And you don’t have to be such a dick. I can see you’re hurting, Weston, and that hurts me, knowing you’re in pain. I just want to help.”

I put Mia too close to danger. And everywhere I go, everyone I’ve ever gotten close to, bad things happen to them.

I can’t get involved with her. I learned a long time ago that I am fucking cursed and if anything was meant to remind me of that fact, it’s these dancing flames bringing back all of the awful truth. I was foolish to think I could carry on as if I have no past.

“Gerald,” I say, and he steps to us. “Take Mia home.”

“Of course,” he says, and opens the door.

“Are—are you serious?” Mia asks. “Weston...”

“There’s nothing for you here.” I can’t look in her eyes, so full of tears and confusion and a healthy dose of rage.

“You can’t just send me off.”

If I look at her, I might have a breakdown. Gerald ushers her into the car, and before he shuts the door I almost look back. But I use all my will not to.

“Weston,” she calls through the open window. “You’re an asshole, you know that? I can’t believe you’re doing this to me. I can’t believe you...”

The car finally pulls away. I turn and watch it go. Mia Cassidy, driven out of my life forever. When I look up at the flames of the building flickering so close to my own apartment, I know it's the only choice I had. Keeping Mia safe from me is all that matters—even if I can never see her again.

--End of Part Two--