



Recklessly In Love With A Ruthless Savage

Author: *Bella Grace*

Category: Erotic, Romance

Description: Nova Travers built walls to survive. As a single mother and the Director of Nursing at a crumbling facility, she wasn't looking for love. She was looking for safety, survival, and a sliver of peace in a world that had taken too much from her. Love was a luxury she couldn't afford. They say love conquers all. They never said what it destroys in the process.

Nova's life revolved around long shifts, whispered fears, and protecting her daughter from the ghosts that refused to stay buried. But Nova has a secret that could destroy them both and enemies lurking in the shadows who'd stop at nothing to drag her back into the life she fought to escape. In a city ruled by power and money, love isn't given. It's taken. In Timberline, power isn't clean. Bloodlines are everything. And love? Love is a war zone.

Then one reckless night with Crew Sanderson, a dangerously charming stranger at a corporate gala shatters everything she thought she knew about herself. Crew Sanderson stepped into her world like a storm wrapped in a tailored suit. A man who doesn't ask permission, who doesn't know how to lose. Rich, ruthless, and carrying secrets darker than the scars on his skin, Crew isn't just dangerous. He's inevitable, not just a man. He was a force of nature, hellbent on claiming Nova and her daughter.

Her moment of surrender leads to a collision of worlds neither of them are ready for. Nova thought running would save her. She didn't realize Crew Sanderson was the kind of man who would burn cities to the ground to keep what's his.

Total Pages (Source): 37

CHAPTER 1

Nova Travers

Our Valentine's gala was coming up this weekend, and I couldn't wait. It was one of the only things that our company did for us that was enjoyable throughout the year. This will be my first time attending since I haven't been with the company that long. I was also excited about the mini vacay I planned for my daughter Timberly and I the next day. We were both in need of a break from our hectic schedules.

She has been such a good sport with everything that has been going on in our lives and I just wanted to show my appreciation. Other than my career, my six-year-old daughter was the only thing that I love and that loves me back. With the hours spent here and studying, quality time has been limited. Especially since joining the management team here at Timberline Springs Nursing and Rehabilitation Center. Lately, she'd been spending more time with the babysitter than me. My baby never complained but I knew it bothered her that I was not around as much anymore. But if I could help it, that would change soon.

Things had gotten so bad at work that I'd started hiding out in my office during the day, only venturing out for meetings or emergencies. I'd been in my position as the director of nursing for about eight months and my nerves were shot. Running a nursing home was like running a fucking high school. We rarely got top quality staff and when we did, lack of funding and resources ran them off. I came into this building with minimal expectations. I knew when I started that I wasn't gonna be able to reinvent the wheel, only keep the building afloat.

Even still I started this job with the best of intentions. But like my grandmother always said, the road to hell was paved with good intentions. This facility was the bottom of the barrel when it came to post-acute care and rehabilitation services, but I was trying to make it better. Because of Covid, we hadn't had a survey in several years so I knew that when the state finally showed up, it would only be the grace of God that kept these doors open. I leaned back in my chair, looking up at the ceiling, wondering why I'd even taken this job. My stress levels were through the roof and the pay, although good, wasn't worth the bullshit I'd been subjected to on a daily basis. I needed to make a change in my life, and it needed to be sooner rather than later.

"Nova, are you ready for tonight?" Tyra, my unit manager, asked, poking her head into my office.

I really thought I locked that door.

"Yeah. I bought a cute gown and some heels online from Neiman Marcus. I got my nails done yesterday. I think I'm gonna get Candy to press my hair. I want to wear it out. How about you?"

"Yeah, I already got my wig for my appointment with Candy. We still headed there after work today, right?"

"Yeah, Ms. Leona is picking Timberly up from school and getting her things packed for our trip. We're headed to Cedar Springs tomorrow morning. Timberly asked to go skiing on our trip."

"Awww, you're such a good mom. I wish my mom would have let me experience new things like skiing and snowboarding when I was a kid. All we ever did on vacation was get dropped off at my grandparents' house."

You know you and DJ are welcome to go,” I told her, meaning it. Tyra was not only my employee, but she was my only friend here in town. Her and her son DJ had become family to me and Timberly since we moved here two and a half years ago.

“You sure? I don’t want to interrupt your time with Timber, " she said.

“You’re not and it will give her someone to play with when she gets bored with hanging out with me.”

“Okay, it's settled. I'll have my mom get DJ packed and ready so we can all get on the road on Saturday morning.” She grinned. We finished our day and headed to get to our hair appointment. The shop was empty of clients but us and I was pleased after spending all day in a busy nursing home. I didn't want to interact with anyone for a few hours. When we entered the salon, Candy, our stylist, offered us wine and snacks while we got started.

I loved it here.

Candy’s shop was always a vibe, and she made sure to cater to her clients. I got my long curls pressed and trimmed. It was bone straight with a middle part stopping in the middle of my back. I loved to wear my hair out but rarely got the chance. It gave me a sophisticated look.

With our hair styled we headed to my house to get showered and dressed. After applying some light makeup to my face, I was ready.

I looked damn good if I say so myself.

The one shoulder, cut out gown I wore clung to my curves like a second skin. The slit exposed just enough hip to be sexy but still classy.

A pair of gold strappy Roberto Cavalli heels had my ass looking plump. I paired my outfit with gold accessories and a gold clutch Tyra got me for my birthday last year. I stepped out of my bedroom and went down the hallway to check on Tyra. I found her in my guestroom putting finishing touches on her makeup. Tyra wore a short black cocktail dress and the same heels as mine but in black. Her accessories were red and matched the ends of her black and red ombre, shoulder length bob.

My girl looked good. Tyra was taller than me by two inches at five feet six inches, but she is just as thick as me at a size sixteen. She has light brown skin that shined from the body oil she applied to it after her shower. We were about to shut shit down at the Gala.

“I think we should take an Uber, just in case we get tipsy. It’s a work event but you never know. I heard it was crazy last year,” Tyra suggested.

“That’s fine. Go ahead and order it while I check on Timberly.” Taking my phone out of my clutch, I dialed Ms. Leona’s number. It rang twice before Timberly’s little voice came through the phone.

“Hi, mommy,” my baby sang into the phone.

“Hi, baby. Are you excited about tomorrow?”

“Yes, ma’am. Lee Lee showed me skiing videos on YouTube. Will you be here when I wake up mommy?”

“Yes, baby. I’ll be there to pick you up. Guess what?”

“What?”

Page 2

Source Creation Date: July 1, 2025, 9:39 am

“DJ and Tyra are coming?”

“Really, yay. Me and DJ can play Roblox in the car and Auntie Tyra can braid my hair for me like she promised,” she cooed.

“I’ll remind her, baby. I have a work event to go to and then we’ll be over to get you. Love you, Timber.”

“Love you too, mommy, ” she said before hanging up.

The party was in full swing when we walked in the door. 30 for 30 was playing through the speakers as coworkers and corporate employees mingled and danced with drinks in their hands. We laughed as we saw my administrator and general manager grinding on each other in the corner. There has been a rumor that they were seeing each other for a while. Based on the absence of corporate wives, I could tell what type of party this was going to turn into.

We walked over to the bar and ordered a few drinks to get our night started. I’m usually not a big drinker but the need to get my vacation started was taking priority. The venue where they were hosting the party was top tier. We were sitting in the ballroom of a posh country club and the decor they picked looked like it came straight out of a magazine. All reds, creams, golds and luxury. Pink hearts and red roses decorated the large room signifying love and valentines. The drinks were flowing, and the music was blasting as we joined in with our co-workers in the corner and vibed.

“I’m going to the bar for another drink,” I told Tyra as she continued to dance with

the respiratory therapist from our sister facility.

As I made my way to the bar, my heel got caught in the carpet causing me to topple over. I braced myself as the floor came barreling toward me. But the impact never came. A pair of large muscular arms stopped my impending face plant before I embarrassed myself in front of the whole hall. Thick arms cradled my body in a warm comforting embrace. His large body casted a shadow over me.

“Are you alright?” My savior asked, as he helped me to my feet.

I turned in his arms and my breath caught in my throat. I shook my head, not quite able to find my words. But then I did.

“I-I um, I’m fine; thank you,” I said, stumbling over my words.

The man in front of me was beautiful. Everything around us disappeared as I stared, lost in his stormy gray eyes.

“No problem, Princess,” he said, his eyes gazing at my lips before coming back to my face.

The timbre of his voice was low and commanding but somehow gentle, sending vibrations between my thighs. I attempted to back out of his hold but his arm around my waist and his hand on my back kept me locked in place.

“Come have a drink with me,” he said.

I wasn’t sure if that was a request or a demand but the way his presence commanded obedience I was inclined to agree.

An involuntary shiver went through me as he pinned me with his dark heavy gaze.

“Sure. I was headed that way actually,” I said, finally finding my voice.

He smirked at me before guiding me over to the bar. He helped me into a stool, finally removing his hand from my back. I missed the warmth of his touch almost immediately, but just as quickly shook off the feeling. He looked and smelled so good as he sat next to me. He was dressed in a black-on-black Kiton suit that had been tailored to fit his muscular body just right. His smile was bright encased in thick suckable lips. Thick brown curls tapered and lined to perfection. His dark skin was smooth and looked like he had a stellar skin care routine. He smelled like a mixture of cedar, citrus and cardamom. I wanted to breathe him in. I could almost feel my body moving, leaning into him involuntarily.

“What can I get you?” the bartender asked, distracting us from our stare off.

“Whiskey,” my hero said, with that same deep baritone voice.

“A lemon drop,” I ordered.

Bitch, get yourself together. Nigga got me weak in the knees.

“Thank you again for saving me from a lifetime of embarrassment in front of my coworkers,” I said.

“Crew. Nice to meet you.” Not even acknowledging the fact that he saved me from injuring myself.

“Are you an employee or a guest?” I asked him, trying to find out a little more about my savior.

“A little bit of both,” he said with an air of mystery.

“What about you?”

“I'm the director of nursing at Timberline.”

“Is that right? Are you here with anyone?” He asked, changing the subject from work to personal.

Page 3

Source Creation Date: July 1, 2025, 9:39 am

“I’m here with a friend. A female friend,” I added.

I’m not sure why I wanted him to know that I wasn’t here with another man, but I did. I wanted to make it clear that I was available. Our drinks arrived and I took a healthy gulp to get my nerves under control. I was usually a very confident and relaxed woman but the man in front of me gave me butterflies in the pit of my stomach. Something that hadn’t happened in a long time.

“Are you here with anyone tonight?” I asked him, curious to know if such a fine man was here alone.

“No,” he said, his eyes roaming my body as he drank his whiskey.

I don’t know if it was the fact I haven’t had sex in years or if it is just the effect Crew was having on me, but every inch of me was craving him. Our conversation flowed as we drank, laughed and stole glances at one another. I found myself touching him any time he said something to make me laugh, and he didn’t seem to mind. Our chemistry was insane and the need to run my hands all over this man increased with each lemon drop I consumed.

I tried to remember I was at a work event, and this wasn’t the place to get totally loose, even though it seemed no one else got that memo, considering all the grinding and twerking that was going on in here. Not to mention the DJ for the night was killing it. He was playing straight bangers. When Fuckin Wit Meby Tank came on I closed my eyes and started swaying in my seat to the music. The lyrics were going straight to my clit as I imagined Crew’s hands all over me while Tank serenaded us.

“You got it all on my face, I love the way that it tastes. When you put it all on my plate. Won’t go to waste. That’s what you git every day when you fucking with me,”Crew sang next to my ear, making my eyes snap open.

It wasn’t just the words that had my pussy wet and throbbing, it was his voice that sent shivers down my back. Not only was he sexy as hell but he could sing. Damn I wondered what other secret talents he had.

“Come dance with me, " he commanded as the song ended. Not giving me room to decline his invitation to dance, he lifted me from my stool, pressing me back into his hard body. He towered over me at least a foot taller in comparison to my short frame. The atmosphere of the gala wasn’t helping as Say Yesby Floetry became the soundtrack to my thoughts. He pulled me onto the dance floor, and we danced like we were the only people in the room as our bodies intertwined. Crew’s hands drifted from my lower back to my ass. Heating my body with each and every tantalizing touch.

I almost jumped out of my skin the moment I felt his hard dick pressed against my stomach.

What the fuck?

This man was walking around with a loaded weapon in his pants. The sexier the lyrics got the more we got caught up in each other until our bodies weren’t the only thing pressed together. Before I could stop myself our lips were locked in a war of dominance, that I would gladly let him win if he could. I loved being dominated but only by a worthy opponent.

He ran his tongue against the crease of my lips before I opened up accepting him willingly. A moan escaped me as he explored its depths with his tongue. The deeper the kiss became the more he squeezed my ass and pressed his dick into me. He broke

our kiss and latched onto my neck, nipping me with his teeth and sending shivers down my spine. I pulled away when I felt the warmth of his tongue against my pulse point.

“Let’s go,” he breathed out, voice deep and thick with lust.

“I can’t. I’m here with a friend,” I said, panting.

“You can and you will. Now let’s go,” he said, as he pulled me behind him out of the venue. Tyra and the Gala going on behind us became a distant memory as we exited the venue. Outside was a large black on black SUV with a driver standing outside the back door. As we approached the driver opened the door for me as Crew helped me inside. As soon as the door closed, his hands were all over me. My dress was over my head before my ass hit the soft leather of the back seat, putting my red lacy bra and panty set and my heels on display.

“Fuck you’re so beautiful,” Crew said as he ran his hand across the skin of my chest and stomach. His fingers dug into my hip as he pulled me onto his lap to take my lips into a bruising kiss. He was rough yet gentle as my core rocked back and forth against the massive print in his pants. I pulled back, wanting to see him out of his clothes as well.

“Take this off, ” I told him, pointing to his jacket. I helped him remove his suit jacket, vest and then his black shirt revealing dark skin covered in beautiful artwork. His tattoos ran over his chest and arms and up his neck, he was truly breathtaking. I sat back and removed my bra letting my heavy breasts fall free. He took one in his hand and ran the tip of his tongue over my nipple. I threw my head back and sucked in a breath as his teeth sank softly into the sensitive skin. Wetnesspooled between my thighs soaking the thin material that barely covered my pussy.

“I want to taste you, ” he said, letting my nipple go.

“Please,” I begged. I had never wanted something so much in my life. I had been dying to feel his thick lips on my clit since he first smiled at me.

He gripped me under my thighs and pulled me further up his body as he leaned back on the seat. He ripped the lacy material of my panties off me before he sat me on his face. I nearly fell apart when I felt his thick wet tongue lick between my folds. Raising my hands above my head I braced them on the ceiling as I rolled my hips onto his tongue.

“You taste so sweet, ” he mumbled into my pussy. He was devouring my center as I wet his mouth and beard with my juices. His nose rubbed over my clit as he pushed his tongue into me over and over.

“Oh my god, ” I screamed, reaching down, and tangling my fingers in his curls tightly. Removing his tongue from my pussy, he latched onto my clit and sucked hard before inserting a finger into me at the same time. The sensation was too much as he buried his face between my legs, making me shake and moan above him, forcing me right to the edge before releasing me and pushing me back onto his chest.

“Fuck, why did you stop?” I screeched, I was right there. I was right on the edge of my orgasm.

“I want you to cum on my dick not my tongue. I want to feel your pussy grip me like you’re doing my finger,” he said as he removed it from my pussy leaving me empty.

“Stop teasing me. I need you to fuck me,” I said, eyes half lidded, the alcohol I had consumed making me a little bolder. No more words were spoken. I watched him unfasten his belt buckle and unzip his slacks. He pulled them down with his briefs, just enough for his dick to spring out. When he saw the look of amazement on my face he smiled before bringing his lips to mine and allowing me to taste myself on him. He gripped a handful of my hair and tugged my head back making me gasp.

“I want you on your knees, face down. Do you understand me?” He instructed me.

“Yes, Sir,” I said, obeying and getting into position. I was so lost in this. I knew what I was doing was wrong, but I didn’t give a fuck. I hadn’t been with a man in years and this man was giving off the type of big dick energy that made you want to risk it all. I climbed off of him, getting onto my hands and knees, and lifted my ass high in the air with my chest pressed to the seat. I could feel Crew positioning himself behind me, his belt buckle clanking and dropping to the floor. The feel of his large rough hands running over the skin of my ass was amazing.

He used them to spread my cheeks. Cool air made the damp flesh between my thighs tingle. My pussy throbbed in anticipation for what was to come. I heard the tearing of a condom wrapper and thanked god that one of us was thinking about our safety. Right after I felt the head of his dick at my entrance. He pushed in and I gasped from the intense stretch and burn. Fuck, he was so big. It felt like he was ripping me apart.

“Fffuuk, relax Princess. Let me in,” he groaned, rubbing one large hand down my back as he used the other to hold me in place. A sheen of sweat covered my body as I did my best to relax and accept his girth. He was not only thick but long and right now I was desperately trying to be a big girl and take all of him. He pulled back and pushed back in making me take more of his length. His arm went around my waist where he found my clit and applied pressure making my hips buck against him and helping me relax more. As soon as my body responded and opened up to accept him, he thrust forward, giving me every inch of his dick, causing his balls to slap against my clit and snatch the breath out of me.

Page 4

Source Creation Date: July 1, 2025, 9:39 am

He hissed against my ear before rocking into me deep and hard, replacing the pain I originally felt with overwhelming pleasure. Before I knew it I was clawing at the leather of the seat and screaming his name. He released my clit to grip my hips and drilled into me from the back. The pleasure was so sweet mixed with a slight hint of pain each time he bottomed out inside me.

“You're so tight and warm, he growled as he fucked me senseless in the back seat of his SUV. I prayed no one was outside other than the driver running interference because they would definitely hear my screams and his moans. Our skin slapping echoed through the cabin of the SUV as he pounded me into the leather. Drool ran out of my mouth as my face pressed against the seat. The friction from the leather against my sensitive nipples was sending me over the edge.

“You look so beautiful taking my dick.” The wet sound of him fucking me was driving me mad. My pussy clenched squeezing around him making him moan louder. He ran another hand over my ass again before spreading me to watch the spot where we connected so well. The sensation of warm liquid ran between my cheeks as his thumb messaged my tight back hole.

“Has anyone ever fucked you here?” he asked as he caressed it, giving me over to a new sensation.

“No, but I always wanted to try,” I panted. He kept slamming into me as I lost myself.

“Next time I'll take your tight ass from behind, but right now I need you to cum on my dick.”

If he kept fucking me like this I would do anything he wanted me to. It had been so long since I had been fucked. And never like this. Crew was fucking the sense out of me. I felt myself becoming dick dumb with each deep thrust. This most definitely couldn't happen again. The way he was fucking me would lead to obsession and I couldn't deal with any more problems than I already had. So, I was going to enjoy his dick for this evening and then I was never going to see him again. Crew slammed into me, hitting my G-spot over and over until I was shaking and quivering as I came all over him.

“Ummm, Crew. Shit,” I cried out while warm cum dripped down my thighs as he continued to fuck me.

“That's right. Cum all over my dick Princess.” I felt like I was having a seizure the way my body trembled. My body tried to go limp from the powerful orgasm that ripped through me.

“Don't tap out, Princess; be a good girl and keep your ass in the air, ” he said, keeping his arm around my waist to help me balance myself.

He pressed his hand down in the middle of my back as he fixed my arch and slammed balls deep into me repeatedly until he was filling the condom with his warm cum and sending me into another orgasm. How I wish I could have felt it filling me up until it dripped down my thighs. I shook my head clearing it of that ridiculous thought. I didn't even know this man and here I was thinking about letting him cum inside me. We breathed heavily in unison as he laid on my back but braced himself, so his full body weight didn't crush me.

“Fuck, that was so good,” he said, placing a kiss on my neck.

Increasingly as I came down from the euphoria of what we had just done reality started to creep back in and the realization of fucking a stranger in the parking lot of a

holiday party hit me like a ton of bricks.

“I-I have to go nervously,” I said, trying to squirm from under him. He sat up, pulling himself out of me and leaving me empty. No matter how much I missed the feeling of his big dick inside me, I had to get out of this truck and back to the party. Without another word, I scrambled around the back seat collecting my dress and pulling it over my head before fixing myself as best I could. As soon as my hand touched the door handle he stopped me.

“Why are you running, Princess?”

“I’m not running. We had fun and now it’s over. I have to get back inside. Thanks,” I said awkwardly.

Oh my god.

Did I just thank this man for dick? What is wrong with me?

“I’ll be seeing you later, Princess,” he called after me, with a sexy smirk on his handsome face like he knew something I didn’t.

The door opened and the driver that let us in held his hand out to help me down. I was mortified did this man just listen to us fuck while he stood out here the whole time. I scurried back into the venue looking for Tyra so we could get out of here without running into Crew again. The alcohol I had in my system was now wearing off and shame was quickly taking over my previously tipsy brain. I wandered around for a few more minutes before I found Tyra rushing toward me with a panicked look on her face. She clearly had noticed my absence from the way she was acting.

“Where the fuck did you go, Nova?” She whispered harshly at me.

I walked over toward her as fast as I could, still feeling the after effects of Crews' big dick rearranging my guts with each step.

"I'm so sorry, I-I was having a drink with someone," I lied, not wanting to tell her that I had just let a stranger fuck me in his truck outside just now.

"Bitch you know better we came together we leave together," she hissed at me. "And you look like you did more than just have a drink. Bitch did you know your dress is on backwards?"

I almost died on the spot when I looked down and saw that in fact my dress was not only on backwards but inside out. This man had truly fucked my brains out.

"I um—" I couldn't think of anything to say. I just put my head down in shame.

"Girl, come on, I saw you at the bar with that fine ass man. Is he the reason you walking around glowin', looking freshly fucked?" She smiled at me.

"I'll tell you about it later. Right now, I need to get out of here and into a hot shower," I told her as we walked arm and arm to the exit to wait for an Uber, putting the events of the night firmly behind me.

I filled Tyra in on my adventures with Crew tonight. She laughed saying that it was about time I got the cobwebs knocked off my pussy. She had jokes, but it didn't mean it wasn't true. After I dropped Tyra off to get her and DJ packed. I headed home for a shower and to load my things into the car for the next morning. Sleep eluded me as visions of the things Crew did to me tonight played in my head. It wasn't until I brought myself to orgasm again from thoughts of him that sleep finally found me.

I woke early the next morning well rested and rejuvenated and ready for our trip. I picked up Timberly first from Ms. Leona's. She was still tired and dozed off as soon

as I had her secured in her booster seat. Once I had Tyra and DJ, we were off and on our way to Cedar Springs Ski Resort. We arrived at the resort after three hours on the road for bathroom and meal breaks. The resort was beautiful; it looked like we had just driven into a winter wonderland. The hotel looked like a snow-covered castle nestled amongst huge mountains.

Page 5

Source Creation Date: July 1, 2025, 9:39 am

I pulled up to the valet in front of the hotel and got out after the driver opened my door. Going to the back I helped Timberly out of her seat while Tyra did the same with DJ as the doorman collected our bags and took them inside. The inside of the hotel was just as luxurious as the outside.

“Oh, this is so nice, mommy; thank you, ” Timberly cheered, as she and DJ did a little TikTok dance in the lobby.

“Yeah thanks, aunty,” he said.

“You’re welcome babies,” I told them.

“What about me? I guess I’m just chopped liver huh,” Tyra feigned sadness.

I shook my head at her as they ran over to her for hugs and reassurances that she was awesome too. I made our way to the front desk and was greeted by the attendant with a warm smile.

“Good morning. Welcome to Cedar Spring Luxe Resort. My name is Tina. How may I help you ma’am?”

“Nova Travers checking in.”

“Ah yes. Ms. Travers. I’m sorry but it looks like your room isn’t ready just yet,” she said.

“How long will it take? We really wanted to get some rest before getting our day

started.”

“Since we inconvenienced you and your party we can give you one of our best suites for the same rate as your current room.”

“That would be wonderful. Thank you,” I elated as she handed our keys.

“The suite comes with a personal butler so if you wait here, Bertrum will be right out to escort you all and collect your things.”

“Thank you again, Tina.”

“You’re welcome and please enjoy your stay.” She smiled.

I walked over to Tyra and the kids and filled them in on the good news. They cheered because just like me, they couldn’t believe our luck. We sat in front of the fireplace in the lobby as we waited for our butler for the weekend. A tall graying friendly looking man in a nice suite ambled over and greeted us.

“Good morning family, I’m Bertrum, your butler for the remainder of your stay,” he introduced.

“Good morning Bertrum,” we all said in unison.

He leads us to our suite all the while filling us in on all the amenities the resort had to offer, many of which were included in the price of our room. Our suite was a large three-bedroom open concept flat filled with marble and hardwood, with floor to ceiling windows that had breathtaking views of the forest and mountains beyond. There were fireplaces in each room and beautiful spa sized glass encased showers and marble tubs that I couldn’t wait to soak in with a glass of wine. Bertrum collected our bags and informed us that he would have them unpacked while we got some rest. He

gave us a few brochures detailing amenities and even childcare for when we needed some adult time. This place was amazing. We picked a few activities from the lists, trying to fit as much as possible into our weekend.

We hit the road early so after a much needed nap, we decided to visit one of the many restaurants around the resort for an early dinner. Since tonight was casual I chose a warm cream turtleneck sweater, a pair of dark fitted jeans, and knee-high boots. Grabbing my wool trench coat, I met Tyra and the kids in the living room so we could take a short walk to dinner.

We decided to eat at one of the two steakhouses in the resort since the kids wanted to try a tomahawk steak. The food was amazing and after dessert, the kids went to campfire story time and hot chocolate with a few other kids off the lobby with the nanny assigned to our suite.

“What do you want to do until the kids are finished? I asked Tyra.

“I’m going back to the suite, friend. I was too turned last night and that nap didn’t do me justice. “Why?” Tyra asked.

“I wanted to see if I could get a massage. I want to be refreshed and as loose as possible for the events tomorrow. We’re gonna be outside most of the morning and I’m already stiff from poppin’ my shit last night.” I smirk.

“I bet you are,” she grinned.

“Hopefully they can get me in on such short notice,” I said, heading to the spa. After the night I had with Crew, my body needed this.

“Sorry Ms. Travers, unfortunately one of our VIP guests booked our last time slot. I’m so sorry,” the spa attendant said with an apologetic expression.

“You don’t have anything else?” I asked. Bertrum praised this spa as one of the best in the state and I would hate to miss out. I’m sure I could try another time but with the amount of activities we had planned for the weekend I doubted I’d have the time.

“Well, we could...” She broke off. “This may be a little unorthodox. Give me a moment,” the attendant said. I watched as she walked to the back, wondering what she had in mind. A few minutes passed before she returned with a smile on her face.

“Good news, Ms. Travers, we have a space for you. The only thing is that you will be sharing the room with another guest. The room is equipped with multiple tables and a beautiful view with access to our hot springs. If you agree, we can have a masseuse service you in the same room as our VIP guest.”

Page 6

Source Creation Date: July 1, 2025, 9:40 am

Although I wasn't comfortable with being in the room nearly naked with a strange woman, I really needed a massage.

"Why not. Let's go," I said.

"Wonderful; right this way, ma'am," she said, before leading me to the back.

She escorted me down the hall to a beautiful set of golden doors. We entered the dimly lit suite with warm lights and a beautiful waterfall taking up most of the wall.

She led me to the unoccupied table closest to the door before lowering her voice.

"You can remove your robe and drape the sheet across your lower half. Nala, your masseuse, will be in shortly," she said before leaving the way we came.

I shrugged my robe off my shoulders, doing as I was told but stopped dead in my tracks when my eyes darted to the other guest. Positioned face down on the other table was a large, muscular, half naked man. A soft whimper escaped me just as my robe slipped from my hands. The sound made the stranger turn, and I couldn't believe my eyes. I stood there like a deer in headlights as the sheet covering him dropped when he sat up on the side of the table facing me.

He had the body of a god, all hard muscle and tattooed brown skin. And he was sitting in front of me naked, in all his glory, with the type of dick romance writers told stories about. Jesus Jerome Christ, how was this happening?

"I told you I would be seeing you again, Princess, but I didn't think it would be this

soon," Crew said with a devilish grin. His gray eyes took in my body from head to toe. He watched me with nothing but hunger in his eyes.

I was frozen to the spot as he pushed up from the table and stalked toward me in all his naked glory. I didn't get to see all of him in the back of his SUV. I took all of him in and his body looked like it was carved out of stone and his dick was so much bigger than I remembered it. I couldn't believe I had that monster inside me. Each step he took toward me caused me to take one back. Throwing my hands up, I placed them on his chiseled chest to stop his momentum toward me.

"Oh my god, Crew. How are you even here right now?" I asked in a whisper.

"If I'm not mistaken you're in my spa session right now, remember. Not the other way around," he said, running his thumb across my cheek.

"Did you know I was here?" I ask him. But he didn't answer me.

I attempted to leave but he gripped my arm, turned me, and pushed me into the door, pressing his large body against me. I sucked in a breath at the sight of his huge dick hanging between his legs.

"I missed you, Princess. Did you miss me?" He asked, running his lips over the shell of my ear. "I haven't been able to get the taste of you off my tongue or the feel of you out of my head." He groaned.

"How is this happening?" I ask out loud.

"Clearly this is the universe giving us what we need. But I can see how overwhelmed you are," he said, backing up to put some space between us. "Come enjoy your massage. I promise not to interrupt while you unwind. At least not until after," he promised with a devilish smirk.

Taking my hands from his chest, he walked me over to my table before lifting me and placing me on it. I thought he would try something, but he didn't. He just dropped a kiss on my forehead and walked back over to his table before lying down and covering himself for his massage.

“Lie down, Princess. You’re supposed to be relaxing.”

A soft knock broke me out of my stupor spurring me to make my decision. We were both grown and there was no reason for me to be so wound up around him. Yes, he was unbelievably attractive and yes images of him fucking me played on a reel in my head all day, but I was here to relax. So I was going to lay my ass down and enjoy this massage. Laying down I covered myself quickly before calling for the masseuse to come in.

The massage was exactly what I needed after the night I had and the long drive here. I laid face down after the masseuses left, telling us to take our time and continue to relax until we were ready to either visit the sauna, rain room or the hot springs. We sat in comfortable silence as the tranquility of the session lulled me further into my relaxed state. All of a sudden, strong fingers caressed my bare back before I felt soft, feather kisses across my shoulder blade adding to the euphoria of the moment.

“I didn’t get to explore you like I really wanted to last night. But I think now is the time,” Crew said quietly against my skin.

“Turn over, Princess,” he commanded.

And like the obedient girl I was, I did.

“I’ve been thinking about what I would do to you the next time I got you alone,” he said, still standing over me and tracing a finger over my sensitive skin.

“What did you have in mind?” I asked breathlessly, becoming more and more drawn into the gray storm in his eyes. I knew what he meant because I had thought about the same things.

“I’m going to dominate you in every way imaginable and you are going to submit,” he said, staring me straight in the eyes.

Umm, I whimpered.

Fuck I think I just came.

He gave me a panty wetting smile that I had a feeling that few people got to see. He leaned down over me and gripped me by the front of my throat applying slight pressure just barely cutting off my air supply as he held me against the massage table.

Page 7

Source Creation Date: July 1, 2025, 9:40 am

“What are your limits? He asked, staring at me like he wanted to destroy me.

“Crew we can’t do this here,” I tried to tell him, but he was too far gone to care where we were.

“Limits. Hard stops now, he growled.”

“Um, I’ve never thought about it. No one has ever asked me that. I guess nothing that will leave a scar or permanently injure me. I am okay with pain but not an excessive amount,” I blurted out. I could barely contain my excitement of what’s to come as I felt Crews’ dominating presence beside me.

“Your safe word is Control. If you want something to stop or you don’t like something, use it and I’ll stop immediately.” He growled again. He released the pressure from my throat and removed his hand.

CHAPTER 2

Crew

The scared sound that Nova made when I squeezed her throat made my dick leak precum while I took in her beauty.

“I need you to be a good girl for me and stay quiet. If you want me to stop, remember your safe word. I wouldn’t want any of the other guests to hear you getting fucked. Can you be a good girl and be quiet?” I asked her, with my lips feathering over the shell of her ear.

“Yes, Sir,” she moaned quietly.

“Good girl. We don’t have a lot of time but I need to get another taste of you before I take you back to my suite to fuck you into submission,” I told her. I turned her body so that I am between her creamy thighs.

“Open your legs,” I commanded her, and she obeyed like the natural submissive she was. I kneeled in front of her on the soft carpet. The sight of her glistening pussy had me about to cum already. Due to my height, I was still eye level with her slick entrance as she lay exposed with her legs spread wide for me. “Damn, Princess; you’re so wet for me.”

I rubbed my finger across her slick lips. Using my thumbs, I opened her up to expose her pearl and dripping wet opening. I used my tongue to catch some of her arousal before plunging my tongue into her as far as it could go. Nova let out an audible gasp and arched her back from the pleasure of my tongue spearing her. My dick throbbed each time she moaned and ground her pussy into my mouth. I gripped onto her thick thighs and pulled her closer, allowing me to push my tongue deeper between her folds. I removed my tongue and replaced it with a finger while my tongue continued to flick over her clit. With the other finger, I toyed with her ass, getting it ready for when I finally claimed it for my own. Her tight walls gripped my finger, reminding me of how it felt to slide my dick into her.

From the way she gripped me and thrust her hips to get my finger deeper, I knew she was right on the edge. I pushed another finger into her warmth and fucked her at a rhythmic pace. She moaned loudly, forgetting the need to be quiet.

“Sshh, Princess. You don’t want to alert everyone that you’re getting your sweet pretty pussy ate,” I told her as I continued to thrust my fingers in and out of her. She let out a wail and squirted all over my face, but I didn’t let up. I needed more of her. Pushing her legs back to her chest I used my tongue, teeth and lips to eat her through

two more orgasms until she was begging me to release her from my grasp. Her legs shook uncontrollably as I kissed her lips one last time before removing my head from between her legs. I stood to my full height and watched her as she came down from her last orgasm. Her face was flushed, and she had a sheen of sweat covering her body from how hot I made her. I pulled her up to meet me and feed her my tongue, letting her suck the remnants of her cum off it before I caught her lips and deepened our kiss.

“Come on, Princess. Let me get you out of her and back to my room.”

“Crew I can't, I'm not here alone,” she said, pulling back from the kiss. Her revelation sent a tinge of anger through me from just the thought of her being with someone else. As if reading my mind, she shook her head and smiled.

“I'm here with my daughter, my best friend and her son,” she said.

I kiss her again, wanting nothing more than to keep her with me. I have never wanted a woman the way I wanted Nova Travers. Women were something that came with the status and prestige of being one of the wealthiest men in the city. But Nova was not just another woman; she was the woman that had piqued more than my interest in more than just fucking her. I wanted more from Nova than just having her in my bed. The fact that she had a daughter should have scared me, but it didn't. Clearly her child's father wasn't in the picture, but even if he was, Nova would be mine.

“Go spend time with your people, but tonight, I want you in my bed. Are we clear, Princess?” I asked her.

“Crew,” she whined, like I gave a fuck about the excuse she was about to try and use.

“Don't make me tell you again, Princess. I won't impede on your time with the family but. You're mine from here on out. Your days can be for your daughter, but

your nights will be spent in my penthouse. Go, and don't make me have to come get you," I told her, helping her down from the table on wobbly legs.

CHAPTER 3

Nova

Idamn near ran out of the spa back to my room after Crew released me. This was the last thing I expected to happen this weekend. I honestly thought I would never see Crew again. Even if I did. I didn't think it would be here of all places. My mind was racing a mile a minute when I finally reached our suite. When I opened the door the kids were sitting on the sofa in their pajamas with their iPads while Tyra was in the kitchen making popcorn.

"How was your massage?" Tyra asked as I made my way inside our suite.

"It was nice," I said, trying to avoid the subject in front of the kids. This definitely wasn't the story for little ears. "What are you guys up to?"

"The kids wanted to watch the Wild Robot movie. We were waiting for you to get here before we started the movie. You got here just in time."

"Great, let me get changed and I'll be out in a minute," I told her before rushing to the back.

By the time it reached 10 pm we had watched two movies and made three chaotic TikTok videos with the kids and eaten our weight in popcorn. They lay on the sofa covered in a throwblanket from the closet while Tyra and I cleaned up our mess. After we got everything in order we carried the kids to their room.

Page 8

Source Creation Date: July 1, 2025, 9:40 am

“So are you gonna tell me how your massage was? You came in here floating like you had just had your soul snatched. Let me find out you got a happy ending,” Tyra laughed.

All I could do was drop my head in embarrassment, cheeks burning. Tyra’s loud ass cackled so hard she almost dropped a bowl.

“Bitch I know you fuckin lying. You got a happy ending?”

“No, not exactly,” I mumbled.

“So what then hoe. Spill it,” she said, getting comfortable like I was about to tell the greatest story of all time.

“Um, you remember the guy that I left the gala with?” I asked her.

“Yeah,” she said, eyes growing wide as realization hit. “Biiiiitch, let me find out that fine ass nigga followed you to this resort.”

“He didn’t follow me here, but he is here,” I told her all about how I ended up in the same spa suite with Crew and how he tried to suck my soul from my body before he ordered me to be in his bed by the end of the night.

“Nova, what the fuck are you sitting here with my lonely ass for then. That man told you to be in his bed when you were done with the family. The kids are in bed where I’m about to go so what is the issue here?” She questioned me.

“I don’t want you to feel like I’m choosing dick over you and the kids.”

“Nova, you are a good mom, friend and aunty to my son. You don’t have a selfish bone in your body. You also haven’t dated since we met. It’s about time you let somebody knock the Mario coins out that ass, she giggled. Shit, if I was gay, I would have took your fine ass down a while ago. I’m not telling you to marry the man, but you damn sure should go and have some fun,” she told me.

Tyra got up from the sofa and gave me a tight hug before going to her room for the night. She was right of course. I hadn’t tried dating anyone since moving here. I put all my energy into raising Timberly and building my career. Even though my mind was telling me to be careful. My body wanted nothing more than to submit to Crew’s every command. I rushed to my room and changed quickly into a silk sleep set complete with sexy shorts and a cami. Tamping down my nerves, I snuck into Timberly’s room, trying not to wake her as I kissed her goodnight before leaving our suite.

The ride up to the penthouse had me rethinking this, but I knew that if I backed out Crew would be true to his word and come and get me. I saw it in his eyes at the spa. He meant what he said. My nights were his and I couldn’t wait to find out how we would spend them. The elevator dinged as the doors slid open, right into a luxury penthouse, dimly lit by the soft glow of a fireplace. Floor-to-ceiling windows framed the mountains beyond, the world dusted in soft, white snow.

I stepped inside and froze. Standing by the windows, shirtless, wearing only a pair of low-slung linen pajama bottoms, was Crew. Muscles like carved stone leading down to the flawless V that lead to the world's most perfect dick. Tattooed arms and a glass of dark liquor dangling from his fingers. He turned slowly, his dark eyes devouring me whole. And for the first time in a long time, I didn’t want to run.

I was once again captivated by the print of his thick dick on display as he came

toward me sitting his glass down. Taking my hand, he pulled me into him, enveloping me into his warm embrace. I sucked in a breath as he buried his nose into the crook of my neck and inhaled. I loved when he did that. It's like he was addicted to my scent.

"You always smell so fucking good ,Princess," he said loosening the belt of my coat and pushing it off my shoulder. It fell into a heap at my feet leaving me exposed in the thin cami and shorts.

"Fuck, Princess, you look so good ,but next time I want you naked under your coat," he said, stripping me of my clothing.

"Yes, Sir." I moaned from the feel of his strong hands on my body.

When I was completely naked in front of him, he stepped back, committing every curvy and dimple of my body to memory like he knew he would never see me again. And he was right. I planned on making the best of this weekend and then going on about my life. With ease he lifted me off my feet and carried me effortlessly down the hall to a large bedroom with the same breathtaking views. Bypassing the huge bed in the middle of the room he walks us over to the large window, pressing my back on the cold glass. The chill caused my nipples to harden against his chest.

"I'm going to put you down, put your hands on the glass, legs spread, and ass pushed out." he commanded, and I quickly complied.

Lookin' over my shoulder I watched as he dropped his pajama pants and moved closer to me pressing the monster between his legs against my ass. The feeling of the heat from his large body was a stark contrast to the chill of the window that pressed against my hard nipples. The chill was almost painful, but I enjoyed it. The feel of his large hands caressing the skin of my ass and hips was an electrifying experience that I couldn't get enough of. I gasped when I felt him pressing the head of his dick to my entrance, as he ran it through my slick wetness.

“Fuck!” I screamed when he thrust deep inside me with no warning. He was so deep, hitting something inside that made me rise up on my toes from the pleasure and slight pain. Crew was fucking me like he had a point to prove. My hands slid against the glass from the force of his deep rhythmic thrusts.

“Oh my gawddd,” I moaned as he proceeded to fuck me into the glass. I could feel every inch of his dick as he pounded me from behind. His grunts and groans echoed throughout the spacious room.

“You're taking my dick so well, Princess,” he said, pressing his body onto my back to speak directly into my ear. “You’re mine, Princess. You know that right?” he asked as I mumbled unintelligible nonsense. The fear of hearing those words was nothing compared to the pleasure that Crew was giving me right now. So, against my better judgement, I pushed those feeling down and basked in the feel of him fucking me against the glass.

I pressed my hands harder against the glass and threw my ass back meeting his deep thrust. It was almost too much and not enough at the same time. The feeling of his dick rubbing against my G-Spot was sending me over the edge. And just when I thought I was about to tip over into pure bliss, Crew pulled out of me. But before I could argue I was in the air and my shoulders were around Crews’ head with my back against the cold glass.

A shiver ran through my body when he separated my lower lips with his tongue and took a long, slow lick.

“Ummm, yes, please.” I moaned, begging and throwing my head back so hard I damn near knocked myself out when it thud against the glass.

“We taste so good together, Princess. I can’t get enough of you,” he said, mumbling into my pussy.

He was eating me like he had been starving for days. His tongue swirled around my clit before plunging inside of me to taste the juices that were leaking out of me. He sucked and nibbled on my clit sending jolts of pleasure coursing through me. The pleasure was so good I tangled my fists into his hair and pulled his face as close as I could get him, damn near drowning him in my pussy as I came with a scream.

“Shit, shit,” I cried.

Page 9

Source Creation Date: July 1, 2025, 9:40 am

I had never been this aggressive during sex, but Crew seemed to know what my body craved and gave it to me. My body slumped back on the window as I came down from my orgasm. Crew placed gentle kisses on my inner thighs and then slid my body down his until he was lined up at my entrance. He thrust in, bottoming out, causing us to both moan into each other's mouths. Crew's large arms caged me in against the glass as he drilled into me, grunting and groaning with each roll of his hips. The loud, wet sounds my pussy was making would have been embarrassing if I wasn't being fucked within an inch of my life right now. Crew gripped my hips changing angles and the pleasure became too much. A sharp tingle shot through me making my muscles spasm and explode causing me to squirt all over Crew's dick. He thrust into me a few more times before he stilled, driving his dick as deep as he could get. His dick throbbed and pulsed inside me as our bodies convulsed from the aftershocks of our orgasms. We stayed like that for a moment before Crew carried my limp body over to the bed. As soon as my head hit the bed I was out.

I woke up sore, satisfied, and tangled in the softest sheets I'd ever felt. The soft light from the penthouse windows crept across Crew's bare chest as he slept beside me, one thick arm thrown possessively over my waist. I should have slipped out, back to my suite, but something about his hold on me, the quiet way his body caged mine, made me stay. This wasn't the deal. I needed to get back to my suite. Reality was starting to set in.

But for a little while longer, I let myself pretend. I would pretend that I wasn't a woman on the run. And that I wasn't one text away from the past finding me. But reality didn't wait forever. The soft crackle of the fireplace and the slow, steady beat of his heart under my ear lulled me into euphoria and I was lost. For a moment, I didn't move. Didn't think. Just breathed him in. Warm, solid, dangerous, Crew

Sanderson had almost made me forget that I couldn't have this. That I couldn't be safe in the arms of a man.

I lifted my head carefully, blinking against the early gray light spilling through the penthouse windows. Snow drifted outside like the world had finally slowed down to let me breathe. I slid out of bed carefully, hating how cold the room felt the second I left his warmth behind. My legs ached in a way that made my cheeks heat, a reminder of how thoroughly he'd fucked me last night.

A reminder that I hadn't just slipped once. I'd fallen, hard. I found my silk shorts and cami on the floor before slipping them on quickly. My heart hammered as I tiptoed around the bed, grabbing my coat. Maybe I could get back to my suite before anyone noticed I was gone. Maybe I could pretend last night hadn't shifted something deep inside me.

Maybe I could...

"Where you sneakin' off to, Princess?" Crew asked, scaring me out of my skin.

His voice was rough with sleep, low and dangerous, dragging across my nerves like velvet and steel. I froze, hand halfway to the door. Crew shifted onto his side, head propped on one arm, watching me with those unreadable gray eyes.

"You really think you can run from me?" he quizzed, with an edge of amusement in his voice that made my stomach flip.

"I wasn't..." I stated.

He raised an eyebrow.

I sighed. "Okay. Maybe a little."

A slow, wicked smile spread across his mouth.

"You're cute when you lie."

I tightened the coat around my body, needing the barrier.

"Timberly's gonna wake up soon. Tyra and DJ too. I need to get back."

Crew's smile faded, not completely, but enough that I saw the serious man underneath.

"I'm not gonna keep you from your kid, Nova," he said.

"But don't you dare pretend last night didn't happen."

I swallowed hard.

"It was a mistake."

He laughed, low and sharp. "Really?"

He swung his legs off the bed, standing up slowly, moving toward me like a predator.

"You telling me this was a mistake, Princess?" he said, catching my chin between his thumb and forefinger, tilting my head back gently.

I could still smell him; he smelled of cinnamon and expensive whiskey. I still felt him in every sore muscle.

"Tell me," he whispered, voice sinking lower. "Say it."

I opened my mouth. But nothing came out.

Crew's eyes softened, just barely but it was enough to break me wide open inside.

"You feel safe with me," he said.

Like it wasn't a question. Like it was the only truth that mattered. I hated that he was right. Because Crew didn't feel like danger. He felt like my safe haven. He was addictive and for the first time in years, I didn't feel like I had to carry all the weight alone. My shoulders slumped slightly. Crew leaned down, pressing a soft, lingering kiss against my forehead

Page 10

Source Creation Date: July 1, 2025, 9:40 am

"You're not alone anymore," he murmured.

I wanted to believe him. God, I wanted to. But the past had a way of finding me.

Dragging me back no matter how far I ran. I pulled away gently.

"I need to go." Crew let me. He didn't stop me. He just nodded once.

"You got today, Nova. Get your head right. But tonight?" He stepped close again, mouth brushing my ear. "Tonight, you're back in my bed."

I shivered, nodding before my brain could catch up. And then I was gone, heart pounding, mind racing, body already missing him.

Everyone was still asleep when I made it back to the room. The kids were passed out in their beds, and Tyra was snoring like a grown man in her room. I went to my bedroom undressed and took a long shower, letting the hot water relax my sore muscles. My mind was all over the place with thoughts of Crew's words. He was trying to tear down the walls that I had carefully crafted after all these years. I had to be strong. No amount of dick should be able to throw me off my square like this. It was the only one thing I could do. I wasn't going back.

"You're back early," Tyra mumbled, stretching as she entered the living room.

I jumped, splashing coffee on my wrist. "Damn, Tyra. You scared me."

She grinned sleepily. "I figured you'd be gone for days. Thought I was gonna have to

tell Timberly you ran off with a rich mountain man."

I snorted, sitting across from her. "Not funny."

"Kind of funny," she said, sitting down on the couch and rubbing her eyes. "You good?"

"Yeah," I lied automatically.

Tyra stared at me for a long second, then shrugged. "If you say so."

The day passed in a blur of cartoons, popcorn fights, and trips to the overpriced arcade downstairs. Minus the annoyed faces Tyra was making because I refused to tell her about my night and the fact that I said I wasn't going back. My only concern was enjoying my time with my daughter. After making breakfast for Tyra and the kids this morning we started our day out on the slopes with the trainers. The kids were doing such a good job on the skis and snowboards. Tyra and I were another story, but we had fun nonetheless. After some time in the snow, we had a hearty lunch in our suite. I opted out of going to one of the restaurants, scared I might run into Crew.

After lunch, we spent the rest of the day inside playing games and watching movies by the fire. Our private chef prepared a delicious roast with carrots, potatoes, and freshly baked bread. The kids crashed early, knocked out from sugar and arcade-induced exhaustion. Tyra and I cleaned up the disaster zone they left behind. Somewhere between loading the dishwasher and arguing over who cheated at Uno earlier, my head started spinning.

"I'm not going back tonight," I said suddenly, out of nowhere.

Tyra looked at me over her shoulder. "Okay."

"I'm serious," I said, flopping down onto the couch. "I need to... think."

"Sure," Tyra said casually, wiping down the counter. "Think with your coochie. Think with your heart. Either way, that man's gonna get you."

I threw a pillow at her and she cackled.

"Sleep it off, Nova," she said, flicking the light switch off.

The last thing I remembered was Timberly crawling up next to me on the couch, her tiny body curling into mine. I kissed her hair and closed my eyes. Telling myself I was strong enough to stay away from Crew. The feel of being carried woke me from my deep slumber on the couch. For a moment, I thought I was floating but then I felt the warmth from the hard chest that I was being cradled against.

This can't be... I was on the couch in my suite. I opened my eyes and Crew's stormy gray ones were looking down at me. His lips quirked up into a sly smirk.

"I thought I told you that you would be in my bed tonight?"

"I- I fell asleep," I said. It wasn't a lie I had fallen asleep after a few too many glasses of wine.

"I told you it was cute when you did that. But if you do it again I'll have to punish you," he said.

"What?" I asked, already knowing.

"If you lie to me again I'm going to fuck your throat until you can't speak. He said, eyes shining like he couldn't wait to do exactly that.

CHAPTER 4

Crew

She wasn't coming back. I knew it the second the clock hit midnight, and she hadn't shown up. Nova Travers was stubborn as hell. She was also scared. Scared of what I didn't know. But that was alright. I could be patient. When I wanted something, I didn't sit around waiting for the world to hand it to me. I went after it. Nova was no different than anything else I wanted.

I threw on a black hoodie and jeans, grabbed my room key, and took the elevator down to her suite. I knocked once, hard enough to be heard but not hard enough to startle the kids at this hour. After a few moments, a woman I knew to be Nova's best friend answered the door. Tyra answered in pajama pants and a tank top, a satin bonnet halfway sliding off her head. She blinked at me, then smirked.

"About damn time," she whispered, stepping aside to let me in like she had been waiting for me.

"Where's she at?" I asked low.

She pointed to the living room, grinning like she was in on some secret she couldn't wait to see unfold.

"Passed out on the couch with the kids. Wine hit her harder than she thought."

I nodded once.

"You cool with this?"

Tyra shrugged.

"Look, all I know is my girl deserves a man that wants her as bad as you seem to. Plus, you had my girl singing 90s R&B in the shower and whether you know it or not the look on your face says that you want more than just a fling with my girl. But just to be clear I got a marksmanship award in the military, and I will air some shit out behind that one. We clear?" She asked, arching her brow.

"Clear."

"Good then go get her," Tyra said, before walking over to the couch to pick up one of the kids with a wink.

Nova lay sprawled out on the couch with Timberly across her chest and DJ curled up at her feet. They were a mess of soft snores, tangled blankets and messy hair. She was perfect even in her sleep. I crouched down, brushing the back of my knuckles along her soft, warm cheek. She stirred a little but didn't wake. Tyra came over and picked Timberly up off her and placed her on the other couch before covering her with a warm blanket. I slipped one arm under her knees, the other around her back, and lifted her carefully. She made a small noise that was half protest, half sleepy confusion. I pressed my lips to her temple.

"Shhh, Princess. I got you."

I carried her through the suite. Tyra cracked the door open wider with a big ass smile on her face.

"You're welcome!" she whisper-yelled.

I nodded once before leaving, carrying Nova back to where she belonged. Back to my bed. We barely made it back to my suite before she stiffened and opened her eyes.

When she saw it was me carrying her she relaxed back into me.

“I thought I told you that you would be in my bed tonight?”

“I- I fell asleep.” She lied. I wonder if she knew she wrinkled her nose when she told a lie.

“I told you it was cute when you did that. But if you do it again I’ll have to punish you,” I said.

“What?” She asked..

“If you lie to me again I’m going to fuck your throat until you can’t speak. I said.

Her eyes got big, and her breathing increased. I watched her eyes become heavy with lust. I watched as her tongue darted out of her mouth to wet her soft lips. The thought alone of those lips wrapped around my dick had me walking a little faster.

“Is that what you want? Princess. Would you like me to fuck that pretty mouth of yours?”

“Yes, Sir.” She moaned.

As soon as I let us into my suite I took Nova over by the island in the kitchen and placed her on her feet.

“Take off your clothes,” I told her as I undressed down to my black boxer briefs. Once she was naked before me I lifted her in my arms again and placed her on her back on the island. I pulled the top of her body off the edge letting her head hang back, so she was looking up at me. I ran my knuckles across her cheek before asking her.

“Do you remember your safe word?”

“Control.” She whimpered.

Page 12

Source Creation Date: July 1, 2025, 9:40 am

I stepped out of my briefs and watched her eyes light up. Stepping in front of her I gripped the base of my dick and rubbed it across her plump lips.

“Open.”

She opened her mouth and stuck her tongue out. Gripping my dick, I gave it a few strokes before pushing in slowly. Allowing her to hollow out her cheeks and suck on the tip. My toes curled from the sensation, but this wasn't about her enjoyment, this was punishment. I pulled back, letting just a string of saliva connect us before surging back in making her eyes water when I hit the back of her throat. Thrusting in deeper, I felt her gag around me as she got used to my size in this position.

“Fuck, Nova. Relax your throat and breathe through your nose, baby.” I wasn't about to go easy on her, so I needed her to take her punishment like a good little slut. I pulled back, giving her a chance to take in a breath before surging back in, going deeper with each thrust. She moaned around me, swallowing and making her throat clench around my dick. Her face was wet from her tears and drool as she swallowed my dick like her life depended on it.

“Fuck, baby. Your mouth is so wet.”

I placed both my hands on each side of her head before fisting her hair and fucked her throat just like I said I would, and she took every inch of me using her tongue to circle to head every time I pulled out to the tip. If I kept going I was going to explode down her throat at any minute, so I stepped back and pulled my dick from her mouth. She gasped sucking in as much air as she could. Her eyes fluttered as she looked up at me. This woman was going to drive me crazy if I let her. Fuck she was perfect for

me.

I spun her body around, so I was standing between her legs. Then I took a seat on the chair in front of the island. I had the perfect view of her soaking pussy. She had done such a good job taking her punishment with no complaints that she deserved a reward. Spreading her legs more for me I gripped her hips and pulled her pussy to my mouth and started to devour her like my last meal.

“Oh shit, fuck, Crew,” she moaned dragging her fingers through my hair as I licked and sucked on her clit.

Her moans were music to my ears. Her soft whining and whimpering had my dick harder than steel. I pushed a finger into her, and she clamped down sucking my finger deeper inside. A few more sucks, licks and thrusts with my finger had her on the edge.

“Your pussy is so sweet, Princess. Cum for me,” I commanded. And like the good girl she was she came with a loud scream.

I placed one last wet kiss on her pussy before standing and positioning my hard dick at her opening. I lifted her legs, hooked them over my arms to bend her in half and thrust just the tip inside her. Nova groaned and slammed her eyes shut from the stretch as I pushed inside her. I pulled back out and thrust in again earning a few moans from her sweet lips. Leaning in, I latched onto her bottom lip and sucked it into my mouth. Fuck she felt so good. Bracketing my hands on either side of her face I started pounding into her.

Ahh, Sir please,” she begged.

“Open your eyes, Nova. Look at me while I fuck you.” I grunted. Being inside Nova was becoming my favorite thing to do. I couldn’t get enough of her, and if she let me,

I would never have to. “You’re close, Princess. I can feel the way you’re gripping me.”

“Crew, yes. Ahhh,” she moaned as she came again.

I pumped my hips a few more times getting as deep as I could on the last thrust and spilled inside her.

Fuccck, Nova. I growled trying not to collapse on top of her. I placed a soft kiss on her sweaty forehead before I pulled out and lifted her in my arms to take her to my tub. She was damn near asleep in my arms as I carried her. Once we made it into the bathroom, I gently sat her on the side of the tub while I got out what I needed to run her a nice bath. I used the honey vanilla bubbling oil I ordered from a specialty shop in town. Once the water was at the right temperature, I picked her up and sat her inside. She moaned and sank down in the water, letting it soothe her. I stepped in behind her and positioned her against my chest.

We stayed like that, silently basking in the haze of great sex for what felt like hours. This was the closest I had been to intimacy in so long. And I wanted this for the first time in a long time. I wanted to be as close to this woman as I could get. I just had to make her see that this could be more than a weekend.

The sun was just starting to crawl through the cracks of the blackout curtains when I stirred. I reached for her out of habit, the way you reach for something you know is supposed to be yours. But the bed was cold. Empty. I sat up, heart hammering once, sharp and stupid. The space beside me was bare, except for a folded piece of hotel stationary, neatly placed on the pillow. I picked it up slowly, running my thumb over the words.

Crew,

Last night was... amazing. If life were different... If I were different, maybe we could have stayed in touch. But some things aren't meant to be. Thank you for giving me something beautiful to remember.

I wish you all the best.

~Nova

I sat there for a long time, staring at the paper until the words burned into my brain. I should have expected it. People like Nova didn't stay with men like me. Men who didn't deserve soft things. Men who couldn't protect what mattered most, no matter how many times they swore otherwise. I balled the note in my fist. Closed my eyes and breathed.

It was better this way.

She deserved normal and safe. Two things I wasn't. Not a man who built his empire on blood and broken promises. I leaned back against the headboard, letting the ache settle into my bones. I would let her have it for now. But if I ever ran into Ms. Nova Travers again, she was mine.

CHAPTER 5

Nova

"Nova, hey, are you busy?" Stephanie, my administrator asked, barging into my office like she paid the bills..

Fuck. Forgot to lock the damn door again. "No, Steph. What's up?" I said, forcing a smile. As administrators went, Stephanie wasn't horrible. Young, Black, educated, always put together. Only thirty-five, and already running one of the toughest

buildings in the company. I respected the grind. I really did.

But sometimes Steph forgot something critical.

Source Creation Date: July 1, 2025, 9:40 am

I didn't work for her.

We were equals. Coworkers. I ran clinical. She ran operations. Two lanes, stay in yours. Praying this wasn't about to be one of those "forget your lane" moments, I sat back in my chair. She stepped in, looking serious.

"We've got an emergency corporate meeting at two. Byron just called. Said it's about a change in the corporate team."

I glanced at my Apple Watch. 1:20 p.m. I sighed. "What do you think it's about?" I asked, raising an eyebrow. "We're due for a new owner. It's been two years. It's about time."

"We've had what? Three owners in the last five?" she said, sighing.

"Exactly. You really think it's just a new team member being added?" Steph shrugged. "Guess we'll see."

I nodded and stood up. "Cool. I'll go grab my squad. Meet you in the conference room."

My management team consisted of myself, my assistant director of nursing Kim, and my two unit managers, Tyra and Cortney. For the most part we were a solid team. We all complemented each other's strengths, which was a good thing in management. My first stop was Kim's office. Lucky for me, Tyra and Cortney were already posted up at her door, running their mouths.

“Ladies, conference room. Thirty minutes. Emergency meeting with corporate.”

Kim groaned. “What now?”

“We're getting sold, ain't we?” Cortney chimed in, grinning.

“Why does everyone automatically think that?” I asked, laughing.

Tyra, arms folded, before she laughed and said, “Because these companies switch owners faster than a hoe switches tricks. And Covid only made it worse.”

We all burst out laughing. Tyra didn't care what flew out of her mouth, and honestly? I loved her for it.

“No matter what,” I said, chuckling, “residents still gotta eat, still gotta shower. Whatever changes, we stay focused.”

As I turned to leave, Kim called out, “Nova, before you go. The new ombudsman's coming Monday. She's got complaints from Mr. Hightower.”

I rolled my eyes so hard my brain shook. “What now?”

“Showers. Food. Call bells. Us breathing air he don't like. The usual,” Kim deadpanned.

“Set up a time. I'll fit her in,” I said, heading to the conference room.

When I got to the conference room, most of the department heads were already seated which was strange since they usually dragged in late like kids avoiding school. I slid into my usual seat near the back, watching everyone file in. The air buzzed with nervous tension. Then the projector screen flashed on and Byron's goofy mug popped

up, the tension snapped tighter.

"Good afternoon, everyone," Byron said, smiling too wide for what was about to drop.

Short, round, and full of bullshit, that was Byron. A man who loved hiring pretty faces with empty heads, while every building under him rotted.

"I won't drag it out. As of the twenty-eighth, this facility has been sold to Phoenix Healthcare Group," he said, voice chipper like he just handed us free lottery tickets. "An email will go out with details about jobs, benefits, and payroll. Phoenix's team will be here Monday to start the transition. I've loved working with you all. If you have questions, hit me up."

The click of the Zoom ending was deafening around the large room. Then all of a sudden cue chaos.

"Man, what the fuck?" Bobby from Maintenance barked. "Two week's notice? Really?"

"And who the hell is Phoenix Healthcare Group?" someone else snapped.

Rumors flew like bullets.

"They bought four other buildings. Big changes. Big money," Moe from the kitchen said.

"I heard they fired half the staff and brought in their own people. But they pay better than anybody," Connor from Admissions added.

The noise blended into a dull roar. I wasn't stressing. I was a nurse. If it got too crazy,

I'd bounce. Simple.

Page 14

Source Creation Date: July 1, 2025, 9:40 am

Monday hit quicker than a backhand. After the morning stand-down, everyone sat on edge, as everyone stood, clock-watching like our lives depended on it. I had tried to research the new owner but he was a goddamn ghost. Net worth articles, corporate mumbo jumbo, but no face, no background, no anything.

Who the hell was he?

Suddenly, Tyra crashed into the room like she'd been running a marathon.

"They're here," she gasped. She gave me a weird smirk before practically falling into her seat.

The room froze. The door swung open. Two middle-aged women in power suits. Four men trailing behind them. All tailored, all polished. But none of them were the reason Tyra looked like she saw a ghost. No. He walked in last. And my heart fucking stopped.

Six-foot-four of pure danger. In a three-piece suit that molded to his broad body. His gray eyes were intense and sharp enough to slice glass. And when those eyes locked on mine and the world disappeared.

Seconds.

It was only seconds. But it cracked something inside me wide open. He broke the gaze first, and somehow, the air felt colder because of it. He moved with the kind of control that made you wonder what he'd be like without it. I barely kept my jaw from dropping as he sat directly across from me.

Crew Sanderson.

It was him. The man from the gala that I had allowed to fuck me into a coma this weekend. The man who ruined me with one weekend and a thousand memories I never planned to have.

He slid off his glasses, leveling the room with that stare. As he positioned himself at the head of the conference table.

“Good morning,” he said, voice deep, steady, lethal. “If you’re unclear, allow me to introduce myself. My name is Crew Sanderson, owner of Phoenix Healthcare Group.”

No soft welcome. No warm speech. Crew didn’t deal in sugarcoating. He was straight to the muthafukin point.

“Some of you will continue on this journey with us. Some of you will not,” he said. “Effective March first, the following individuals are terminated.”

The silence was deafening. Crew rattled off names like reading off a grocery list with zero emotion. Admissions. Kitchen. Maintenance. Gone.

"Collect your severance from the front desk. You’re excused," he said simply, leaning back in his chair, every inch a king in his court.

It was ruthless and efficient. But it was also sexy as hell and I hated myself for thinking it. The rest of the meeting covered facility upgrades, expectations, upcoming evaluations. Everything he said screamed one thing:

Change was coming so get on board or get run over.

As the meeting ended, individual team meetings were scheduled. Clinical just so happened to be first. I stayed seated, pretending not to be stealing glances at him while also pretending not to be undressing him in my mind. But Crew? He wasn't pretending at all. The way he looked at me said one thing. He wanted me, and this time, he wasn't letting me run.

CHAPTER 6

Crew

"The purchase of the new building is in order and the date of transfer is still scheduled for the first of March. I already have the names of the staff members that you will be terminating. George has the list and cost projections of the renovations and new equipment. The car taking us to the new site will be here in the next fifteen minutes. Please do not get in here and scare the good employees away. You have teeth for a reason, let them see that beautiful smile," Janelle, my general manager joked.

Janelle had been with me since I bought my first nursing home in my twenties and her expertise was indispensable. Janelle and her partner Delema were the backbone of my organization. They ran the day-to-day aspects of my facilities whenever I wasn't able to be hands on and there was no one else I trusted more with my business. Plus, they were the only people other than my grandfather that could put me in my place and call me out on my bullshit.

"Whatever, Janelle. It's not my job to coddle them, it's my job to whip them into a five-star building," I told her.

"You're right, but you can do all that and still be a nice guy."

"I am nice."

“To who?”

“You still have a job don’t you? I asked her, cocking my head to the side.

“Touché, mean ass. Well at least let me and Del deal with the employees who won't be reporting directly to you. That at least will keep them from having mental meltdowns every other day after you give them the evil eye,” she said with a knowing smirk.

Janelle and Del often said I had a frightening presence but I felt that I was just a direct individual who didn’t believe in smiling in the face of every idiot that came into my presence. The drive to the facility was a beautiful one. This facility was on the outskirts of Timberline, a thirty minute drive from the larger city of Brookview. The facility was smaller than the others that I currently owned but it had larger grounds and potential to be one of the nicest. The facility had good bones, it just needed a few renovations, supplies and building-wide training. Mostly operations, the clinical team seemed competent. I thought with an influx of well trained staff they would be a force to be reckoned with. I knew this wouldn’t be easy but I was determined for this building to be just as successful as my others.

Source Creation Date: July 1, 2025, 9:40 am

The meeting went just as I expected it to go except for one beautiful distraction. The employees that weren't up to par were excused and the ones that stayed would hopefully be able to meet the requirements of the job they were assigned. If not, they would be out on their asses right behind their incompetent coworkers. I tried my best to remain focused during the meeting but the one person I had been dying to see again had my attention from the moment I stepped in the room and we locked eyes.

Even in her scrubs she was captivating. She drew everyone's attention in any room she entered. She was a thick beauty with curves for days, intelligence and sex appeal to go with it. Memories of her ass bouncing as I fucked her from the back against the window of my suite had my dick stiffening. Looking at her face to keep my eyes off her curves didn't help much either. If I had to guess, she looked to be in her mid-twenties with her smooth chocolate skin with freckles that pepper her cheeks and almond shaped eyes that gave her a youthful appearance.

The kicker was the beauty mark that rested on the right side of her thick pouty lips. I took her entire body as I seated myself, every curve, dimple and curl of her hair. Breaking my gaze from her I refocused my energy on the task at hand. Getting sidetracked by one of my employees wasn't on the agenda for me, so I did what I had trained myself to do, and that was shut myself off to anything and anyone that could knock me off my square. And based on my time with her, she could do just that.

I was able to get through the meeting without any further interruptions. The fear in the room was almost palpable as I laid out my plan for the future of Timberline Springs. I had never planned to lead with fear, but it was beneficial. If my staff was fearful they tended not to fuck-up as much. And right now, I would use that fear to keep everything professional with the gorgeous beauty in front of me.

“How about you guys introduce yourselves before we get started,” Janelle said to the nursing team. With a soft clearing of her throat the heartbreaker I had been trying to ignore spoke and her voice was like silk.

“Good morning, my name is Nova Travers. As you probably know, I’ve been the director of nursing here since last April. I’m looking forward to working with all of you and would like to say that I am very appreciative of any knowledge you all will provide us. Whatever you can do that will allow me to be a better leader, I’m all for it,” she said.

I tried to remain nonchalant, but just being in her presence again made it hard for me to keep my wall up.

“You will be reporting directly to me,” I said before my brain even processed what had just come out of my mouth.

“Are you sure? I thought I would be reporting to your general manager,” she asked with her brows bunched together.

“Both you and the administrator will be reporting to me. Is that a problem? ” I asked, never taking my eyes from hers. Normally, I wouldn’t have repeated myself, but memories of her bouncing on my dick made me give her a pass on questioning me.

“No, sir, ” she said softly, looking me directly in my eyes, making my balls tighten and my dick jump. She had to know what she was doing by calling me that.

“Okay, now that we know who will be reporting to who. How about the rest of the team please introduce themselves?” Janelle said, grinning hard as hell.

We finished the introductions and discussed the current condition of the facility. We went over the last state survey and how we could do better next time. Janelle

reviewed a couple of new procedures we would be rolling out and then we exchanged contact information leaving a call log available and hierarchy of who to call first and for what. I was pleased with the team Nova had put together in such a short time. With a few minor adjustments this facility would be a force to be reckoned with under her leadership.

“When have you ever had one of your DONs reporting directly to you?” Janelle asked as we left the office for the night.

The meetings had lasted most of the day and we hadn't reached our office until after six that evening. The day was long and boring and with it being the beginning of the purchase there would be more to come.

“She’s fairly new to the role of director, and I just wanted to make sure that she had everything she needed to be a success,” I said, somewhat honestly.

“You like her, don’t you?” she sang.

“No, and why would you say that?” She looked at me with her face screwed up like I was stupid.

“Okay, so remember the woman I told you about from the Gala?” I asked, waiting for her to get on my ass.

“Oh my god, that’s her? You fucked her, didn’t you? That’s why you want her reporting directly to you.” She laughed. It's about time. We were worried about you. Del was getting ready to download a dating app on your phone” she laughed.

“I don’t need to date to get a nut. You and I both know that’s really all I have time for,” I said.

“You’ve already proven yourself as owner of Phoenix. You’re 34 years old, Crew. It’s time for you to start a family,” she said.

“You sound like the old man.”

“That’s because he’s right. So what happened at the resort?” she asked.

“Let’s just say it was great until it wasn’t,” I said leaving it at that. I wasn’t one to gossip with my friends let alone one that acted like my mother at every turn. Besides the way Nova ran from me that night I don’t think she was interested in anything more than what we shared.

“Yeah, okay, but think about this. She could be just what you need. I know your grandfather is still pushing for you to get married. Why not ask her out on a real date to see if she could be interested in more? You’ve already sampled the goods and clearly you’re interested. Based on your performance at the meeting, anyway.”

“I’ll think about it.” We would have to do some research before I even considered her as an option. Maybe spending time with her on a professional level would give me the fix I needed to move along. My life wasn’t set up for a relationship at the moment, so I would do my best to keep everything professional with Ms. Nova Travers like she wanted. Even if I wanted nothing more than to have her on her knees as she gagged around my dick. Fuck, I would have to clear my mind of all improper thoughts of her before I met with her again.

“Wonderful, because contrary to what you believe, you deserve to be happy and in love again.

“I know,” I said.

“What took you so long to come and see me, grandson?” My grandfather, Bruno,

asked as he stirred the pot of chili he was putting the finishing touches on. My grandfather was known far and wide for his home cooking. It was something that he had shared with me as a small boy coming to live with him after my parents passed. Every Sunday he would make us dinner while we sat and caught up.

Page 16

Source Creation Date: July 1, 2025, 9:40 am

“The new facilities has been keeping me busy, old man. What you been up to since I was here last?”

“Not too much. Just staying out the way. Catching up on some reading. Even had a date last week with Ms. Davis from across the way.”

“Ms. Davis, my fourth grade teacher? That Ms. Davis? I knew something was going on with you two when she stopped me in the grocery store two weeks ago asking about you. You still got it old man,” I joked.

“You need to work on getting you someone up under your old acting ass. When was the last time you had a woman checking for you?”

My thoughts went straight to the curvy beauty from the new facility. Images of her writhing underneath me with her hands tied above her head as I thrust deep inside her.

“Mine your business old man, ” I laughed.

“Exactly, you need to get back out there Crew, ” he said, his tone turning serious. It’s been long enough. “You deserve to have someone to come home to. You are a successful business man that went from hustling to the board room. You’ve changed and it’s about time you let all that old hurt go and let someone in Crew. If you want to take over everything when I go you’ll get it done sooner than later,” he declared.

This is the only part I hated about coming to see my grandfather; he was determined to get me back on the saddle and married. Before passing his company to me, he

made sure to add a stipulation to his estate that I had to be married to fully take over after his passing, and if I wasn't, I could remain CEO, but I would own nothing. I would be just another employee that the board could fire at any time. But the walls I had put up all those years ago to protect myself were hard to take down after so long.

"Sabrina was a good woman, but it's time to move on, Son," he said.

I pushed all those old feelings down before I said, "I'm good, old man. Don't worry about me. It's not like I'm lonely, I've had a few friends here and there. I just haven't met the right person. But you'll be the first to know when I do okay. I have something in the works."

"Good, because I need some great grands to pass all this knowledge to before I leave here, " he said. We continued to catch up and enjoy each other's company until it was time for me to get back home. Maybe the old man was right. Going home to an empty house, no matter the size, was getting old. But after my past experiences with love and relationships, I wasn't so sure.

CHAPTER 7

Nova

Unknown: You can't hide from me. I will find you sooner or later and when I do you will regret taking my daughter from me you slut.

I read the message three times, letting the words sink in. This wasn't the first time I had gotten a disturbing message from an unknown number, and it most likely wouldn't be the last. Not with Kyle still out there looking for us. Kyle was my ex-fiancé and Timberly's father. He was the type of man every parent hoped their daughter finds. Successful, handsome, charming and rich. But underneath all that window dressing resided a monster that enjoyed inflicting pain on those he perceived

as weaker than him.

I met Kyle at college during my sophomore year of nursing school. He was absolutely perfect, he wined and dined me, buying me anything my heart desired. Kyle was the kind of man you marry. He was very sweet, loving, and attentive, so when he asked me to marry him, I said yes. But then things changed. A month after his proposal I found out that I was pregnant and at first, I was hesitant to keep the baby because I didn't know how I'd be able to finish school and raise a child.

But Kyle and his family were so happy they persuaded me to keep the pregnancy. They suggested that I take a break from the program during the pregnancy and they would take care of me. Kyle came from a wealthy family of lawyers and was about to take the bar exam before joining them at their firm. Against my better judgement, I agreed and everything was fine until it wasn't. It started with small comments from his parents about how I better be taking care of their son while he was out here providing for me. At first I thought they were joking because this wasn't the 1960's and I wasn't his maid.

But things only got worse. His father would say things about how I was lucky to be with their son like I was the shit on the bottom of his shoes in comparison. Because their son had so many choices in a wife being who he was. Kyle always told me that I was being too sensitive and they didn't mean any harm but I knew when I was being insulted. It wasn't until I got too far along in my pregnancy to perform my duties as his fiancé, as Kyle put it, that he showed his true colors.

Around my seventh month I went into preterm labor after sex one night. The doctors were able to stop it but I was put on bedrest and told that sex was out for the remainder of the pregnancy to minimize any further complication. This bit of information caused Kyle to hit the roof. As soon as we got into the car after that appointment, the mask that hid Kyle's monster slipped; the look that he gave me was one of pure disgust and loathing. I instantly recoiled from his gaze, scared of what he

might do to me.

“What am I supposed to do while you are on fucking bedrest? Huh, how are you supposed to take care of me sexually if I can’t touch you, Nova?”

“Kyle, it’s not my fault. You heard the doctor, sex could cause me to go into preterm labor. What do you want me to do?” I asked him as he stared at me with so much hate.

“I see now that my parents were right. I have been too easy on you. I should have shown you what was expected from you from the start, but I wanted to ease you into this life. But now you leave me no choice but to show you who I really am,” he said coldly, his voice sending chills down my spine.

“Mommy, where is my Bluey sweater?” Timberly yelled from the back, bringing me out of my memory. I deleted the message before turning it off and shoving it in my drawer. Luckily I had a work phone that I used for business. I could use that until I was able to get a new number. It would have to work for now. Timberly, the nanny, and the school had this number just in case of emergency so I wouldn’t have to worry about them not being able to reach me. Heading out of my room I walked toward my daughter’s room to help her finish getting dressed. Timberly was the only good thing that came from my time with Kyle and I would do anything to protect her. Every time I thought we were free of her father he found a way to find us. It had been two years since the last time we had to run and I was tired of having to uproot my baby. As understanding as Timberly was, she was still a child and I wanted her to be able to just be a child without the fear of her father’s wrath.

“Did you check your top drawer ma’am?” I asked her as she pulled her undershirt over her head.

“No ma’am, ” she said, when her head popped out of her shirt. Timberly was the

perfect mixture of me and her father. She was cinnamon brown like Kyle with freckles and dimples like mine. Her hair was a mess of dark brown curls that we usually kept in a ponytail or in two thick braids. Today she had opted for a ponytail at the top of her head with her favorite pink bow attached. I reached into her drawer and pulled out the sweater she needed.

“Here you go baby. Hurry up and get dressed and meet me downstairs. Breakfast will be ready soon. I grabbed my workphone and checked my text message and emails for anything that needed to be addressed before I got to the facility as I made oatmeal for Timberly and I. My texts were just a few FYIs from a couple of nurses, but I did notice a calendar notification. When I clicked on it, I was greeted with a meeting invitation for a meeting with Mr. Sanderson. What could he possibly want to meet with me about? To my knowledge, it wasn't the norm for the director of nursing to report directly to the owner. And after what happened this weekend it wasn't a good idea to be alone with the chemistry we shared. But since I was new to my position I would take all the help I could get no matter who it came from.

“Mommy, when am I going to get a dad like the other kids at school?” She asked me with bright eyes and a frown.

We'd had this discussion before, and each time it caused my chest to tighten. I hated that I wasn't able to give Timberly the family she deserved. I tried to be the best mother I could be to her but sometimes that just wasn't enough.

“One day the perfect man is going to come into our lives, and he will not only love mommy but he will love you as well. He will want to be your father as much as he wants to be my husband. But we just can't pick anyone for such an important job so be patient and give mommy some time to find the right person for us. Okay?” I asked her, hoping that answer would appease her for a while. She smiled big with her four missing teeth before giving me a big hug.

“Okay, mommy.”

Source Creation Date: July 1, 2025, 9:40 am

I dropped Timberly off at school and headed to work to get my day started. During my ride I was able to get Verizon on the phone and have them change my number and make it private. It was inconvenient but necessary for Timberly's and my safety. Today was Wednesday, which meant all day meetings and constant talking about problems we had no answers to. I accepted the meeting time with Mr. Sanderson and the new ombudsman as well since I had to reschedule her first meeting with me and the team. The building was in its normal disorganized chaos when I arrived. Staff was still arguing over assignments and difficult resident coverage even though this should have been handled at the start of the shift.

I headed straight to my office and closed the door to get my head together before I had to put on the mask of leadership. I pulled up all the charts that I needed for the day and new information that had come through the night before. After I had what I needed, I got up and took the documents to the conference room for our morning meeting. The morning was flying by faster than normal, and before I knew it, lunch had come and gone, and I was sitting waiting for the new ombudsman to arrive. Hopefully this one would actually be willing to work with the facility to help meet the residents needs instead of disregarding anything we had to say about resident issues.

We discussed Mr. Hightower's recent grievances as we waited for the new ombudsman. I hadn't waited long before a tall familiar looking Black woman entered the room with a designer briefcase and Tom Ford stiletto heels. She was definitely the most stylish ombudsman I had ever seen. I just hoped she put that much energy into her job. She wore a silk white blouse and a form-fitting black pencil skirt. She had her hair pulled up into a bun at the top of her head. The style complementing her slender face and long neck. She was tall and elegant like a gazelle, but with a

dangerous aura of a hyena. Her cinnamon color reminded me of Timberly's. She was very pretty but you could tell she had some work done like fillers and maybe a little Botox but who was I to judge? We all took her in as she sat her things down and started introducing herself as she handed out business cards.

"Good afternoon ladies. I'm your new ombudsman, Kennedy Harris." Everything else she said was lost on me as she continued. Harris, it can't be. Kyle's last name was Harris. I tried to hide the terror in my expression as I searched her face for any signs of relation to the monster that haunted my nightmares. There were vague similarities but nothing that would give me solid proof. I would have to get some more information on her to be sure. From what I remember Kyle didn't have an older sister. This woman had to be at least a few years older than us. I fixed my face and refocused on what she was saying.

"I've got a few residents that have active grievances that would like me to stop by and speak with them about their options. Mainly Mr. Hightower. He believes that what is happening to him is neglect and abuse," she said, picking up a piece of paper and scanned through it before reading off his accusations.

"Mr. Hightower reports that he hasn't had a shower for three weeks. His food is often cold or he isn't given the option he ordered. He goes on to say that the wait times for assistance in this building is ridiculous."

"Did he tell you that he is non-compliant with the majority of safety and facility protocols?" Kim asked her but she ignored her question. This bitch was already working on my nerves. I could see what type of ombudsman she was going to be.

"We have actually addressed each of Mr. Hightower's grievances prior to your arrival. We have all of the documentation from the investigation as well as copies of forms Mr. Hightower signed at the end of the investigation once completed and interventions were initiated. I'm unsure of what other options he had if he was

already agreeable to our resolutions to his grievances,” I told her.

“His options are whatever benefits the resident. From what he’s told me, this facility is not meeting his healthcare needs and a fire needs to be lit under you all to get these things rectified,” she said with a condescending tone. “I understand that you are new to your position. Is that correct?”

“Yes, but I’m unsure of what that has to do with Mr. Hightower's issues.”

“Everything. Excuse me for saying this but maybe this isn’t the right job for you. Maybe you would be better suited in a less authoritative position. Some people have it, and some people don’t,” she said with a nasty smirk.

“I’m confused because it sounds like you're trying to insult our director's ability to run this building, ” Tyra said with an attitude.

I had to reign this in because Tyra wasn’t wrapped too tight and would pop off if she felt like someone was disrespecting us.”

“Not at all. I’m just saying that from what I’ve heard, things around here could be managed a little better. You know these things rot from the head down.”

I was dumbfounded on how this woman could walk into my facility and talk to me like that. Based on one resident, how could she determine that I couldn’t do my job?

“Well, that’s all the time I have Ms. Harris. I can’t say that it was nice meeting you but I’m sure you feel the same. If there is anything else, please hesitate to call or email the unit manager assigned to that resident. You should have nothing to say to me at this point. You can see yourself out,” I said as I handed her my card.

I gave her one last fuck off look and went back to looking at my computer as she

grabbed her things and exited the room with a huff.

“I know that knock kneed bobble head bitch didn’t just try you like that Nova. Who the fuck does she think she is,” Tyra ranted.

“It’s fine, Ty, fuck her.”

“I knew it was something I didn’t like about that hoe the last time she was here, ” Kim said. Her vibes were way off.”

“It’s okay guys, we just have to make sure we stay on our Ps & Qs and document everything. Our documentation is what proves that we are handling our business. Other than that, keep that bitch out my face please and thank you because she was this close to getting cussed out,” I said as I got up grabbing my computer and started to head out.

“I’ll be in my office if you guys need me. I have to get ready for this meeting with the new owner.”

“Oh, okay. I see you,” Tyra sang.

“What are you talking about Tyra?”

“You know what I’m talking about. I saw you two stealing glances at each other in the meeting and how his eyes flashed and nostrils flared when you called him sir at the meeting. Girl, that man still wants some of you. He clearly didn’t get enough this weekend,” she whispered as she caught up with me.

It didn’t surprise me that Tyra had noticed our interaction. She was noisy as hell and never missed a thing. Too bad for me she could read me like a book, so I didn’t try to deny what she had just said, I just rolled my eyes.

“Whatever, mind your business.”

“Exactly, now make sure you lock your door when he gets into your office. I don’t want to see my boss bent over her desk by my bigger boss, she laughed.

“I can’t stand you,” I said as I exited the room.

I could hear her still laughing as I closed the door. Tyra may be crazy but she was right. I was lusting over my boss, and if her observations were correct, he may be still lusting after me as well. I rounded on all the units, making sure everyone had what they needed to do their jobs before stopping in on a few residents. After my rounds, I headed for my office. Placing my computer and folders down on my desk I opened up my computer and pressed play on the training video I needed to watch, while answering a few more emails before texting Ms. Leona to let her know to make sure Timberly did her reading and stuck to her tablet time tonight. Those two were thick as thieves and would frequently disregard some of my rules when it came to snacks and screening time. She meant well and loved my daughter, so I didn’t complain much.

Source Creation Date: July 1, 2025, 9:40 am

A knock on the door startled me from my message. I finished and hit send and hit pause on my computer before standing up and straightening my clothes before going to the door. I opened the door and was stunned into silence by the beauty of this man up close. It was weird to call a man beautiful but that's what he was from his long eyelashes and kissable plump lips to the icy pools that were his gray eyes. His dark chocolate skin was smooth and blemish free. This close up I could see the tattoos better on his neck that led to the ones on his massive chest and bulging arms. He was a little more casual today with a dark sweater and a pair of slacks that showed off the largest print I had seen in my life.

Unfortunately, he noticed where my eyes had traveled too because I was only broken from my trance after he cleared his throat. I looked up realizing I was staring at my boss's dick before I got myself together and stepped back to let him in.

"Excuse me, come in," I said, embarrassed by my whorish actions. Before the Gala it had been years since I had been with a man and my pussy was alert and ready for some more action since fucking Mr. Crew Sanderson all weekend long.

"No problem, Princess." He smirked. Fuck, I have to get myself together this is my boss. I told my misbehaving pussy.

"How are you today, Mr. Sanderson?" I asked as he walked in looking around my office. He looked at the pictures of my daughter and I that sat on my desk as well as my accomplishments wall.

"Good," he said, back to his usually dry self. He inspected a few more things before taking a seat in an available chair in front of my office.

“So, what can I do for you?” I asked after an awkward silence. He stopped looking around and then pinned me in an intense gaze.

“Two things actually,” he said while still examining me. His eyes traveled the length of my body as a bolt of electricity shot down my spine and around to my pussy, making it throb. I needed to get this meeting over or I couldn’t be held responsible for what I would do to this man behind my closed door.

“And what are these two things? ” I asked in a whisper. How was he having this type of effect on me? He hadn’t even attempted to make a pass at me. The only thing he had done was stare and I was ready to bust it open for a real one once again.

“First you will be meeting with me every day for six weeks in order for me to train you to be the best director of nursing I have, " he said in a serious tone. “I need you to be a representation of me. Is that clear?”

“Yes, Mr. Sanderson," I said. Heat shot from the pit of my stomach down to my core as I listened to him tell me what he wanted from me. After he finished, I still didn’t understand why I had ran from this man twice and he still wanted me to not only work for him but train me. “But why?” I was confused as to why he wanted me to be a representation of him and what that actually meant.

“You keep calling me Mr. Sanderson like I haven’t had my tongue in every part of your body, Princess. Call me Crew or Sir, " he said, smiling this time, giving me a panty soaking smile.

“Why, Sir?”

“You're a single mother, right?” He asked instantly, changing the energy in the room.

I didn’t, at any time, play about my baby and there was no reason for Mr. Sanderson,

Crew or whoever he wanted to be called, to ask about her.

“What does that have to do with anything? My daughter is my business, and I don’t feel comfortable speaking with you about my personal life,” I told him with a little more base in my voice than I was necessary when talking to my boss.

“It matters because of my second request. My organization is in the position to purchase more skilled nursing facilities this year and the board of my corporation feels that it will be more marketable to investors and sellers if I was married with a family instead of a single playboy that took over his business after a life of drug dealing to become a multimillionaire soon to be billionaire. It makes no sense to me but they seem to think that the families that run this industry feel better selling to a family-oriented company.”

“What does that have to do with me?” I asked again, even more confused. No matter how fine my boss was, he was starting to make me think he was slightly throwed off.

“I need a family and you are single with a child. From what I found out, you are trustworthy, a hard worker, loyal, and a good mother. Also, your daughter's father is not in her life, or am I mistaken?”

“Look, tell me what you want from me, or this meeting is over. You sit here telling me that you have basically been looking into me and my daughter's lives. I’m not sure if you know it or not but that shit is creepy and I don’t think any of this is going to work for me. You fucking me for a weekend does not entitle you to my life story,” I said, ready to say fuck this job and him too.

“If you take a moment to listen you’ll understand; now please, sit down.” I hadn’t even realized that I was standing over Crew until he said something. I sat back down in my chair but my body still remained tense as he spoke.

“If you take the time to think about it, you’ll see that this will benefit both of us. If you agree to marry me, I will not only train you to run this building as not only DON but as the owner. I will give you this building and another for each year we remain married. You will be given access to an account with a predetermined amount of money to provide any needs you or your daughter may have.”

“Who determines the amount?” I was intrigued by the possibility of a lump sum of money being given to me. I made very good money in my position but it never hurt to have a cushion.

“You do. Just give me a number within reason and it’s yours,” he said nonchalantly like money was no object to him.

“I would have to really think about this. I have a daughter to protect. My daughter and I are a package deal so I’m assuming I would have to live with you and that means my daughter would as well. I have to make sure she is safe,” I told him, trying not to offend him, but Timberly is my priority.

“I totally understand, and believe me when I say, I would treat your daughter like she was mine and that means protecting her with my life as if she came from me, " he said sincerely.

“With that being said you will be expected to make our marriage look as real as possible. That means PDA, family outings and date nights. Our agreement is for show only; however, if things between us change, any children from our marriage will be heirs to my entire fortune.”

“How long would we have to stay married?” Yeah he was fine but I couldn’t anchor myself to a man like him permanently. I just needed to use this opportunity to finally be free of Kyle.

“If after three years we have no biological children we will be free to divorce and go our separate ways.”

“What makes you think we would have any children? This isn’t a real marriage so we won’t be having sex again,” I stated with certainty.

Source Creation Date: July 1, 2025, 9:40 am

“I just fucked you in every position imaginable in my suite, Princess, and I barely knew your name. What makes you think after we’re married that I won’t be fucking my wife against every surface of our home?” he said as his eyes roamed my body, making me shiver. He was right and by the look on his face he knew it.

“W-Why me?” I stuttered out.

“Because you're loyal, beautiful, intelligent, hardworking, nurturing and you have the best pussy I’ve ever tasted. But most of all, you deserve a soft life. But it’s also because you intrigue me. I’m gonna be honest with you. I did my research on you before I decided to bring this proposition to you. I know that you are running from your ex-fiancé and I know why. If you accept my proposal I can protect not only you but your daughter as well. I protect what’s mine, and if you marry me you and your daughter will be my family. Meaning you have my protection and all that comes with it. I’ll give you some time to think about it. You have my number. Give me a call with your answer when you’re ready. No matter what you choose, I will still train you to be the best director in the state.”

I was speechless after listening to what he had to say. Could he really be serious? I mean, I had been worried about how I was going to continue to hide from Kyle and his family. Crew had the resources to protect us from Kyle. No matter how unorthodox his proposal seemed, if he was right it could benefit both of us. It was a win-win for both parties. I would have to do some research of my own. I couldn’t just jump into this headfirst I had my daughter to think about. I had to know what kind of man I could possibly be bringing my daughter around.

He stood and stalked to the door before he turned. I watched as his tongue ran across

his lower lips, captivating me. The sight sent shockwaves to my core making me squeeze my thighs together to quiet them. He smirked, catching me in an attempt to stop the simmering between my thighs. Crew stalked toward me and pinned me against my desk, making my body heat with need.

CHAPTER 8

Crew

I crouched down, taking each of her shoes off, before pulling her scrubs off with her panties. Standing up, I used my foot to kick her feet apart, spreading her so I could get a good look at her wet center. She was already so wet her pussy was glistening in response to just my words. I wanted to taste her on my lips again. To feel her essence in my beard but first I needed to feel her lips again. I used my belt to secure her wrists so she couldn't touch me while I used her body any way I wanted.

Gripping a hand full of hair, I pulled her up turning her around to face me and pushed her down on her knees. She looked so beautiful on her knees for me, her big brown eyes filled with need and vulnerability. Her chest heaved with excitement as she gazed up at me. I unbuttoned my pants and pushed them down with my briefs under my hips to free my dick. It sprang out hitting my torso, precum already beaded at the tip. I stepped forward and ran the wetness over her lips before tapping them lightly. She closed her eyes and licked her lips to taste me on them with an audible groan.

“Open, Princess,” I told her, still tapping her lips with my dick. She opened her mouth wide and stuck out her tongue.

“Open your eyes while I fuck your throat, I demanded. I wanted to see her eyes well with tears as I fed her every inch of my dick. As soon as I saw her light brown eyes fall on me I pushed the tip of my dick into her mouth. She used her tongue to tease the tip before sucking me in further. I groaned as I tried to control myself and not

fuck her throat like I wanted to. I was sure if she could handle that right now. The feeling of her gliding her tongue along my sensitive shaft was driving me wild. She bobbed her head up and down my length, taking as much of me as she could as her lips stretched around my dick with drool dripping from the corners of her mouth and down her chin.

“Ffffuuk Princess. You’re being such a good little slut for me, ” I moaned, twisting my fingers into her curly hair. She was sucking my dick like a champ moaning and swallowing around me. Slurping and gagging was loud in my ears as I tried to distract myself from thrusting deeper. The last semblance of my control broke when she pushed down as far as she could, holding me at the back of her throat while she hummed. My knees almost buckled, and I saw stars as she pushed me over the edge.

“Oh fuck,” I growled as my body stiffened and I came down her throat. I was usually always in control but Nova had proven that she could snatch that control away with a little effort. Pulling my dick from her mouth I took in her beautiful face as she licked her lips cleaning my excess cum from around her mouth with a huge smile. That image was now burned into my mind, that and the feel of her soft lips around my dick.

“Was I good, Sir?” She asked.

“Oh, Princess. You don’t know how good you were, but you will, I told her as I dragged her up and pushed her back onto her desk. Her arms were pinned behind her back, causing her ass to lift off the desk at the perfect angle for me. I stepped between her legs pushing them back so that she was almost folded in half. I saw how she was leaking for me as I spread her legs. I ran two fingers between her folds collecting her wetness. Lifting it to my mouth, I sucked them clean, tasting her sweetness on my tongue. Fuck, she always tasted so damn good.

“Please, Sir. I need you,” she begged.

“Tell me what you need, Princess, ” I asked, wanting her to tell me what she wanted.

“I need you to fuck me Sir,” she moaned. She sounded so sweet, so obedient I had to oblige her. Gripping the base of my dick, I used her essence to lubricate my dick. Holding her hip with one hand tightly I guided my dick into her with the other. We both gasped loudly as I pushed into her. Fuck she was so tight. I had to think of something else or I would cum quicker than I wanted to.

“Remember you have to stay quiet, Princess, or your employees will hear you,” I said as I pulled out almost completely before thrusting all the way in making her cry out.

A smile crossed my face as I leaned down steeling her lips in a rough kiss that stool all of her screams as I fucked her on her desk. I pinned her legs back and sat up to watch my dick sink into her over and over again. The sounds of me pounding into her was barely being covered up by the voices of the nursing video that played on her computer.

“Umm, yes. Right there. Don’t stop,” she chanted. I groaned as she clenched around me panting. I ran my hand over her mound and pressed down applying pressure to her lower abdomen and thrusting into her as deep as I could; at this point, I didn’t give a fuck who heard us. The feeling of her walls hugging me was out of this world.

“Cum for me, Princess.” I grunted, drilling into her relentlessly. I wanted to fuck her so good she have no hesitation about saying yes to marrying me. Because no matter how much I lied to myself after having a taste of her at the Gala and the whole weekend at the resort, I couldn’t think of anyone else if I tried.

“Ummm yes,” she screamed as someone knocked on her door. I slapped my hand over her mouth as I fucked her through her orgasm.

“Shhh, Princess. Keep cumming on my dick,” I coached as I wrapped my hand

around her neck while pushing my thumb in her mouth to muffle her screams. Her legs shook as she came down from her orgasm. The knock came again but nothing would stop me from making Nova lose control.

“Umm. Y-Yes Sir,” she mumbled around my thumb, that was all it took to have me cumming so hard, flashes of bright light danced behind my eyelids as I emptied inside of her.

“Damn, Princess,” I growled as my back seized up from how hard I had just cum. I was dizzy but still ready for more of her. Are you ready for more?” I asked her, still buried deep inside her hot tunnel. I removed my thumb from her mouth to hear her answer.

“Please, Sir,” she moaned sweetly. Pulling out of her, I flipped her over onto her stomach and kicked her legs apart. I gripped her ass and spread her cheeks. A mixture of our cum was leaking out of her swollen lips. Taking a finger, I ran it through the mess and used it to wet her back hole. She shuddered from the sensation of me prepping her for my entrance.

“Do you remember me telling you that the next time I would fuck your tight ass, Princess?” I asked her as I massaged her hole and listened to her moan and roll her hips against my hardening dick.

“Ummm, yes,” she moaned.

“I’m going to stretch that pretty ass out before I fuck it. But first,” I said before crouching down and driving my tongue into her ass. I loved the taste, and if she’d let me, I’d be tasting all of her for the rest of my life. I held her cheeks open as I devoured her, sucking and licking her ass until she was trembling. I needed her to be relaxed before I fucked her. I would have liked to have some lube but she was wet enough for me to stretch her around my dick without too much pain.

Source Creation Date: July 1, 2025, 9:40 am

“Good girl, ” I said, coming up for air as she came again. “Now take a deep breath and relax for me.” She took a deep breath and then relaxed as I pushed my wet finger into her tight hole. Pushing past the tight ring of muscles until my entire finger was inside her ass.

“Ohhh,” she moaned as I pushed my finger in and out of her slowly getting her used to the feeling of having something inside her ass. Using more of our cum to lubricate her entrance, I pushed in another finger, curling them and opening her up for me. Pretty soon, she was pushing her hips back on my hand taking my fingers deeper into her.

“Just like that, Princess.” I removed my fingers and lined my dick up with her hole. Breathe, I said as I pushed in just the tip. The pressure caused her to go up on her tiptoes.

“Ssss. Sir, please. I can’t take it,” she hissed as I pushed in another inch and held it there letting her adjust.

I reached between her legs and used my fingers to massage her clit. Pretty soon she was pushing back against me trying to take more of me.

“Push against me, baby. Fuck yourself on my dick.” It was so hard to remain still as she rocked her hips, taking my dick deeper into her ass. The feeling of her ass clenching around me was pure bliss. She was tight and warm and so willing to please. I watched the spot where our bodies connected and the sight of her opening up for me had my fingers digging into her waist. I let her take control until she had all of me inside her. The need to moan overtook me the moment I felt her ass connecting with

my thighs each time she pushed back on me letting her ass suck me in.

“Fuck, you’re so needy for my dick in your ass. How does it feel, Princess? Talk to me.”

“Ummm, oh my, fuck,” she moaned, trying to be quiet.

I tilted my hips, pulling back to just the tip before thrusting forward burying myself inside Nova so deep she went on up on her toes even more. I repeated the move again and again.

“Answer me. How does my dick feel inside of your ass?” I hissed as my balls tingled. I wasn’t going to last much longer.

“Sooo good. I’m cumming,” she cried ass clenching around me. My thrust became erratic as her ass tightened and our skin slapped together. I came filling her up and biting my lip to contain the string of curses that tried to spill from my lips. I rested against her back to catch my breath. Once I had my bearings, I pulled out of her and watched the trail of my cum that leaked out of her well stretched hole. She looked so beautiful and sweaty with her holes leaking with my cum.

I pulled my pants and briefs back up around my waist before going into her bathroom and cleaning up with a few damp paper towels. After I cleaned myself and adjusted my clothing, I went back out to the desk and cleaned her with a few warm towels. She was half asleep as I gripped her around the waist and helped put her scrubs and shoes back on. I would have loved to cater to her after what I had just put her body through, but she still had to get through the rest of her day. The thought of her walking around with my cum leaking out of her made my dick hard again but just like her I had a job to do. I lifted her in my arms and placed her back in her chair to relax before I headed to the door.

“Call me when you’ve made your decision. I’ll be waiting, Princess.”

CHAPTER 9

Nova

He turned and headed out of the door, closing it behind him. I was stuck in my aftermath of the chaos that was Crew Sanderson. Damn, what was I going to do? Not only did he just ask me to be his wife, he nearly fucked me into oblivion. I needed my friend. This was something that you talked over with someone you could trust. Someone that has your best interest at heart. The only person I could think about talking to was Tyra, but we were at work.

Sending a text, I let her know to meet me in my office asap as I went back to absentmindedly watching my training video. Not even five minutes went by before there was a knock at my door, startling me from my postsexual haze. Thank god the candle in my warmer was new, masking the scent of sex in the air. I got up and opened the door, still feeling Crew inside me with each step.

“It took you...” my words trailed when I saw my administrator at my door.

“Can I come in?” Stephanie asked with her mouth in a tight grimace.

“Sure, how can I help you?” I asked her, confused as to what she could possibly want or be upset about.

“I had a visit from the ombudsman and I wasn’t pleased about what I heard.”

“Okay, what does that have to do with me?”

“Well, she informed me that your team was very rude to her after she gave you all

some simple suggestions on how to resolve the issues with Mr. Hightower.”

“I’m sorry she felt we were rude. Maybe if she wasn’t being a condescending wench we wouldn’t have been rude to her. You know me. I will never be an asshole to someone that does not deserve it. So the next time someone tells you I said something to them, ask yourself this. What did they say to make Nova snap?”

“Nova, I understand where you're coming from but you know I have to investigate every complaint,” she said.

“I know but, like I said, me and my team will always return energy. Nowhere in my job description does it say I have to be disrespected with a smile.”

“You’re right. There was something else as well. She also said that you were having a meeting with Mr. Sanderson,” she said with her brows knitted.

“Now how would she know that? And what business is it of hers? You were at the meeting when he said I would be reporting directly to him so why is me meeting with him an issue for anyone?”

Stephanie was starting to piss me off. Usually, I tried my best not to hurt her feelings because she was sensitive, and I knew when I was pissed, I could take things too far. But she was working on my last good nerve. Something about them asking me about Crew had anger brewing in the pit of my stomach.

“What I’m gonna need for everyone here to do is stay in their lane and worry about the things that involve them. Yeah, that’s what I'm gonna need. I have another meeting, so is there anything else you need?”

Source Creation Date: July 1, 2025, 9:40 am

“Um, no I-I’m gonna go, ” she said.

“Okay, see you tomorrow. Hey, if you see Tyra, can you send her in here please. Thanks.”

“Sure.”

I could hear some commotion out in the hall and knew Tyra was nearby. My girl was loud and a little hood but she was great at her job and the residents and families loved her.

“Yes, ma'am, how can I help you?” She grinned. “You were so busy with your boss I didn’t think you would have enough energy to do anything after his visit.” She laughed.

“Did you knock on my door earlier?” I asked. I could have sworn I heard someone at my door while Crew had me bent over fucking the shit out of me.

“No. Why?”

“Someone knocked on my door a while ago when I was with Crew. I thought it might have been you,” I told her, not telling her that they may or may not have heard Crew and I fucking.

“What did you guys talk about?”

“That’s why I needed to talk to you. He offered me a proposition.”

“Okay, now we’re talking. What did he propose?”

“That's just it . He asked me to marry him.”

“Bitch I know you fuckin lyin?” She gasped.

“No, I’m not. He wants me to marry him so he can look like a stable business man instead of a playboy. Would you think I’m crazy if I told you I was actually considering it?”

“Girl, hell no! That man is fine plus he’s got to be a millionaire or something. And by the way he had you walking on air this weekend the dick has to be mind blowing, she joked. You better jump back on that before someone else beats you to it. He clearly needs a wife so if you don’t agree then he’ll have to ask someone else.”

She was right, and thinking about him marrying someone else gave me a sick feeling in the pit of my stomach.

“Yeah, you’re right but I’ll have to consider Timberly and how she may feel about it. She’s been asking me when I was going to get her a dad, so maybe she’ll be okay with all this.”

“Well there you go. Get my girl Timber a daddy and you too.” She smiled.

This was a big decision and I wasn’t going to make it without considering all the pros and cons.

Unknown: You think you can replace me?

Unknown: I'm going to make you beg for forgiveness.

Unknown: I'm coming for you.

The text messages were getting more frequent and any other time I would be packed up and running for the hills, but this time was different. Timberly and I are happy here. We've put down roots finally after all the years of running scared. I couldn't let Kyle keep ruining our lives.

CHAPTER 10

Crew

It had been a month since I technically proposed to Nova. We meant via Zoom every day to train her on policy and procedures that would improve her skills as a director. It took all the discipline I possessed not to go back to the facility and fuck her all over her office everyday but I needed her to have a clear mind and really think about the proposition that I had presented. She seemed to be onboard but I understand that she needed to make sure her daughter would be okay with such a big change. The fact that she was such a good mother made me want her that much more. Anyone else would have been all over me just because of my name alone even without being told what they would get outside of being married to me.

I had had a few casual flings but nothing since Sabrina passed. The office was silent except for the steady tick of the clock on the wall that read 10:37 p.m. I sat at the head of the long mahogany table, alone under the dim recessed lights, the city of Timberline glittering coldly outside the windows. An untouched glass of bourbon sat by my elbow. The manila folder Janelle dropped on my desk hours ago sat open in front of me.

Before me was everything my contacts in Brookview had been able to gather on Nova's ex. Kyle Harris. On paper, he was clean, polished, educated and respected. But underneath was a different story. An associate of mine had loaned me his securities

expert and he and his brother were able to dig up domestic violence reports buried with payoffs. Women paid to disappear. Deals cut in secret courtrooms.

I leaned back in the chair, closing my eyes for a second too long. And there she was. Sabrina, sitting across from me in the passenger seat of my old black Charger, laughing, messy hair blowing in the night wind.

"One day, Crew," she said, grinning at me like she could see a future I couldn't yet. "You're gonna find someone you're scared to lose. And when you do... don't waste time. Don't wait for perfection. Just claim her."

Source Creation Date: July 1, 2025, 9:40 am

I didn't understand it back then. Too busy chasing power. Too busy thinking there would always be more time. Until there wasn't. Until a bullet meant for me carved her out of my world. Until the best thing I ever touched bled out in my arms, whispering apologies for loving me too much.

I opened my eyes. The city blurred for a second, then sharpened. Nova wasn't like Sabrina. She was harder, fiercer. But at the same time they both had the same delicate nature and hearts of gold. Sabrina had warned me. Don't waste time, don't hesitate and don't leave the people you love unprotected. The bourbon stayed untouched as I stood, pacing to the window, staring out at the city lights. This marriage wasn't romance. It was protection, armor for war if it came to it. I wasn't about to lose another woman because I played by someone else's rules.

I picked up my phone. Texted Janelle three words:

"Make it happen."

And just like that...Nova Travers was about to become Nova Sanderson. My mind drifted back to Nova laid out under me. The feel of her soft lips and sound of her moans as she came undone for me were burned into my memory. I glanced at my tablet to the open app that showed me Nova sitting at her desk typing on her computer. I had cameras installed throughout the facility to keep an eye on staff and residents. Though I wouldn't normally place cameras in the management offices I needed to keep an eye on Nova.

Whether she knew it or not she had become mine and I would do anything to protect what was mine. So watching over her is a priority. I watched her as she stopped

typing and picked up her phone like she was about to call someone but stopped with her hand hovering over the call button. She sat for a few moments before finally hitting the call button and my phone rang. I almost knocked it onto the phone from how fast I picked it up to answer.

“Hello, ” I said after putting it on speaker.

“I accept your proposal,” she said as a smile crept across my face.

“Really, what made you accept it?” I asked, knowing it more than likely had to do with the dirty things I did to her in her office a few days ago.

“I felt that it would be a good opportunity for me and Timberly. Who doesn’t want to live a soft life,” she lied. I could see her running her fingers over her desk probably remembering being fucked into it.

“Good. I’ll have my lawyers draw up the papers. We will need a public proposal so I’ll need you and your daughter’s ring and dress sizes,” I told her.

“Why would you need Timberly’s sizes?”

“I told you before I plan on being there for not only you but for your daughter. She’s just as much a part of this as you are. Therefore she will receive a ring to show her that I plan to be a father figure in her life from this moment forward. The dresses are for our engagement party that will take place following the proposal. My people will plan it for this Saturday at the venue that was used for the Gala.” I watched her breath hitch at the mention of the Gala like the memories of me being inside her plagued her dreams as much as they did mine.

“What do I tell everyone here? I’m not forthcoming with my personal life but most people knew that I was single.”

“Just tell them that we met months ago and kept our relationship private but now that we are taking it to the next level we are making it public. Simple.”

“What do I say when anyone asks us how we met?”

“People will talk no matter what but with both of us already being private people they can only make assumptions and nothing more.”

“Anything else I should know?”

“I expect you and Timberly to be ready to move into my estate after the party. I will have everything set up for your arrival to our home. If you need anything in particular send me a list and I will have it delivered. Other than that we will speak in detail after the papers are signed. Do you have any questions for me?

“Not really, this is just so weird. I thought that when I got married it would be a fairytale romance and my fiancé would sweep me off my feet,” she said as she sat back in her office chair with her head back and eyes closed like she saw it playing out in front of her.

“What does your dream wedding look like?” I asked her, and I saw her smile as she started telling me her vision of a fairytale wedding. I smiled, listening to her talk about the wedding that she dreamed of as a little girl. And with each word the desire for her grew because I wanted to be the man to give her all that she was describing to me. I took notes to make sure that I didn’t miss anything as she continued to talk and then an idea hit me.

“Are you free for dinner tomorrow night?” I asked after she finished her description of her fairytale.

“Yes, but I thought we were having an engagement party this weekend,” she asked.

“Yeah we are but I thought that I would take you out on a real date before I married you. Is seven o'clock good for you? I know you need to get Timberly situated first.” I smiled at the phone.

“What should I wear?”

“Don't worry about it, I'll take care of everything. You just have to be ready. I'm glad you decided to accept,” I told her honestly.

“Me too,” she said, surprising me. We said our goodbyes and hung up before I started making plans for our date and this weekend. I called Del to help me with the setup for the date tomorrow since Janelle was already working on the engagement party. After that I contacted one of the high end boutiques in town to have a few dresses, shoe and accessory choices sent over for our date tomorrow. Once I had that taken care of I called the jewelers to pick out some pieces for our date as well as the engagement party for her and Timberly.

“Have you told Mr. Bruno that you found a wife yet?” Del asked as she hung up with the caterer.

We were sitting in our conference room going over last minute details for my date tonight.

“Nah not yet, he would be too excited. Demanding to meet her immediately. I want to ease her into everything before I introduce her and Timberly to the old man. He can be a bit much. You know grandchildren are all he talks about.”

Source Creation Date: July 1, 2025, 9:40 am

“Yeah I know, but he just wants to make sure that you don’t end up alone. He means well,” she said.

She was right but no matter how much I was on board with this arrangement, I hated to be pushed into anything. By the time we finished getting everything in place for the party I only had about two hours to get ready for dinner with Nova. Instead of heading out to my house I decided to get ready in the private suite in my office. I showered, brushed my teeth and moisturized my skin. I picked out a blue suit from my closet and dressed. I had gotten a fresh taper and my beard lined up so after grabbing my wallet and phone I was ready to pick up Nova.

The drive to her home wasn’t long. Nova lived in a nice gated community with a wide variety of single family homes. My driver parked in her driveway behind Nova’s green KIA Telluride with personalized nurses plates. He let me out and made my way to the door to get my wife to be. It was weird that after all this time alone in a matter of days I would have a wife and daughter. I just hoped I was able to live up to the responsibility that came with taking care of a family. My grandfather had been a great example of how a man provides and cares for their family. I would take those lessons and put them to good use.

Nerves bubbled in the pit of my stomach as I rang her doorbell and waited. I had never been one to be worried about what someone thought of me but for some reason I cared what Nova thought. It felt like I was chasing her approval whenever I was around her. I wanted her to see me as a man worthy of being in her and her daughter’s lives. I heard movement behind the door before it opened and standing in Squishmallow pajamas stood a small little girl with curls peeking from under the hood of her pajama top.

“Hi, is Nova at home?” I asked, giving her my best smile. She looked so much like her mother. Especially with the curious expression on her face.

“Yes, are you my mommy's new husband?” she blurted out. From what I knew about her mother, I understood her directness.

“Timberly, what did I tell you about answering the door?” I heard Nova ask behind her.

“Not to,” she answered her mother with a pouty expression. Nova appeared behind Timberly looking like a dream in the pink dress that hugged every curve she had. I had to look away before my mind drifted to all the improper things I wanted to do to her tonight. I had to remember that Timberly was present so after giving her a good head to toe I kept my eyes on her pretty face.

“These are for you,” I said, handing the lilies to Nova while trying to steal glances at her at the same time. I remembered her telling me that they were her favorites at the Gala.

“Thank you. Please come in,” she said, leaning in and placing a soft kiss on my cheek. Before stepping to the side and letting me into her beautiful home. Her home had a comfortable warmth to it. It was clean but you could tell a child lived here by the stuffed animals on the sofa and coloring book on the coffee table.

“Next time I’ll bring something for the both of you,” I said as she led me to her sofa and I took a seat.

“Is it alright if we have a talk with Timberly before we leave?” She asked.

“Of course, we have time,” I said before turning toward Timberly who had taken a seat on the ottoman across from me.

“Timberly, this is Mr. Sanderson. He's the man I was telling you about earlier. And yes he did ask me to be his wife, but I have to make sure this is something you are okay with as well,” she explained to her daughter.

“How would you feel about your mother marrying me and me being your step dad?” I asked. I watched as Timberly's eyes got brighter and the smile on her face grew.

“Does that mean you'll go to all the daddy-daughter events at school with me?” she cheered.

“Every one, Timber,” I told her. Just like her mother I would do anything in my power to make her happy and if that meant joining the PTA or chaperoning school trips I would do it.

“Well then I think you should marry Mr. Sanderson mommy. Will I get to call you dad when you marry my mom? She asked with her toothless grin.

“Whatever you're comfortable with dad, Crew, pops, old man. Just don't call me bruh,” I said, making her and Nova laugh. We talked about what would happen after the wedding and the upcoming party before Nova took Timberly upstairs for bed. We left shortly after her nanny, Ms. Leona, arrived. It felt like a weight had been lifted off of my shoulders after our talk with Timberly. Now all I had to do was make sure I won her mother over.

Dinner went great and we learned so much more about each other. When asked about Timberly's father, Nova seemed to shy away from that subject. The only thing she said was that their relationship ended and he hadn't been in Timberly's life since she was a baby. I wouldn't push her to discuss it now but we would have to talk about it. I needed Nova to open up to me about why she ran from him. From the information I gathered it wasn't hard to guess. But I needed to know if he was gonna come back to try and take what was mine.

Nova and Timberly were my responsibility, and I wouldn't let anyone come in and ruin what we were trying to build. I wasn't the type to share so if he ever got the idea that he wanted to get his family back I needed him to know that it wasn't happening. He had a chance and he failed to be the man they needed. It was my turn now and I wouldn't let them down ever.

“Whenever you're ready to talk about your ex. I'm ready to listen. I've done my research on him and he is not a good man. But just know that neither am I. The only difference between us is that I will never hurt you or Timberly. And I'll never let anyone else hurt you either,” I told her.

CHAPTER 11

Nova

Dinner with Crew was wonderful. He was the perfect gentleman escorting me home and giving me a passionate kiss at the door before seeing me in. I wanted so badly to have a replay of what we did on my desk a few days ago but he reminded me that Timberly was at home and he wanted to be respectful. I appreciated the sweet, respectable Crew but right now I wanted dirty filthy Sir. Ass eating, spit in my mouth Sir.

I don't know what was wrong with me. Whenever I was around him, I became a dick hungry slut, willing to do anything and everything he asked of me. My wrist still had bruises from his belt, and I couldn't wait for what kinky things he would do to me next. It's like he got off on pulling me out of my dominant role and making me submit to him.

With Kyle he never required me to submit in the bedroom he wanted me to submit in my daily role as his fiancé. He wanted me to be his docile meek little housewife. Sex was for his pleasure only. I was to do it whenever he wanted however he wanted.

Kyle demanded that I be okay with him cheating, even going as far as bringing women home during the last few months of my pregnancy after I was placed on bedrest. When I refused to stay if he kept seeing other women, he and his family threatened to take Timberly away from me.

At the time I was pregnant with no job and a half-completed degree. Kyle took care of me financially and I had nowhere to go. My mother took his side and told me that I should be happy someone was willing to take care of me like Kyle, and that I needed to be grateful for what I had. I found out later that Kyle was paying her mortgage. His mother was no help either. She told me that women were supposed to support our men right or wrong. That we all had to make sacrifices for comfort.

The last straw was a week after I gave birth to Timberly, Kyle came home from work and demanded sex. I told him I couldn't for at least another six weeks, but he refused to listen to me and forced himself on me. From that moment on I started planning my escape. But I had to be careful because at every turn Kyle and his mother used Timberly as a pawn in their game to keep me under their thumbs. I knew I couldn't get help from my family or his so I started squirreling money away to get out of town.

It took me a year and a half to get away from them and we've been running ever since. We came close to them finding us a few times but for the past two years we have felt safe and at home here in Timberline.

Source Creation Date: July 1, 2025, 9:40 am

Unknown: "I told you I would never let you get away from me. You think you can move on and start a new life with my daughter. I'll show you what happens when you disobey me. Your punishment will be long and excruciating while I make you beg for my forgiveness."

How is he doing this? I changed my number so many times and he keeps getting it. The number isn't even in my name. Sooner than later I would have to tell Crew the truth about Kyle. I just didn't want to scare him away. No, Crew didn't seem like the type of man that scared easily, but I couldn't expect him to want to take on my burdens. It would be better if I told him about my issues with Kyle after we were married. I archived the message from Kyle just in case I needed it for a later date and pocketed my phone.

The takeover was underway and the changes that Crew and his team were making gave the facility a more home like environment. The residents and staff were loving the changes. The residents were happier and staff morale was at an all-time high. My meager staffing budget had been increased and I was able to hire some qualified dedicated staff. I had increased bonuses and bought gift cards and prizes that we used to offer monthly raffles for perfect attendance and documentation. Everyone was enjoying life at the facility except our resident problem child Mr. Hightower who was still in cahoots with our new pain the ass ombudsman Ms. Harris.

I hadn't seen her since our last encounter but she had been in the building a few times over the past week causing trouble. My team had noted the uptick in complaints and state reportables for any resident she came in contact with, even though all the other residents and families raved about the new updates and changes to the building we were making. It was something about her that rubbed me the wrong way but I

couldn't put a finger on it other than her last name. She was trouble, but from what I remember about his family, Kyle didn't have a sister our age so I didn't have to worry about her being related to that psycho. But just in case, I would keep an eye on her.

I pushed my laptop back down into my bag and got ready to leave for the day. Stephanie hadn't said anything else to me about my attitude or Crew, which pleased me to no end. I headed out the back entrance past the kitchen. Two kitchen staff members sat on the bench at the back of the building smoking and engrossed in their cellphones. I walked past them giving my usual peace sign before reaching my truck. I popped the trunk and placed my bag inside. I turned to get in the car and was stopped by none other than Ms. Harris, the ombudsman. She stood next to my truck with a malicious grin on her face.

"Ms. Harris, it's so bad to see you here. Was there not enough parking at the front of the building? Guests don't normally park back here."

"Hhm is that right? Well, I was waiting for you actually. I think we got off on the wrong foot and I would like to apologize. I stopped by your office, but you were preoccupied," she said, that wicked smile never leaving her face.

"Was I? I was rather busy today. But it doesn't matter. Thank you for the apology but like I said our interactions will more than likely be very limited especially since the overall resident satisfaction rates have skyrocketed since Mr. Sanderson has taken over. So, if that is all I have to be somewhere," I said, side stepping her.

"Oh okay. Tell Timberly aunt Kennedy says hello," she said, stopping me in my tracks.

"What did you say? I turned back to face her ready to choke slam this bitch into the cement if she said the wrong thing.

“Did you really think you could hide forever? We’ve always known where you were. Our parents felt that Kyle needed time to sow his wild oats before settling down to be a family man after all, but now that he’s had his fun and ready it's time for you to come home.”

The fear that I should have felt was an afterthought, as rage bubbled to the surface of my psyche. Before I could stop myself, her hair was in my hand and our faces were so close our noses almost touched.

“Don’t let whatever old information your brother gave you fool you. I will snap your neck and sleep like a baby tonight. Look around, there are no cameras back here. No witnesses. If I were you I would run home and tell the family that you never saw me. Because if I see you again we will be looking for a new ombudsman. Are we clear, Ms. Harris?” I asked her. I wasn’t a violent person, but I was tired of running. I released her hair and got into my car without a second glance her way. Kennedy Harris can go to hell right with her brother. I took my phone out with shaky hands and hit the call button. It rang once before he picked up.

“Crew, I need you,” I said.

“Nova. What’s wrong?”

“I need you. Can you meet me at my house please?”

“I’m on the way, Princess,” he said before ending the call.

I sent Ms. Leona a message asking her to keep Timberly with her for another hour to give me time to explain everything to Crew. My time had run out, and I had to tell him the truth. It was either that or run and I just wasn’t doing that again. I was on autopilot as I drove to my home. I didn’t realize I had arrived until I reached my gate.

I originally picked this property because it was gated and my home backed up another property that was owned by an ex-military couple that did not play about security. They had fences, lights and cameras that could see everything. With that type of security, I knew that anyone attempting to sneak around my house would be seen by their nosy asses.

I informed the security guard that Crew was to be added to my visitors list until further notice. I parked my truck in the driveway before getting out to get my bag and running inside. A black Mercedes S-Class AMG pulled into my driveway next to my truck as I got my keys out. Being prepared for anything I tugged my mace out of the side pocket of my bag just in case. I relaxed as soon as I saw Crew emerge from the car. I opened the door, kicked off my shoes and put my coat and bag down in the closet. I went straight to the wine that I kept in the fridge as Crew walked in behind me. He sat quietly observing me as I fixed myself a glass of wine and returned to the island to sit with him.

“Timberly’s father knows where we are. From what his sister told me today he has always known. He’s been sending threatening messages for a while, and I ignored them and just changed my number. He hasn’t been this close in a while. Normally, I would run but I’m tired of living in fear that one day he’ll show up and try and take Timberly away from me out of spite. He and his family are great lawyers, and it wouldn’t be hard for them to convince a judge that she was better off with them. Especially after he tells them what I did to him.”

“What did you do?” He asked.

I let out a deep sigh before reliving the last time I saw Kyle.

“The last night we were together Kyle decided that he wanted a threesome. I told him that I didn’t want to bring anyone else into our bed, but he refused to listen. It wasn’t the first time he tried to force me to be with him and another woman but that night I’d

had enough. I was tired from my day with Timberly and just life in general. Kyle brought home one of the many women who entertained him after I went on bedrest from my pregnancy. He came into the room with her and told me to get undressed and lay on the bed with her so we could start things off.

When I refused, he tried to tie me up, but I grabbed some scissors off our nightstand and slashed him across the face. There was blood everywhere. The girl ran when she saw what I had done. While Kyle was on the floor screaming I hit him over the head with a lamp. As he laid on the floor knocked out, I took Timberly and left. I left everything he could use to track me and never looked back. I think Kyle and his family could say that I attacked Kyle and stole our daughter. I mean I never reported any of the things Kyle did to me. He made sure to never hit me. It was all mental and emotional abuse.”

“When did you see his sister?” He asked, running a comforting hand across my back.

“She turned out to be the fucking ombudsman at the facility. I knew it was something about her that I didn’t like. She tried to corner me as I was leaving just now. I told her I would kill anyone that came for me and Timberly and I meant it. I’m not going back, and no one is taking my daughter from me.”

“I told you that I take care of what’s mine and you and Timber are my responsibilities now. I will never let anything happen to either of you,” he said, taking out his phone and texting.

“Where is Timberly right now?” He asked.

“With Ms. Leona. I told her to give me an hour before bringing her home. They should be here anytime now. Why?”

Source Creation Date: July 1, 2025, 9:40 am

“Call her and see how long they’ll be. Then I want you to go and pack a few things. You and Timberly are coming home with me. We’re getting married tonight.”

“What, I can’t marry you tonight. I thought we were going to do a public proposal, so it looked real.”

“We don’t have time for that now. From what you’re saying your ex-fiancé is coming to try and take you and Timber. That’s not happening. If we get married tonight, you and Timber will be Sandersons and no matter what your ex says, no judge in the area will go against my grandfather or me for that matter. I need you to trust me. Go get ready,” told me before going back to text on his phone.

“Can Tyra be there for the ceremony? She’s my best friend and I need someone there to center me and make this real? I asked.”

“Of course, give me her information and I’ll have someone pick her up. Is there anything else you need?”

“Thank you. I know getting married is benefiting you too. But thank you for at least making sure that we’ll be safe.”

“Come here, Princess.”

My heart raced in my chest anytime that Crew was near me. My body reacted to him in ways that it never had for any other man. I wanted to fall into his arms and forget all the crazy things that were happening in my life. But I knew we didn't have time for that. So right now, I would just settle for this moment between the two of us and

keep going forward. I moved to stand between his legs as he wrapped his strong arms around me. He held me against his chest allowing me to breathe in his soothing scent until I was calm and able to face what was coming.

“I’m okay. Let me make the call to Ms. Leona,” I said, stepping back from going to pack some things for us both.

Timberly and Ms. Leona arrived twenty minutes later, and we got on the road. Timberly was so excited to be going to Crews’ house. To her it was an adventure, but to me, it was our new reality. A reality I was excited to explore. We drove for over an hour heading further into the vast forest of Timberline before we turned down a dark secondary road. It was lit with beautiful lanterns every few feet that stretched at least a few miles from the main road. It must have cost Crew an arm and a leg to have such a beautiful driveway. About five minutes later we reached a massive home tucked into the thick trees of the forest. It blended in perfectly with the landscape. It was dark out so I wasn’t able to take in the home’s full beauty, but I could tell Crew had spent a great deal of money on it. The large glass and iron door opened as we parked in front. Out came Janelle and Del and an older gentleman who looked a lot like Crew. Crew turned off the engine and helped us out of the car and up the stairs to the door.

“Nova, Timber... I would like you to meet my grandfather, Bruno Sanderson,” he said, introducing us to the friendly looking man.

“Nice to meet you two beautiful ladies,” he said, giving me a hug. He then got down at eye level with Timberly and asked if it was okay to hug her as well. I honestly thought Timberly would say no but she rushed in giving him a good squeeze before turning to Janelle and Del and introducing herself, followed by a succession of rapid-fire questions. The inside of the home we would be calling ours from now on was just as luxurious as the outside. The decor was clearly picked by a man with all of the hard lines and dark browns, blacks, and beiges. Crew led us into the living room

where everyone else joined us.

“So, Nova. My grandson tells me that you two are moving up the marriage ceremony to tonight.”

“Yes, Mr. Sanderson we are. Um I know it’s?—,”

“Don’t worry yourself about it, dear. I’ve been waiting years for this boy to have a family and now he has one. I couldn’t be more happier to have you and Timberly as a part of our family,” he said with a big smile.

“Thank you, Mr. Sanderson.”

“You’re family now. Call me Pops, Bruno, or Old man like this one here,” he said pointing at Crew. We all laughed and talked as we got to know each other. Timberly instantly gravitated toward Mr. Bruno sitting and listening intently to his stories about Crew as a boy. You could tell that he loved his role as a grandfather and Timberly was soaking up the new experience. Our conversation flowed easily for the next hour until there was a knock at the door.

“I’ll get it,” Janelle stated as she went to answer it. She returned shortly with a short well-dressed white man and three black women pushing in two big racks of clothing.

“Oh, mommy princess dresses,” Timberly giggled running over to touch the beautiful racks of clothing.

“What is all this,” I asked Crew, looking over at the dresses straight out of a fairytale.

“These are wedding dresses and accessories to make sure that you look the part of a fairytale bride. Their options for you, Timberly, and Tyra. Donovan will help you with anything else you may need including makeup and hair. Wear your curls. Straight

hair is beautiful on you, but I love your curls.” He said before disappearing into another room.

“Come on darling, let's find the perfect dress for you,” Donovan said as he led me over to the racks. Timberly was already spinning around in a beautiful pink ball gown with a pink and gold tiara with tiny diamonds throughout.

“Momm,y look; I’m a real princess,” she cooed.

“Yes you are, baby. Is that the dress you want?”

“Yes, mommy. Crew said I can have whatever I want,” she said with her signature wide toothless smile. I laughed as I told her yes she could pick anything she wanted. As I searched the racks I heard loud talking and laughing coming from the foyer and knew who had entered the house immediately.

“Take me to the bride to be,” she bellowed as she and DJ entered the living room.

“Girl, why are you always so loud?”

“How else would everyone know that the life of the party has arrived.” She laughed, coming over to hug me and Timberly.

We picked our outfits and accessories and then sat for hair and makeup. Donovan was one of the best stylists in town and he and his team had us looking like Disney princesses. He even had DJ looking like a mini prince charming in a black tux that was sized perfectly for his small body. He and Timberly danced around us snapping pictures on her iPad.

“Nova, they're ready for you in the sunroom,” Janelle said from the door.

Source Creation Date: July 1, 2025, 9:40 am

She was dressed in a pretty off the shoulder mermaid gown in lavender and she wore a warm smile on her face. She guided us to the sunroom and my eyes almost bugged out of my skull at what Crew had done to it. Lovely by Billie Eilish & Khalid played softly through the double doors that led out to the all-seasonsroom was a modern-day fairytale complete with soft pink and cream silk canopies with flowers and twinkling lights.

At the back of the room Crew stood with a pastor and his grandfather. He had a fresh line up and he was wearing a handsome tux that was fit for a prince. He was so handsome with his head of thick short curls and haunting gray eyes. At the moment those eyes were burrowing into my soul as he watched me walk into the room with DJ and Timberly walking ahead of us and Tyra walking me down the aisle. I never thought this would be a reality for me after what I went through with Kyle. But Crew had made my dreams come true in less than a few hours. I stood before him in a custom made, cream colored ball gown covered in floral lace. My curls hung down my back with flowers pinned into it attached to my veil that trailed behind me.

“Dearly beloved, we are gathered here to join these two beautiful people in holy matrimony in front of God, friends and family,” the pastor said as the ceremony started. I stood facing Crew with my eyes welling with tears as I looked into the face of the man that had made my dream of a fairytale wedding come true after one conversation. The pastor's words drifted away as Crew reached over and wiped a single tear off my cheek that had fallen.

“Princess, the pastor needs you to say the words,” he said softly as I realized I had zoned out in the middle of my wedding. Because I was so captivated by my fiancé.

“I do,” I said without hesitation.

“Crew Sanderson do you—” the pastor attempted to say before Crew said with all the confidence in the world,

“I do.” All words were lost as Crew leaned down and kissed me for the first time as my husband. The kiss was so tender it took my breath away. When my head stopped spinning, I could hear the cheers and whistles that came from those few in attendance. But my eyes remained locked on my husband.

Timberly and DJ skipped over to use with black velvet boxes in each of their hands. DJ passed me his box and inside was a gold wedding band with designs etched into it that resembled Crew’s tattoos. We faced each other after the kids scurried off. When the pastor instructed us to exchange rings, Crew stepped forward and placed the most beautiful ring I had ever seen on my finger. It was a ten-carat cushion cut engagement ring and wedding band set. Both rings had diamonds around the entire band and gleamed as he slid them on my ring finger. Followed by a kiss on my hand.

“I now pronounce you Mr. and Mrs. Crew Keron Sanderson,” the pastor announced, and Timberly came barreling toward us wrapping her short arms around our legs. My heart was full to bursting with emotions as my daughter hugged me and my new husband. We posed for pictures before having dinner with his family and friends that Crew’s grandfather had catered for the occasion. We had a great time. It almost made me forget the threats I had received from Kyle and his sister earlier today.

“I’m taking Timberly with me tonight so you can spend some time with your husband and work on making another one,” Tyra joked as she got the kids ready to leave with her.

“Whatever. Thanks Tyra, for everything,” I said, hugging her.

“I appreciate you coming to be a part of this at such short notice,” Crew told her.

“No problem, anything for my girl. Make sure you treat her right. I would hate to hurt you,” she said threatening Crew with a smile.

“Goodnight you two. Be Good. I’ll bring Timber back tomorrow afternoon. I’ll call you when I’m on my way,” she said, heading out the door with Crew’s driver, who had been eyeing her the whole night. It was around midnight before everyone left me and Crew alone.

“What now?” I asked as we stood in the foyer after Janelle and Del and Pops left.

“Come here, Princess,” he said smoothly as he removed his tux jacket and rolled his shirt up his elbows. I walked over and stopped in front of him.

“Turn around,” he ordered. My breathing picked up as I waited for my next order.

I felt his hands on me as he took off my gown placing kisses over my back and hips as it pooled at my feet. I stood there in nothing but my lace bra and matching thong until he removed them as well. He turned me around to face him and his gaze traveled up and down my body. He rushed me like a lion hunting its prey, lifting me up and wrapping my legs around his waist.

“I need you now. But I want you in our bed the first time as my wife,” he said, carrying me upstairs to our room. Our bedroom was at least two sizes bigger than my bedroom in my home. He walked me over to a large bed in the center of the room and set me down on it.

“Undress me,” Crew instructed me.

I did as I was told and helped him out of his clothing until he was standing naked

before me. I licked my lips, desperate to taste every part of my husband. The tattoos that covered his body only added to the perfection that was Crew Sanderson. He stalked toward me, pushing me back on the bed. He pulled me down until my hips were almost hanging off the edge of the bed. From what I had experienced with Crew so far, I knew that I was in for the ride of my life.

CHAPTER 12

Crew

I trailed kisses down Nova's neck, biting and sucking as I made my way to her breasts. Her head fell back in ecstasy as I took one of her stiff nipples in my mouth lightly biting down on it. I watched her reaction as I licked the sensitive pebbles, soothing the pain that I had just caused. Her moans echoed in my mind each time she was near me. I released her breasts and moved lower to my favorite place.

"Tell me what you want from me, Princess," I commanded her.

"I want you to use me, Sir," she said, making my dick jump.

Everything about my wife was sexy and if she needed me to use her like my own personal slut I would each and every time. I got on my knees to get a better view of my wife's pretty pussy. Pushing her legs back to open her up for me. The first taste of my wife had me about to nut already and I hadn't even got started. I felt her clenching around my tongue as I pushed it deep into her. She bucked her hips against my face the more I feasted.

"Oh yes, don't stop," she screamed, digging her nails into my scalp.

Releasing her legs I placed them on my shoulders and continued to eat her alive. The taste and smell of my wife was intoxicating. It made me ravenous as I latched on to

her clit and tried to suck her soul from her body. I pushed a finger into her, making sure to curve it to hit her G-spot. Her body shook violently as she squirted all over my face, neck, and hand. I came up for air and stood up with my dick in my hand.

“I’m going to use you until you pass out but first I need to feel your lips wrapped around my dick.

Source Creation Date: July 1, 2025, 9:40 am

Sit up and take care of your husband, Princess,” I said, calling her to me.

“Yes Sir,” she cooed, getting on her knees, and sinking down in front of me.

Without another word her thick lips wrapped around the head of my dick. I let out a deep groan as her tongue ran under the bottom of my shaft. Her head bobbed up and down as she repeatedly took me to the back of her throat.

“Oh fuck, I growled as her throat tightened around me as she swallowed my dick.

Tears, drool and precum decorated her sweet mouth. The sounds of her moaning, slurping, and gagging on my dick caused me to fist her hair, crushing the flowers that had been pinned there for the ceremony. I held her head and thrust my length down her throat at a steady pace listening to the sounds she made. Her fingers grazed the underside of my balls while she cupped and messaged them. When her finger teased that little area under my balls I exploded with a roar coming down her throat, making sure to hold her head down so she could take it all. And like always she didn't disappoint.

“Fuck.” I panted, my hand falling from her head. She popped me out of her mouth and licked the tip catching the last drop of cum.

I dragged her up from her knees and crashed our lips together tasting a combination of us both on her tongue. Lifting her by the ass, I carried her to the middle of the bed. Her core was slick with wetness as I rocked her hips against me trying to create friction to cum again.

“Please Sir. Make me cum,” she begged.”

I lay her in the middle of the bed, covering her body with mine. Kissing her until we were both out of breath. I pulled away, kneading her breasts, and drinking her in. I lifted her legs over my shoulders and lined myself up with her entrance. Thrusting my hips forward I buried myself inside my favorite place on earth. When I was fully seated inside her warmth we both gasped.

Ah, shit,” she moaned.

I gripped her hands and held them above her head as I fucked her into the mattress. I pounded into her while she screamed my name. She tilted her hips and matched me thrust for thrust, taking me in as deep as I could go. I wanted to live inside her. Light brown eyes gazed up at me and grew large each time I sank into her.

“Cum for me, Princess,” I coached her. Drilling into her with reckless abandon. My wife threw her head back and came hard all over me. Her pussy squeezed me tightly while I fucked her into another orgasm. I needed her so much. If I could stay inside her forever I would.

The softness of her skin and the flush that had appeared from her multiple orgasms I had just gifted her with increased my need for more. Letting her hands go I ran my hands over her body before pressing my fingers into the skin of her neck. I squeezed until her eyes were rolling back while my deep thrusts stilled, and I came filling her womb as her core clenched around me. I released her throat, and she sucked in a deep breath. We lay together with me still buried inside her coming down from our orgasms. A comfortable silence surrounded us as our breathing synchronized and we drifted off to sleep.

When I opened my eyes we were both still naked as Nova rested on my chest snoring softly. She was beautiful. From the first time I saw her I wanted her and now that I

had her I was never letting her go. We would have to discuss a few things this morning, especially her ex. I planned on calling my decorator to have her meet with Nova and Timberly so they could add their own touches to the home they would be living in. Hopefully decorating will keep her busy while I handle the situation with Timberly's father. Sliding from under my wife I reached over to the nightstand to grab my phone and sent a text to Del letting him know that I was in need of a larger security team.

Getting back into bed I cuddled close to my wife, pulling into me and wrapping her in my arms. I nuzzled my nose into her neck breathing in the scent of us on her skin.

“Wake up, Princess. We have business to attend to this morning, sweetheart.

She stirred in my arms grumbling about being tired. It was a little after eight in the morning and past the time she usually woke in the morning, but I knew I had worn her out last night.

“No, let me sleep Crew. I'm tired, she moaned.

“If you don't get up I'm going to fuck you again, Princess.”

When she didn't answer me right away I took that as an invitation. I pulled her back to my chest and lifted her leg in the crook of my arm. I lined up with her entrance and pushed into her warm tight pussy with a groan.

“Crew,” she moaned.

“What did I tell you to do, Princess?” I said as I thrust slowly into her from the side. Her soft moans grew louder as I thrust into her deeper and deeper each time.

“T-To wake up Sir. Oh my, oh my god. Please don't stop, she screamed, bracing

herself on my arm.

“Never Princess,” I growled into her ear. Bringing my hand around her waist I used my fingers to rub her clit. I felt Nova tilt her hips to take me deeper into her. I sped up pounding into her until we both came together clutching each other tightly.

“Ever since the first time you fell into my arms at the Gala you became mine. You are mine to protect, to catch you when you fall, but mostly, I’m here to love you. If you let me. This thing between us is more than just business. I know you feel it too. So, if it’s okay with you, I would really like it if I could date you?”

“You know this is backwards, right? We are already married, Sir.”

“Yeah, but we only went on one actual date. I think it would be nice to get to know more about my wife. I want to make you fall for me like I’m falling for you.” There it was. I told her the truth of what I had been feeling since the first time I saw her.

“I am scared, Crew. Scared that you will wake up one day and realize this is all too much for you and I’m not worth it. But if you want me, I’m willing to try with you,” she said.

“That’s all I asked, Princess,” I said, kissing her forehead softly.

I talked Nova into taking the rest of the week off until we handled the situation with her ex. The marriage paperwork had been filed. Our names were now linked forever. My grandfather and the board signed over the rest of Phoenix’s shares, making me CEO and majority shareholder. Everything was falling into place. Timberly’s new room was almost finished with pastel colors, a reading nook in the corner, and a little chandelier she picked out herself. Nova had made changes too, little things around the house that felt like home instead of a fortress. Fresh flowers, candles burning in the kitchen.

Source Creation Date: July 1, 2025, 9:40 am

Her presence in every corner. For the first time in years, my house felt alive.

We spent days together bonding. Had late night ice cream runs with Timberly tucked on my shoulders. We played board games that Nova cheated at, and I let her win. To running around in the backyard until Timberly declared me the best "Crew-dad" in the world. Pops loved on Timber like she had always been a part of our family and took Nova under his wing just like I knew he would. They spent nights at the house making elaborate meals for the four of us and on Sundays for the whole crew including Janelle, Del, Tyra, and DJ. I knew we were working on being a real family when Janelle cried after dinner one night when Timberly called her "Auntie Nellie" without thinking. They just fit without even trying. It wasn't forced, it just happened.

The dreams I had of a life with a family was becoming a reality. And I would do anything to protect what we were building. Even if I had to be the man I once was to do it.

CHAPTER 13

Nova

I didn't realize how much I missed this. Simple easy mornings with the safety of being held without fear. Crew was different than I expected. Still hard and dangerous but with me and Timberly, he was patient, caring, funny, and so very gentle when I let him be. We had developed a daily routine of Crew and I making breakfast with Timberly. Eating together and then picking something fun to do as a family. At night we either had dinner together or Crew and I went out for date night. I was learning so much about Crew it made me see him in a different light. Pops told me one night over

preparing dinner,

"You've given him something none of us could."

"What's that, Pops?" I asked.

"A reason to stop surviving and start living," he said.

And somewhere along the line, I stopped counting the days. Stopped waiting for the other shoe to drop. Stopped looking over my shoulder. But like all good things the bubble we had been living in would come to an end eventually, even if I prayed for it not to. After the week that turned into two glorious weeks at home with Crew and Timberly, I went back to work. I expected to come back to bullshit but Tyra and the girls had actually been holding it down. They had also had training but theirs had been headed up by Janelle and I can tell it was effective.

Since Kennedy Harris made that thinly veiled threat before the wedding, she hadn't shown her face once. Nor had I received another threatening text from her brother. It seemed too good to be true, but I would take it for now. I let myself believe maybe, just maybe, we won. Maybe Crew scared them off. Maybe we finally had peace. But then I got another text from an unknown number. This time it was just one word.

Unknown: Soon.

I knew I should have told Crew about the text immediately, but I had to start dealing with some things on my own, and a threatening text was the least of my worries. Maybe that was all they ever would be. I think Kyle just liked knowing that a text from him could make me run. But no longer. I wasn't giving him or his sick family that much power over me. If it ever became more than a scary text, I would tell Crew. Right now, I had more pressing matters on my plate. Like informing my co-workers that I was now married to the boss.

We hadn't announced our marriage to anyone other than family or friends that were in attendance and the board of Crews' corporation. I should have known the minute I stepped out of my car that something was off. From the way the aides standing out front stopped talking the second they saw me. That should have been a red flag. Them ho's couldn't wait to tell me the latest gossip. Then the maintenance guy who was usually loud and joking nodded stiffly and kept it moving. But the biggest of the red flags was the way Stephanie avoided looking at me when I passed her office. Come to think of it, she was never here before me with her late ass.

Maybe I was being paranoid. Maybe I was still stuck in survival mode and being paranoid. I headed toward the conference room, laptop tucked under my arm, ready for our daily morning meeting. The second I opened the door, I knew. The tension was thick enough to cut with a knife. Stephanie walked in a few moments later and sat next to me, her smile tight, her laptop open like a shield.

And Kennedy Harris? That bitch sat at the far end, legs crossed, smirking like the cat that ate the canary. My stomach twisted.

"What's going on?" I asked slowly, setting my laptop down without opening it.

Stephanie cleared her throat.

"Nova...we received some news this morning regarding your relationship with Mr. Sanderson," she said, her voice was dripping with fake professionalism.

I didn't blink. "Did you?"

Stephanie nodded, flipping her laptop around.

On the screen was an email. But the sender's information had been encrypted. The attachment contained a photo of me, Crew and Timberly at the estate. In the photo

you could see my huge wedding ring and Crew's gold band clearly. We were happy, smiling, and exposed. The room felt like it spun for a second before snapping back into focus.

"Do you deny it?" Stephanie asked, eyes sharp behind her glasses.

I straightened my spine.

"What am I supposed to be denying, Stephanie? What I do in my personal life is none of anyone's business. Especially not anyone here. Was it our business when you were screwing Byron?" I asked calmly.

Because what was the point of lying now? Stephanie pressed her lips into a thin line not answering my question.

"Given your marriage to the owner of this facility," she said, voice cold, "there is a clear conflict of interest. I believe it would be best for you to step down as Director of Nursing."

Silence swept into the room. Tyra slammed her palm down on the table.

"Like hell!" she snapped.

"Stephanie, be for real," Kim said, voice tight with anger.

Source Creation Date: July 1, 2025, 9:40 am

"Nova's the only reason this building's still running." Courtney nodded, arms crossed.

"She earned her position. Long before Mr. Sanderson showed up."

Stephanie shrugged, fake sympathy dripping from her tone.

"It's not personal. It's optics. If the state finds out?—"

"If the state finds out what?" I cut in.

Everyone froze.

"If the state finds out I'm married to the owner, what happens? They audit us? They ask if residents are being harmed?" I said, leaning forward.

"Well guess what, Stephanie. I'm the reason our care scores went up. I'm the reason we passed the last two surprise inspections. I'm the reason your turnover rate is down." My voice dropped into something colder, sharper. "So unless you can show proof that my marriage is hurting residents, not your feelings, you have no case."

Stephanie stiffened but didn't back down.

"You can't be objective anymore."

"I don't have to be," I said simply. "I have to be effective. And my numbers speak louder than rumors."

Kennedy tsked before interjecting. "All it takes is one complaint, Nova. One family member thinking you're playing favorites. One nurse saying you're looking the other way."

I smiled sweetly. "Funny you're so concerned, Ms. Harris. Considering you have no business addressing anything other than the residents you're assigned to. So if there's nothing else, you can respectfully kick rocks, hoe. I don't answer to either of you."

Her mouth snapped shut. Kim smirked. Tyra leaned back like she was watching the best TV drama of the year as Stephanie straightened her blouse and gathered her papers.

"This isn't over," she said stiffly.

"No, I think it is," I said quietly, watching her and Kennedy scuttle out of the conference room.

A chorus of laughter and loud voices erupted as soon as the door closed but I couldn't even chalk this up as a victory. I knew that Kennedy was behind this, and Stephanie was not going to let up since she thought I had more power than she did being married to Crew. I was going to call my husband no sooner than I left this room.

"Babe, I wanted to call you so bad. That bitch and her minion were on one all morning. You need to let hubby know about this," Tyra said quietly as she slid her chair next to mine.

I didn't want to tell him. Not tonight. Not after the way he played dolls with Timberly after dinner. Not after the way he held me from behind, kissing my neck as we listened to Jill Scott while I washed the dinner dishes. But secrets didn't survive in Crew's world. And if I learned anything by being by his side these few weeks. It's better to bring the storm than to wait for it.

After I shoed him out of the kitchen so I could finish up the dishes, I weighed my options about what I should do until I came to the conclusion that I needed to be honest with my husband. He was sitting on the couch, scrolling through work emails on his phone when I sat down next to him, tucking my feet under me.

"Crew?" I said quietly.

His head snapped up immediately, phone forgotten, all attention locked on me.

"What's wrong, Princess?"

I swallowed hard.

"I think Stephanie and Kennedy are trying to force me out."

His eyes sharpened like a blade being pulled from a sheath.

"What happened?"

I explained everything about the anonymous email, the photos, accusations of conflict of interest, and the veil threats about the state. I kept my voice even as I told what I thought they were trying to do. Crew listened without interrupting. He didn't ask stupid questions or try to soothe me. When I finished, he just nodded once.

His expression was so unnerving. He was so calm and cold.

"Thank you for telling me," he said, voice low and even.

Source Creation Date: July 1, 2025, 9:40 am

And then he picked up his phone and texted two words to a number I didn't recognize. He set the phone down and turned to me.

"You won't have to worry about them much longer," he said, running his knuckles across my cheek and I leaned into his touch. It was so good to be with someone that fought for me. I wasn't in this all alone anymore.

CHAPTER 14

Kennedy

Stephanie lit her cigarette with shaking hands, glancing around the back of the nursing home like someone might be listening to our conversation.

"I can't believe this shit. I've been sleeping with Byron for months and haven't gotten closer to anything more than late night booty calls. And little miss Nova bats her eyelashes, and the new owner not only fucks her but marries her fat ass. I'm not sure this was the right way to go about this. I mean, it's not like they're doing anything illegal. Nova has always been cool with me. I know you have your issues with her, but do you really think we can go up against Mr. Sanderson and win? If it was just Nova, I would be all for it but..." Stephanie whined.

"But what? You already chose your side. Don't forget if it wasn't for my family, you wouldn't even have this job." I gritted.

"This isn't what we agreed to when you convinced me to come out here. You said all I had to do was play my position, keep an eye on Nova and when the time came to

give you any dirt I had on her. How is any of this going to help your brother get her and his daughter back?" She asked, continuing to look around.

"You're worrying about the wrong thing? I huffed, leaning against the brick wall, with my arms crossed.

What the hell should I be worried about? I didn't count on Nova marrying one of the most powerful men in the state and clearly neither did you." She told me.

"Doesn't matter." I said more nonchalantly than I really felt.

"You saw what happened. The staff's on Nova's side," she said.

I smiled grimly before repeating. "Doesn't matter."

"Then what's the plan?" she asked.

Stephanie took a slow drag from her cigarette, blowing smoke toward the sky while she waited for me to speak.

"We create an incident," I said confidently.

"What? She stiffened.

"You heard me." I hissed, tired of this bitch already.

"Real or fake?" she asked with a sign.

She knew she didn't have any choice but to go along with my plan. I wasn't in the business of leaving loose ends, and if Stephanie wasn't helping my family get what we wanted, she was a loose end that needed to be dealt with.

"Doesn't matter, all we need is a report and an accusation. State walks in and finds 'evidence' that the directors are neglecting residents because she's too busy being Mrs. Sanderson."

"And if there's no real incident?" Stephanie tapped her cigarette nervously.

"Then we make one." I smiled. I would get what I wanted one way or another. Nova wasn't going to get away with the shit she put my brother through. And she damn sure isn't going to walk away with Crew.

"I'm not going down with you if this doesn't work. The money your family gave me was cool, but it won't be enough to get us away from Crew Sanderson if he finds out what we're up to."

"What do you actually know about the man? And don't tell me about what you heard. From what we know, he runs his grandfather's business nothing more. So stop jumping to conclusions and do your job," I said, rolling my eyes.

This bitch was on my last fucking nerve. I needed Stephanie to help me finish what I started. We would just have to play this safe and get this done quickly.

"I'll call you when I have something," she said, dropping her cigarette butt on the ground and walking to her BMW.

I shook my head as I walked over to my Lexus GX 550. I was running out of time. I need to get this done. He'll be here soon.

CHAPTER 15

Kyle

Source Creation Date: July 1, 2025, 9:40 am

The time had come to pop up on muthafuckas. Nova must have thought that since I've been letting her skate for these past few years. She was free and clear but contrary to what the fuck she believes she and Timberly are mine and always will be. Timberly is a part of my legacy. To think she left me to run off and live the life of a peasant, working a regular 9 to 5. She could have had everything, but she wanted to play victim.

What woman in their right mind thinks that a man of my caliber wouldn't demand any and everything from his wife? A wife's duty is to serve and obey her husband. It's right there in the vows. But instead of being the woman that I needed her to be, Nova decided to throw away everything we had. I'm owed her submission for the life I provided for her ungrateful ass. I gave Nova whatever she wanted, and this is how she repaid me. By running off with my child.

Not to mention what she did to my face. Even though I'm told the scar on my face gives me definition, I will forever have a reminder of her betrayal. A betrayal that she will pay for soon enough. My sister Kennedy has been keeping me in the loop with our housekeeper's daughter, Stephanie's, progress and I'm displeased to say the least. But if my career as a defense attorney has taught me anything, you never leave a job this big to an underling; and if I want the job done right I need to do it myself.

That's why I was on my family's private jet enroute to a little backwater city called Timberline to fix what Nova broke. Nova will never get another chance to take my legacy away from me again. I have plans for my daughter that don't include my ex-fiancé.

“Son, Edmond will not wait any longer for us to hold up our end of the agreement.

His men have been breathing down our necks for the past two years. We agreed to this when he gave us the money. We need to show good faith and make sure we have the collateral in our care. She needs to be with us until the contract is settled.” My father, Judge Nathanil Harris, said through the phone.

“I know, dad, and I intend to bring her back myself.” I huffed.

“Good, the Harris’s always pay their debts. We can’t go back on an agreement. It will be the end of everything we’ve built. Make sure everything is clean and quiet. We don’t need any negative press attached to our name. Handle your business. Your mother and I will be waiting,” he said in his pompous tone.

“I understand... I have everything under control. I’m meeting Kennedy at the air strip so we can touch base to see where we are with the plan. Nothing and no one will stand in my way even if that means death,” I said.

“Good boy, Kyle. Call me if you need us,” my father said before disconnecting the call.

“Mr. Harris. We will be landing in 45 minutes. Can I get you anything before the landing process?” The flight attendant asked with a big smile.

Without a word I sat back in my seat, undoing my belt. Her expression changed into a mask of lust as she swiftly dropped to her knees in front of me. Taking over, she unbuttoned my pants and like the gentleman I am, I lifted slightly for her to pull them and my boxers down enough to release my dick. Once it was free she took me to the back of her throat, swallowing around my length. I laid my head back and let the sound and feeling of great head helped me get my thoughts together.

This was the life that was meant for me. The life that Nova tried to deny me. Men like me deserved to have anything I dreamed of at the drop of a dime. And this time,

Nova would allow me to have it my way or she would suffer the consequences of her and anyone else that got in my way. My family and the people we represented didn't take no for an answer. And because of the agreement we made, the streets of Timberline would run red if I didn't complete the task at hand. So instead of worrying about the what ifs of this mission, I gripped the back of this irrelevant flight attendant's head, holding it down while I fucked up into her throat. At least the tension from my shoulders would be relieved when we landed.

The feeling of her nails digging into my thighs as I held her down only increased the feeling of her throat tightening around me as she attempted to breathe. Her face reddened as she gagged around me, soaking me in more and more of her saliva as her mouth watered and tears stained her cheeks. Right when I thought she might pass out, I thrust in as far as I could and emptied all my stress into her mouth before letting her go and watching her fall to the floor. She coughed and gasped for breath as my cum ran down her chin.

"Get up and bring me a washcloth!" I barked.

"Yes, Mr. Harris," she mumbled in a scratchy voice as she scurried off to do as she was told.

It was little after midnight when we touched down on the tarmac. There was a blacked-out Escalade waiting for me when I stepped off the jet. The flight attendant sauntered down the stairs in front of me, carrying my bag and placing it in the trunk before opening the back door for me. Kennedy sat back lounging against the soft leather of the backseat with an evil scowl on her beautiful face. But still she looked far too comfortable for my liking.

"I'm disappointed, Kennedy. You have one fucking job. One, and from what I see you haven't accomplished shit but fuck off and flirt with failure." I growled.

“Hello, to you too brother,” she said snidely. “Don’t get it twisted. I’m doing this shit for you. Putting my life in danger for you. And for your information, I have been handling things. It’s just been a little harder than we originally anticipated. With Crew involved it’s become more than just a snatch and grab.”

“This was simple. All you had to do was get my daughter and Nova would follow,” I said.

“I told you it’s not that simple. Nova and Timberly have tighter security than the feds since she married Crew. That niggas been 10 steps ahead of us at every turn.”

“You promised me that you could handle this. You said I would have my family back by now. I took you at your word, Kennedy. Instead, you’re playing tit tat with Nova at a fucking nursing home. I want my fucking family!” I barked.

“We were just trying to rattle her a little, bruise her ego before we landed the final blow,” she said, filling me in on what they’ve been doing to ruin Nova’s career and credibility.

I sighed loudly. I loved my older sister but if she fucked this up for me I would kill her and bury her corpse in these fucking woods, our parents be damned. “We need to move quickly. If Crew is anything like me he’s not going to let what you did today slide. This isn’t the type of man to underestimate. We need to move smart,” I said.

“I found a weak link in Crews’ organization; give me a week and I can flip them.”

“Nah, your time is up. We ain’t waiting anymore. You got till tomorrow to flip your target or I’ll step in myself. I didn’t come all this way to this risky dink town to lose.” I scoffed.

“I thought this was about payback. Don’t tell me your feelings are hurt because Nova

is playing house living out her fairytale dreams with the next nigga?”

“Fuck you, Kennedy. It’s about all that. But it’s also about making Nova beg. And if you can’t help me with that, sis, I’ll make sure you’re not in the picture when it’s time to finish the job,” I said, hoping she heard the threat in my words.

Her eyes narrowed and she looked at me with all the contempt she had.

“Let’s finish this then brother. But just remember, this isn’t just your war. It’s mine too. And I have my own reasons for wanting Nova out of the picture,” she said, before beginning to text furiously on her phone.

We would see because everybody was expendable including my sister.

CHAPTER 16

Crew

Screaming and the sounds of pounding fists accompanied the bass of Baby Keem & Kendrick Lamar's Family Ties that thumped through my speaker as I sat in my matte black suburban deep in the forest. I hadn't done this in a while but the joy of kidnapping an enemy never left you. It was past midnight and the woods were quiet except for my guests' muffled cries. After Nova called me shaken after Stephanie and Kennedy's attempted shake us down, the urge to revert back to the old me resurfaced. I tried to tamp it down but ain't no way I would let them get away with playing with my wife.

What fucked with me most is that they had pictures taken of us at our home. Most at angle that let me know that the person that took them had been on our property. No one was ever supposed to be that close ever again. They wanted to play games now look where it got them. Zip-tied in my muthafuckin trunk.

When the song finished, I stepped out of the truck slowly, my boots crunching on twigs as I stomped to the back. I hit my key fob and the truck hatch popped with a click. Tears and snot ran down Stephanie's scared face as she begged for me to let her go.

"You really thought you could threaten my wife and come out unscathed?" I asked her.

But she didn't answer. She just watched me with wild eyes.

SLAP!

The impact of my open palm across her face made her teeth click and her head spin. I wasn't here to play with this bitch she was either going to talk or she could die out here.

"I won't repeat myself," I said calmly. "You showed up at work with pictures of my family at our fucking home. I know you aren't smart enough to have done this on your own, so I want to know who took the picture for Kyle. I know you're working for him. Where is he and his sister right now?"

"Please, I don't know. I just have a number to contact Kennedy. It wasn't my idea, please."

"So, you gon play dumb? Okay, well, I guarantee you if you play with me the next time I open this trunk, it won't be for air," I said, about to close the back.

"I swear to god I don't know anything. They don't tell me anything. I'm telling the truth. I didn't want to hurt Nova," she cried.

No matter how much I was itching to kill this bitch for playing with my wife I needed a way to get Kyle and Kennedy out in the open. Plus, her crying was starting to give me a fucking headache.

"I'm gon let you live for now. But listen to me and listen good. If I see you anywhere near Nova or my daughter, I'm not asking any questions next time or putting you in my trunk." Stephanie's eyes almost popped out of her head when she saw the knife I pulled from my pocket. She was so frantic I almost cut her when I leaned in to cut her ties. She froze, watching me stand to my full height. "Next time, I'll put you in the ground. Now get the fuck out of my trunk," I said, stepping back to let her crawl out and run off on bare feet. Stupid ass didn't even know where we were. It would take

her ass till morning to walk back to the city.

I sat at the head of the boardroom table at Phoenix HQ with Janelle and Del on either side. We had been inundated with complaints from the state for the past few weeks since Nova told me about Stephanie's request for her to step down. We've been able to show proof that the accusations were unfounded so far, but this shit was getting old fast. Not only was Stephanie and Kennedy fucking with my business, they were stressing my wife. Files spread in front of us on our troublemakers Stephanie Green and Kennedy Harris. Every weakness they had, every mistake they made, every secret they thought they buried laid out like weapons on the table.

Stephanie had been true to her word and stayed away from Nova. She had been working from home since our little talk in the woods. Turns out, Stephanie was Kennedy's college roommate, and her parents worked for the Harris family.

"Start termination paperwork for Stephanie," I said flatly. No second chances, no questions asked. She wasn't going to get another chance to come after my wife.

"Cause?" Del asked.

I smiled coldly. "Formally for misappropriation of corporate funds, conflict of interest violations, and creating a hostile work environment with claims from three employees."

Del nodded, typing furiously on her tablet.

"And Kennedy. We can't really fire her, but we can keep her out of the building?" Janelle asked, mouth tight.

I leaned back in my chair thinking. I could just kill her but that would be something the old me would do. I was doing my best not to go back to that life, so I needed to do

this the right way.

"Call the ombudsman association. Inform them one of their reps has been under investigation for harassment and falsifying reports," I said, standing to button my jacket. I checked my watch for the time. I needed to be home before Timberly's bedtime. I promised we could look at treehouse designs when I got home. This is the life I wanted, not one where I had to constantly be on alert because someone was after you.

"Why do you think they're coming after Nova? I mean we know why Kennedy is doing this. Kyle is her brother and she's obviously doing this for him. But what is Stephanie getting out of all this?" Del asked.

"I don't give a fuck what either of them are getting out of it. They fucked with my family so they both better get ready for my wrath." I growled.

"Calm down. What are you? A werewolf? Did you just growl? Nigga!" Janelle laughed.

Janelle couldn't be serious for nothing in the world. Here I am plotting a war against my wife's ex-fiancé and his family and she was laughing. Good help was so hard to find.

"Del, get your girl before I fire the both of you."

"Come on, Del; we have a call with Black and Blue to go over the surveillance we put on Kyle Harris. From what we found, he isn't looking for Nova but we all know that's not true. Blue already found a few private investigators that he hired to get information on Nova and Timberly."

Source Creation Date: July 1, 2025, 9:40 am

“I don’t want too many people involved with this.”

“Don’t worry, Black and Blue are solid. You remember me telling you that one of my cousins is a tech genius and the other is ex-military with a private security team. Well, that’s who I got to collect all the information on the Harris’s for you. They’re legit and so is their partner. I think you may know him, August Alexander? They built the surveillance systems that’s keeping August and his family untouched. They’ve got a private network running circles around the FBI,” Del said.

“Yeah, I know about them. If they’re your family they’re good with me. And from what I know, August is as real as they come,” I said, heading toward the door.

“Are you going to tell Nova about what you’re planning?” Janelle asked.

“Nova doesn’t even know the half of what I’m about to do for our family. But she’ll learn soon enough” I said softly. “Nobody touches what’s mine and walks away whole. Not in this life and not in the next.” I left the building and headed home to be with my family.

“You didn’t have to do this, you know? I would have taken her. I know this is new to you and I don’t want you to feel obligated to drop everything for Timberly. She’s not your daughter and...” She started but I couldn’t let her finish that statement.

“Princess, you and Timber are a package deal. If I couldn’t handle that I wouldn’t have proposed,” I told her.

“You didn’t exactly propose but that neither here nor there You sound like this is a

real marriage Crew. Did you forget this is a business deal?"

"No, but you must have forgot that I said I would make sure you and Timber were good no matter what. So that means anything baby girl asks I'm going to do. This is real for as long as we're married."

If it's up to me, that will be forever.

"I told you that I was going to be as much of a father to Timber as I would be a husband to you. You are my wife and Timber is my daughter, so no matter how big or small an event it is, if my daughter wants me to attend I'm going to be there," I said walking over to wrap my arms around her waist. "Is that okay with you Mrs. Sanderson?" Fuck! My wife was so beautiful. I held her close to me as she finished getting ready for Timberly's event.

"Thank you, Crew," She said with a slight snuffle.

I turned her to face me and saw the tears brimming in her eyes. "Baby are you crying?"

"No, I just... Timberly has wanted this for so long. To have a father figure in her life and I'm just really happy," she cried.

I hugged her tighter to my body letting her feel the love I had for her and Timber. "I'll do anything for y'all. I mean that. Come on, we're going to be late," I said, planting a kiss on her forehead before letting her go so she could finish getting ready.

The gymnasium of Timber's school was filled with people. You would think that this was the Olympics, not a gym show for 7- and 8-year-olds. But what could you expect from an elite private elementary school where none of the parents made less than 500K a year? I was glad we increased security for Timberly and Nova. There were

too many unknowns at this event. The school was putting on an event for the Spring sports with students from Timberline and Brookview.

They had been practicing since school started in the fall for tonight. We couldn't wait too to see her performance. Timber had been working hard. I even had a room off the sunroom turned into a mini gym for her to work on her tumbling. For a 7-year-old, she was as good as any teenager. She had no fear and would never quit. No matter how many times she fell or didn't stick a landing she would always get back up and try again. I was so proud of her and honored that she wanted me to be at her event.

We sat in the stands with the other parents and guests as the program started.

“Good evening ladies and gentlemen Walden Academy would like to thank you for attending our spring fling gymnastics event. We hope that you enjoy the show and without further ado we present our little tumblers,” the announcer said.

The show started and we watched the kids in Timberly's class perform choreographed gymnastics routines individualized to their skill set. And then Timber took her place in the spotlight with another little girl about the same age and the routine was flawless. They were sticking everything perfectly. I can tell that they practiced together often because they were so in sync. I was so proud of Timber.

Keeping my eyes on our surroundings I noticed a familiar face amongst the crowd. A large man sat next to a curvy short woman and watched the performance intently. Two big niggas sat at their backs doing the same. I recognized him instantly, it was August Alexander. I'm guessing the big niggas were Black and Blue Davenport. August rarely went anywhere without them. When gazes met he gave me a head nod and I did the same. One of his kids must go to school with Timber.

The routine ended and everyone in attendance cheered and clapped for the girls.

“They were the best out of everyone, don’t you think?” Nova asked with a big smile.

“Yeah, Princess, but I was gon say that shit anyway. Ain’t nobody fuckin wit our girl.” I chuckled. For what felt like the first time in my life. I hadn’t had anything to laugh at in a long time or anyone to laugh with and the shit felt good. Timber ran up to us holding the hand of the same little girl she’d done the routine with.

“Mommy, Crew-dad, this is my friend Tati. Can she come over this weekend?” she asked, giggling.

“Nice to meet you,” Nova and I said in unison.

“You girls did so well,” she said.

“Thank you for inviting me,” I said to Timber.

“Why wouldn’t I? You’re my dad,” Timber said with a straight face.

That shit almost broke me down in public. I could hear Nova’s super sensitive ass sniffing behind me.

Source Creation Date: July 1, 2025, 9:40 am

“You’re right I am,” I said. “I kneeled down to her height and gave her a big hug. “Now about that playdate. We have to speak with Tati’s parents first.”

“My mommy and daddy are here. I’ll go get them,” she said before running off, taking Timber with her through the crowd.

A few minutes later they walked back over to us with none other than August, the same short woman and the twins behind them.

“Crew Sanderson, nice to finally meet you in person. August Alexander, and this is my wife Anesia,” he said, holding his hand out for me to accept. “I believe Black and Blue’s cousin Delema has been using their service to protect your newfound family.”

His wife smiled and waved to Nova in greeting.

“Yes, that’s right. Thanks, by the way,” I said, looking at Black and Blue. Good to meet all of you,” I said, shaking his hand. “This is my wife Nova, we appreciate the information and the upgraded security.”

Black and Blue hit me with a head nod before going back to scope the scene like this wasn’t a kids event. These niggas acted like a soccer mom about to come out the wood works and try to assassinate a nigga.

“You’ll get used to them. They’ll talk when they get to know you better.” August’s wife said. “They did me the same way when we met.” She laughed.

“It looks like our girls hit it off. Tati asked if she and your daughter could have a

playdate at your house this weekend. I've done my research just like I'm sure you have as well. You know what type of man I am, and I know what type you are. I'm good with them spending time together as long as you protect mine like I will protect yours," he said.

"Same here, how about Saturday at 2 o'clock sound? I asked.

"Sounds good. I'll get your address from Del," he said.

"Fine with me. We'll see you this weekend," I told them.

"Crew-dad we're going to get dressed and then we'll be right back. Okay? Timber said.

"Yeah, baby girl; we'll be right here waiting," I said as Timber and Tati took off to the dressing rooms.

We stood talking amongst ourselves while the girls changed. August and I talked about the possibility of building a new facility in Brookview next quarter, as the ladies got to know each other. Anesia invited Nova to a spa day reminding me of the last spa day she had. After about 20 minutes we noticed the crowd was starting to thin out, but the girls hadn't returned. August and the twins must have been thinking the same thing because as we walked closer to the dressing rooms at the same time, we heard a woman scream.

We ran in the direction of the scream and would have laughed if I wasn't so fucking worried for my child when we got around the corner. Timber and Tati had Stephanie pinned to the ground. She looked to be knocked out, and when I looked closer, Tati was holding a small pocket sized taser in her hand.

"Good work, Tati," Black said, as we made it over to them.

“I helped too,” Timber said with a big proud smile.

“What the hell happened?” August asked.

“Crew-dad, this lady tried to kidnap me. She told me she was taking me to my daddy, but I told her that you were already in the gym waiting. Then she tried to grab me but I kicked her in the stomach and ran but she grabbed me by my hair. But that’s when Tati came out of her dressing room and shocked her in the back.”

Damn, my baby hanging out with a little gangsta. We damn sure about to get Timber in training. I kneeled down and checked Timber over to make sure she wasn’t hurt then I told Tati ‘thank you’ for helping my daughter. This shit was getting out of hand. Out of the corner of my eye I saw two of the men Black loaned me picking Stephanie off the ground and carrying her out of the room.

“Don’t worry about this,” he said, looking over to the limp body of my administrator. “We have somewhere to take her. Take your family home and I’ll send you an address to meet us,” he said, leaving behind the men.

“Come on girls, let's get back out here before your mothers start to worry,” August said.

We went back out to the gym to find the ladies still talking to each other about who knows what. In a way I’m glad they didn’t notice because I didn’t want Nova to worry but I had to tell her what happened when we got home. We said our goodbyes and headed to the house. I needed to fill Nova in what just happened and get to the address Black just sent to my phone.

Timber skipped into the house like she hadn’t almost got taken by a stranger. From the look on her face, she was so proud of herself for what her and her friend had done to Stephanie.

“Timber, run upstairs and get ready for dinner. I need to talk to your mom about what happened tonight after your performance.”

“Okay, Crew-dad,” she said, hugging us both before bouncing up the stairs.

Nova’s face balled up as she looked between me and Timber.

“What happened after the show?” She asked, concern etched in her beautiful face.

“Did I miss something?”

“Stephanie tried to kidnap Timber at the event.”

Source Creation Date: July 1, 2025, 9:40 am

“What, when, where the fuck is she?”

“Take it easy, Princess. Timber and Tati handled it.”

“What do you mean two 7-year-olds handled a grown woman trying to kidnap our daughter?”

I wanted to stop and go into the fact that she said our daughter, but I would get back to that later.

“Exactly what I said. Timber fought her off and when Tati heard the commotion she ran into the stall and tased Stephanie. When we got into the dressing room they had her pinned to the floor,” I told her with a smile on my face.

“What are you smiling about? They could have been hurt. What happened to Stephanie?”

“This could have ended badly if the girls didn’t fight back. I’m proud of them and you should be too. Just know Timber will be getting more self-defense and weapons training. She has to be able to fight until we can get to her.”

“Why do you think she did it?”

“I’m about to find out. Give me a few hours and I’ll be back.” I kissed her cheek, happy that she didn’t argue about me leaving. I changed into something a little more comfortable and headed to the location that was sent.

Stephanie was tied up to a chair in the middle of a warehouse in between Brookview and Timberline. The warehouse looked well used and had a collection of torture devices that would make the craziest psychopath smile. Each man in the room stood around dressed in all black and ready for anything.

“Please, it wasn’t my idea. Kennedy told me I had to bring her to her and her brother. I wasn’t going to hurt her. I was just taking her to her father.”

“Nah, bitch you wasn’t. Cause I’m her father. I warned you what would happen!” I barked.

“I’m sorry. I-I don’t know where to find them. I was supposed to call them when I had her.” She screamed.

“I didn’t ask you shit. Remember, Stephanie, no questions. Plus, I don’t believe you. I think you’re lying to me.”

“No, I promise I don’t know.”

“Stephanie, you know who I am right?

“Y-Yes Mr. Sanderson.”

“What about the men with me? Do you know them?”

“Yes.”

“Then you know no lie you tell is gon get you out of this. Now tell us everything you think is the truth or I swear on my dead parents that I will break every bone in your body and then these two,” I said, pointing to Black and Blue. “Will bury you alive before we go and find your old ass parents and do the same to them.” Black handed

me a hammer from the wall of tools behind Stephanie and I walked closer to her as she screamed and tried to free herself from her restraints.

“My parents work for the Harris’s. They paid for me to go to college and helped me get this job. I owe them so when the Harris’s paid me to watch Nova and report back to them about her every move, I couldn’t refuse. They said they wanted Nova and Timberly back. But then when Kennedy moved here my assignment changed. Kennedy said she wanted to ruin her before her brother came back to get her. She hates Nova not just because of what she did to her brother but mostly because of you.”

“Why would she hate Nova because of me? I don’t know that bitch.”

“Yes you do. She said you picked her up at a club one night a year ago and never called her again after.”

I thought back for a moment to the few women I’ve slept with since Sabrina. But most we’re a blank none of them ever last more than a few months since I wasn’t interested in more than a fuck or some head. They were all cool with the arrangement. But there was one that seemed more desperate for the dick than all the others. I remember I let the bit give me head in my car before I kicked her out. I don’t even remember her face. Fuck maybe that was her because I don’t remember fucking with Kennedy’s delusional ass.

“Fuck that. I don’t give a fuck about her delusional ass reasons. Where the fuck is Kennedy and her brother?”

“I don’t know exactly. But I do know that they are both still here in town. They were waiting for my call, I swear. That’s all I know, please. I told you everything I know.”

“Right, thanks for that. Make it quick,” I said, looking over to the guard standing at

the back of the room.

“Please, I didn’t hurt her.” She screamed before the pop of a gun silenced her cries.

I turned my back to the scene and stood, waiting to hear what else the twins had for me.

"I ran everything we got from Stephanie on Kyle Harris and his people again. Clean on paper, but underneath?" Blue said, turning his laptop toward us. "Dirty money, quit a few private settlements. They have some judges in their pocket as well as some shell companies tied to some very old, very southern money."

Page 36

Source Creation Date: July 1, 2025, 9:40 am

"And he's not just dangerous. He's connected. If we hit him wrong, we'll look like the aggressors." Black said looking at the connection he and his parents had.

"I don't care about optics. I care about outcomes. That motherfucka and his fucked up family not only threatened my wife but tried to take my daughter. I need to know who's on his payroll, what back doors he's using, and how close he is to this city."

"I agree. Which is why I'm bringing in backup," he said.

"I already got a team..." I started.

"Not like this. Two of my best men, ex-navy seals, will be on Nova and Timberly's personal detail until we find out what we're up against and how they're coming."

"I appreciate the support. I can feel a war is coming my way behind my family and I can never have too many soldiers on my side," I told the twins.

"I already called them. They'll be posted on your property within the hour. Go home to your family. The team will clean this up. Blue's setting up an encrypted data spider through all Harris's shell companies now. We should have everything we need to know soon," Black said.

CHAPTER 17

Nova

It was late and I was starting to wonder where Crew was and if he was safe. Dinner

was eventful with Timberly recanting her story about how Stephanie tried to grab her. And how her and Tati knocked her out and had her pinned to the floor when Crew and the other guys arrived. To say I was scared out of my mind was an understatement. After watching a movie in the family room, we headed up to bed. I showered and washed my hair but still wasn't able to get some sleep. So I decided to read for a bit until I got tired. I had been trying to finish *Crucible* by BB. Reid but life had been kicking me in the ass lately.

I woke up to Timberly sneaking into my bed and curling up against my body. I smoothed her hair back from her forehead.

"What's wrong, baby? Did you have a bad dream?"

She nodded against my chest. I held her close to me and just held her safe in my arms.

"You know," she mumbled against my nightshirt, "We don't have to be scared anymore, Mommy."

I blinked, my throat burning. Understanding what she was talking about.

"Why do you say that, baby?"

"Crew-Dad said nobody's ever gonna take us away."

I squeezed her tighter and swallowed the lump forming in my throat.

"You're right, baby," I whispered. "We're safe now."

And for the first time...I almost believed it too.

I was sprawled out on the lounge in the sunroom, Timberly was playing with the doll house Crew had gotten her, and Crew sat playing chess with Pops. Crew had come in late last night and kissed Timberly and I goodnight before going to his office, where he stayed for the rest of the night. I could tell from the set of his jaw and the tension in his shoulder that something was wrong. He hadn't spoken to me about what happened to Stephanie but from the calls I had received from my staff no one had seen her today and she hadn't called in, which wasn't like her.

Laughter echoed through the room as I felt nauseous out of nowhere. I took a deep breath and closed my eyes, soaking in the cool air, letting the feeling of vomiting flow out of me. I was just about to feel relief until it came again with a severity that made a layer of sweat pop up over my body. I leapt up and hurtled toward the bathroom, barely making it as I emptied the contents of my stomach into the toilet. I hadn't had this feeling for 8 years, so I knew what was wrong.

Two pink lines.

I stared at the pregnancy test in my hand, sitting in our master bathroom with my heart thudding so hard it hurt. Pregnant. I was pregnant. Before I could even process it, I heard Crew's voice in the hall low, urgent, and angry. I rushed to the door and saw Janelle was holding a phone out to him.

"Crew, you need to hear this."

Crew snatched the phone and listened. His jaw tightened then his whole body went still. When he looked up at me, something in his eyes made my blood run cold.

"What is it?" I whispered.

He didn't speak. Because behind him, Janelle's voice cracked the world open:

"Kyle Harris hired a team to retrieve his family. They know where you and Timberly are and who you're with."

He knew where we were and found us again. Why couldn't he leave us alone? After all these years we still couldn't find peace. Crew stood a few feet away, silent, a phone pressed to his ear, voice low as he ordered more security, more cameras, more bodies. He had increased our security twice already. Both Timberly and I had our own personal guards with us whenever we left the property. But it would never be enough. Not when Kyle and his family would use every ounce of their power to get us back.

Page 37

Source Creation Date: July 1, 2025, 9:40 am

I buried my face in my hands and squeezed my eyes shut.

"I can't do this," I whispered.

Crew hung up and crossed the room to stand in front of me.

"You're not doing it alone."

I shook my head, the panic burning me alive.

"You can't stop him?—"

Crew cupped my face in his calloused hands.

"I don't have to stop him." His voice was rough and unshakable. "I just have to end him."

Tears slid down my cheeks. I married Crew for protection. For him it made sense for not only his company, but because it closed legal loopholes and shielded Timberly. But standing here as he held my shaking body in his arms, I realized that this wasn't just business any more.

This was love.

Crew tilted my chin up until our eyes met.

"You trust me, Princess?"

I hesitated for a heartbeat, then nodded. He leaned down, pressing his forehead to mine.

"I promise, I won't let him take you or Timberly," he said, his voice dropping to something primal. "If he wants war, Princess, he just got one."

It was Saturday and August and his family would be here for the playdate in a couple of hours. So because Crew forbade us to leave the house without him or our guards, he decided to go on a quick grocery run with Timberly and I this morning. Our SUV was half a block from the estate when the first car rammed us while metal creaked and crunched as my seatbelt jerked tighter across my chest. On instinct, I held my arm out to protect Timberly from flying forward in her booster seat.

"Fuck," Crew cursed.

His hand was already reaching for me as another car boxed our SUV in. All I could see were the blacked-out windows of the other car as tires screeched on the asphalt. Crew slammed on the brakes, reaching for a weapon I didn't know he had under the seat. But it was too late.

BAM!

Glass shattered everywhere, raining down over us. Timberly screamed from the back seat, her scared face flashing in my mind. Men in masks poured from the cars with their guns drawn, shouting orders and ripping the SUV doors open. Crew fought with every ounce of strength he possessed but there were just too many of them.

When a gloved hand wrapped around my arm, I was yanked out of the car while a needle was jabbed into my neck. Cold fire exploded through my veins. My family, including the baby I carried, were my last thoughts before I collapsed against a hard body and an icy voice broke through the blackness that was swallowing me whole.

"You thought you could outrun me, Nova. You thought wrong."

"Kyle."

To Be Continued...