



# Mine to Keep

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**Category:** Romance, Billionaire Romance

**Description:** "Watch me. Keep your eyes on Daddy."

We had one night together, and it was everything a girl could dream of. Only three months later, it turns into a nightmare.

That sexy, older man from the airport? The one who had me twisted up in his sheets?

Turns out, he's a billionaire. And worse, he's my dad's best friend.

Now, we're trapped in this house, and my dad's oblivious to the secret affair happening under his own roof.

Things really hit the fan, though, when Dad comes home early, catching his little girl and best friend engaged in a salacious act.

We try to do the right thing and go our separate ways. But, no matter how hard we fight it, Tommy Sinclair won't let me go.

Dad's Best Friend Age Gap Billionaire Forced Proximity Secret Relationship

Between the Sheets is a collection of instalove quick reads that are short, steamy, and straight to the point! If you're looking for protective, possessive, obsessed, dirty-talking, extra sexy, over-the-top book boyfriends, then this is the series for you! Each book in the series is a complete standalone with a guaranteed HEA!

**Total Pages (Source):** 19

# Page 1

*Source Creation Date: July 2, 2025, 6:17 am*

## PROLOGUE

### KATE

I rush through the crowded terminal, my heels clicking against the polished floor, as I frantically check my phone for updates on my missed flight.

“Ugh, how could I be so late?” I mutter under my breath, weaving through the chaotic sea of people. My frustration mounts, but I’m determined to find a solution. After all, nothing’s ever been handed to me on a silver platter. I’ve always had to fight for what I want.

I’m supposed to be sitting on a beach right now in Saint Lucia, sipping pina colodas with my toes buried in the sand. A last-minute getaway with my friends before we have to be real adults and start our new jobs. While they’re all ogling hot cabana boys beneath the tropical sun, I’m stuck in Miami, having missed my flight after being delayed at LaGuardia.

This sucks.

As I approach the airline counter, a sexy stranger catches my eye. There’s an air of authority around him that seems to demand attention from others, despite the surrounding chaos. He’s tall, broad-shouldered, and exudes wealth and confidence. His tailored suit hugs his physique just right, and it’s impossible not to notice the way his dark hair falls effortlessly over his forehead.

“I need to be on the next available flight,” he explains to the agent, his voice smooth

and decisive. He speaks with an ease that suggests he's used to getting what he wants. I'm drawn in by his composed demeanor, even as I continue to berate myself for missing my own flight.

"Of course, sir," replies the attendant, trying her best to accommodate him. A blush warms her cheeks as she tucks a strand of hair behind her ear, affected by the gorgeous man in front of her. "I'll do everything I can to assist you."

"Thank you. I appreciate that..." He eyes the name tag on her blazer. "Carly." The way he says her name oozes sensuality, and suddenly I want him to say my name too.

Then his piercing gaze flickers to mine before returning to the attendant. My heart races, and my nipples peak. What is it about this man that has me so captivated?

I shake off the thought and refocus my energy on the task at hand—securing a new flight so I can start my vacation.

"Excuse me," I interject, stepping up to the counter beside the mysterious stranger. "I'm in a similar situation and need to book a new flight as soon as possible."

"Of course, ma'am," the attendant tells me while splitting her attention between us. "We'll do our best to help you as well."

"Thank you," I say, stealing another glance at the stranger.

He smirks, amused by my persistence. A thrill runs through me, and I match his smirk with a playful grin of my own.

"Seems we're both victims of circumstance today," he comments, his voice deep and rich, like dark chocolate. I feel a shiver run down my spine, the sensation amplified by the intensity in his eyes.

“Apparently so,” I respond, compelled to match his confidence. “Though I must admit, being stranded in an airport isn’t usually this appealing.”

“Appealing?” He chuckles, raising an eyebrow. “I suppose that depends on the company you keep.”

“I suppose it does. I’m Kate.” I introduce myself as the spark seems to grow even stronger.

“Call me Tommy.” He captures my hand, but instead of giving it a polite shake, he lifts it to his full mouth and places a soft kiss to my knuckles.

Subtle, charming, and damn sexy.

We exchange a knowing smile, each sensing the undeniable chemistry simmering beneath the surface. And though I don’t know this man, there’s something about him—something irresistible—that keeps me rooted to the spot, entranced by his presence.

Soft jazz music draws my attention to the dimly-lit cocktail lounge tucked away in a quiet corner of the airport. Tommy and I glance at each other, our unspoken agreement clear. Perhaps we can salvage some enjoyment from our unexpected delay.

“Care for a drink while we wait?” he suggests, his voice low and inviting.

“Lead the way.” Together, we navigate through the bustling terminal, leaving the ruckus behind as we enter the hushed sanctuary of the bar.

Warm, amber lighting bathes the room in an intimate glow, casting long shadows across polished wood surfaces. The low murmur of conversation envelops us, a soothing balm after the cacophony of the main terminal. We slide into a secluded

booth, the plush leather cushions embracing us as we settle in.

He hands me the drink menu, and our fingers brush for a brief moment, sending a chill racing up my arm. I scan the list of cocktails before settling on something daring.

“What would you like?” My eyes never leave his seductive mouth as he asks the question.

“A French 75 for me.”

## Page 2

*Source Creation Date: July 2, 2025, 6:17 am*

“Bold choice,” he replies with a smirk.

“And you?”

“Scotch. Neat.”

I should’ve known, if his expensive watch and tailored suit were anything to go by.

I lean back, crossing my legs while a heel dangles from my foot. I catch Tommy’s gaze lingering on the curve of my arch, and goose bumps rise to the surface of my arms.

As the bartender slides our drinks toward us, our subtle dance of attraction continues. Each sip, each shared laugh brings us closer. Our knees touch beneath the table, the contact charged with potential. I find myself lost in the depths of his dark eyes, his glare drawing me under like a riptide. The electricity between us crackles, growing stronger as we surrender to the intensity of our chance encounter.

The clock on the wall ticks, each second dragging me farther from the sanctuary of our temporary escape and back to the reality of our missed flights. As if on cue, Tommy drains the last of his drink, the ice clinking against the glass like a farewell chime.

He places a crisp hundred-dollar bill on the table and rises from his seat. “Shall we?” he asks, offering the crook of his elbow with a mischievous smile that sends my heart racing.

“Of course,” I agree, slipping my hand into his as he helps me from the booth. Arm in arm, we navigate our way across the crowded hall, the noise swelling around us, but our connection remains unbroken. There’s a palpable force that surges in the silence.

Our footsteps echo in tandem as we approach the airline counter, our hopes for a resolution dwindling with each passing moment. The attendant’s apologetic smile does little to assuage our frustration as she delivers the news: No flights tonight. We’ll have to wait until morning.

“I’m sorry for the inconvenience, but the earliest we can get you both on new flights is tomorrow morning. Hopefully, this will help.” The agent hands us each a voucher for a free night’s stay at a nearby hotel.

Tommy studies his for a moment before glancing over at me, his gaze assessing. “A woman like you deserves something better than a cheap motel. I know a place that isn’t too far away. Care to join me? My treat.”

My breath catches in my throat as I struggle with the weight of my impulsiveness. The allure of the unknown is intoxicating, while the consequences of my actions could be devastating. However, there’s a magnetic pull toward this man that I can’t ignore. I’m torn between protecting myself and embracing this chance. Yet when I stare into his eyes, the decision is easy.

“I’m all yours.”

Tommy arranges for a town car to pick us up, the sleek vehicle pulling to a stop at the curb in front of the airport as the anticipation mounts with each passing moment.

After we’re seated and we’re on our way, Tommy addresses the driver. “Sorry for the short notice, Alex. Thanks for coming back.”

“No problem at all, sir. I’m always at your service whenever you’re in town.” Hmm, guess Tommy comes to Miami pretty frequently.

“We’re you able to book my usual room?” Tommy asks, adjusting the cuffs of his crisp, white shirt.

“Yes, sir. It should be ready for you upon arrival.” Alex glances at Tommy in the rearview mirror.

“Thank you. That’s why you’re the best.” Tommy’s smile is genuine and my appreciation for him grows. He’s kind and courteous, gives praise when warranted, and takes control when needed.

Everything about this man is attractive.

We enter the luxurious hotel suite and his strong hands grip my hips possessively, pulling me against him. As if a switch has flipped, his lips find mine in a brutal kiss that steals my breath away. He pushes me against the wall, his body pinning mine to the cold surface as he grinds his hips against me. I groan into his mouth.

“You’re mine,” he whispers against my ear, his hot breath making me quiver. “All mine now.”

His words should scare me, but they don’t, and I nod eagerly. My fingers clutch at his suit jacket as he manhandles me like a possession. He grabs my wrists, forcing them above my head before slamming his body into mine again. This time, his hard cock grinds against my stomach, leaving no doubt about what he wants.

Good. I want it too.

“Tell me you want this, Kate, and I’ll give you everything you need.”



“I want you,” I breathe, arching into him. The power dynamic is intoxicating, and I revel in it.

He rips off my clothes, tossing them aside while never breaking eye contact with me. His gaze bores into mine as he takes control of every inch of skin revealed by each layer of fabric he removes. When he reaches for the lacy black thong covering my wetness, I tremble with excitement and fear. He yanks it down, and I gasp at the sudden exposure but can’t tear my gaze away from his intense stare.

“Spread your legs for Daddy,” he commands in a low growl that makes my stomach flutter.

Without hesitation, I obey, as need surges through me stronger than any sense of self-preservation. He steps back for a moment to admire his handiwork before crouching down and pushing two fingers inside me, a rough invasion that makes me cry out with pleasure. He crooks those fingers just right and rhythmically thrusts them in and out while circling his thumb around my clit.

## Page 3

*Source Creation Date: July 2, 2025, 6:17 am*

“That’s it, baby. Ride my fingers,” he purrs as I moan louder than expected.

I look up at him, my eyes pleading as I catch my breath. “Please. I need you.”

He swoops my naked body into his arms and carries me to the bed, where he tosses me onto the mattress. “Watch me. Keep your eyes on Daddy.”

I couldn’t look away if I wanted to.

He takes a few steps back then sensually removes his clothes. When he’s finally stripped bare, my lips part with a gasp as I marvel at his sculpted, muscular physique. What makes my mouth water, though, is his long, thick cock with delicious veins trailing along his girth. I’ve never seen a dick this big, and I just know this man is going to tear me apart in the best way.

“You’re drooling, baby. You ready for this?” he taunts, stroking his length while moving in closer.

No, I’m not ready. But nothing will stop me from enjoying this.

I scooch toward the headboard and spread my legs in invitation. His tongue peeks out to wet his lips as he stares at my glistening pussy.

“Fuck, you’re gonna feel so good. I know it.”

“Then stop making me wait...Daddy.” My tone is seductive and my eyelids are heavy with lust.

Tommy crawls over my eager body, my core clenching with impatience. He rubs the fat tip of his cock between my slick pussy lips and my head drops back with a moan. But before I can relish this new sensation, he finds my entrance and ramshis dick deep inside me. I cry out, and thankfully he gives me a moment to accommodate his size.

“Christ, your cunt is tight.” His lewd words only turn me on more. “Daddy’s gonna fill you up with cum, baby. Tell me now if you want me to stop.”

“Please, Daddy. I need you to move,” I beg. I’ve never engaged in this kind of kink before, but I can’t deny it’s fucking hot.

Without another word, he begins to pound into me, reaching out and grabbing one of my breasts. He squeezes it before pinching my nipple between his fingers, tugging the tender flesh away from my body. I arch my back in response, moaning as pleasure shoots through me.

“I need to feel you come on Daddy’s dick.” He moves his hand to my throat, where he tightens his grip, sending a shockwave of fear through my system that only heightens my arousal. “Tell me you like it,” he commands, and I nod, unable to speak as the words catch in my throat. “Say it louder, baby. I wanna hear you.” Each word is punctuated with a hard thrust that threatens to shatter something deep within me.

“I... I love it,” I manage to choke out between moans. He grins wickedly before increasing his pace, slamming into me with a ferocity that leaves us both breathless. His hips slap against mine in a brutal rhythm as we move together like two primal animals engaged in a seductive dynamic of dominance and submission.

My nails dig into his shoulders as I attempt to regain some sense of control while also giving myself over to him. The smell of sweat and sex fills the air around us as we move faster and faster toward our ultimate release.

“Fuck, Daddy, I’m close,” I pant, my toes curling into the sheets beneath us. “I’m so close.”

“Come for me, Kate. I wanna feel your tight pussy strangle my cock,” he growls, his grip on my throat tightening a little more. Just enough to remind me who’s in control.

Then my orgasm crashes over me like a tidal wave, my back arching off the bed as I scream his name at the top of my lungs. Tommy’s hot, thick cum fills me up as he groans out his pleasure, his body shuddering above mine. We remain entwined for a few moments, panting and trying to catch our breaths.

The sensations coursing through me are so overwhelming that a blissful chuckle escapes from me. “That was…”

“Incredible?” he suggests with a satisfied smirk.

“Someone’s cocky,” I goad, utterly boneless and relaxed.

Then he flexes his dick that’s still inside me, and I clench around him. “I think you like Daddy’s cock, though.” He bends down and kisses me, forcing all other thoughts out of my head. “I’m glad we met tonight. Made missing my flight completely worth it.”

We collapse in a heap of glistening bodies and tangled limbs, enjoying our post-coital high. He pulls me in close and I rest my head on his muscular chest, being lulled to sleep by the soothing beat of his heart.

When the first light of dawn spills through the curtains, I awaken with a start, disoriented by the unfamiliar surroundings. As I blink away the lingering haze of sleep, the events of last night come flooding back—Tommy’s intense gaze, our electrified connection, and the raw passion that quickly unfolded.

I called him Daddy.

The thought makes me smile as I roll over, only to be filled with disappointment when I find the other side of the bed cold and empty. Until my eyes land on the handwritten note on the pillow.

My beautiful Kate,

You're the sexiest woman I've ever met. I hope this won't be the last time we see each other. Call me.

## Page 4

*Source Creation Date: July 2, 2025, 6:17 am*

Tommy

His phone number is written beneath his name, and my fingers itch to dial it. Even as temptation tugs at my heartstrings, something else has me hesitating. I know nothing about this man. What if I find out more and I don't like it? What if he has a wife and hooks up with random women in every city he visits?

I push that thought away because I refuse to believe it's true. Perhaps it's best to leave this as a one-time thing. Just a single night of hot sex with a gorgeous stranger.

A stranger I'd love to callDaddyagain.

1

TOMMY

Three Months Later

Ifollow the hostess as she leads me past the murmur of quiet conversations and clinking silverware. Excitement runs through me at the thought of seeing my old friend after too many years. The high-end restaurant is all gleaming surfaces and low lighting, but it's Geoff Roush's face that lights up when he spots me striding closer to his table.

"Tommy!" His voice booms through the hushed dining room, turning a few well-coiffed heads at the commotion. I can't hide my smile as I approach.

“Geoff.” I greet him with a firm handshake accompanied by a hearty pat to the back of the shoulder. It’s the kind of familiarity that comes with twenty-plus years of friendship.

“Been way too long, man.” He pulls away, his eyes crinkling with sincerity. He gestures to the seat across from him, and I take my place in the leather-bound club chair.

“Hasn’t been easy catching you in town,” I say, easing into the comfort of old jokes and shared history.

“You’re one to talk. You keep a busier schedule than I do.” He chuckles, pushing a glass of amber liquid toward me. “Your usual.”

“You remembered,” I joke and lift my Scotch with a subtle nod.

“Hope you don’t mind,” Geoff starts, a twinkle in his eye that piques my curiosity, “I invited someone else tonight. Katie Jane’s in town. Figured it was about time you met her.”

“Katie Jane?” Her name rolls off my tongue, foreign yet intriguing. “That’d be great. I’ve heard so much about her over the years.” I manage to keep my tone even, my expression open as I’m interested in meeting this elusive daughter of his. She’d always been away at school the few times I’d come into town.

“She just graduated from NYU. Damned proud of her.” His chest visibly swells, a father’s love etched into every line on his face. “She’s got her mother’s brains and looks... but my stubbornness, God help us.”

The thought of meeting Katie Jane stirs something in me—a mix of curiosity and an unexpected jolt of eagerness. Geoff has always spoken about her with such reverence.

I picture a young woman with his cool blue eyes and his late wife's gentle smile, but my imagination falls short. There's a mystery to her, a piece of my friend's life I'm about to uncover.

"Looking forward to it," I say, and I mean it. His world has always been a fortress, his business acumen as sharp as the Chicago skyline. But Katie Jane? She's the heartbeat he's fought to protect, the soft echo in his steel-hard life.

"Ah, there she is," Geoff announces, his gaze fixed on something beyond my shoulder.

I twist around, expecting to lay eyes on a young woman who's somehow both a stranger yet not after years of her father's stories that he's shared with me. I stop midway, my drink pausing inches from my lips before almost dropping to the floor. No longer a hypothetical image, Katie Jane is about to become a reality. One that, unbeknownst to Geoff, might just change everything. Then, memories come flooding back—salty Miami air, the heat of her skin, the taste of her lips.

"Isn't she something?" My friend's voice pulls me back into the present, but my pulse hammers against my temples.

"Incredible," I manage, the word a tightrope I walk between truth and catastrophe. My heart lurches as my gaze clings to the woman approaching our table.

Kate. Not Katie Jane. Kate.

The woman whose laughter still echoes in my dreams, whose body I've worshipped under a veil of stars in a bed of sin.

"Tommy, you alright?" Geoff's brow furrows, a crack in his ever-confident facade.



“Fine, just... tired from my flight...” I trail off, failing to find a lie that doesn’t sound like betrayal.

Time slows and my breath catches. Kate is here, wrapped in the same elegance that spelled my complete undoing three months ago.

“Dad!” Her bubbly voice is a melody that tugs at memories best left buried. My friend and his daughter embrace in a picture-perfect moment that should warm me but instead sends ice down my spine.

“Katie Jane, meet Tommy Sinclair. Tommy, this is my favorite daughter, Katie Jane.” He wraps a protective arm around her shoulders and pulls her in for a tight hug.

## Page 5

*Source Creation Date: July 2, 2025, 6:17 am*

“I’m your only daughter,” she deadpans, still with her back to me, and I brace myself for the moment recognition sets in.

Then she turns, and our eyes lock. A collision course set by fate or damnation, I can’t tell which. Realization flashes in her brilliant blues, mirrored by the storm in my own eyes.

“Tommy,” she breathes, her surprise masterfully masked by a polite smile.

“Katie Jane,” I respond in a steady tone, despite the chaos churning inside me. A handshake would be appropriate, safe. Instead, we’re both frozen, clinging to discretion as our only lifeline in the most awkward moment of my life.

“N-nice to meet you.” She stumbles over her words as our shared secret coils around us. The weight of what happened in Miami is as heavy as lead in my stomach, threatening to pull me under.

“Excuse me for a moment. You two get to know each other. I’ll be right back.” Geoff steps away, drawn by an acquaintance across the room. Our eyes dart to his retreating figure, then back to one another while sharing a silent scream.

“Small world,” she murmurs, a masterclass in keeping cool.

“Tiny,” I reply as my mind races through scenarios where this ends well, only to come up empty. “Please, have a seat.” I pull out the chair next to mine, a gallant invitation loaded with peril.

As she sits, poise personified, I know I'm playing with fire. But oh, how the flames beckon, and I can't resist trailing my fingertips along the smooth, bare skin of her upper arm.

"Sorry about that." Geoff returns to the table and takes his seat. "Gotta play nice with the city inspectors." He laughs, oblivious to the tension between me and his daughter.

After ordering our meals, my friend launches into a proud monologue about Kate's accomplishments and her future plans.

"She graduated top of her class, you know," he boasts, his chest once again puffed out like a peacock.

"Please, Dad, Tommy doesn't want to hear all this," she interjects, cheeks flushed with embarrassment. Or maybe it's pleasure as she skims her leg against mine beneath the table.

"No, I want to hear more," I insist, forcing each word out in an attempt to remain civil. "I'm very interested in everything about such a charming, beautiful girl."

It's true. Damn it all. I lean back in my chair, crossing my legs in a futile attempt to ease the discomfort of my aching cock.

"Thanks, Tommy," she says, her voice velvet and sin. And there it is again, that invisible thread, tugging us closer with every glance, every word loaded with meaning only we can understand.

"Katie Jane's always been driven," Geoff continues, unaware of the silent exchange happening right under his nose.

"Clearly. I can tell she's the kind of girl who gets what she wants." I take a sip of

Scotch, the liquid fire doing nothing to quell the blaze Kate's proximity is fueling. My grip on the glass is white-knuckled, an outlet for the tension that threatens to shatter my carefully-constructed composure. "Tell me more." It's both an invitation and a plea. Desperate to shift my focus from the pull of her lips, the curve of her neck, the memory of her whispered moans that echo in my mind like a siren's call.

"You don't have to ask me twice. I could go on about my girl all day." So could I. Geoff chuckles as he launches into another story, and I nod along, pretending my entire world isn't sitting inches away, dressed in a sexy black dress and breathing in rhythms that match my own. Pretending I'm not one wrong move from betraying my best friend's trust in the most unimaginable way. "Isn't this great?" Geoff beams, continuing to be clueless. "Finally, dinner with my best friend and my daughter. Only took twenty-three years to make it happen."

"It's perfect," I lie, my tight smile a façade. Inside, I'm a tempest, havoc and desire waging war with every beat of my heart. I hold the line because I have to, because the alternative is unthinkable.

The clink of fine china and the hum of conversation are a distant murmur compared to the internal cacophony in my head. Geoff's words become background noise as I feel Kate's hand on my thigh, shooting a jolt of electricity that threatens to burn through every shred of self-control.

"You feeling okay, man?" Geoff's voice cuts through my fog of desire. His brow is furrowed with genuine concern, and it's an ice bath over my simmering thoughts.

"Of course," I manage, plastering on a smile. Yet inside, I'm tumbling into an abyss. If he ever found out about Miami...

The thought alone is a vise around my chest, squeezing until I can't breathe. He trusts me, and here I am, battling a lust that could shatter a lifelong friendship. What kind of

man does that make me?

A man ready to go to hell for the sexy goddess sitting next to him.

“Actually, I’ve got a proposition for you.” Geoff’s tone shifts, lighter now, and I brace myself. “Why don’t you stay at our place while you’re in town? I never get to have my two favorite people together and I want to make the most of it. Hell, it could be another twenty-three years before I get you two together again.”

No, the fuck it won’t. I need her too much to wait another five minutes.

My heart stutters as I weigh the potential risks. A glance from Kate, quick and laden with silent words, makes my blood sing with the kind of danger that’s sweet and addictive.

“Geoff, I...” The hesitation is palpable, clogging my throat.

“Come on, it’ll be like old times.” The warmth in his eyes is enough to make me hate myself for even considering it.

## Page 6

*Source Creation Date: July 2, 2025, 6:17 am*

“I wouldn’t want to impose,” I deflect, but there’s a part of me that’s already crossing lines in my head that should never be crossed.

He laughs, brushing away my concerns with a wave of his hand. “Imposing? Nonsense! Kate would love it too, wouldn’t you, sweetheart?”

“Oh, absolutely, Dad.” Her voice is a velvety whip that only I feel the sting of.

“Alright.” My stomach drops as if I’m stepping off a cliff. “I’ll stay.”

“Fantastic!” he exclaims, oblivious to the fine line I’m walking.

“Should be fun.” It’s the most dangerous truth I’ve ever spoken.

“Shall we?” Geoff stands, signaling the end of the evening. Then he escorts Kate out of the restaurant with a hand on her lower back in a fatherly manner. But an unexpected jealousy burns within me and I’m dying to get my hands on her again, best friend’s daughter or not.

The chill of the Chicago night bites at my skin, but it’s nothing compared to the fire Kate ignites within me with just a glance. I bury that flame deep, lock it away behind a door of duty and respect. It’s the only way I can walk beside her and not reach out to claim what I’ve tasted once before.

“Thank you for dinner, Tommy,” Kate tells me as we part ways, and I nod, unable to trust my voice.

“Goodnight, Kate.” It’s all I offer, a simple farewell loaded with unspoken promises and suppressed longing.

“See you back at the house, buddy.” Geoff claps me on the shoulder, and I muster a final smile, one that belies the roiling storm within me.

As I watch them walk away, the tension coils tighter, excitement whispering through me like the caress of a ghost. I’m stepping into the lion’s den, armed with nothing but the fragile shield of my flimsy convictions.

You cannot sleep with your best friend’s daughter.

At least, not again. Yet as the city lights flicker as they stream by, painting the path before me in shades of temptation and trepidation, I can’t ignore the intense pull of desire between me and Kate. I just hope Geoff can forgive me because I’m committing the ultimate sin.

2

KATE

I wake up, my heart pounding in my chest as the memories of last night’s dinner flood my mind. Seeing Tommy again after our one-night stand back in May sends a shockwave through my body, stirring up a blend of desire and panic. The internal conflict rages inside me, my attraction to him battling against the complications his presence brings.

All night, I struggled to resist the temptation of sneaking into his guest room, keenly aware of the intense chemistry that still lingers. I’m determined to maintain a semblance of control despite the magnetic pull I feel toward him. My thoughts race with anxiety about facing him at breakfast. As I get dressed for the day, I choose an

outfit and fix my hair in an attempt to appear composed and unaffected by his presence.

Who am I kidding? I'm ready to pounce on that man as soon as I see him.

Taking a deep breath, I enter the kitchen and I'm immersed in a scene where Tommy and Dad are laughing together. The warmth and camaraderie between the two men create a stark contrast to the tension I feel within myself. My attention is captured by Tommy's assertive presence as he stands at the stove cooking breakfast. He exudes charm and authority—somehow effortless and subtle—even in this domestic setting, making it impossible for me not to want him.

“Good morning, sweet pea. Tommy insisted on cooking for us,” Dad says with pride evident in his tone.

My curiosity piqued, I allow my eyes to linger on Tommy as I take in the small details that intrigue me: the way he flips pancakes with practiced ease, the concentration in his brow as he prepares bacon, careful not to burn it. This moment, showcasing Tommy's respect and admiration of my dad allows me to deepen my understanding of his character.

“Morning, Kate,” he greets me, his voice warm and inviting. “I hope you're hungry. I'm starving.” I don't know if he intended the dual meaning, but I don't miss the glint in his eyes when he looks me over as I move farther into the kitchen.

“It smells delicious.” I attempt to keep my tone steady.

As the conversation continues around me, I remain captivated by our houseguest. We're under my dad's roof, for Christ's sake. I can't throw myself at his best friend. Well, at least not again, because all bets were off in Miami. Why does he have to be so sexy and charming? Forget that he's a billionaire, he's the kind of man every



woman dreams of, and I'm no different.

As I take a seat at the marble-top island, I can feel my pulse rate increasing. A thrill stirs in my stomach with every stolen glance and innocent touch. If I don't have him again soon, I think I might combust.

"I hope you're ready for some of my famous pancakes," Tommy teases, his eyes sparkling with mischief.

"I'd love a taste," I reply, stifling a grin.

That's when I notice his physical reaction to my presence and I hide my giggle with my napkin. His lengthening cock is unmistakable beneath the thin fabric of his navy-blue sleep pants. He catches the blush on my cheeks and raises a single eyebrow. It's a subtle warning, a reminder that we're walking a dangerous line while my dad sits next to me at the counter.

"Here you go, honey." Tommy sets a plate piled high with pancakes and bacon in front of me, and a warmth spreads through me at his attentiveness and care. His fingers brush along mine, and my nipples harden beneath my shirt. He notices too, and the tip of his tongue darts out to wet his lips.

## Page 7

*Source Creation Date: July 2, 2025, 6:17 am*

“Breakfast looks fantastic. Thanks for cooking,” Dad exclaims, unaware of the undercurrents swirling around his own kitchen. Then his cell phone rings, and he glances at the screen. “Sorry, I need to take this.” He excuses himself and steps into another room.

I’m left alone with his friend as the air thickens with the weight of our shared desire, finding it difficult to breathe as wetness pools between my thighs. An intense moment of privacy hangs heavily with unspoken words and emotions.

“You’re very good at what you do. In the kitchen, I mean.”

“I’m good anywhere, baby. I’m especially good at pleasing you.” His seductive tone is barely above a whisper. My heart skips a beat, and I can feel my cheeks flushing as I meet his intense gaze. In this moment, it’s as if the rest of the world has fallen away, leaving only Tommy, me, and the bad choices we’re about to make.

I let out a low, exaggerated moan as I take the first bite of my pancakes, savoring the sweet, vanilla flavor. My gaze flicks to his, while he watches me with a mixture of amusement and caution.

“So good,” I purr, testing his resolve. A wicked grin spreads across my face—I’m enjoying this game far too much.

“Behave, Kate,” he says while leaning in close. “Or I might have to spank that pretty pussy of yours.”

I almost choke at his salacious suggestion, but before I can respond, Dad reenters the

kitchen with his brow wrinkled and his lips pinched into a tight line.

“I just got off the phone with my Site Manager in Nashville. This is our first build out there,” he explains, rubbing the back of his neck. “Evidently, we had a surprise inspection and they’re claiming we’ve got some serious safety issues. I need to fly out for a few days to deal with it.”

“Ah, that’s too bad,” Tommy replies. “In that case, I should head back to the city today. We can catch up another time.”

“No, stay.” Dad shakes his head. “This is your first time meeting Katie Jane. You guys should get to know each other. You’re like family to me.” Well, that just hit me in the chest with a stab of guilt. “Besides, I’d worry a hell of a lot less if you stayed and kept my little girl safe. At least until I get back.” He glances at me, concern etched on his face. “I don’t want Katie Jane to be alone.”

“Seriously, Dad?” I roll my eyes. “I’m not a child. I can handle being on my own for a few days.”

“Come on, it’ll make your old man feel better.” Then Dad turns to Tommy and adds, “You two will get along great. You already have something in common—you both live in the same city.”

“Wait, you’re in New York too?” Tommy asks, surprise evident in his voice.

“Moved out there for college and decided to stay. I love it there,” I confirm, already dreaming of the possibilities that could arise from this newfound information.

“I might love it even more now.” A thoughtful expression crosses his face.

“Great! It’s all settled.” Dad claps his hands together. “You guys enjoy your

breakfast. I'm sure you'll come up with some funthings to do while I'm gone. Shouldn't be more than three or four days, tops, but I'll get back here as soon as I can."

"Take your time, Dad. We'll be fine." I glance at Tommy, who shoots me a warning look that I ignore.

Dad wraps me up in a hug and kisses me on the top of my head. "Be a good girl while I'm away. And show Tommy a good time. He comes to Chicago for business, but never has time for fun. You'll help him with that, won't you?"

"Oh, don't you worry. I'm sure we'll haveplentyof fun." Pretty sure I've just earned myself the spanking Tommy warned me about, but I know it'll be worth it.

Dad leaves the room to pack, and I feel the weight of our solitude in the kitchen. The silence crackles with tension, a testament to the desires we both harbor. "So," I say, sashaying over to Tommy with a sinful smile. "Care for a dip in the pool?"

He hesitates, his moral compass warring with his attraction to me. "Kate, I'm not sure we should?—"

"Relax," I interrupt, placing a reassuring hand on his forearm. "It's just a little swim. I promise I'll be good." I bat my eyes at him while I mimic marking an "X" over my heart with my index finger. We both know it's a lie, but I'm curious how long we'll keep up this charade.

After a moment, Tommy relents with a nod of his head. "Alright. Just a swim."

"The pool is downstairs." I point to a door behind him that leads to the entertainment area of the house, including the pool and sundeck. "There are extra swim suits in the changing room. I'll meet you there in ten." The need to kiss him is strong, but I have

to wait until my dad is out of the house. He'd kill us both if he caught us.

Fifteen minutes later, Dad is out the door and headed to the airport. Excitement courses through me as I race out of my room, wearing the skimpiest string bikini I own. I can tell Tommy needs a little nudge in the right direction, so hopefully this raspberry pink swimsuit will do the trick.

When I step onto the pool deck, my gaze hones in on his tall, muscular frame and smooth, tanned skin. He's even sexier than I remember and my core clenches at the sight of him.

"Hey," I call out, my voice laced with playful seduction as I approach Tommy.

He pivots in my direction and his mouth drops open, appreciation obvious in his dark eyes. "Fuck, you're beautiful."

"We're all alone for at least three days. Whatever will you do with me?" I taunt with feigned innocence.

## Page 8

*Source Creation Date: July 2, 2025, 6:17 am*

“You’re a temptress, you know that?” He glides the tip of his finger down the center of my chest. “And I’m a weak man, honey.” The hint of danger in his voice sends a delicious thrill down my spine.

“Think you can catch me?” I rise onto the tips of my toes and give him a quick peck before diving into the pool. The crisp water is refreshing and much needed to cool down my heated body.

When I swim to the surface, Tommy’s already there, shaking his wet hair out of his face with a flick of his head. He wraps me in his arms and presses his body against mine, rubbing his massive cock along my lower belly.

I gasp, looking into his intense eyes, now clouded with passion. “Please... I want you so badly.”

“God, Kate,” he growls in response, all traces of his restraint having disappeared. “You have no idea what you do to me.”

Our lips crash together, a collision of fire meeting gasoline. The world around us fades away as we lose ourselves in each other’s touch, our bodies moving together in a primal dance of need and lust. There’s nothing but the taste of him on my tongue, the feel of his hands on my skin, and the deep connection that threatens to burn us both.

His deft fingers remove my bikini bottoms and toss them onto the deck with a wet plop before shoving his swim shorts down his strong thighs. He lifts my legs onto his arms, the backs of my knees resting in the crooks of his elbows. His cock nudges at

my entrance and I hold my breath with anticipation, waiting for the delicious burn when he fills me up. Then, with a powerful thrust, he slams inside me and forces the air from my lungs in a loud moan.

“Daddy missed you, baby. I thought I’d never have you again,” he whispers into my neck as I hold on tight while he fucks me.

We cling to one another, the line between right and wrong blurring as we explore every inch of each other’s bodies. Our moans mix with the sounds of the water splashing around us, each thrust sending waves rippling outward. The urgency grows, fueled by the knowledge that we need to make the most of these next few days.

I surrender myself to him, to the passion that seizes us. “Harder, Daddy. Make me come,” I beg, meeting his every thrust.

He turns us around and walks us to the side of the pool, pressing me against the cool tiles. “You need more, baby? I’ll give you more,” he groans, then takes my mouth in a searing kiss. Holding me up with my thighs spread wide, Tommy commands, “Play your clit for Daddy. I need to feel your cunt squeezing around me while I fill you with my cum.” He has no idea what his words do to me as I hurry to comply with his wishes.

We move together, teetering on the edge of ecstasy, before plummeting over the precipice, our cries echoing through the summer air as we shatter into a thousand glittering shards of euphoric bliss.

“I can’t stay away from you, Kate,” he admits while his dick twitches inside me with every spurt of cum he releases.

“I don’t want you to, Daddy. I’m all yours.”

As our breathing slows and our heartbeats return to normal, we remain entwined, unwilling to break the spell that has woven itself around us. In the late-morning light, with the sun beaming down on our forbidden rendezvous, it feels as if anything is possible. Like everything in my life is just as it should be.

“Tommy. Promise me?—”

“We’ll figure it out, baby,” he murmurs back, his gaze a mixture of lust and uncertainty.

His cock is still inside me when he kisses me deeply, and we give ourselves over to the passion that has reignited. The days ahead will be filled with secrets, stolen moments, and the undeniable truth that our lives have been irrevocably changed by the connection we share.

3

TOMMY

I stride out of the boardroom, feeling each tick of my watch like a physical weight. Guilt gnaws at me as I check the time again. I’m late—overdue for picking up Kate. She’s waiting downstairs. And the thought of her alone, tapping a foot or checking her phone, quickens my steps.

Descending to the cafe, I push through the hum of chatter as my eyes sweep the small room, searching until they land on her. There she is, lost in a book, a picture of beauty and serene patience. A flush of relief washes over me as I drink in the sight of her, blond hair cascading over her shoulders and lips pursed in concentration.

“Kate,” I start, my voice laced with regret as I pull out a chair and sit beside her. “I’m sorry I kept you waiting, baby. My meeting went longer than I expected.”



She glances up, and that bubbly smile of hers dances across her face. “Tommy, it’s fine. I had company,” she says, gesturing to the novel in her hands, setting me at ease despite my tardiness.

I lean forward, the annoyance of the day melting away in her presence. “Let me make it up to you,” I offer, the words carrying a new determination. “How about we go shopping? I’ll take you anywhere you want.”

“Shopping?” She tilts her head, feigning protest. “That’s not necessary.”

I’m insistent, firm yet charming... I hope. “Come on, honey, indulge me. Hermes? Dolce? Whatever you want,” I suggest, rolling off names of high-end boutiques. It’s a familiar world, one where luxury is a language I speak fluently.

Her gaze sparkles with mischief, and she leans in closer, her fruity floral scent wrapping around me. “Enchanté.” Her voice has a teasing lilt that sends an unexpected jolt to my cock.

“Lingerie?” I’m amused and intrigued all at once. Her suggestion isn’t just about the place; it’s a challenge, a flirty test of my willingness to give in to her every whim. And damn it, I’m more than willing. I’m eager. “Daddy’s happy to buy you anything you want,” I concede with a grin, happy to grant her every request. The prospect sends a pulse of excitement through me, a response that surprises me with its intensity.

“Perfect,” she purrs, closing her book with a decisive snap and rising from her seat. “Let’s see what kind of trouble we can get into.”

*Source Creation Date: July 2, 2025, 6:17 am*

Trouble indeed. The word takes on a whole new meaning with Kate.

The doors of the exclusive boutique part like the red sea before Moses, and we step into its opulent embrace. A sparkling chandelier drips crystals from the ceiling, casting prisms across the marble floor that gleam beneath our feet. The air is perfumed with a fine fragrance—a world draped in opulence with seductive promises of satin and lace.

“Wow,” Kate breathes out, her eyes wide as she takes it all in. I watch her, my heart thudding in a way no business deal ever could orchestrate. In this place where wealth is unspoken but ever-present, she doesn’t seem overshadowed—she shines.

“How about this?” She beckons me with the curl of her index finger, holding up a wine-colored lace bra and panty set. She places it against her voluptuous curves, and I swallow hard, my throat suddenly dry.

“Stunning,” I manage, and I mean more than the intimate garments in her hands.

She taps her chin as if deep in thought. “I wonder if they have anything in leather?” She giggles, a teasing sound that dances through the air, light and carefree. A quiet growl escapes me as I move toward her, but she shimmies out of my reach. I love seeing this kittenish side of her.

As we move through the store, our conversation flits from silk to lace, from bold to demure. Each piece she selects is a glimpse into her desires, each word we exchange another layer peeled away.

Then she slips into the fitting room with a handful of provocative options, the black velvet curtain closing behind her with a swish that feels final. The quiet left in her wake is heavy as my thoughts drift to us as a couple, the gravity of what we're doing, and the boundaries we've already crossed.

"Mr. Sinclair?" Her sultry voice is muffled by the thick fabric hanging between us. "I'm having trouble with this clasp. Think you can get it for me?"

I know what she wants, and she's driving me to madness. It's impetuous and reckless, but there's not a chance I can say no. Without hesitation, I push past the curtain, tugging it closed behind me. Inside, the world narrows to the dimly-lit space of the mirrored room and to Kate's alluring smile. To the lust in her eyes that matches mine.

"Would you look at that? I seem to have gotten that pesky clasp all by myself," she taunts me, letting the straps of her bra slide down her arms before whipping it off and tossing it to the floor.

She's a fucking goddess, all tits and ass with an hourglass figure, dressed only in sheer lace panties with a matching garter belt and black fishnet stockings. It's the sky-high black pumps, though, that do me in, elongating her toned calves and accentuating her thick thighs.

"Think you can be quiet?" I ask, removing my suit jacket and unbuttoning my thousand-dollar dress shirt. "Or do I have to shove those panties in your mouth?"

Suddenly, the small fitting room becomes our clandestine world, the air thick with the scent of her arousal. Velvet drapes shroud us in secrecy, where it's just me and Kate and the orgasms I'm about to give her.

"Daddy," she breathes out, and her voice is a silky caress against my ear as I kiss her neck. I can almost taste the heat radiating from her sweet cunt.

I pull her to me, my hands roaming over the juicy globes of her supple ass. I've committed her body to memory, every inch of her soft skin, every swell and dip of her luscious curves. Her hands tug at my hair, matching my own need and urgency.

"Like what you do to Daddy?" I groan as obsession surges through my veins. "You own me."

Her eyes, brimming with mischief and something deeper, lock on to mine. "Then show me," she challenges, a flirtatious smirk playing on her lips.

And that's exactly what I do.

I sink to my knees, the plush carpet forgotten beneath me. I lift one of her legs over my shoulder, exposing the intoxicating paradise that promises oblivion. My breath hitches as I trace her soft inner thigh with my fingertips, watching her eyes cloud with yearning.

"Look at you..." My voice trails off, husky with desire. "So beautiful, so ready to be fucked. I can smell your wet pussy, baby. I know you want me."

"Yes," she moans, losing herself in the sensations before covering her mouth with a hand.

"Good girl," I praise her. "Be quiet or I'll stop."

I don't wait for her compliance before my tongue finds her slick cunt, filling my mouth with her divine flavor—sweet and heady, like ripe forbidden fruit. She shudders, a symphony of sighs and hushed pleas that urge me deeper into the madness.

"Fuck," she pants with a trembling exhale, spurring me on.

In the confined intimate space, each lick, each kiss, is amplified—a testament to our reckless abandon. Her hips buck against my face, seeking more, seeking her release.

“Come for Daddy.”

“Tommy, I—” Her words cut off as she clings to me, her body convulsing in waves of ecstasy that crash through her, spilling her cum into my mouth.

Our shared breathlessness fills the silence that follows, a tangible reminder of yet another line we’ve crossed. In this stolen moment, there’s no turning back.

I spin her around, a swift movement that has her facing the mirror. Her blue eyes are wild, caught between alarm and anticipation. I press my hand against the front of her throat. “Remember, baby. If you don’t want me to stop...” I whisper a warning, my voice a low growl. “Daddy’s going to make you come again.”

*Source Creation Date: July 2, 2025, 6:17 am*

Her chest rises and falls rapidly, each breath a silent plea as she watches our reflection. My other hand snakes down her body, fingers dancing over her slick heat. She quivers, biting her lip, trying to stifle the moans that threaten to spill from her lips.

“Look at us, Kate.” My gaze burns into hers through the glass. “Watch how much you enjoy Daddy’s touch.”

Her body responds to my probing fingers, her hips grinding back against me. I see the battle in her eyes, the struggle to stay quiet, to obey. I’m relentless, pushing her toward the edge with expert strokes designed to unravel her completely.

“Fuck...” she breathes out, the words muffled against her plump lips as she tries to keep quiet.

“You’re being such a good girl for me.” I thrust my fingers deeper, feeling her silky walls clenching around them. “Let go, Kate. Come for me.”

And she does, her entire body shaking as she surrenders to her pleasure. I feel her climax in the tension of her grip on my wrist, in the silent scream that contorts her pretty face in the mirror.

Before she can catch her breath, I position myself behind her, unbuckling my slacks and pulling out my thick cock. I press her against the cool glass with one hand splayed over her mouth to muffle her cries. “Keep watching,” I insist, sliding inside her with a single, fluid motion.

Her eyes are wide, locked on our joined bodies in the mirror. The sight is intoxicating—my older, dominating presence against her youthful, vibrant form. With each thrust, I force her to confront the raw reality of our desire, the forbidden thrill of our connection.

“Feel that, Kate? That’s Daddy taking what he wants.”

She nods, a whimper escaping from beneath my hand as I drive into her deeper, harder, determined to make her feel my cock for the rest of the week. Nothing else matters, the only reality that’s left is the rhythm of our bodies as I shove my dick inside her over and over again.

“Remember this moment, baby,” I breathe out, my control shattering with every movement. Right now, I don’t give a damn if anyone hears what we’re doing. “Remember how Daddy makes you feel.”

And then we’re lost, spiraling together into a place where nothing exists but the rapid beat of our hearts and the collision of flesh on flesh. We both soar over the edge of our releases while I muffle her scream and hold back a grunt of my own. I press my body into hers, desperately trying to shoot my hot cum as far as I can into her tight little pussy.

Panting while my heart is pounding like it’s trying to escape my chest, I step back and watch Kate’s chest heave with each breath she takes. Barely able to stand on her tall heels, she turns, her blue eyes still glazed over with the remnants of lust as a silent conversation passes between us.

A small smile plays on her pouty lips, but there’s something else in her gaze—a depth that wasn’t there before. I’m too afraid to name it, fearing I’m projecting my own feelings onto the beautiful girl who just let me inside her again.

There's a shuffle of fabric as we redress and straighten our clothes, an attempt at restoring a modicum of normality while knowing nothing is normal anymore. Not after this.

As she steps out of the fitting room, I follow, trailing my fingers along the small of her back. The touch is possessive yet gentle—a contradiction that mimics the storm swirling inside me.

“Let me help you with that,” I murmur, brushing her hair aside to button the single pearl closure at the back of her blouse. It's an intimate gesture, one that makes her tremble beneath my fingertips, especially when my lips ghost over her neck.

“Thank you, Daddy,” she whispers, reverent and sincere, filling me with a thrill of pleasure mixed with a pang of guilt.

“I'd do anything for you, Kate.” My voice is low, raw with emotion.

I buy everything she looked at—much to her protest—then we leave the boutique in silence as the air around us is heavy with unspoken words. There's a shift in the way she moves, a newfound grace that comes with the knowledge that what we share is growing, becoming more real than just fun. I can sense the change in myself too, a dangerous longing for something I shouldn't want, something that will cost me what took twenty-plus years to build.

As we walk outside in the warm summer sun, I steal glances at her, taking in the flush on her cheeks and the brightness in her eyes. The allure of Kate is undeniable, magnetic, pulling me in despite every red flag waving in my face.

The thought of a future with her flickers in my mind, tantalizing and terrifying in equal measure. Can I reconcile the man I am, one of principles and control, with the man who succumbs to such intoxicating desire?



“Tommy?” Her voice pulls me from my reverie. “You’re quiet. Is everything okay?” There’s a hint of apprehension in her tone.

“It’s perfect, baby,” I assure her with a smile that feels more like a mask.

She links her arm through mine, resting her head on my shoulder as we continue down the street. In that simple gesture lies a promise, a vow of complicity in our forbidden tryst.

I know I’ve fucked up, my moral compass spinning out of control. However, right now, with her body pressed against me and the taste of her pussy still on my tongue, I let myself bask in the afterglow, pushing away the creeping doubts.

For now, I’m hers—utterly and completely. And as we step into the evening, the future stretches out before us, a tormenting mix of desire and indecision.

4

KATE

It’s too soon, way too soon for this pounding in my chest, this lightning in my veins that spells out Tommy’s name with every heartbeat. Sex and kisses and a carousel of hopeful expressions that all blur together in my head, making me feel like I’m living a dream. A fun, exciting fantasy with a man who sees me, the real me, and makes me feel beautiful, sexy, confident. The man who looks at me like I’m the only woman in the world. And even though my fantasy could come crashing down at any moment, I’m going to cherish every second of it while I can.

*Source Creation Date: July 2, 2025, 6:17 am*

Tonight, he planned a special date for us, complete with an elegant dress he had delivered to the house. I assured him I had something in my closet I could wear, but he wouldn't hear of it, wanting to see me enrobed in a gown for this specific occasion. It's a beautiful dress, the luxurious deep-burgundy fabric clinging to my every curve like a second skin and draping perfectly until it skims the floor.

I don't know how he knew I was dying to see it, but he somehow managed to get his hands on sold-out tickets to see the Beauty and the Beast musical. And not just any seats, we had our own private suite with the best view in the house. My pulse races, thinking about the dimmed lights, the swell of music, how his eyes always seemed to find mine in the darkness. The show was amazing, but the company was even better.

Now, we're topping off the best date I've ever been on with dinner at Alinea. Our chauffeured car rolls to a stop under glowing lanterns, and the restaurant looms, a beacon of culinary genius nestled in the Chicago skyline. I've dined in plenty of fine establishments before, but nothing compares to this... or being with him. Tommy's presence is a magnetic field, pulling me toward something unknown, something exhilarating.

"Ready, baby?" His voice is a warm caress, tingling down my spine. I smile at him, already breathless before the night has even begun.

We step out from the car, the cool air of the evening nipping at my bare shoulders. I barely feel the chill, though. Not when I'm wrapped up in the heat radiating from the gorgeous billionaire standing next to me, from the hope of an evening poised on the edge of perfection. In his company, I'm transformed, no longer Kate Roush, the twenty-three-year-old daughter of a construction magnate. In her place is a princess

stepping into a fairy tale, handcrafted by her gallant prince. I shed layers of my former self with every click of my heels on the cobblestone, stepping farther into this dream spun from moonlight and fantasy. All because of the man who keeps me tucked safely against his side, sending tendrils of longing through me, making me ache for more than just dinner and a show.

I lace my fingers with his, the strength in his grip grounding me as we stroll along the sidewalk. His touch lingers just long enough to send a current zipping up my arm, setting every nerve alight.

“Thank you,” I murmur, unable to keep the smile from my lips or the flutter from my chest. “You’ve already made this an unforgettable night.”

His eyes meet mine, and there’s a promise in their depths. I know what I want it to be, but I don’t dare say it aloud.

Alinea looms before us, its facade a beacon of luxury amidst the city’s heartbeat. We glide through the entrance, and the opulence washes over me, each detail meticulously crafted to astonish. It’s an atmosphere of extravagance. And here, I’m seen, valued, and adored by the man determined to spoil me.

Tommy guides me to our table with his hand at the small of my back, a touch that burns through the fabric of my dress. My senses are heightened, alive with the anticipation of his every move. He pulls out my chair and I gracefully sink into it, our smiles a secret dialogue of words unneeded when our eyes say it all.

Dinner unfolds like a scene from an old Hollywood movie. Tommy’s charm is effortless, his wit sharp as he regales me with stories that have me laughing until my sides ache. He speaks with an authority that commands boardrooms. Yet here, under the soft hum of the restaurant, it weaves a spell just for me.

“Tell me something. What’s one thing you’ve always wanted to do but never had the chance?”

“Skydiving,” I answer without hesitation, and his eyebrow quirks in surprise.

“The fearless Kate wants to leap out of a plane?”

“Yes! Free-falling from thousands of feet in the air, wind in my face, the world a blur below... It’s the ultimate rush, isn’t it? Like having a superpower.”

“Then we’ll do it,” Tommy states, the decision made as simple as that, and my heart skips a beat. “We’ll jump out of a plane together.”

“Really? Just like that?” Everyone else thinks I’m crazy when I tell them my number-one bucket list item.

“Just like that, baby.” He leans back in his chair with a confident swagger.

I laugh, shaking my head at his audacity, at the way he makes even the impossible seem within reach. Our conversation veers from dreams to secrets, each revelation another thread weaving us closer together and making me fall for him that much more. As I sit next to Tommy, the man who defies every societal norm, I realize I’m no longer just playing with fire—I’m dancing in the flames.

The server hovers, as Tommy’s gaze meets mine with a flicker of something more than just confidence—it’s an intimate understanding of my tastes and preferences, the kind of understanding that allows me to relax and be cared for.

“We’ll start with the Osetra caviar, followed by the pear-glazed foie gras.” He searches my face for a moment, and I respond with a pleased smile, encouraging him to continue. “Then, she’ll have the arctic char en papillote and I’ll have the truffled

duck breast.”

“Excellent choices, sir. And for your final course?” our server asks.

“The lavender pavlova.” All his selections sound fantastic, and I can’t wait to try them. “And have the sommelier choose wine pairings for each course, please.” The impeccably-dressed man dips his head toward my date before collecting the menus and returning to the kitchen.

I place my hand on Tommy’s thigh, grateful for his attentiveness. “I guess you do listen to me when I’m talking,” I tease.

He lifts my hand and places a soft kiss on my knuckles. “I may not say much in return, but I listen to every word, honey.”

Warmth floods my cheeks, and I’m still amazed that a man like Thomas Sinclair wants anything to do with a girl like me.

As plates arrive, one after another, each a mosaic of color and savory scents, I’m struck by the stark contrast to my previous dates with men who’d talk over me to assert their order, or worse, depend on me to navigate awkward silences. With Tommy, however, it feels like we’re partners in a dance of mutual respect, where I’m free to follow his lead, knowing he’s attuned to every step I take.

“Did I ever tell you about my first college date with a guy named Jonathan?” I start, my fork pausing midair. “He thought showing a girl a good time was pizza and beer—that I paid for because he conveniently lost his wallet—eaten on a tattered blanket on his dorm room floor.” My eyes roll at the memory. “It was... gross. But this...” I gesture around the room before returning my gaze to Tommy. “This is a dream,” I confess, letting the truth of it fill the space. This man’s presence in my life casts shadows over every half-hearted romance I ever tolerated.

And then, as if the universe conspires to illustrate my point, Tommy's hand reaches across the table, his palm capturing mine with a touch that speaks volumes. It's a simple gesture, yet it sparks with intent, fueling a fire within me that's been burning since the moment I first laid eyes on him. My skin tingles, each nerve ending awakening to the call of his touch.

"Kate." My name is a melody on his tongue. "Seeing you happy is one of the greatest gifts I could ever receive." The sincerity in his tone makes my eyes water and my chest swell with gratitude and adoration. Tonight isn't just a date; it's a declaration, a testament to the extraordinary man who I'm falling in love with.

5

TOMMY

I wake up with Kate's body against mine. Her breath, soft and rhythmic, fanning over my chest. I'm caught, captivated by the simple rise and fall of her shoulders as we lie in bed with the weight of my internal conflict pressing down on me.

"Morning," she mumbles without opening her eyes, a sleepy smile tugging at her plump lips.

"Morning, honey," I reply, my voice a low rumble. Thoughts of how fleeting—how fragile—our situation is threatening to consume my mind. Our time together is short, coming to an end soon, and I'm determined to figure out a way to make this work.

The early hours of the day pass by in a blur of passionate sex; we explore every inch of the house as if we're claiming territory. In the kitchen, against the cool marble countertop, urgency takes hold of both of us. Upstairs, in the shadow-dappled bedroom, our bodies find a different rhythm, slow and deep as if I'm marking her from the inside out. Each touch, each kiss, is a word in a language only we know, spoken in gasps and moans and cries of pleasure. The spaces we inhabit are now branded with the memory of our fervor, every corner concealing our forbidden secrets.

When she arches beneath me, the world outside these walls fades away. I'm drowning in the feel of her body against mine, her tight pussy squeezing my cock, and in the delectable scent that is uniquely Kate.

My Kate. Mine.

That realization hits me like a freight train, barreling through the last of my restraint. This isn't just lust or some illicit affair; it's something far more dangerous. Something earth shattering and life changing.

"Daddy," she breathes out, locking those intense blue eyes with mine. "Don't stop."

Christ, when she calls meDaddy, I lose all sense of control. I've never had a woman call me that before, but it feels right with her, with Kate. I'm not her father and she doesn't need me to fill that role. I'm just the man who'll take care of her every need, her every desire, and give her anything she wants.

Still, guilt gnaws at me because she's my best friend's daughter. Because I'm far too old for a sexy young thing like her. But when she looks at me with those sultry blue eyes, none of that matters. She's not just some girl; she's a force to be reckoned with, a hurricane I'm willing to be swept up in. She's smart, challenging me in ways no one else dares, wrapped in a package of sinful curves that fit perfectly against my hard physique. And when she whispers my name, her voice laced with pleasure, I know she's right where she belongs, writhing beneath me in my bed every night.

How do I tell my best friend that his little girl is the woman who's brought me to my knees? That she's the first woman I've ever cared for, and someone I could spend the rest of my life with? The thought alone makes my chest ache, knowing my friend will never approve.

"Tommy," Kate calls my name, pulling me back to the present. "I need you." Her small hands cup my face while I brace myself on the back of her thighs, filling her deeply with my swollen cock.

I look at her, really look, and I see my future in those eyes. I have to figure this out.



For us. For the incredible, maddening, intoxicating woman beneath me. I'll find a way to be with her, obstacles be damned.

The setting sun casts a warm, golden glow over the outdoor kitchen as I fire up the grill. The sizzle of thick steaks hitting the hot surface punctuates the quiet evening that has settled around us. Kate stands across from me at the counter, chopping vegetables for the salad, with a look of concentration softening her delicate features.

"Pass the salt, will you?" I ask, and she slides the shaker down the counter with a practiced flick of her wrist. It's a simple gesture, yet it speaks volumes about the ease between us and how quickly we've fallen into a pattern of domesticity. There's comfort in this shared task, in the sounds and scents of a meal coming together as two people move in sync with one another.

"Looks like we've outdone ourselves," she says as we sit down to eat on the sun deck.

"Here's to many more dinners like this," I toast, raising my glass to hers.

"Many more," she echoes as we dive into our meal with the laughter and conversation flowing as naturally as the wine.

After cleaning up dinner, we head inside and settle by the fire, the crackling of the logs creating a soothing backdrop. The earlier banter gives way to something more intimate as twilight seeps through the sheer curtains of the spacious living room, dimming the world to just the two of us.

Kate snuggles into my side and we relax on the sofa, watching the flames flicker. Her voice is lower now. Softer too. "Have you ever felt so connected to someone that it's like... like you can't tell where you end and they begin?"

I'm surprised by her question, but I already know my answer. "That's how I feel every morning when I wake up next to you." The truth of my response resonates in my chest. I've never been one to bare my soul, but with her, vulnerability seems not only safe but necessary.

Kate inches closer, the heat from her body mingling with the warmth of the fire. Her hand finds mine, our fingers lacing together in a grip that says she's not going anywhere—not without me.

My palm cradles her cheek as my thumb traces the apple of it, feeling the flush of her skin beneath my touch.

"I want—" She begins but doesn't finish, her gaze locked on to mine, heavy with all the things we don't need words to say.

I pull her onto my lap, her supple curves molding against me. The firelight dances across her face, casting her in an ethereal glow that makes my heart ache with the knowledge of how much I have to lose.

"I want you. Now," she whispers, her lips hovering mere inches from mine, her breath a tantalizing caress.

I capture her mouth, the scorching kiss stoking the smoldering embers of our desire into a blazing inferno that threatens to consume us whole. Whatever happens after this week, whatever challenges we face, this moment crystallizes the certainty of one thing: I am irrevocably, undeniably hers.

Kate unbuttons my shirt with a swiftness that speaks to her hunger as much as mine. Clothes shed like falling leaves until we're naked and breathless, the urgency of our need palpable in the air around us. Her hands are on me and we're skin against skin, setting fire to every nerve ending in my tense body. The sight of her, flushed and

desperate for me, sends a jolt of lust through my veins.

*Source Creation Date: July 2, 2025, 6:17 am*

She straddles me with a fluid grace that belies the fervor of our movements, sinking down onto my hard cock as we both exhale loud moans. My hands grip her hips, guiding her as she rides me with a smooth rhythm that's as much primal as it is sensual.

"Fuck, Tommy..." she whines, and her blue eyes darken like storm clouds, full of raw emotion and undisguised longing.

"I'll never get enough of you, baby," I grunt, each word punctuated by the exquisite friction of her body moving against mine.

"Yours." That one statement uttered from her lips claims me as I claim her.

"Mine," I affirm, my voice rough with the effort of holding back the climax building within me, wanting this moment to stretch into eternity.

Then eternity shatters with the loud drop of a leather duffel bag, the outside world intruding on us in the most violent of ways. My best friend stands at the edge of the room, his presence like a jagged blade slicing through my chest. The shock of which strikes me speechless, my heart pounding louder than the blood roaring in my ears.

"Jesus, Geoff—" I start, but words fail me, the lewd scene of me with his daughter too damning for explanations.

"What the fuck?!" he roars, a tempest of anger and disbelief as disloyalty hangs heavy in the air.

“Dad, I—” Kate’s voice breaks, and the spell of our intimate evening shatters into a million pieces. She looks at me, panic and apology warring in her gaze, both of us knowing nothing will ever be the same again.

I carefully lift her off my still-hard dick, yanking the blanket from the back of the couch and shielding our naked bodies as we get to our feet. I guide her to stand behind me, protecting her from her father’s wrath even though I know it’s directed at me and not her.

“Katie Jane, go to your room!” His voice booms like thunder, as if she’s still the little girl who’d scamper away at his stern command.

“Don’t talk to her like that, Geoff,” I bite out, my words tinged with an edge I can’t suppress. “She’s not a kid.” He may be her father, but she’s mine, and I won’t let anyone hurt her.

“Fuck you, Tommy! I trusted you!” The accusation hammers in my ears, heavy as lead.

“Geoff, listen?—”

“No! You fucking listen! My daughter? My only daughter! How could you?” His face is twisted into a mask of disgust, a sculpture of fury and heartbreak.

“Dad, it’s not his fault. I—” Kate attempts to plead with him, but his hand slices the air, cutting her off.

“It is his fault. He seduced you, like he does all women.” His words feel like a punch in the gut even if they’re not true.

My gaze narrows as I stare back at my friend. “Now, wait a minute. Let’s just?—”

“Enough! I don’t want to hear it!”

“Damn it, Geoff. She’s a grown woman!” My voice is a roar I barely recognize as my control splinters like thin ice. “She has a right to choose who she?—”

“Who she what, Tommy? Who she fucks?”

Kate trembles behind me with quiet sobs while her father’s nostrils flare and his face flames red.

“You’re old enough to be her father!”

I inhale a deep breath, trying to remain calm. “Age doesn’t dictate feelings. What Kate and I have?—”

“Is a fucking mistake. A goddamn colossal mistake.” His voice ricochets off the walls as the word mistake echoes back at me like a condemnation.

“Maybe so,” I concede, the fight draining out of me for a moment. “But it’s ours to make.”

The air is thick with tension, but Geoff’s accusation manages to slice through it. “How could you, man?” His tone is heavy with disdain. “My own goddamn friend, taking advantage of my daughter. In my fucking house.” He shakes his head while sneering at me, and defeat settles on my shoulders.

I feel the ground shift beneath my feet, his declaration tilting my world off its axis. The bond we’ve built over more than two decades, destroyed in a matter of seconds. My chest tightens like a vise around my heart as I absorb the blow. “I’m sorry, Geoff. I should’ve?—”

“Get the fuck out of my house,” he spits, venom in every syllable. “You betrayed me, Tommy. My trust, my home... You defiled everything important to me.”

“Please, Dad, don’t do this,” Kate begs, her hands clutching at the blanket that’s the only barrier between her vulnerability and her father’s scorn.

*Source Creation Date: July 2, 2025, 6:17 am*

“Stay out of this, Katie Jane.” The disappointment in his gaze as he stares at me is unmistakable. I’ve known this man since college and he’s as stubborn as they come. Nothing we could say will change his mind, at least not tonight. Maybe not ever.

I turn to face Kate, her brilliant blue eyes now red and brimming with tears. “Honey, I?—”

“Shut up! Don’t you ever speak to her again.” Geoff’s finger jabs the space between us, a clear line drawn. “You’re dead to me, Tommy. And you’ll have nothing to do with my daughter.”

I look at my girl, each tear that rolls down her cheeks like a dagger to my heart. “I’ll find a way to fix this, Kate. I promise.” The words, however, feel like sandpaper on my tongue.

“Out. Now.” His order echoes with a note of finality that leaves no room for negotiation.

My arms demand to hold her, but I’m already stepping away, every muscle of my body screaming in protest. She’s right here next to me. At the same time, she feels like she’s miles away. Her fingers graze mine as we part, a fleeting touch before the chasm widens.

“Tommy, don’t leave me. Please.” Her chin quivers as she quietly begs me to stay. But I know if I don’t leave now, I’ll end up doing something stupid—like kicking my best friend’s ass, even though I have no right to do it.



After wrapping her in the blanket, I grab my discarded clothes from the floor and use them to shield my nakedness. The moment is awkward, but more than that, it's sad. I'm backing away from the woman I'm falling in love with, because what choice do I have? This isn't something that can be resolved tonight.

Geoff's eyes burn into me, searing a mark of treachery onto my conscience. And Kate—my beautiful, vibrant Kate—stands half-hidden, half-exposed, caught in the crossfire of love and loyalty.

I climb the stairs two at a time, rushing to the guest room to gather my things. After haphazardly throwing everything into my suitcase, I close my eyes and silently say goodbye. The front door closes with a hushed thud like a barrier between me and the happy world I was just ejected from.

As I start the car, the hum of the engine is cold comfort compared to the warmth of Kate's skin and the fire of her spirit. My grip on the steering wheel is tight and the leather creaks beneath my hands while I struggle to keep my emotions in check. I drive away, glancing at the rearview mirror reflecting the house that holds the most beautiful woman I've ever met. It's a dwindling image retreating into the distance while the road stretches before me, empty and bleak.

"Fuck," I curse under my breath, knowing I have no one to blame but myself. The man I respected, admired, called my brother... now despises me. His trust in me is gone and our lifelong bond is shattered.

6

KATE

Is it on the edge of my bed with my eyes swollen from a downpour of tears. The shitshow of my dad catching me and Tommy naked in his living room will haunt me

for the rest of my life. The cold prickle of shock and embarrassment hasn't left my skin, and it blooms afresh with each pounding heartbeat.

Should I face my dad again? Try to explain the unexplainable?

I don't know what to do, but the weight of his disappointment crushes me like a physical blow, and fear gnaws at my insides—fear of losing Tommy and fear that my dad will never accept us. My heart is splintered, shards of longing to stay and fight mingled with the strong impulse to flee.

My lungs feel heavy as I drag in a deep breath, my decision made. I rise to my feet, my movements robotic when I slip out of the room. Each step is laden with a myriad of emotions and turmoil, but I don't look back. Not even to assess the damage, not when every inch of this place screams of our betrayal. My father is wrong. This is my fault as much as it is Tommy's. Even so, I don't regret the time I had with him.

The chill of the predawn air hits me as I step outside, and I shiver, though not from the cold. It's the emptiness beside me, where Tommy should be, steadying me with a mere glance and an affectionate hand at my lower back. Now, there's just the hollow echo of my footsteps on the driveway, a one-woman procession toward exile from her father's home. Perhaps that's a bit dramatic, but that sure is what it feels like as I slink out of the house before my dad can convince me otherwise.

At the airport, the waiting is a slow torture. I huddle in my seat, phone clutched like a lifeline in my hand as I stare at a glaringly bare screen. No messages, no calls. No sign that Tommy is even thinking of me, or missing me, or wanting to bridge the distance. Hope frays a little more with each passing second, unraveling into the void he left behind.

My thumb hovers, tempted to send yet another text, but I resist. Tommy Sinclair doesn't chase; he's pursued. He's a billionaire, for heaven's sake, and he's used to

beautiful women throwing themselves at him. And yet, I desperately want to believe that I've somehow rattled him. That beneath his controlled, polished exterior, there's a tumult raging as fierce as mine. The silence is deafening and relentless as each tick of the clock is a reminder of the widening gulf between us.

My seat belt clicks into place, trapping me in a plane soaring toward New York, a city that now feels colder and darker than it did before. The hum of the engines vibrates through my body, resonating with the storm swirling inside me. I close my eyes and sink into my seat as images of the last few days play on repeat in my head. His deep, warm laughter. Flirty glances and seductive touches. Explosive orgasms that made me shatter apart in his muscular arms. Tommy made me feel alive in ways I never knew I was craving.

Now, he's gone, and I've never felt so lost.

"Would you care for a drink, ma'am?" The flight attendant's question pulls me from my thoughts.

"Just water, please," I mutter, barely able to hold back more tears.

The ride home is a jolt to reality, and the city lights twinkle mockingly as we cruise through the busy streets. They used to be stars beckoning me to new adventures; now they're just distant, uncaring points of luminescence. I unlock my apartment door, and it creaks open to reveal the life I left behind, a life that feels hollow and less vibrant.

"Welcome home, Kate," I whisper to myself, sarcasm lacing my tone.

I drop my bags at the door. My reflection in the hallway mirror is a ghost of the confident woman who once believed she could conquer anything, claim the world as her own alongside a man who could move the heavens with a nod of his head.

Collapsing fully dressed onto my bed with a heavy thud, I bury my face into the sheets. My lavender-scented laundry detergent fails to soothe me as the brand claims it should. It's here, in the dark of my room while I stare at the ceiling, that the dam breaks again. Tears pour down my cheeks, hot and relentless, each sob a release of the weight I've carried from Chicago to New York—shame, disapproval, fear. And the ache for a man who hasn't returned my calls or texts.

No, he never said he loved me, but surely, I didn't mistake his feelings. Did I?

## Page 15

*Source Creation Date: July 2, 2025, 6:17 am*

The tears continue until there's nothing left, until my eyes are dry and my heart begins to harden with anger. I draw in a shaky breath, curling into a ball on top of my comforter. "Damn you, Tommy Sinclair," I choke out between sobs. "For making me love you, then leaving me behind."

Sunlight filters into my bedroom, and my puffy eyelids flutter open. A single glance at the empty space beside me is a punch to the gut, as Tommy's absence is a tangible void in the cool morning air. I reach for my phone with a sliver of hope, my heart stuttering when the screen lights up to reveal his name. It's a message, one I've been craving since that horrid night, since our blissful world came crashing down around us.

I press his name on my phone, and the words of his voicemail cut through the fog of my sleep-deprived brain. "I'm sorry, Kate. This was my fuckup. If I could fix it, I would. Please believe me."

His voice holds a familiar warmth, and I imagine his furrowed brow with a shadow of regret in his intense brown eyes. My trembling thumb hovers over the keyboard while I take a slow breath, steadying my resolve before tapping out my reply.

Can we talk? Face to face?

After hitting send, I clutch the phone to my chest like a lifeline, waiting for it to vibrate with his response. There's nothing, and my heart breaks a little more.

As the day drags on, and I shuffle aimlessly around my apartment, the silence from him weighs heavy on my shoulders. I busy myself with menial tasks. Straightening

my bookshelf, cleaning my kitchen, rearranging pillows that don't need rearranging. Anything to keep my mind off the empty chat bubble that haunts my screen.

By evening, the apartment is immaculate, and I'm anything but. My mind is a wreck, circling back to Tommy with every turn.

What is he doing? Why hasn't he replied?

Then, finally, the phone rings, jolting me from my misery, and my pulse spikes with an erratic rhythm. I swipe to answer, pressing the cold device against my ear. "Tommy?" My voice cracks with emotion, laced with longing and trepidation.

"Kate." Hearing his rich baritone causes goose bumps to appear on my arms. "I've been thinking... Maybe we should?—"

"Can't we just figure it out?" I interrupt him, my knuckles turning white as I clutch the phone.

There's a sigh on the other end, a sound that seems to echo through the empty space of my apartment. "I think we need some time apart. Let things cool off a bit."

Those dreaded words fill my stomach with acid, and my heart plummets, while I feel like I've been cut to my very core. The room stands still, the ground beneath me feeling shaky as I plop onto the couch.

"You can't mean that," I protest as tears well in my eyes for the umpteenth time in the last forty-eight hours. "I never meant for any of this to happen, but I can't pretend these feelings aren't real."

No, this isn't how our story ends. Not with whispered apologies and a line gone dead. I won't accept it. I just can't.

As the quiet stretches on, my resolve shatters. I don't know what else to say.

"I wish things could've?—"

"I love you, Tommy," I profess before abruptly ending the call. If he doesn't feel the same, I don't want to hear it. The sting of his rejection is already painful enough.

I draw in ragged breaths, each one a mix of anger and sorrow as a fresh wave of tears spill down my face. I was foolish to think a man like him would fight for me, to think what we had was real, despite how fast it all seemed to happen. It was reckless, impulsive, and stupid.

And I won't make that same mistake again.

7

TOMMY

She loves me. Kate loves me.

The weight of her words crushes me, a relentless pressure against my ribs as I sit at my desk. Her confession, defeated and unguarded, echoes in the hollows of my office, bouncing off the cold glass walls with a taunting persistence.

I rake a hand through my hair for the hundredth time this morning, the salt and pepper strands a testament to the years that separate us, to the barriers that should exist but I won't allow. My heart is a traitor and beats only for her. I'm torn between my bond with my oldest friend and the love I feel for his incredible daughter.

I want to let her go. I should. I need to.

I can't.

I can't live without her now that I've experienced real happiness for the first time. Life is sweeter when she's with me and I'd be a damn fool to give that up.

I stand, a decisive motion that scatters papers from my desk. They flutter to the ground like the remnants of my restraint, but I refuse to wait another minute. I love my friend, but I love Katemore. And I'll make him see that no one could ever be a better man for his daughter than I am.



## Page 16

*Source Creation Date: July 2, 2025, 6:18 am*

I grab my keys and my wallet, then rush to my car. On the way, I dial my assistant to help me with my newly formed plan.

“Hi, Mr. Sinclair. You sure left in a hurry.” Nadine chuckles nervously. “Did I miss an appointment on your calendar?”

“Cancel all my meetings for the rest of the day.”

“But it’s not even eight thirty yet. You have a full schedule,” she protests.

“I’m sorry, Nadine, but I don’t have a lot of time. I need you to book me on the next flight to Chicago. I don’t care what airline or what seat you put me in, just get me on a damn plane. Book a private flight if you have to. I need to get there as soon as possible.”

“Oh! Okay, um... I’ll make it happen, sir.” Her tone lacks confidence but she’s never failed me. That’s why she’s been my assistant for the past four years.

“I’m counting on you, Nadine. This is important. And have a private flight on standby ready to bring me back to New York this afternoon.”

“This afternoon?” she questions, but I’ve no time to explain.

“If you can make this happen for me, I promise to buy you that Hermes bag you’ve been looking at for months.”

“How did you?—”

“I’m the CEO. I know everything.” Not true. I actually overheard her talking about it with some of the other women in the break room. I make a point to listen to the people around me, and that’s how I’m able to give the best gifts. “I’m headed to the airport. Just send all the details to my phone. See you when I get back.” I end the call and speed to LaGuardia, breaking about fifty traffic laws on the way. I’ll gladly pay for a million tickets if that’s what I have to do to get Kate back.

Landing in New York hits me like a punch to the gut, but it’s all for her. Everything is for her. I half-jog through the private airport with a single-minded focus as images of her smile and the sound of her laugh echo in my mind.

Nadine went above and beyond and had a huge bouquet of flowers waiting for me as soon as I returned. I think that warrants me buying her a wallet to go with her new bag, because she’s a damn good assistant, and I don’t mind rewarding her. The drive home is a blur, and before I know it, I’m under the steaming-hot spray of the shower in my penthouse, washing away the last six hours I’ve spent on two different planes, travelling between two cities.

Dressed sharply in a charcoal suit that fits my muscular body just right, I scrutinize the man staring back at me in the mirror. Is he worthy of her?

He fucking better be, because I can’t afford to fuck this up.

I grab the keys to my Audi R8 and slip out the door with anticipation zinging through me like electricity. When I arrive at Kate’s building, I sign in at the main desk, and the receptionist directs me to the sixteenth floor. The elevator dings and my heart stutters when I step into the sleek lobby of CyberTech Communications. Her colleagues’ heads turn as I move, their whispers sparking into a wave of murmurs. They’re either gossiping about my face or the giant bundle of white roses I’m carrying. Either way, let them talk. It’s not the first time people have gossiped about me and I’m definitely about to give them something good to talk about.

There's a large, frosted-glass desk straight ahead and a well-dressed older woman stands as I approach. "Thomas Sinclair to see Kate Roush," I announce, my voice steady and confident.

"Thomas Sinclair..." She repeats my name, mulling it over as she tries to place where she's heard it before. Then her eyes go as wide as dinner plates. "Thomas Sinclair of Quantum Investments?"

I give her a debonair smile. "That'd be me."

"Oh! Well, alright then." She clutches her pearls while gathering her composure. "One moment, please."

It takes all I have to remain rooted in place and not dart past her to find Kate myself. The old dear doesn't keep me waiting long, though, and quickly escorts me to the woman I'm looking for.

She keeps glancing back at me as I follow behind her through the maze of cubicles surrounded by several glass offices along the walls. I give her a wink, and I swear she blushes before turning back around with an extra sway to her hips. She's a charming older woman, I'm sure, but no one exists for me other than Kate.

After walking through several corridors, we come to a quieter area of the massive office space, and I finally see my girl. There she is, sitting in the midst of her domain, her fingers flying across her keyboard as she stares at three computer screens.

"Hi, Kate. You have a special visitor," my escort announces.

"Thanks, Martha. Who is it?" Kate chuckles, as my face is hidden by the four dozen flowers I'm holding.

“I think I’ll let you find out for yourself,” Martha muses before pivoting on her sensible heels and heading back to her desk.

Kate peeks around the massive bouquet, and shock contorts the features of her pretty face.

“Hi, honey,” I begin, my voice filling the space between us before we’re interrupted by several of her coworkers whispering across their cubicles.

“Who’s the hottie in the suit?”

“Shush! I can’t hear them!”

*Source Creation Date: July 2, 2025, 6:18 am*

“What did he say?”

Kate rolls her eyes, then turns back to me. “Oh my God! Tommy! What happened to you?” She pushes the flowers aside to get a better look at me.

“Your dad happened.” I laugh, still feeling the sting of the punch my best friend delivered to my face only a few hours ago.

“What?” she exclaims, taking the roses from my hands and setting them on her chair. “When did you see my dad?”

“We had a nice little chat earlier today, and I got to find out firsthand that his job is still as good as it ever was.”

Kate brings her warm palms to my cheeks, and I close my eyes, leaning into her touch. She tilts my chin to the left then the right, while she examines my new black eye. It hurt like a bitch, but I’d take the hit again if it got my friend to speak to me and begrudgingly forgive me.

“Earlier today? You went back to Chicago?” Her brow wrinkles and her gaze narrows.

“I had to talk to him. This whole thing has been eating me alive since the moment he walked in on us.”

Her smooth cheeks turn a subtle shade of red as she remembers our last night together. “So he hit you? My dad? Geoff Roush?” She acts as if we’re discussing a

stranger.

“Yes, honey. Your dad. The man owns a construction company, Kate. I assure you he knows how to handle himself. He’s only a teddy bear to you.”

She snorts a laugh, imagining her father as a human-size plush toy. “I’m confused.” She shakes her head. “You flew all the way out there just to turn around and come right back. Why?”

“For you. For us.” I desperately want to pull her hips to mine, but I can tell she’s not ready for me to touch her yet, as she stands with her arms crossed over her ample chest. “Some things are better said in person, wouldn’t you agree?”

“Hmph.” A noncommittal sound is all she gives me, so I continue.

“I had to apologize in person. He’s my best friend and he deserves that much. I know I should have told him about us from the beginning, but honestly, I never planned for it to go any further.”

“I see.” Her response is clipped, a stark contrast to her usual melodic tone.

“I couldn’t stay away. I’ve wanted you since the moment I laid eyes on you.”

Her features soften and I think I’m getting through to her. That is, until we’re reminded we have an audience.

“She should make him beg,” one of the women hisses.

“Quiet, Doreen. I can’t hear.”

“I’ll take him if she doesn’t want him?”

“Is he who I think he is?”

Kate huffs, and I know I better move fast before she kicks me out of her office so everyone can get back to work.

“I love you,” I blurt out, and her eyes widen again. “You walked into my life with your fire and brilliance, and I knew I had to have you. That one taste in Miami was not enough.”

Someone whispers, “What happened in Miami?”

“Hush, girl. I’ll tell you later,” someone else answers.

Kate rises on her tiptoes and looks at them over the low cubicle walls. “Can you let the man finish without your commentary, please?” she scolds, and I stifle my laugh.

“I love you, Kate. I love the way you challenge me, the way you care so fiercely about everything and everyone. You’re funny, and smart, and kind, and so fucking sexy I can’t stand it. Please forgive me,” I beg as I hold her gaze.

Tears well in her blue eyes and it feels like a stab in the chest, knowing I’m the one who put them there. “But you said?—”

“I was only trying to do the right thing. I swear.” I reach for her hands and she places her palms in mine. “I’ll do anything for your forgiveness, baby. I never meant to hurt you or make you think I didn’t want you.” Then I drop to my knees, earning myself a collective gasp from her coworkers. Guess they’ve never seen a man grovel before. “I promise to spend every day proving that you are my beginning and end. My reason for everything. You’re the love of my life, Kate.”

The silence is deafening and the tension in the room is palpable as we all hold our

breaths and wait for her response. Her face is passive, and fear begins to creep in as I worry I've ruined all chances with her. Then she's moving, crashing into me in a flurry of blond hair and soft curves. Her arms wrap around my neck, and our lips meet in a kiss that seals promises and mends the fractures of my once-guarded heart.



## Page 18

*Source Creation Date: July 2, 2025, 6:18 am*

Cheers erupt around us, and the sound of Kate's angelic laugh fills my ears and warms my heart. "I love you too." Her absolution is sweeter than any victory I've ever known.

I surge to my feet, taking her with me and cradling her body against mine as I swing her around. A few tears roll down her face, but her smile is big enough to see from across the room. It matches mine, and I feel like the luckiest man in the world to be with this woman.

Everything else fades into the background as I set her on her feet. "Think you can cut out a little early today? I need to properly make this up to you."

"Take her!" someone yells, and we all share a laugh.

I lean in so only Kate can hear me. "Oh, I'm gonna take you, alright. Daddy's missed you, baby." I can feel her cheek heat as it's pressed to mine while I tug her earlobe between my teeth. "Shall we give them a finale?" I tease before leaning back to see her face.

"You mean... something like this?"

There she is. There's the sassy girl who makes my heart skip a few beats. Then Kate lifts her hands to the sides of my face and pulls me down to hit me with a soul-shattering kiss.

Mocking kissing sounds mix with whoops and claps from the office ladies, forcing us to part with a laugh.

“Grab your stuff, baby. I’m taking you home.”

## EPILOGUE

KATE

Two Years Later

Stepping out of Table Bruno Verjus with Tommy’s hand in mine, I feel a wave of contentment wash over me. The warm Parisian night embraces us, carrying the intoxicating scent of blooming flowers and the sound of distant laughter. As we walk toward our waiting car, my mind wanders back to the exquisite meal we just shared.

“I know you don’t believe me, but I swear that man was flirting with you,” Tommy grumbles beside me, and I playfully swat his bicep.

“No one was flirting with me. Chef Bruno just wanted to introduce himself. He was charming. And the dishes he prepared for us were heavenly.” I remember how the chef had described his latest creation, his passion for food evident in every gesture. The exclusive menu he crafted for us was divine, and I felt honored that he’d visit our table.

“I can admit the food was amazing. I’m glad you enjoyed it, baby.”

Our driver holds the door open for us while Tommy helps me slide into the back seat, then follows behind me. He tugs me into his side, wrapping a comforting arm around my shoulders as we ride through the illuminated streets of Paris, the city lights casting a magical reflection off the Seine. My eyes trace the enchanting cityscape, taking in the beauty around us. I believe Audrey Hepburn said it best in the movie *Sabrina*: Paris is always a good idea.

As we settle into companionable tranquility, I find myself lost in thought, reflecting on the past couple of years with the man at my side. What started off as a secret dalliance grew into a true romance filled with love and adoration. Despite the challenges we faced early on, our connection has proven to be more powerful than any obstacle thrown our way, even stronger than an angry father who socked my forty-nine-year-old boyfriend in the face.

Tommy's warm fingers intertwine with mine, drawing me back to the present moment. The unspoken affection is tangible, and I feel the weight of our shared history grounding me before the car comes to a gentle stop in front of my favorite place, the Eiffel Tower. The iconic structure looms above us, its lights twinkling like stars against the night sky. Call me cliché, but I'm in awe every time I see it.

"Look at that view," Tommy says, his voice filled with wonder. "It never gets old, does it, honey?"

I shake my head, my eyes locked on the mesmerizing sight before us.

We exit the car and make our way to Madame Brasserie for dessert, a leisurely end to our fine-dining experience. The bustling restaurant exudes a magical ambiance that can only be captured inside the Eiffel Tower. We settle into a cozy table by the window, gazing into the night at our majestic view.

"Remember the first time we came here?" Tommy asks, a fond smile spreading across his face.

"You couldn't stop talking about how amazing the chocolate soufflé was." I laugh at the memories of him going on about it for weeks after we'd returned home.

"And you couldn't get enough of the crème brûlée."

“I think we can agree that both desserts were equally delicious.”

“You’re right, honey. You’re always right.” He shoots me a wink as he reaches for my hand on the table and lifts the back of it to his lips.

We place our order and enjoy our digestifs, soaking in the extravagance of our surroundings. After a short while, the waiter arrives with our desserts, a traditional tarte tatin and a pillowy tower of chocolate-covered cream puffs. We dig in, savoring each bite and barely containing our gratified moans. It’s in these moments that I’m thankful I have a partner who enjoys food just as much as I do.

“Did I tell you how beautiful you look tonight?” Tommy asks, his gaze intense and sincere.

“Maybe once or twice,” I tease before taking another sip of my Sauternes. “I don’t mind hearing it again, though.”

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He looks into my eyes, caressing my hand in his warm palm. “You’re breathtaking, Kate. Every day, I fall more in love with you.”

My heart swells with devotion for this man, who has shown me time and time again how much he truly desires me.

We savor the rest of our desserts and finish our drinks before leaving the Madame Brasserie behind. Stepping out into the cool night air, I steal one more look at the historic twinkling tower casting a romantic glow around us. The evening is perfect, and I’m thankful I get to share it with Tommy.

Then, he turns to me and halts our casual stroll, his expression shifting from relaxed to serious. The gravity of the moment hangs heavy in the air as he reaches into his pocket, pulling out a small velvet box. Then he drops to one knee, his gaze never leaving mine, and my eyes well with tears.

“Kate,” he begins, his voice steady but filled with emotion. “These past two years have been the most incredible journey of my life. You’ve challenged me, inspired me, and brought more joy into my world than I ever thought possible.”

My pulse quickens and my heart threatens to beat out of my chest.

“Every day I spend with you is a gift, and I can’t imagine going through life without you by my side. I want to be your rock, your partner, your confidant—everything you need and more.” He pauses, taking a deep breath before continuing. “Kate Roush, will you marry me?”

My tears spill over my lashes as the reality of what's happening sinks in. The culmination of our short time together, the promise of our future, all wrapped up in this single, life-changing moment.

"Yes, Tommy. A thousand times yes," I choke out between sobs of happiness as a boyish grin sweeps across his handsome face, and he slides the three-stone, princess-cut engagement ring onto my finger. I barely have a chance to look at it before he shoots to his feet and crushes his lips to mine, making this the most incredible night of my life. "I love you more than words can express," I whisper into his ear with a trembling voice.

He pulls back, his eyes glistening with unshed tears. "I can't wait to start my future with you."

Joy and elation swirl inside me like a kaleidoscope, lighting me up from the inside out. It's not just about the ring or the promise it represents; it's about the unwavering love and commitment that will carry us through the rest of our lives.

Our lips meet again in a tender kiss, one that speaks volumes about the depth of the passion that burns between us. As we continue to stroll hand in hand along the quiet streets, I know with absolute certainty that this is just the beginning for us. Our journey has been filled with a few twists and turns, but it's led us here, to this unforgettable moment.

I can't wait to see what the next chapter of our lives holds.