



# Einar

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**Category:** Romance, Paranormal

**Description:** Rowan

After years of captivity, I finally escape, and in the process of running from one monster, I find myself in a world that defies belief. I've been abducted by creatures that only exist in mythology and every time I open my eyes, there's a new level of hell. I pray for it all to stop. Just when I'm moments away from peace, a beast comes out of nowhere, picking me up in his huge arms, offering me what I've always dreamed of. Out of the darkness comes an opportunity, a second chance, and all I have to do is find enough courage to reach out and grab it. How can I believe he's going to make it better when he's a monster too?

Einar

The gods have forsaken my family. We were abandoned in a world where we were forced to fight and steal for survival. My brothers and I raided a bug ship, expecting to loot it and leave. Instead, I found her broken and moments from death. That is when I realize everything I was subjected to prepared me for this moment. The gods knew my Starshine was broken, and I was the only one that could possibly erase the emptiness in her eyes. Can she see past the beast to the male inside?

This storyline ends in a HEA, but continues on throughout the remaining series as each book concentrates on a particular couple.

Have questions??

Keep reading, all will be revealed....

**Total Pages (Source):** 71

# Page 1

*Source Creation Date: July 11, 2025, 2:30 am*

## Chapter One

ROWAN

“Hey Sis! What have you been up to since we talked last?”

“Oh, the usual. Had a dress fitting yesterday for a benefit. Robert has later in the week and other than that, I’ve just been fiddling with things here at the house. What about you?” I reply, forcing cheer into my voice.

Ruby pauses and I see her eyes darting across my face. However, I feel my husband’s cold, dead eyes boring into me the longer I talk to my sister on our FaceTime call. So now isn’t the time for her scrutiny, and I prompt her to reply quickly.

“Sis, are you listening to me?”

“Sorry Rowan, my mind drifted off there for a second.”

After years of marriage, I should be used to the level of intrusive control that he exerts over every miniscule facet of my life, but I’m most assuredly not.

Did I use getting a drink of water, the only thing I’m allowed to have without restrictions, as a cover to move across the room and situate myself just so? Absolutely, yes I did. Am I now standing in front of my bathroom vanity wearing the shortest sundress in my closet knowing that it’s Tuesday, the allotted family phone call day? Knowing that Ruby would be able to see my legs in the mirror just outside the

door?

Yes, I sure as shit did!

The look in my big sister's dark brown eyes as she takes in the bruises that cover the back of my legs almost has me cringing. This is my hell, my secret, my embarrassment. And as much as I've tried to stay strong by hiding the horrors of the life I chose, I must get out before my mind splinters. I've tried to be strong on my own, but I need help and she's all I have in this world. I know my sister and there's no way that she won't immediately start making plans to get me out of this hellhole if I say one simple word. A word we've used since we were kids to keep each other safe. The one I've wanted to scream out loud, only to whisper it in my mind over and over every time I thought I wouldn't survive another day.

"Rowan? What the fu..."

I've let my mind float off, and now Ruby's voice spreads terror through me because I can't let her finish that sentence. Robert is watching, like he always is, and I won't risk him knowing that I allowed my sister to figure out what he's doing to me.

Pasting an even bigger and brighter smile on my face, I shake my head as minutely as possible. My sister isn't stupid and instantly stops mid-sentence and switches gears. Her beloved face creases into her fake smile.

"Hey, I was thinking of stopping by on Thursday. I'm going to be traveling that way to pick up some new uniforms in the next city over from ya. I'm sure the boss wouldn't care if I swung by on my way back."

Thursday... she would want to come on Thursday. Nausea begins roiling in my gut as I force myself to airily respond to her.

“Ohh, Thursday won’t work for me, Ruby. I’m sorry, I would have loved to see you. Robert has a few of his colleagues coming over that evening and you know my main job is to be a good hostess.” If only she knew exactly what being a delightful hostess entailed...

The bottom drops out of my stomach when she replies. Knowing Robert is listening, I fight to keep the small amount of food he allowed me to have for breakfast in my belly where it belongs.

“Hey, I’m a waitress, so hosting is what I do best. I don’t care to help you out.”

Ruby can’t be here. We look so similar that many people mistake us for twins, and I refuse to allow Robert to get his hands on the only person on this earth that loves me and whom I love in return.

“Absolutely not!” My words come out in a harsh snap, and I hide a wince. Robert doesn’t permit me to raise my voice, and I’ve no doubt he’s going to use that as an excuse to educate me on how a lady comports herself.

Softly, I clear my throat, making a concentrated effort to gentle my voice and lose the edge to my tone.

“Sorry, didn’t mean to snap at you, but Robert is so picky about how he wants things done. You would probably be in the way more than anything else.”

Movement out of the corner of my eye catches my attention and I freeze. Robert has decided that my conversation with my sister has lasted long enough and he’s on his way to make my excuses for me. His cold voice reaches me as I put a hand over the speaker on my phone, so Ruby can’t hear what he says.

“Rowan, my precious pet, you’ve exceeded your allotted phone time today. Wrap it up

now, or your punishment for raising your voice on the phone will worsen...drastically.”

I feel myself nod, numbness beginning to seep in. It's the only way I've managed to survive this long being married to a depraved monster.

“Sis, I need to go, Robert needs me. Call me Thursday and I'll see if our plans have changed. I love you, go have fun!”

Even though I know those particular plans won't change, no matter how many times I've begged whatever god or gods that were listening to end my suffering.

My thumb is moving to end the call as I feel my husband's hand wrap in my curly, waist length red hair, viciously yanking me away from the bathroom counter. My flailing knocks the half-empty cup of water over, the liquid spilling across the marble surface dripping onto the floor as my husband drags me across our bedroom to the closet.

Both of my hands are gripping his wrist, trying to alleviate the pressure on my scalp. Thankfully, he allows me to do that since most of the time, when he drags me by my hair, I'm required to crawl alongside him like a good, obedient wife. I close my eyes and will myself to get through this...just one more time.

## Page 2

*Source Creation Date: July 11, 2025, 2:31 am*

I can hold on and survive now that Ruby knows about the bruises. She'll come to my rescue, just like she always has. She's my big sister and has always looked out for me. Even when I'm the one responsible for landing myself in this mess.

Robert hasn't said a word since he grabbed me, but then he never does until he gets me to his playroom.

He's a United States Senator and makes sure that none of his perversions become common knowledge. Robert knows that he wouldn't survive the scandal his... preferences entail. The mansion we live in employs a large staff that are in and out of various locations all day, so he had a special room made to indulge in his vices.

Much to my dismay, if only one person in this godforsaken house was trustworthy and not terrified of my husband, I might have been able to escape without involving my precious sister.

The clicking sound of the latch on the hidden door at the back of our closet makes me flinch. Which in turn, causes the hand in my hair to tighten and twist, brutally pulling and forcing my face up so he can see the expression written there. My gaze drifts over his face, wondering how something so handsome can be so evil. His classical Romanesque features, dark brown eyes and dark hair dusted with silver at the temples hid so much.

So. Very. Much.

"I see that talking to your sister has revived some of your spirit. I don't know whether to allow you to speak to her more, so I can have the pleasure of breaking you all over

again, or to forbid you from doing it anymore, as your disobedience vexes me greatly. Have I not given you everything a woman could ever want? Have I not taken years to painstakingly train you to be the perfect wife and toy?" His icy words rip into me, cutting at the fraying edges of my mind. It's always far worse for me when his words are slow and measured versus his normal, loud outbursts of rage.

He drags me the rest of the way into the playroom and throws me against the St. Andrew's cross positioned in the middle of the floor. Pain explodes in my shoulder where my body hits the hard surface of the disgusting sex toy. Taking slow measured breaths, I force myself to breathe through the pain, wishing it ... all of this away. Nevertheless, I know it's only the beginning.

"Strip!"

His harsh words make me flinch, but I don't hesitate to begin removing my clothes, closing my eyes as I do.

Once naked, I raise my arms and spread my legs, assuming the position I've taken many, many times before.

As he securely fastens the cuffs around my wrist and ankles, I allow my consciousness to drift into that gray, in-between place. It's the only thing that has saved me from completely losing my grip on reality.

The first strike of the cane against my shins comes as a shock. The pain emanating from the strike flows across my mind, attacking it and feeling like shards of glass have been shoved into my skull.

"You will thank me for being a good husband and taking time out of my exceptionally busy schedule to remind you of all the things I do for you. How lucky you are to have such a loving man at your beck and call."

He sneers before backhanding me across the face so hard my head snaps to the side. The sensation of wetness trickling down my chin tells me that he's busted one or both of my lips again. It's a small wonder he's never knocked any of my teeth out.

Seconds later, he grabs my cheek roughly, running his fingers through the blood dripping from the corner of my mouth. "Oh, my dear wife, how I love this look on you." I close my eyes as those words flow through my mind. 'God help me' is all I can think when he rears back, slapping me again. His laughter is all I hear as dark spots appear before my eyes as they start to swell shut. He keeps asking me something, but with the ringing in my ears I can't hear him. This disobedience just enrages him further and I become nothing but a human punching bag. But Robert is smart about my so-called punishments. He has learned through trial and error just how hard to hit me without doing permanent damage. Although his last punch to my side has me moaning aloud; a rare sound I never allow myself to make when I feel something crack.

Tears streak down my face, blurring his handsome outline in front of me. Cussing, I hear him pick up the discarded cane and brace myself for what's next. The cane whistles through the air, an ominous foretelling of the pain I'm about to feel. The throbbing in my shin is a pale echo of the suffering yet to come. Robert continues to rain strikes down upon my body, never striking the same place twice, and after every impact of the cane, he stops just long enough to demand the humility of my words.

"Thank you, husband."

## Chapter Two

### ROWAN

Wednesday dawns and I can barely move. In fact, any movement, no matter how small, sends shards of pain all over my entire body.



I raise my head and look around. I'm still in the playroom, but Robert didn't leave me tied to the St. Andrews cross this time. After I passed out from the pain, he must have unbuckled the restraints and let me fall to the ground. It's obvious he left me where I landed, since I'm lying in a small pool of my own blood. Breathing is difficult, but that has become the norm, as I felt more than one rib crack while he was hitting me in the torso.

At least...

He didn't leave me trapped on the platform. It's hard to recall how many times he's forced me to come to while still strapped to that torture device.

Slowly, I ease into a sitting position, panting through the pain in short, sharp little breaths, since I literally can't take a deep one. Fear slices into me because I know Robert won't take me to the hospital because of my ribs.

Pausing, I force myself to calm down and assess the state of my body. Freaking out won't fix anything and will only waste my time. If there's anything I learned from my mother, it was that breaking down never solved anything. With the life I lead, if I had a weak mind, I would've been dead a long time ago.

Methodically, I run my fingertips along the sections of my ribs that sustained the most damage while forcing myself to take small, even breaths. I've had cracked ribs before, so I know what that feels like, from the inside and out. I feel an inkling amount of relief when my inhaleds don't result in a dry, hacking cough, my heart racing, or cause me to be overly short of breath. My lungs have become weakened from years of asthma attacks, as well as these regular beatings from my husband.

Due to my asthma, I must be exceptionally careful. My lack of an immune system means that I'm at a higher risk of infection.

Bracing myself, I force myself to stand, muffling the groans that result from my body protesting any movement. I desperately need a hot shower. The congealed blood on my face is grotesque and the heat will alleviate some of the tightness in my body. It takes me far longer than it should to shuffle my way out of the playroom, through the closet, across the bedroom, and into our opulent bathroom.

For once, I'm glad I'm still nude. I doubt I'll have the strength to get any clothes off in my current state. I ease into the stall and sit on the seat built into the wall. I fiddle with the controls until the water is steaming hot and hitting me in all the right places. The sole boon Robert granted me last night is that he didn't rape me before, during, or after my punishment. A lack of vaginal pain tells me I was spared that particular wifely chore.

## Page 3

*Source Creation Date: July 11, 2025, 2:31 am*

A sigh escapes me as the hot water begins to do its job. The water sluices down my face, washing the dried blood away, turning the water a garish, dark pink as it runs in little rivulets down my body. The color clashes with the freckles that liberally dot my entire body.

I don't dare linger, especially since I have no clue if Robert is still home. Shower sex is one of his favorite things because of the easy clean up. Grabbing a towel off the counter, I refuse to look in the vanity mirror as I wearily walk passed it to focus on the task at hand. I gingerly begin to clean myself up, ignoring the slight tug of the delicate chain that connects my nipples, navel and hood piercings together. Something else that was forced on me by Robert. It was his way of reiterating that my body doesn't belong to me; it belongs to him, and it is his to do with as he chooses.

The punishment Robert meted out against me last night is one of the worst in a while. Especially since he has a guest coming over tomorrow, and more specifically, since I'll be the entertainment for the night...and if he wants, possibly the entire weekend. It's always hard to tell how long Robert will allow his friends to play with me. The sick bastard gets off on letting his cronies rape me in front of him.

All I can think is that his temper got the best of him last night. He normally refuses to let anyone see me looking less than perfect. The thought that he is willing to allow others to see me in this state is alarming to say the least. Because there's no way any of the swelling in my face or body is going to dissipate in the next twenty-four hours, it means things are changing, and that never ends well for me.

Lately, Robert has been acting like he no longer cares to keep up his charade in front of his lackies. If he is allowing them to see me like this, then he has far worse plans in

store for me. Possibly more abhorrent than what I've endured for the entirety of our farce of a marriage.

There's no way I'm going to continue to exist like this. I just can't do it anymore. The situation I'm in now may be my own fault, as Robert is just one of the many bad decisions in my life, but he is slowly, insidiously killing me. I think he's growing tired of me, and that could be good or bad.

The very thought makes my stomach cramp in disgust.

He knew I'd never tell Ruby what was happening to me, especially since I did everything in my power to keep her from his sphere of influence. He has tortured me for years with the threat of tracking my sister down ... making me watch as he broke her in front of me. The only thing that has stopped him is my continued obedience and the fact that he hasn't quite figured out how to pull off having a wife and a mistress, while also keeping his flawless "family man" public persona yet.

If he were seen with another woman, it would drastically affect his poll numbers during elections, and the only thing he loves more than sexual torture, is power.

So, I finish my shower, dry myself off, and put on my softest, comfiest pajamas. Then I climb into bed, praying that he is gone for the day and that I can get some rest.

Reaching for my cell phone that is on the bedside table, I realize Robert must have picked it up from where it landed after he grabbed me. I gather what little bit of courageous spirit I have left and do something that, if he finds out, will either make him kill me or beat me within an inch of my life. I download a texting app and send a message to the only person in this world that really, truly loves me.

A teenager, we had a safe word. If we were on a date and a guy was making us feel

uncomfortable, all one of us had to do was call and say the word and the other would come immediately, so this is a message only Ruby will understand. Even if Robert is still tracking my phone usage, he shouldn't have been able to see this brand-new app or this one short message that I'll delete once it's sent. I send up a prayer that Robert is not monitoring my phone.

The message simply says: Boudreaux and Thursday.

### Chapter Three

#### ROWAN

It's Thursday, a day that has become synonymous with pain, degradation, and betrayal. I must say I hate Thursday; it's the worst day of the week by far. Most folks hate Mondays, but not me. They are a day of reprieve after my weekend, which begins most of the time on a fucking Thursday.

As I lay here in bed, basking in the early morning sunshine streaming in through the bedroom window, it feels like a lifetime has passed since I talked to Ruby on Tuesday. After my punishment, Robert roughly woke me up as he slid into bed that night, telling me that he would allow me to stay in bed all day the next day, Wednesday, to "recover and think about what I had done to earn my punishment."

How kind ... Not!

Thankfully, Robert was far too busy today with his political duties to watch over me, and the help isn't permitted in our bedroom while he's out of the house. That has certainly worked to my advantage, since I look and feel like death warmed over. Not to mention this quiet time has allowed me to once again try to find a way to escape this hell without endangering my sister further.

During the early years of our marriage, Robert had duplicated my phone on various devices that only he had access to; specifically, his smartphone, tablet, and laptop. For whatever reason, roughly eight months ago, he removed that other tracking software, only monitoring my phone calls now.

If he was still tracking my phone on any other level, he would have already confronted me about the text I sent to Ruby yesterday. Since I haven't seen or heard from him since Tuesday night, it's safe to say that he's unaware of what I've done. Thankfully, his side of the bed was cold and empty when I finally got out of bed yesterday morning, and again this morning. Although, I did hear him in the hallway earlier instructing the staff to leave me alone, only to be interrupted by the ringing of his cell phone.

As he was walking away, I heard him say that he will be out of the house for an hour, maybe two, this evening and that they could do as they wished with me. The only person he would grant that kind of carte blanche power to is his best friend, Mark. This means he'll be gone for part of the festivities, and Mark is not nearly as intelligent as Robert. I close my eyes as his words sink in; the one moment I've been praying for is finally in front of me. Just when I know I can't take it anymore, this path is laid before me. I know this will be my one and only chance to escape. If I fail and get caught, Robert will surely find a way to dispose of me secretly.

Maybe there is a higher power, and I'm finally getting a bit of good luck after all the years of shit. Robert alienated me from everyone I loved years ago. Any friends I had before our marriage are nothing more than a fond memory now. Robert, at that time, gently told me that they were not quite up to his level in society, and I needed to start cultivating new friends with the wives of his business associates.

That endeavor did not go well, much to Robert's aggravation. None of Robert's closest friends were married and the more respectable congressional representatives wouldn't allow their womenfolk to associate with me. They knew something was amiss

with Robert, they just didn't know what, so they took extreme measures to ensure that their women were never left alone with myself or Robert.

It's still early enough in the day that I won't see Robert, or anyone else for that matter, for several hours. Trained dog that I've become, I know Robert's schedule for his Thursdays. I should be left alone until midafternoon or early evening. It just depends on when the festivities are to start, something I'm never allowed to have any input in.

What it did though, was make it easier for me to make preparations for tonight. I know my sister is coming to get me, as evidenced by her dot on the map getting closer to me as the day progresses. This being the case, I don't have any time to lose. I must get everything in place well before she gets here and before I'm summoned.

Throwing the covers back, I carefully ease my battered body out of bed, testing my mobility as I do. Excluding my ribs, eyes and lips, the rest of me is in fairly good shape, even if I am covered in bruises in various states of healing. However, the slight wheeze at the end of my breaths is moderately concerning. My regulatory medicine isn't relaxing my bronchial tissue like it's supposed to. This breathlessness, while annoying, is my normal asthmatic response when my body has suffered too much.

I make myself go through the motions today as if it were a regular Thursday. I can't afford for anyone to guess what I have planned, not if I want to succeed. Especially since I never know who is on Robert's payroll and who truly feels sorry for me, as all the workers always look the other way when I approach them. With that in mind, I select a dress that Robert will find appropriate for me to wear this evening. That's to say, only he and his filthy companions are the ones who would find dresses like this to be appropriate outside of the bedroom.

That chore done, I move on to the small collection of comfy clothes I'm permitted. Just as I am rummaging through the drawers, a small, soft, black

bag with white writing on it catches my eye. It's the little cloth bags that you get at large events, for grab bags and such. I remember keeping this because it's one of the few happy memories I've had over the last few years. A rare occasion that Robert let me out of the house to go do something I enjoyed, and I had taken full advantage of his good humor. The literary event had been a bit of a drive down to Tennessee, and the traffic awful, but it was one of the most wonderful experiences.

So.



## Page 4

*Source Creation Date: July 11, 2025, 2:31 am*

I feel it's totally appropriate that this little bag, representing a rare happy moment, will be the one I chose to hide the clothing needed to make my escape. It will work perfectly for what I have in mind. Snagging my favorite baggy hoodie, a pair of leggings, a sports bra, undies and a pair of socks, I take a second to think about what I'm missing. Ohhh... I'll need shoes as well. Looking amongst the vast array of designer heels, I spot one pair of Coach ballet flats. Grabbing them, I roll them up inside the bundle of clothing I've gathered and walk back into the bathroom.

Finished with that, I peek around the edge of the closet doorway into the bedroom. This next part is even more important than a set of getaway clothes. Ruby and I are going to need cash and things to sell in order to get away. When I see the coast is clear, I crawl to the back of the closet. I peel the carpet up in the furthest corner away from where Robert walks in every day to choose his suit and shoes. I'd found the loose carpet by accident one time when Robert locked me in here for a couple of days.

Under the carpet, I'd found a small hole. Something that may have been cut for a water or gas line at one point in time before the house was remodeled. Overtime, I worked to make the hole large enough to fit a small duffel bag. I've managed to steal roughly seventy-five thousand dollars right out from under his nose. The safe on his side of the closet doesn't have a camera pointed at it and he's so arrogant he never thought that someone would dare to steal from him.

Reaching down into the dark hole, it takes me a second to find the soft material of the duffel bag. A sigh of relief escapes me the second my fingers graze the bag. Carefully, I pull it out and replace the carpet, ensuring it looks exactly the same as it always has. Easing the zipper open, I peer down, making sure the money and my extra

medicine is exactly as I left it. Rising slowly to my feet, I reach out with one hand against the wall, bracing myself as a wave of dizziness hits me.

Both bags in hand, I exit the closet, making my way over to the vanity, and the copious amounts of jewelry to be found there. Picking through the array of expensive items, I choose midrange pieces that are not unique enough to stand out at a pawnshop but are worth enough that it'll make us money.

Task completed, I creep to the bathroom.

I give my reflection a brief glance in the mirror as I walk through. My multihued blue, green, and gold eyes reflect my suffering. They were what had caught his attention and the first thing he complimented me on when he made his approach. Releasing my gaze from the mirror, I pace over to the toilet stall.

The toilet is in its own little room, complete with a door. Easing into the small space, I quietly close the door and click the lock in place. My heart is beating so hard and fast I'm afraid it's going to beat right out of my chest as I take the tank lid off the toilet and position the little blue bag where the straps are down in the tank reservoir. Using one hand, I hold the bag in place while carefully putting the lid back on with the other.

After securing my getaway clothes, I take the bag of money, extra medicine, and jewelry and shove it into the decorative toilet paper holder. I always thought the little cabinet was a gaudy thing. Far too large and ostentatious, but it's enabling me to hide the money I need to escape, so I can't bring myself to hate it anymore.

I close the little door and make sure the latch on the toilet paper holder is secure before standing. The roll that's on the holder attached to the wall is full, so there's no reason for anyone to go into the small cabinet and consequently find my bag. Forcing myself to keep up appearances and just in case, I flush the toilet, pausing

to make sure it's going to refill, before I exit the bathroom.

Glancing down at my phone, the "Find my location" is already up on the screen and it's easy to see that Ruby is on her way. At the rate she's driving right now, she should be here mid-evening.

"One more time, Rowan. You can do this one more time. Ruby is coming to get you. Just get past tonight, once more, and you won't ever have to suffer a man's attentions ever again."

## Chapter Four

### ROWAN

Later that day. Early evening.

The smile I have fixed on my face is as fake as they come. Nothing like knowing the living hell you're willingly walking into but tonight is different. The end is in sight. A quiet, heavy sigh escapes me.

But.

One must keep up appearances. Or that's what Robert has drilled into my skull over the years. I've never become accustomed to the type of clothing I'm expected to wear to functions such as this.

The black gown is made of a sheer fabric, to the point it's completely see through. Although, this is one of the few pieces I own that actually has fabric. There are cutouts around both of my breasts, fully showcasing the hooped nipple piercings and delicate silver chain that trails down to the piercing at my navel. That part is "covered" with material that is meant to tease a man's eyes as to what that chain might be

connected to. Not that these pricks don't already know where that is.

He is so short it barely extends past the curve of my ass cheeks, ensuring easy access to their wandering hands. I can't imagine I look all that appealing tonight. Not with two black eyes, a slightly crooked nose and two busted up lips. These are in addition to the multitude of bruises that were already scattered across my skin.

Smoothly, I open the door, instantly noticing Robert and Mark seated in two of the larger chairs in the center of the room, two empty glasses sitting on the ornate coffee table in front of them. Robert's slight nod to the empty glasses is my cue. Mark, as usual, is the first to arrive. He never misses an opportunity to fuck his best friend's wife. I loathe him just as much as Robert, his smirk as I approach them to retrieve their glasses makes my skin crawl.

It is truly unfortunate that he is just as good looking as Robert, but with green eyes and blonde hair. Such a beautiful exterior hides a truly hideous interior of these predators, men that can only get it up while injuring another. I've had enough of handsome men using me as nothing more than a fuck toy.

Robert and Mark are having a discussion about the next presidential election and who they are going to support as a candidate while I make their drinks. In this room, the private den/parlor, I am whatever Robert tells me to be. Regardless of whether I want to be or not. Such an opulent room for the type of activities that often occur here. Red and gold brocade walls with cream door jambs complement the rich red patterned carpet and dark masculine wooden furniture. It screams sin, unfortunately for me, that's appropriate. A golden chandelier hangs from the center of the room, casting shadows in the corners where strategically placed pieces of furniture reside.

Clenching the crystal glasses in my hands, I stride over to the full bar built into the wall across the room. They would pick the chairs on the opposite side of the room, just to

make me walk back and forth with my tits and ass hanging out but compared to the other atrocities I've suffered in this room, it's a minor inconvenience. As I open the decanter, the stench of scotch makes me wrinkle my nose. I despise Scotch. The scent, the taste, even the appearance of it in a glass. All the schmucks that come here only ever drink Scotch when they're in this room, as if the high dollar liquor somehow elevates what they do to me.

I don't dare dawdle. If Robert thinks I'm deliberately delaying any of the festivities, he won't hesitate to make my sessions with the others last twice as long. Pouring two glasses takes less time than I want it to. Gently, yet resolutely, I set both glasses on the sterling silver serving tray, turn gracefully on my four-inch stiletto Louboutin heels, and saunter back over to where Robert and Mark are sitting.

Per Robert's instructions, his guests are to always be served first, so with this in mind I approach Mark first. As I reach them, I bend at the waist, offering Mark his drink while flashing my bare pussy at Robert, and then repeat the motion as I give Robert his drink. I jolt as a harsh crack lands against the exposed curve of my ass, the heat from the strike blooming across my fair skin.

"Your wife has the most beautiful, freckled skin. It always blooms so prettily for me."

His leering comment makes me cringe internally. I'm nothing but a piece of meat to Mark.

"Yes, she is a rather lovely creature, is she not?" His lifeless brown eyes bore into me, ensuring that my facial expression hasn't changed from what he expects. I maneuver myself to stand at his side, waiting for my next instruction. If my smile dips or I act anything less than grateful, and elated to be here, he will call more than the regular two or three guests and make me service every single one of them. Well versed in this game, my smile doesn't falter. I have a goal, and I am going to achieve my goal or, literally die trying.

I checked my phone just before I left the bedroom and Ruby's location showed that she was only about an hour away. That was a little less than half an hour ago. I just have to make it until Robert leaves for the evening, and then I can give Mark the slip. I no sooner have that thought than Robert's phone dings with an incoming text message. He pauses for a moment, reads the screen, and then looks over at Mark. "I need to go to my office. There is something there that needs my attention."

## Page 5

*Source Creation Date: July 11, 2025, 2:31 am*

My eyelid twitches as Mark snickers.

Ah.

So, Robert is having an affair. No wonder I haven't had to suffer his attentions in that particular manner recently. Robert isn't old per se, but he is in his late fifties. His stamina isn't what it once used to be. Which is completely fine with me. More than fine if the truth must be told. I refocus on the conversation going on around me as Robert and Mark both stand and shake hands.

"I shouldn't be more than an hour, possibly two, Mark. Feel free to enjoy yourself. Rowan will satisfy your every need. Won't you, Rowan?"

The implied threat in his words is blatant.

"Yes, husband. It will be as you say."

My meekly uttered words must pacify him, and I watch as Robert confidently strides out the door, slamming it shut behind him. The crash of the door makes me flinch, which causes Mark to snicker. I brace myself as Mark turns his full attention to me.

"Hello, pet. Let's have some fun, shall we?"

Chapter Five

ROWAN

Think, Rowan. THINK!

What do I tell Mark that will be convincing enough to let me out of the room?

Ruby is here; I can feel it. Growing up together, and only having one another to rely on created a deeper connection than most siblings. That's how I know she's here, and I'm out of time.

Just as Mark reaches for me, inspiration strikes. Pervert that he is, Mark will use every orifice on my body. However, he's extremely particular about how a woman prepares herself for his attentions. One stray pubic hair, bad breath, or a less than scrupulously clean anal cavity and he gags. You might even say that he has an overactive gag reflex. His weak stomach might be my only opportunity to escape this hell. Gathering what little courage I have left, I speak out of turn, stopping him in his tracks.

"Mark, before we begin, I do have to warn you. I wasn't able to attend to all the housekeeping chores you prefer. I wasn't informed you would be one of this evening's guests. If you wish to take me ... everywhere, I need to go to the bathroom and clean up."

The disgust that comes over his face at my words makes a warm sort of excitement rise in my chest. He's going to buy it! They think I'm so broken that I will acquiesce to whatever they want. No matter how vile and depraved.

"Ugghh! What a disgusting little bitch. You know better than to skip any of the required tasks Robert assigns you before his little get-togethers. You're lucky it's me here instead of him. The sight of blood does nothing for me, so I won't punish you the way Robert will when he learns of this. Well, don't just stand there staring at me like a simpleton. Hurry the fuck up and get the rest of your personal grooming done and come right back here. You have fifteen minutes before I come looking for you,



and I assure you, you don't want that."

His words end in a threatening hiss, and I don't delay in nodding my understanding as I skitter past him to make my escape out the door. I have to force myself to move normally after I leave the den of horrors. Robert has cameras everywhere in this part of the house, so I can't make a mistake now. He enjoys watching anything and everyone in what he sees as his dominion. Walking unhurriedly, I make it to our personal wing and enter the bedroom.

After I pass the threshold of the doorway, I become a flurry of motion. I don't have to worry about Robert seeing me in here. He would never chance his preferences being on a hard drive somewhere that some unknown enemy could hack. A quick glance at the clock on the bedside table shows six o'clock. It couldn't have taken me longer than a minute or two to get here, so I have a small window of time left. Darting into the bathroom, I head towards the little room the toilet is in. Shutting the door behind me, I flick the lock into place and, as silently as possible, retrieve the blue bag from behind the toilet.

In a tiny fit of rebellion, I rip the disgusting excuse of a dress from my body and fling it on the floor. I would rather die. I will never wear something like this ever again. Rapidly, I snatch the clothing from the blue bag and pull it over my emaciated body, ignoring the delicate chains that connect my piercings as I do so. There isn't anything I can do about them right now. The chains are small and fine, but they're still chains. The fact that they're connected with a tiny, bejeweled lock is just the icing on the cake.

Once dressed, I slide my feet into the flats I've packed. They're not much, but they're better than nothing. Reaching down, I open the ugly little toilet paper cabinet and grab the black bag out. My eyes fall on the blue bag I hid my clothes in. I can't leave that there for anyone to find, so I roll it up, unzip the pocket on the black duffel bag and shove it inside. I turn around and lean against the door, pressing my ear to it, straining to hear

if Mark followed me. If he's outside this door waiting for me ... I'm going to die.

Anxiety fills me as I click the lock and slowly ease the door open. Only to find the bathroom completely empty. A heavy sigh of relief escapes me.

I conquered my second hurdle of the evening.

As stealthily as possible, I creep out of the bathroom and to the bedroom window. I've never been more thankful that I don't live in a multi-storey house than I am right now. Looping the handles of the black bag over my shoulder, I slide the latch open on the window furthest from the bedroom door, praying to whatever god is listening that it won't make any noise.

I've never dared to open a window, so I have no idea if the tracks have been oiled or not. It's something Robert would do to make sure any window in this bedroom was easily heard if it were opened without his knowledge. I don't breathe as I wrap my fingers under the bottom of the window frame and push up. To my relief, it doesn't make a sound.

Raising one leg, I stick it through the opening, making sure I don't knock my head or elbows on the frame as I bend my torso. I suppress a wince as my body protests this particular movement.

Once I'm outside, I reach up and pull the window closed, forcing myself to move slowly and methodically. I can't afford to lose my shit right now, no matter how badly I want to. Not when I'm this close to my freedom.

Glancing down at my phone, I press my thumb on the home button to open the screen. The dot shows Ruby's location just a short distance from the front gate, and the time is 6:08pm.

Perfect.

This is going to work. It has to! Maybe there is a God after all because she's parked right in the area where there's a slight break in the wall. It's a miracle none of the guards have ever found it, and the only reason I know about it is because I'm allowed to wander around the grounds on days that Robert's in a good mood. My only solace these last couple of years has been what I've managed to find in nature. Trees and ornamental bushes flank the exterior fence along its entire length. It's meant to look fancy, and it does, but it's also designed as a way to make it hard to sneak onto the property.

## Page 6

*Source Creation Date: July 11, 2025, 2:31 am*

Luckily for me, I don't want to sneak in; I want to get the fuck out of here.

The downside is, there is a massive open space where the side of the house meets the edge of the manicured yard that extends all the way to the boundary of the greenery running parallel to the exterior fence. I have to make it across the yard without being seen to get to the fence. Fortunately, the sun is going down and my clothes are all dark.

Peering around, my eyes strain trying to ensure I'm alone. Robert has guards everywhere. Flipping my hood up to cover my bright hair and pale skin, I make sure I'm as unnoticeable as possible. I know there are several guards, but I'm not sure what type of rotation Robert has them on. Taking a deep breath, I move as fast as I can across the lawn, a constant silent prayer, a litany in my head. I'm terrified that any second I'll hear someone shout and my escape will be foiled.

But.

That never comes.

Reaching the edge of the trees, I check the time on my phone. Only two minutes have passed since I first checked it, so I have roughly five more minutes before Mark gets suspicious and comes looking for me. Moving deeper into the trees, I look for the maintenance gate. Night is falling, and it's getting difficult to see, so I use the flashlight on my phone but turn it down to the lowest setting.

A few seconds later, the dim rays of my cell phone shine on something metal to my left, and I move that way.

I've found the gate.

## Chapter Six

ROWAN

Easing through the gate, I find myself amongst some large bushes. Ruby's old Civic is literally right in front of me. I start to step out of the shadowed edge of the shrubbery until the sound of the front gate opening halts me in my tracks.

Who's leaving?

I smirk when Robert's towed car drives by as a tiny amount of triumph fills me. He was still in the house when I snuck out!

Victory is quickly followed by terror.

Robert was still in the house when I snuck out!

My stomach starts churning as I think about how close I came to death. If he had caught me ... If Mark had decided to go find Robert ...

I glance down at my phone. It's 6:14 and my time is almost up. Peeking around the corner of the bush I'm hiding in, I see the taillights of his car turn the corner and disappear from sight.

Stepping out of the shadows, I quickly walk over to Ruby's passenger side door and just as I'm reaching for the handle, the door opens. I quickly sit down in the seat and pull the door closed behind me. My fingers haven't even reached for my seatbelt when it takes off.

"Driven normally Ruby. None of them know I've snuck out

yet. It told Robert's buddy Mark that I needed to use the bathroom. He will be looking for me when I don't return in a few minutes. Especially since I'm the unpaid entertainment for the evening. The moment Robert finds out they can't find me, he'll rush back home, setting his dogs free to find us."

Eye's soft with concern glance over at me and I can see she's trying to peek around the hood I have pulled over my face.

"How did you know I was out here?"

"After I sent you that text yesterday, I started tracking you; preparing the best I could to get the hell out of there. Robert seldom leaves me alone with his friends. He enjoys watching too much, but I heard him tell Mark yesterday that he was going to have to leave for an hour or two and that he was free to play with me all he wanted. I stashed these clothes in the back of the commode and hid this bag in the toilet paper holder next to it. I knew I would only have a brief window to get out of there. If you hadn't gotten here when you did, I was just going to keep walking until you got closer. All day long, I've been watching your location on my phone. I never should have waited this long, but I was scared to involve you."

"What aren't you telling me, Rowan?"

The sharp bark of her words makes me flinch a bit.

"A lot, but it's not something I can talk to you about yet. I need to work through this on my own. I made a mess out of my life, and I've dragged you into an impossible situation. One that could quite possibly get both of us buried in a shallow grave, but I knew I was only a few more punches away from a nervous breakdown. The safe place I had created in my mind to escape the things he was doing and allowing to happen to me, was no longer enough. I felt my grip on reality slipping, and I knew you were my only escape.

Weneed to ditch this car as soon as possible.Youwon't be the first person he looks at, but it won't take long to connect the dots."

Ireach over and pick upRuby'sphone, before asking, "Isthere anything on here you can't live without, passwords, bank info?"

"Nope, wrote it all down whenItook a pee break earlier andIwithdrew all the money out of my bank yesterday before work."

Noddingmy understanding at her snappy reply,Iroll my window down and toss both phones out of the car at the same time, and roll the window back up.Ihesitate for a second before reaching up and pushing the hood off my head.Atthe sight of my face,IhearRubygasp.Isee her open her mouth to start in on me butIcan't handle an inquisition.Notright now maybe not ever.Iraise my hand in a 'stop' gesture before saying,

"Notright now,Ruby.IpromiseIwill tell you in time, but not now.Ineed you to be my big sister and get us the hell out of here."