



Sloth

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Category: Erotic, Romance, New Adult

Description: He taught me everything I knew. Drugs. Weapons. Money. More. If it became known that we shared a history before he became the Arlo Rossi, it could cost us both of our lives. Our destinies were quite different. Especially when I wasn't part of the family. After an unexpected meeting, I was reluctant to embrace everything I knew. Everything he taught me. When all was said and done, I realized that I may not have a choice.

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-Ginny-

Cold, lifeless eyes stared up at me. They were so damn black; they didn't even look real. While the soul was no longer in this body, it was as though it was billowing around me. Haunting me. Promising me endless hours of sleepless nights. It wasn't the first life I had taken and it wouldn't be the last, but this one hit me differently than the others. It was probably because the body belonged to a lethal, powerful man who used little girls for his own personal gain. But he never did the dirty work himself. Instead, he paid people off. He dished out a lot of money to ruin, torture, rape and kill younger women and little girls. I never knew why he didn't do it himself.

I was going to end up paying for this, or his people would at least try and make me pay. In all reality, I didn't care. The lives he had taken, the souls he had tarnished, the victims he had chewed up and spit out, made him deserve more than me killing him.

I didn't know how it happened really. Well, I did, but it didn't mean that I wanted to think about it too much. It was a wrong place, wrong time situation and one that I never wanted to be in ever again. Or that was what I tried telling myself anyway. In fact, it was more like Dante Toretto was in the right place at the perfect time. I had never liked the guy, but he spent years getting a little too handsy for my liking. Even when I threatened him, he would laugh and tell me to go run along and let them do the real work. I scoffed, kicking his unmoving body.

"You messed with the wrong woman, you lazy fuck." I kicked him again, a part of me wishing that he would jump up and fight me back, just so I could kill him all over again. When that didn't happen and he only laid there, I let out a harsh sigh.

“Why me?” I asked him, my jaw clenching. “Why nowafter all of this time?”

“Because.” That was the only answer he gave but it didn’t make sense.

“Well, I must be extra special then for you to come out and do this yourself.”

My fingers tingled with a need to call a certain someone, but I couldn’t. Not yet.

Scanning the area around me, I didn’t see anyone nearby but with the way the hairs on the back of my neck stood on end, I had a feeling I was being watched.

Staring down at the body, I couldn’t help the smile spreading on my face. One of the arms was twisted behind the back. A leg was bent in a way that wasn’t humanly possible. It was twisted in a grotesque way that sent a shiver down my spine.

I did a mental scan of myself. My awareness. My physical being. Nothing hurt minus the fact that adrenaline seeped through me to the point I could feel every fiber of my being. But I was fine. Maybe not emotionally fine but I was in fact fine.

Looking down at myself, I realized what I had done. The night played out in my mind like tiny flashes of film. It was on a constant reel, teasing and taunting me over what I did. Over what he tried to do. He never succeeded but the fact that he almost had, didn’t sit well with me and would forever be etched into my mind.

But it still could have been worse or that was what I tried telling myself. He could still be standing in front of me. He could still be touching me. He could still be trying to rip at my clothes to get to where he wanted most. Dante was forever taking things that didn’t belong to him. If I respected the guy, I would hope that he found peace in the afterlife, but I didn’t respect him and I hoped he rotted in hell and got ripped apart the way he had ripped apart those girls.

The sneer on that too handsome face could still be directed at me. Vile and disgusting words could be said, while rough, calloused hands did things I didn't want them to. He never took it all the way because he wasn't given the chance, but he took it far enough.

I tried stopping him, but it hadn't worked. It was too late. He got part of what he wanted before I was able to get the same. He took from me and gave me nothing in return besides his life. A life that I ripped from him without his permission much like he did to me.

"Please stop."

"I know you want it, you little slut. You hit on me tonight. Your daddy can't protect you now. No one can. So, I will take everything from you whether you like it or not."

I could still feel the burn of his rough calloused hands on my skin. The anger seeping through me had been distracting. He had been too quick for me and almost succeeded in raping me. I could still hear his groans as he squeezed my ass to the point of painful, feel his agonizing touch, and smell the evil seeping from his pores.

Killing him was too easy. It was too quick but not quick enough. Especially not when he tried to rape me anyway.

Crouching low, I stared at him. A man I had known for most of my life. A man that I could be slaughtered over killing. I was sure it would happen but at this point in time, I didn't care. Especially when he should have taken no for an answer. He had gone through countless women and girls, taking from them everything he wanted without their permission. They would fight even though they shouldn't have because he liked it when they did.

They would scream. He especially liked that even more. He would silence them with

threats over their families. He had too much power and now that I had taken it away from him, a sense of pride washed over me.

But I still shouldn't have done it.

"This is for almost raping me," I bit out through clenched teeth, pushing the blade of my knife into Dante's stomach even more. "This is for all of the girls and women you've brutalized, humiliated, raped, and more. This is for every single shitty thing you've done in your worthless life."

"You're a sick bitch," he wheezed. "I heard you..." His breathing became shallow. "...you like killing just for the sake of it."

"No." I tilted my head. "I don't actually but I hope that rumor spreads anyway."

This feeling of satisfaction wouldn't last long and while I should probably clean up the evidence as best I could, I didn't really want to leave. It was fascinating in the way he stared up at me, almost like he was looking through me and not directly at me. Even though he was dead and gone now and no other girls would have to worry about him, I still wished I could bring him back to life and kill him over and over again. But that time had come and gone. It was done. Finished. He wouldn't hurt anyone else ever again.

Throwing my hood up and over my head, I turned to leave the alley when I saw a dark figure come toward me. It was large, appearing bigger and bigger the closer it got.

My heart started racing, my palms became sweaty. I backed up, my shoes hitting the still body on the ground behind me.

As the figure neared, the moon cast an eerie glow on the person's face. When recognition dawned on me, my chest tightened, my hands clenching into fists at my

sides.

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The man stepped into the moonlight, revealing his face. “It seems you’ve been busy, Bunny.”

A sour taste filled my throat over that stupid nickname.

When Arlo Rossi stopped a foot away from me, he smirked, that single dimple in his cheek popping at the movement. His dark hair had a wave through it, his bangs falling over his forehead.

“What are you doing here?” I demanded, crossing my arms in front of my chest.

He caught the movement, glancing down at my tits. “You know, even in this getup, you’re still hot as fuck.”

I rolled my eyes. “The city is big enough for both of us, so I’ll ask you again, what are you doing here?”

He ran two fingers across his full lips, that signature smirk growing the longer silence slid between us. “I want to play a game.”

I huffed, not having time for this shit. When I went to step around him, he blocked my path. “Get out of my way, Arlo.”

“No.” He nodded to the spot behind me. “It seems that you’re in a bit of a bind. You could use the excuse that it was self-defense, which I’m sure it was.” The smirk fell from his lips. “Fucker was a bastard anyway. You probably should have made him suffer a bit.”

“Probably, but instead he made the women and girls he abused suffer instead. He tried doing the same to me, but he didn’t get that far,” I blurted before I could stop myself.

A growl escaped Arlo, a man I had known for my whole entire life. A man who was my first everything. Literally. But after following up on a task my father had given him, he disappeared for long periods of time. I only kept tabs on him through mutual acquaintances.

“He touch you?”

“He did but not the way he wanted. He tried though.” I patted Arlo’s arm. “But it’s done. I’m a big girl. I’ll get through it.” Unlike the women and girls Dante killed.

Arlo let me walk past him this time but not before he caught my arm. “Come home with me, so I can take care of you.”

“If you haven’t learned already, I can take care of myself.” I pulled from his grip and pointed a finger in his face. “Who taught me that, anyway? Who taught me how to defend myself? And before you say anything, tonight doesn’t count. He caught me off guard but he paid for it in the end.”

Arlo sighed, the lines in his handsome tanned face, softening. “I wish you would have called me and told me that you would be out and about.”

“I don’t need a bodyguard.” But sometimes, I wished I had one.

“Where are you going from here?” He reached for my hand and much to my own surprise, I didn’t pull away from him this time.

“I’m going home.” What else could I do? I made a mistake but that fucker made an even bigger one. I knew I would pay for it in the end. Maybe even with my life but I

sure as hell wasn't going to go down without a fight.

"Bunny."

I spun on Arlo, jabbing a finger into his chest. "Stop calling me that. I am not your Bunny. I am not anything to you."

"You..." He grabbed my hand, pulling me against him roughly. "...are everything to me, Ginny," he growled out my name even though he hated using it. Arlo Rossi was a tough man to crack and I had been the only one who could ever do so. I had no idea why. He was nearly fifteen years older than I was but we had a connection. A thing between us and it was annoying as hell.

"I shouldn't be." I struggled against him but when his hold on me only tightened, I glared up at him. "Arlo," I bit out through clenched teeth, attempting to pull away from him.

"You can fight me all you want but we both know where you'll end up eventually and where you've already been."

Placing my hands against his chest, I pushed. He finally released me, letting me take a step away from him.

Smart man.

"You know we can't do this. Not again. Not ever again." I pointed a finger in his face. "You are the one who told me that when I was a little girl and told you about my little girl crush I had on you. What were your words, Arlo?" I pinched my chin, pretending to think about my next words. "Oh I remember. 'Ginny, you're just a girl. You'll find love when you're meant to but it won't be with me'. You have no idea what that did to my heart."

His brows narrowed. “You were a child. I’m into alot of things but children are not one of them.” He lifted his hand when I wentto speak. “I’m not here to tell you what to do.”

I snorted.

He rolled his eyes. “You know what I mean, Bunny.”

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My jaw clenched. “Do not call me that.”

“Yeah.” He chuckled. “Not happening.”

“What do you want, Arlo?” I placed my hands on my hips, not having time for any of this. I had to do something about the body. I glanced at it, almost forgetting it was there but I would never forget what he had almost done to me.

“I’ll get this cleaned up,” he said instead, pulling his phone out of his pocket and bringing it up to his ear. “Yeah, I need a cleanup,” he told whoever was on the other end of the phone.

I let out a sigh, a part of me thankful I didn’t have to deal with this alone but it still didn’t mean I wanted help from Arlo. He had a habit of showing up at a time when I needed assistance. Didn’t mean I was happy about it though.

“Are you going to tell me what you’re doing out there this late at night?” Arlo asked, putting his phone away. “And why you keep leaving our bed before I’m done with you?”

My cheeks burned, remembering how I was at his place a few nights ago. He referred to his place, his things, as my own but they weren’t.

I opened my mouth to give a smart remark but sighed instead. I was too tired for this. I needed to go home and take a long hot bath. I needed to move on. Or at the very least, try to.

“Ginny.”

“I went for a run,” I told him, suddenly feeling stupid for doing something so innocent that clearly got me into trouble.

“You should have called me.” Arlo’s brows narrowed in the center. “And you definitely should not be doing this shit alone.”

“I don’t need protection,” I threw at him.

“Yeah, obviously not.” He thrust his arm out. “Given the current situation, I’d say that you definitely don’t need protection.”

I scowled. “That’s not what I meant.”

“I know.” He rubbed the back of his neck. It was something he did whenever I stressed him out. I also caused most of those gray hairs in his beard and hair too. “You of all people are good at taking care of themselves but it’s been busy. And now that this happened.” He glanced down at the unmoving body. “It’s going to make even more waves. You are not safe.”

“I...” Sirens sounded in the distance, sending me on high alert.

“They’re not here for this,” Arlo said gently, coming toward me. “But I’m taking you home anyway. The cleaners don’t need us here for this.”

It took everything in me not to argue. “Why are you helping me?”

“Why wouldn’t I?” he asked, walking past me. When he noticed that I wasn’t following him, he turned, looking back at me over his shoulder. “I don’t give a shit how much we drive each other crazy. I will always protect you and I know for a fact

that you would do the same for me.”

Unfortunately, he wasn't wrong.

There had been a time where we actually got along and I didn't fight these feelings or try to push him away. But those times were few and far between lately. I wasn't sure what it was like anymore to carry a proper conversation with him.

As soon as we left the alleyway, several guys walked past us. I didn't acknowledge them and kept my head down. Which was probably for the best. Word would get out soon that it was me who killed one of the most powerful men in the city.

Arlo would help me and keep me safe but when it came to asking him, I wouldn't. He also wouldn't do anything until the words left my mouth. Until I begged and pleaded for him to take care of me. We both knew it would take a lot for me to do that. So until then, I really needed a bath and a glass of wine.

“Let's get you home, Bunny.” Arlo grabbed my upper arm, guiding me out of the alley.

I went to look at the chaos I was leaving behind when he caught my chin in a firm grip. I swallowed hard, staring up at the man who had been my mentor for as long as I could remember. Who had been the love of my life, no matter how hard I tried fighting it. He was always there for me. He took care of me when my mom left because she couldn't handle being married to a mob boss and he took care of me even more when my dad had been murdered right in front of me. Arlo held me while I screamed and cried and blamed myself. It had been because of me that my dad was killed. Because I was the only daughter in a long line of sons. It was my fault. All of it. Was my fault.

“Don't you dare look back there,” Arlo bit out, that muscle in his jaw ticking.

“It’s my fault.” I tried pulling my head from his grasp, but he was too strong for me.

“No, it’s not. If it wouldn’t have been you killing him, someone else would have done it. It’s about time anyway.” Arlo released me and continued walking.

He was right but I couldn’t help but be drawn to that alley. I shouldn’t have killed him though. I should have let him go to jail and rot there instead, but I also knew that if I hadn’t taken justice into my own hands, he would have gotten away with it. I wasn’t the only woman he attempted to rape. He was successful with most. Some fought him off like I had but a lot didn’t. In fact, most didn’t. He usually went for the younger girls. It was sick and disgusting what he was into. Along with everyone else in his community. I wasn’t the age he was normally into, but I knew he went after me because of who my father was. He was no longer around, so these men thought they could take what they wanted from me. They also thought that if they got rid of me, they could take over the metaphorical throne my father once sat on. But no one could ever take his place.

Dante Toretto was the epitome of evil, but Arlo was no better. Arlo just never got caught and he didn’t flaunt his power around like Dante did.

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“You still live at the same place?” Arlo asked, keeping his hand wrapped firmly around my upper arm.

“You know I do.” He had been tracking me for years. Ever since my daddy died. Arlo had promised him before he died, that he would spend the rest of his life taking care of his daughter. If my dad knew then that I had lost my virginity to his best friend, he would have had him killed instead. But that little secret had stayed between Arlo and me ever since. Ever since I seduced him. Ever since he gave in to what I wanted. He couldn't resist.

“Tell me where you're going from here.” Arlo released my arm and linked his fingers with mine instead. Under normal circumstances, I would have pushed him away. But at the moment, I craved his touch. I actually craved more than us just holding hands, but it would take a lot of determination on my part to get Arlo to fuck me.

“I'm going home, taking a bath, and having a bottle of wine. Not exactly in that order either.”

“You should come back to my home. Our home, Bunny.”

My jaw clenched, my teeth grinding down hard against each other. “I'm going back to my father's place.” Was all I said. While Arlo thought his home was mine and maybe it was, I couldn't stay there. Not on a continuous basis anyway. I always left when he got too close, and I felt suffocated. It didn't make sense when I did actually love him, but I couldn't help the weight resting on my damn chest every time I had been in his bed for a couple of days.

Arlo grunted, tightening his grip on my hand. Something was on his mind. Something more than just what happened tonight. He was a hard one to read but I found that I liked it that way. It made things more exciting because he liked it when I begged him for information.

“What is it?” I asked, keeping my gaze straight ahead. If I looked at him, looked deep into his eyes, I would fall and I didn’t want that to happen. Not tonight. I already spent part of my evening having some of my control taken from me.

“This will get out, Ginny.”

A sour taste filled my throat whenever he used my real name. It usually meant he was pissed at me or he was trying to get his point across. But this...this moment was unlike him.

“I know. You don’t have to tell me that, Arlo.” I went to pull my hand from his grip but he was having none of that. He pulled me into another alley and pushed me up against the nearest wall.

“I know you can handle yourself, Bunny. I do know that. But you don’t have to do this on your own either.”

I stared up at him, the moon casting eerie shadows over him. Even though he was older, much older than my twenty-five, he was beautiful in a rugged sort of way. Silver was coming through the dark strands of his hair and I found that I couldn’t wait to see what he looked like completely gray. His strong chiseled jaw was covered with a few days’ worth of scruff. He was old enough to be my father. If he had me at fifteen anyway.

I didn’t have daddy issues. My father and I got along as well as a father and daughter should. Even with the power he had. I was never raised to be the daughter that stayed

behind the scenes. He didn't expect me to play with Barbies or do girly things other girls my age had done. It was one of the many things I had appreciated about him. Even now that he was gone, I thought of it often and how he didn't make me feel like the lesser sex.

Arlo had been the same. He taught me everything I knew and kept me safe after my father had been murdered.

"What are you thinking about in that beautiful brain of yours?" Arlo slid his hand from mine and lightly ran his fingers up my forearm. The gentle touch sent a shiver down my spine.

"Just thinking about my dad," I confessed.

Arlo tilted his head, giving me a curt nod. He pulled away from me and left the alley, stopping at the entrance.

I joined him and we continued walking. My eyes scanned the vacant street in front of us. It was pushing two in the morning on a Friday night. Even though we weren't downtown, this place was still usually quite active, especially on a Friday. But not tonight and it didn't make me feel good.

"He would have been proud of you," Arlo muttered, his voice trailing off.

"Maybe." I followed his gaze, watching as a large black SUV sped past us.

Arlo stepped in front of me, shielding me from something that could very well happen. When it didn't, both of us let out a breath of relief.

"Paranoid?" I teased, trying to make light of the situation when it was anything but.

“Nope.” He grabbed my arm, a little too tight this time, and all but dragged me down to the end of the street. When we turned a corner, he led me to a blood red sports car.

I pulled from his grasp and walked to the car. Arlo followed behind me. He watched me and it made my skin tingle.

When I stood near the '67 Shelby Mustang, I ran my hand across the top of the beautiful car. “I missed you.”

“I forgot how much you loved this car.” Arlo came toward me and unlocked the door for me. Like a gentleman, he opened the door for me and waited.

He didn't forget but he didn't want to make it seem like he was pining after me either. Our relationship was odd. The age difference being the least of our problems. My dad asked for him to take care of me and while he had, he felt that it was too weird to build anything more with me. At first, I didn't believe him, but I never pressed either. I threw a temper tantrum and ran away. Which was something I had always done whenever I didn't get my way. I was an only child, so I was used to getting spoiled. Especially when it had only been me and my dad for most of my life, I couldn't help but crave that attention.

I missed what we did in the car more than I missed the car itself. But that had been another life. Long before I had gone on my own and Arlo went rogue.

Instead of letting myself get lost in those memories, I slipped into the passenger seat and waited for him to join me.

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“I’m taking you home so you can have your bath,” he told me, attempting to make conversation with me.

I looked at him then, crossing my arms under my chest. The movement pushed my tits up higher, earning me a soft growl from Arlo.

He shook himself, his gaze dropping to my chest before quickly meeting my eyes. “Now is not the time for that, Bunny.”

“Trust me.” I snorted. “I don’t care how good your dick is, I’m not in the mood.” But even though I said those words, I knew that he could make me feel better after the shit that went down tonight. Instead, I would be a good girl. For now. “To answer your question, even though you already know said answer, yes, I still live at my father’s house.”

Arlo chuckled, shaking his head. “I fucking missed your sass.”

I couldn’t help but smile, the heaviness of the night, slowly dissipating around us. I had to move on from what happened and what I did.

“Take me home, Arlo.” I turned my body toward him, leaning the side of my head against the seat. “Please.”

He nodded, reaching his arm out to rest across my lap. The heavy weight of his arm, eased some of the anxiety over what happened tonight and what was to come.

“I need you to know something, Ginny.” He glanced my way quickly before looking

back at out at the road in front of us. “Whatever happens, I’m not going anywhere. I’m promising you that.”

I wanted to argue with him. I wanted to throw a fit and tell him that I could take care of myself. I had been doing it since before my dad died.

“You promised me that before and look what happened.”

He shot me a look. It was a look that meant for me to shut up or he would make me eat my words. Any other time and I would have laughed but I wasn’t in the mood tonight. I didn’t know how I was going to get past killing Dante. It wasn’t even the fact that I had killed him in the first place that bothered me so much. It was who he was. He had been my dad’s rival for years. It was almost funny in a way, especially when Dante and I had once been friends. It had never amounted to anything more than that no matter how hard he had tried. Arlo wouldn’t have any of it. It had been one of my dad’s wishes that I would end up with Arlo, his best friend, my mentor, the man who had taken care of me now that I had no one. But I didn’t want to be with a man because he felt he had to be with me out of respect for the dead. It had been one of the reasons why I ended things with Arlo in the first place. I also wasn’t stupid though. There would come a time where I would no longer be able to fight these feelings I had for him.

“You’re thinking too damn loud, Bunny,” Arlo grumbled, pulling me from my thoughts.

I snorted, linking my fingers between his because it was comfortable and something I had been doing for years. It didn’t matter how many months we went not seeing each other. This time had only resulted in me being gone for a few days but when we reunited, we fell back into an easy routine, and I could never figure out how I actually felt about that.

“I really need to soak in a bath and fall into a bottle of wine.” I sighed, curling his fingers around my inner thigh.

He squeezed, reminding me that although I fought this relationship between us, he still owned me. But we had to play it safe.

“What happened tonight?”

And there it was. The question I didn’t know how to answer but had to find a way to anyway because Arlo wouldn’t have it any other way.

“What do you mean?” I asked instead, mulling over my words.

“Ginny.”

I swallowed hard, my heart jumping in my chest. “What?”

“You know what I’m asking.”

“It wasn’t my fault. None of it was my fault.” I had gone out for a few drinks by myself. I didn’t have a lot of friends since I couldn’t let them into my world. It was for their safety, so really, the closest person I had to a friend anymore, was Arlo.

“Geezus, Bunny. I would never think it was your fault.” His tone had a bite to it. A bite I wish he would use more often on me.

“I just want to know what happened,” he continued. “That’s it.”

“Why?”

“What the fuck do you mean why?”

“Because I want to know what your intentions are, Arlo,” I threw at him. “I want to know why after all of this time, you happened to show up when I need you most. You never show up out of the blue. It usually takes you weeks. Maybe months. Not days. Are you tracking me? Were you following me? Did you have someone else follow me? Why? How?” I threw question after question at him, and his only response was a deep chuckle. The sound was sinister at best, and it sent a shiver down my spine.

His hand tightened around my thigh, reminding me who I belonged to. Who I would always belong to no matter how hard I tried pushing him away. Arlo and I were connected and it was more than just being physical. Our souls had intertwined from the moment I was born.

I knew then that what happened earlier, wouldn't even be the worst part of my night.

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-Arlo-

Ginny didn't need my help. That much was clear. But she was unraveled, her gaze flicking from side to side. She may not have noticed it but I sure as hell did. She was losing herself. It made complete sense, given the events that took place tonight.

Dante Toretto was a monster. He had taken after his father but ended up being worse than the man who raised him.

What Ginny did, was nothing compared to what I had wanted to do for years but never could. She took that chance away from me and while I understood it was her right, it still pissed me off that my eyes weren't the last thing Dante saw before he died.

"You're stewing," Ginny mumbled, cupping my hand and holding it tight against her inner thigh.

"I wish it would have been me who killed him," I blurted, not expecting those words to actually leave my mouth but I couldn't take them back, so I would live with the consequences.

Ginny laughed. "You know, it's funny. Dante never got very far. Not with me anyway. I killed him because I didn't like the way he looked at me."

"Somehow that doesn't actually surprise me." I moved my hand from her thigh to her cheek. She sighed, leaning into it. "I still wish you would let me take care of you."

"You taught me to not need being cared for." Her gaze hardened. "Both you and my

father did.”

She was right but it still didn’t mean I liked the sound of it.

Ginny grew up in a man’s world. As sexist as it sounded, it was the truth. She was born and bred around men most didn’t even know existed. She was a mafia princess and now that her dad was gone, it was my job to take care of her no matter how hard she fought me on it.

“Take me home, Arlo.” She sighed, turning back around and looking out at the road ahead of us. “We can worry about the rest later.”

A moment later, my phone vibrated in my pocket. I didn’t have to check to know it was the cleaning service letting me know they took care of things. They had been within the organization long before I was born. No one knew exactly when they started or who even ran it. But they were used by the mafia, bikers, anyone really. It was no secret that they got the job done without asking questions. They also knew that if they told anyone what they actually did for a living, every single person they knew, would be murdered. It was a threat that hung over their heads for centuries.

“It’s done,” I told Ginny.

“Good.” She crossed her arms under her chest and stared out the window.

“Is it?” I didn’t look her way but I could feel her gaze burning into the side of my head. She let her emotions get the best of her and a man lost his life at a result of it. It didn’t matter that he was a monster and deserved what she gave him. Now her life was also on the line.

“What are you actually asking me, Arlo?”

The bite in her tone sent a shiver down the length of my cock. No matter how many months, weeks, days, had gone by where we didn't see each other, there was something about her that I would always need. Besides her submission, I needed her sass, her strength. Her damn determination to piss me off on a daily basis.

"I wish you would call me like you used to," I confessed. She didn't say anything. I wondered for a second if maybe she hadn't heard me. But when I looked over and saw her eyes shining with unshed tears, I knew that I had struck a nerve.

"I don't want to bother you," she mumbled.

"Yes, you do. There's something else. Another reason you never call me anymore."

"I don't call you to keep you safe." Her head whipped around, her eyes glaring into mine. "And before you say that you're a man and you can handle shit yourself, I already know that. But you...this..." She huffed. "It doesn't matter. None of this matters. Dante is dead. Nothing else matters."

I didn't say anything more as I pulled into the long driveway that led to the large house she lived in by herself. Ginny didn't even have any maids or cooks and took care of the estate all by herself.

Her dad asked me to take care of her. He probably didn't mean to take care of her by fucking her. Either way, I had a job and it was a job that I took rather seriously. Whether she liked it or not, Ginny and I would always be together.

It was always us.

Until the end.

-Ginny-

Much to my dismay, Arlo followed me into my home. Even though I had lived here my whole entire life, I still felt like an outsider at times. Especially when all of the people in the paintings that hung on the walls, stared at me. I could feel their eyes burning into me every time I walked by them. It was like they judged me.

I remembered back to when I was a small girl and how I had told my father that I didn't like the paintings because they came alive, especially when I walked by them. He would only chuckle, kiss the top of my head, and tell me that I would put my imagination to good use one day.

Now as I walked through the hall in the main entryway of the house, I glared up at the paintings. Arlo was right behind me, his cologne present and sending a tingle racing down my spine. But it was not the time to think of that. Although, using him could definitely make me feel better.

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“I’m going to grab a bottle of wine and take a bath.” I stopped at the entrance to the kitchen. “You can join me or not, I don’t give a shit, but that’s what I’m doing.”

Arlo’s dark eyes moved over my face. “I’m not leaving you alone tonight.”

“Okay. Then it’s settled.” I headed to the pantry located beside the fridge and pulled out a bottle of red wine. I usually had a favorite that I went for but tonight, I didn’t overly care what I drank. I was waiting for Arlo to tell me that getting drunk was not the best way to handle things but he didn’t speak those words at all. It made me wonder why but instead of dwelling on it, I pushed those thoughts to the back of my mind and made my way upstairs to the large bathroom across the hall from my bedroom. “Looks like you’re joining me.”

Arlo sighed, coming up beside me. “Why do you have to make things difficult?”

“Me?” I gasped. “Why, whatever do you mean?”

He rolled his eyes, a small smile forming at the corners of his lips. “You should let me take care of you.”

“Right.” I snorted. “And we both know how that’ll end up.”

“You make it sound like that’s a bad thing.” He reached out for my hand, slipping his fingers between mine and stopping me from taking a step further. “You deserve to be happy.”

It was on the tip of my tongue to argue with him. To tell him that because of me, my

father died. If I had never been born or if I had at least born a boy, he would still be alive. Or if he would have given me up like the men he worked with told him to, he would still be here.

I blamed myself for my father's death. Even though I had never actually pulled the trigger, he died protecting me and for that, I would never forgive myself.

"Your father didn't die because of you."

As soon as those words left Arlo's mouth, I pulled away from him and stomped down the hall toward the bathroom that would be my home for the next few hours.

"Ginny."

"What?" I spun on him. "You can't honestly stand there and tell me that my dad didn't die because of me. That he didn't die because I let my feelings get in the way and I ended up at some party. Some party that a fucker threw because they were using me as bait. You can't..." My heart started racing, my breathing picking up the longer I stood there.

Arlo didn't say anything. He closed the distance between us instead and pulled me into his arms. Normally, I would have fought him but tonight, I was tired. While I succeeded in bringing down one of the most dangerous men in this city, I knew that my freedom was short-lived. That was where Arlo came in, whether I liked it or not. He was there to protect me.

"Why didn't you stop me from killing Dante?" I asked, leaning my cheek against Arlo's chest.

He wrapped his arms around me, slowly slipping his hands to my ass before picking me up.

Hooking my legs around his waist, I latched on to him.

“Because I knew you could handle it.” Arlo carried me to the bathroom. Once we were in the large space, he sat me on the edge of the tub and turned on the water.

“But you were still there,” I pointed out.

“Of course.” He ran his fingers under the streaming water. When he was satisfied it wouldn’t burn me, he grabbed a bottle of bubble bath off the counter and squeezed some into the hot water.

“I didn’t need your help,” I told him but in reality, I actually did. I just hated asking for it.

“I know you didn’t, Bunny.” Arlo helped me undress. Normally, I would have fought him and told him I could do it myself but I was tired. Oh, so fucking tired. Of everything. Of being a woman in this world. Of not being treated as an equal. Of just existing in a world that I was forced into at such a young age. My father had introduced me at a young age to the carnage that existed within generations of our family. Arlo wasn’t much older than I was when my dad had taken him under his wing so to speak. Now he was here, bathing me and both of us were trying to fight these feelings we had for each other.

“Join me,” I murmured.

Arlo didn’t argue. Once he was naked, he slipped into the tub behind me. “It’s been a long time, Ginny.”

“I know.” Bringing my knees up to my chest, I leaned my cheek against them and reveled in the way he ran the cloth over my back.

“When was the last time?”

“With you, but you already know that, so why even bother asking?”

“Because I like hearing you say it. I like knowing that I’m the only man you’ve been with.”

“Yeah, well. It’s not like I haven’t tried to garner interest from other men,” I mumbled just to piss him off. He ignored me and continued running the cloth over my back.

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“The men wish they were me. They wish they could have you like I can, but they can’t.”

“Nope. They can’t. It doesn’t matter though. It’s not like I have guys banging down my door to get to me. You are the only one who has ever done that.”

He chuckled, the sound deep and sliding over my skin. “That was a long time ago.”

And it had been something I would never forget.

Loud banging erupted through the house. Thankfully my daddy wasn’t home or else he would have lost his shit and had the person killed on the spot. Especially seeing as it was in the middle of the night.

My heart started racing the more the banging continued. Who could be here at this hour?

“Ginny, let me in,” a deep voice boomed from the other side of the front door.

My eyes widened. “Arlo?” I rushed to the door, quickly unlocking it and swinging it open. “What the hell’s going on? Why are you banging down the door?”

“You...” His chest rose and fell. His suit was unkempt which wasn’t like him. His clothes were always clean, pressed, and he was always put together. But right now, even his hair was out of place. Almost like he had been pulling at the dark strands.

“Me?” I frowned. “What did I do? I’ve been here all night.”

“That’s exactly it.” He pushed his way into the house, forcing me to take a step back.

“I don’t know what you mean.” He was confusing. He was never confusing. He always said what was on his mind and never left me guessing. Not until now. It was one of the things I found attractive when it came to him.

“I heard you were home alone tonight.”

I swallowed hard at the sudden change in his deep voice. It went even lower as he stalked toward me, finally revealing what it was that he came over for.

“What do you want?” I jumped when my back hit a nearby wall.

Arlo closed the distance between us, placing his hands on either side of my head. His brows narrowed, his eyes dropping to my mouth. “You, Bunny. I want you.”

My heart jumped. “That can’t happen. My dad will kill you.”

“I don’t care about your dad and his idle threats.” Arlo pinched my chin, tilting my head back. His thumb ran over my bottom lip. “It’s my job to take care of you. To protect you. To prevent these boys, these fucking kids, from touching you.”

“So, you can have me for yourself?” I asked him, my stomach twisting with anticipation of what was going to happen next.

“Yes.” He leaned his forehead against mine, taking a deep breath. “I know you’re a virgin.”

I snorted. “I think everyone knows that. Remember who my dad is, Arlo. He wants to make sure I’m untouched until the right suitor comes along.” I loved my father but he liked having way too much control over my life. I was nineteen. I should have some

say in who I ended up with but seeing as I was the only daughter in this fucked up world my daddy belonged to, I was like a prized possession.

“I wish they didn’t.” Arlo ran his hands down my arms, my skin tingling under his soft touch.

“You can’t have me, Arlo. We live two very different worlds. It wouldn’t be right. I also don’t want you to get murdered just because you want to get laid.”

He leaned back, staring down at me. “You think sex is all I want?”

“Is it not? That’s what everyone wants.” I placed my hands on his chest, feeling the beating of his heart beneath my palm. “I’m the first daughter in generations. So, I have a target on my back. I know that. You know that. My dad knows that. Everyone knows that. The fact that he’s told everyone not to touch me and leave me alone, makes you all want me even more.”

“That may be true.” Arlo’s hand moved to my throat. “But I’m the only one who will ever have you.”

Before I could argue, he crushed his mouth to mine. After all of this time. After years of having a crush on him, he was finally kissing me. There were cameras in this area of the house but thankfully, I knew how to erase the video footage. I loved my father and respected the hell out of him, so I didn’t want him to see anything inappropriate.

Arlo groaned, cupping my ass and lifting me in his arms. He pushed me up against the wall, a gasp escaping me at the rough impact. The kiss deepened, igniting every inch of me on fire. I had been wanting this for so long. Him touching me. Kissing me. Fucking me. I didn’t care if it was rough. I didn’t care that it would hurt, seeing as I was a virgin. I just wanted to feel him. Every single thrust, every vein, every violent stroke of his cock inside of me.

“Arlo,” I whispered against his mouth, snaking my arms around his shoulders.

“You feel so fucking good in my arms.” His lips found the side of my throat, his teeth nipping. His tongue licking. His mouth damn near sucking the soul from my body. It was surely going to leave a mark but I didn’t care. My dad would have questions but the fact that I would only be touched by Arlo himself, ignited this fiery inferno inside of me.

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“Please.” The plea left my lips. Under normal circumstances, I wouldn’t beg but this was something I had wanted for quite some time. I was younger than Arlo and he was my father’s best friend. My dad had me at a young age, so Arlo wasn’t that much older than I was. But being in this world, there were rules that Arlo and I both had to follow. Tonight, I wanted to break them.

Arlo placed me on my feet and spun me around. He cupped the back of my neck, pushing me face first against the wall. “I should be gentle. I should make love to you and take care of you.”

I almost laughed at that. Even though I had never been with Arlo sexually, I knew there was nothing gentle about him.

“You know I don’t care about any of that,” I told him. “Not like we have a whole lot of time for hearts and flowers and all that shit.”

Arlo brushed my hair off my nape. “Next time, I’m doing this slowly but right now...” He ran his hands down my sides, slipping his fingers beneath my shirt. “...this is going to be fast and hard.”

“God.” I shivered at his promise. “Yes, please.”

Before any more pleas could leave my lips, Arlo ripped my shorts down my hips and over my ass. A low groan left him but neither of us had time to get used to this. Without him having to ask, I stuck my ass out.

“Fuck, baby.” He swiped a thumb between my legs. “I can see how wet you are. This

sweet pussy is glistening for me.”

I whimpered, needing him, some part of him, inside of me. I didn't care how or what, I just needed what I had heard he was good at.

“Arlo, please fuck me.”

He grabbed a fistful of my hair, ripping my head back. “You think begging is going to get me to fuck you faster, Bunny?”

I ground my teeth together. That damn nickname was enough to drive me mad but at the same time, I wouldn't have it any other way either.

“Why, Arlo. I would never do such a thing.” I licked my lips, staring up at him.

He grinned, releasing my hair and cupping my forehead. “I want you to never forget your first time, so I promise, baby. This is going to hurt.”

“Yes.” I shivered at his words. His need to make me remember him in every delicious way possible.

The sound of a zipper lowering, sent a shiver down my spine. My skin tingled, my heart thumping hard with anticipation.

“Ready for me, baby girl?”

Before I could answer him, he thrust every inch of him into me. I cried out, arching against him and trying unconsciously to get away. He was too big, stretching me to the point of pain. A dark chuckle left him, his hands grabbing hold of my hips as he fucked me slow and deep.

“It’s too...you’re too...” I whined, my pussy pulsing around his thick length.

“I’m too what, Ginny?” He tugged my head back, placing a peck on my forehead as he continued fucking me from behind.

“Too big.” My eyes welled, the burn soon turning into something I had never felt before. It was foreign to me as his hard cock practically scraped along my insides. I knew technically that wasn’t what was happening but with how big he was and how inexperienced I had been, it sure as hell felt like he was trying to rip me apart.

“I’m never too big.” His hand moved to my throat, squeezing there as his hips picked up speed. “Never too big to make you feel good.” Another thrust. “Never too big to make you scream.” Another ripple of pleasure. “Never too big to make you beg for more.”

I slapped my hands against the wall and began moving my hips back and forth. The action meant that with each impact, I took him deeper and deeper. My core still burned but it had slowly turned into more.

“That’s my girl. Taking my cock like such a fucking champ.” With his other hand, he wrapped it around my ponytail, holding my head in place. “You’re such a fucking slut for my dick. Aren’t you, Bunny? You’ve never had it before and now you fucking crave it. You will always crave it. No matter how long we go where we’re not together. You will crave. My.Cock.”

“Yes, yes, yes,” I chanted that single word over and over, taking him deeper, harder, faster. The burn simmered, igniting into a raging inferno of lust and desire for this man. This man I shouldn’t want. This man I couldn’t crave but did just the same. This man that could very well be killed for fucking me. Especially in the hallway where if my dad was bored, could actually check out the security cameras before he got home. Arlo’s world as well as my own, could very well end tonight but in so many different

ways.

Arlo pulled me away from the wall, his dick remaining inside of me as he fucked me to the floor.

Rising on all fours, I slammed back into him, taking him into the deepest parts of me.

“Such a good little whore.” Arlo slapped a hand across my ass, calling me filthy names and telling me every single nasty thing he wanted to do to me. No, that he would do to me. His disgusting and degrading words only made me want him more because I knew that no matter what he said to me when he was inside of me, he would take care of me. He would show me what it was like to be treated like a queen. Even if I was being a bitch and didn’t deserve it. Which was most days.

“Stop thinking, Bunny, and take my dick. Take it all.”

“Shut up and fuck me,” I groaned.

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“No.” In a quick move, he had me face first against the floor. “You shut the fuck up and take my dick like a good girl.”

“What are you thinking about?” Arlo asked from behind me, running the cloth up my arm to my shoulder.

“Our first time together.” I leaned back against him, letting out a soft sigh. The rest of that night had been a blur of naked limbs, screams of pleasure, and pleas for more.

“That was a long time ago,” he murmured.

“Yeah, but it’s something I’ll never forget.”

“Same, Bunny.” He kissed my temple, taking a deep breath before letting it out slowly. “I’ve missed you.”

“I know.”

Our relationship was odd and wouldn’t make sense to most. We couldn’t be together like normal couples. Not yet at least. And especially not now that I had killed Dante. A sour taste filled my mouth. I shouldn’t have let my temper get the best of me. I also shouldn’t have dealt with it on my own. Arlo took care of me just like he had been doing for years but he was too late this time. Or maybe he watched the whole thing.

“Were you there?” I asked him, cupping his knee.

“When?”

“While I was killing him. Did you see the whole thing?”

His heart beat hard in his chest.

“I did,” he said a moment later.

Leaning forward, I glanced at him over my shoulder. “Why didn’t you do anything to stop me?”

“Because Dante deserved everything you gave him. Although.” Arlo smirked. “I would have made him suffer.”

Under normal circumstances, I would have laughed at that but nothing about this was normal. I fucked up and killed one of the most notorious bastards in the mafia. If I wasn’t assassinated as a result of it, I would spend the rest of my life running. It wasn’t a way to live but I would do it to survive.

“I wanted to but it wasn’t like I had a whole lot of time,” I mumbled.

“I know.” Arlo brushed the hair off my nape and placed a soft peck on my shoulder.

“Now what do we do?” I had never been on the receiving end of this. I only heard about what our world conquered when someone made a mistake but I never saw it firsthand. Even though Arlo trained me to deal with it, a part of me thought I was untouchable because of who my father was. But now that he was no longer around, that assumption didn’t even make sense and I was going to pay for my mistake.

-Arlo-

She was scared. She didn’t have to tell me that she was because I felt it too.

I would do everything I could to protect Ginny but I was only one person. I did have some favors I could call in but it would result in me owing people even more. It was a never-ending cycle unfortunately.

Ginny and I sat there in silence but I could practically hear the thoughts rushing through her head. The nervous energy coming off of her, made my muscles twitch. I had to do what I could to protect her, even if I died trying. It would be what her dad wanted.

“When do you think they’ll come for me?” Ginny asked, her voice soft and unsure. It wasn’t like her. She was always strong and confident. Too confident at times. Which was why she got in trouble tonight. Dante deserved everything she had given to him but she should have let me take care of it. I didn’t have a target on my head like she did.

“I don’t know, Bunny, but I know it’ll be soon.” It could be a couple days, a couple hours, maybe even a week. It all depended on how quickly Dante’s body would be found. Sure, the cleaning crew had done their job and were discreet about it but it didn’t mean that word hadn’t gotten out. Especially when Dante had appointments to keep. When he didn’t show up for said appointments, people would know something was wrong.

“Well...” Ginny stood, drops of water raining down her naked skin. “Then I guess we have to make this quick.”

“Make what quick?” As soon as I asked the question, she turned around. Her pussy was at eye level with me. Her pretty little clit, peaked out between the bare folds of her cunt. I licked my lips. It had been too long since I had tasted her. Too long that if she was trying to seduce me, she really didn’t have to. There was no way I would stop her. But there was no way that I would take control of this either. With everything that happened tonight, this was all Ginny’s show. If she wanted me, she would have to

take the lead.

“Do you not want me, Arlo?” she asked, her voice coming out low and husky.

“I always want you. I’ve wanted you for years.” I took a deep breath, wishing I could smell how wet she was.

“Then I think you should prove it.” Ginny ran her hand through my hair, grabbing hold of the strands. “Prove how much you want. Prove how much you’ve wanted me for years.”

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My body tingled, my eyes locking on the spot between her thighs.

“What do you want me to do?” I would usually take complete control but I found that this was rather...exciting.

“Kiss me,” she whispered.

“Where?”

She took a step closer, the scent of her desire finally wafting into my nose. “My clit.”

Leaning forward, I placed a soft peck on the swollen nub.

Her breath caught, her eyes darkening even more. “Now lick it.”

I grinned. Peeking out my tongue, I swiped it along the hard little button. But I knew it wouldn't be enough. My girl liked it rough. It was because I had introduced her to it from the very beginning and now she craved it.

We didn't make love. We fucked. And we fucked hard.

“More.” She threw her head back, her slender throat working over a hard swallow.

Taking that as my cue, I grabbed hold of her ass, threw one of her knees over my shoulder, and dove between her legs.

Ginny cried out, her hands ripping strands of hair free from my head. “God yes, Arlo.

Just like that.”

I growled, shaking my head between her milky thighs. I nipped and sucked at her clit until the creamy juices from her body leaked down my chin. She was fucking soaked and I knew by the time we were done, both of us would be a damn mess.

“Arlo,” Ginny whined, grinding her pussy against my face.

“You taste so fucking good, baby,” I mumbled against her swollen center.

I thrust my tongue into her, reveling in the way her body pulsed around it. Her core convulsed, squeezing and releasing, her body practically begging for that release only I could give her.

But as much as I wanted her to come on my tongue, I needed inside of her.

Releasing her with a smack, I sunk my teeth into her inner thigh.

She yelped, glaring at me.

“Drop this cunt on my cock, baby. And then I’ll let you come.”

Ginny lowered to my lap, cupped my shoulders, took a deep breath, and slammed her body down hard on my dick.

I shouted out, my eyes rolling into the back of my head.

She grinned, riding me and using my cock to give her that orgasm she was desperate for. Sounds left her mouth I hadn’t heard in a while. While we were together, we didn’t see each other often. She had been the only one I had fucked since I took her virginity years before and I knew that I was the only one who had been inside of her.

She flirted with men, Dante especially, trying to get them to hit on her. If they got too handsy, she would kill them. If they did more than just touch her, I would kill them. That hadn't happened in a while. Not until tonight.

Losing her dad messed her up. Especially since now that he was gone, the target on her back became more pronounced. I could only do so much but when she kept leaving the safe space I had created for her, it didn't help me protect her.

"Arlo, please stop thinking and just fuck me." Her words pulled me from my thoughts.

Grabbing hold of her hips, I held her lithe body in place and began fucking her like she wanted. Like both of us had wanted. She cried out, her eyes rolling into the back of her head. I took that as my chance and lowered my mouth to her slender throat. Licking up the length of it, I nipped and sucked. It would leave marks and remind every fucker I knew that she belonged to someone.

"You gave me a hickey," Ginny snapped, glaring at me in the reflection of her mirror. "My dad is going to lose his shit. It also doesn't help that you left it on my throat, Arlo. My throat! How could you? Are you trying to get yourself killed?"

While she continued ranting, I admired my handiwork. It was stupid on my part to leave the hickey on a spot that anyone could see but I couldn't stop myself. We had been sleeping together for a few weeks now and I needed everyone to know that she was taken. Her dad made me promise to look after her once he was gone. Not that any of us wanted him gone anytime soon but with being the leader of a highly dangerous mafia, it could happen at any second.

"Good thing people can't see the bruises I left on your ass." I rose from the bed and walked up behind her.

Her brows furrowed in the middle, a light huff leaving her at my words. "You don't

know what this means.”

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“Yes.” I grabbed a fistful of her hair, ripping her head back and smacking a hard peck on her lips. “I do. But do I give a shit?” I bit her bottom lip. “Nope. Not at fucking all.”

That night had ended up in a blur of naked body parts, muttered cries of pleasure, and things I had never done with another woman.

“God, Arlo. Please make me come.” Her body slammed up and down my cock. Her pussy gripped me tight. She shook in my arms, and I couldn’t get over how fucking amazing she felt.

Reaching between us, I started strumming her clit.

She jumped, a low whine leaving her. Her breathing picked up, sounds of pleasure left her. She chanted my name over and over until a loud scream left her lips.

I took that as my chance, cupped the back of her head, and crushed my mouth to hers. Swallowing the rest of her screams, I thrust up and up until my own release followed.

Ginny broke the kiss, leaning her forehead against mine and letting out a soft sigh. “Thank you for that.”

“You don’t have to thank me, Bunny.” I tapped her hip, hinting for her to get off of me since we had things to do. The first being to make sure she was safe.

“What now?” As soon as that question left her mouth, a bang erupted through part of the house. It shook the foundation.

“What the hell?” I gently pushed her back, jumping to my feet. “Get dressed,” I demanded, leaving the tub and drying myself off.

“Arlo, if they destroy my dad’s house, I will kill them. I’ll fucking kill them all.”

“Get dressed, Ginny,” I said, not bothering to respond to her comment because there would be no point. She was going to do whatever it was she wanted, whether I said something or not.

“Arlo.” She grabbed my arm, stopping me from slipping my shirt on over my head. “I mean it.”

I looked at her then. Truly looked at her. There was a hardness in her eyes. It was because of her father, me, the other men in this fucked up world. That hardness was there because of us. No wonder she didn’t want to truly commit to me. I had already done so much for her, to her, against her. I had loved her from the moment I met her when she was just a young girl and that love turned into more than just her being like family. That love became an obsession and now that we were older, I was in fact, in love with her. She knew it too but never acted on it. She used me when she saw fit. She would come over, break into my house, slip into my bed, and take whatever it was she wanted from me before leaving and heading back to her father’s place.

“We’re not talking about this now,” I told her, my voice curt. “But once this is all said and done and if both of us survive this mess, you are coming home with me and that’s the end of the discussion.”

She opened her mouth to argue but before any words could leave her lips, I grabbed hold of her chin. A soft squeak left her, the sound sending a ripple of pleasure along every vein in my cock.

“I promise you that if you so much as even think to argue with me, you will regret it.”

I didn't want to threaten her, but I had enough. Especially now that I wasn't sure if we would actually make it through this night or not.

-Ginny-

Arlo was pissed. Couldn't say I blamed him really. He had been the only man I had ever been with, but I still couldn't truly commit. Not to him. Hell, not even to myself. Ever since I lost my dad, something inside of me changed. I was lost without him. It was like as soon as he died, a part of me died with him and I didn't know how to find that part again. Or even replace it with something else. It was frustrating because I truly did want to be with Arlo. I did. But I was scared to do so.

"Get dressed," Arlo demanded again, pulling me from my thoughts.

I nodded, dried off, and left the bathroom in search of clothes to wear. I didn't know what part of the house the explosion had come from but with it being a large compound, it didn't affect my bedroom. I wondered if that was the point.

Something outside of the room, caught my attention.

Arlo and I looked at each other. He brought his index finger up to his lips, indicating for me to be quiet.

Instead of getting dressed, I moved to the closet and grabbed a rifle from the display of weaponry my dad had built for me years before. Most girls got their driver's license at the age of sixteen. While I got that too, I also got a wall of guns, grenades, and knives. The knives were my favorite. The handles were all different colors, but I used the pink ones the most.

I peeked my head out of the closet. Arlo was looking my way, so he didn't see the bedroom door opening. Before I could think twice on it, I pulled the trigger. Two

shots rang out and I was thankful that the silencer was already attached.

Arlo's head whipped around. "Fuck."

The man in the doorway dropped.

"And this is why I told you to get dressed," Arlo snapped. "You're fucking distracting when you're naked."

I rolled my eyes, placed the gun on the shelf, and quickly threw on sweatpants, a shirt, and sneakers.

"I also don't like that he saw you naked." Arlo moved to the entrance of the closet. "Now hurry the fuck up, Ginny."

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“You’re so grumpy.” I patted his chest and left the closet space. “You know, we could just wait for them to come here. I have enough that could hold them off.”

“Yeah, until a new wave hits.” Arlo went into the closet, grabbed what he needed and re-joined me.

“So, what are we doing to do? Fight them off just the two of us?” I was good but even I knew that we didn’t stand a chance. Especially with Dante’s people. The fucker deserved what he got but by me killing him, it sent a ripple through his family, and I was going to pay for it.

“I made a call.” Arlo checked his phone. “Help is on the way.”

Great. That meant that once everything was done, I was going to get lectured by people closest to my father.

Before I could dwell on that any longer, another explosion sounded. It jarred through me, pulled a string of curse words from Arlo, and forced him to the door.

“That was closer.” His phone dinged. “They’re here.”

With both of us packing heat, we headed back into my closet. No one knew of all the nooks and crannies that my father had built into this house. His father before him had set up a whole bunch of secret passages. Only my father, Arlo, and I knew of these spots in this house.

Placing my hands against the wall, I pushed until a lock clicked free. Arlo helped

move the slab of wood out of the way so we could slip through and enter the passageway. I had used this space often throughout my life. It was one of the ways I was able to slip free without my dad's bodyguards catching me.

This secret hallway was something out of a horror movie. The house was old, and my dad left it that way. It was his way of remembering his father, his great-grandfather and the rest of the men before him who had owned this place. It had been in our family for generations, and it was one of the reasons why I never wanted to leave.

Arlo didn't understand that, even though he said he did. He had insisted I move in with him for the past few years. While I did have a lot of my stuff at his place and technically, I could come and go as I pleased, I didn't consider his place my own.

"I haven't been in this hallway in quite a long time," Arlo said from behind me.

"I come here often and will grab a book and read." I liked the smell of the dampness in the air. The walls were made of brick. There were cobwebs in the corners and there were mice and rats every now and again in the shadows. I could have paid to have them cleaned but I enjoyed the atmosphere. It was almost like it was gothic in a way.

The closer we got to the end of the hallway, the louder the footsteps sounded on the other side of the walls. I could hear the men who set off the explosions. It made my blood burn through me knowing that these men were going to die. People had asked my dad often if he wished he had a son. He told them he didn't need one when he had me. Sure, I was a female and I had the parts of a female but I was savage. I had no issues killing someone. No regrets when it came to someone who deserved it. The men I had killed over the years put Arlo's number to shame. He just didn't know it or if he did, he never said anything. It wasn't that I liked killing. I just did it for the victims who couldn't.

When we reached the end of the hallway, I placed my hands against the wall

and gently pushed. Slipping the slab of wood to the left, it opened a few inches, and I could see out into the hallway. It led to the alcove that was at the front of the house.

Deep voices sounded.

They were muffled but I could partially make out what they were saying. From what I could tell, it was two men, maybe three.

“Dante would want us to make her suffer.”

“How do we know that it was Ginny?”

“Because we do.”

“No, you’re assuming.”

“I just follow orders.”

“Yeah, so do I. We can’t assume that it was her who did this. Dante had a lot of enemies.”

“You know it was her. Jack said so.”

“Jack is unstable, and he was also paid off.”

“Exactly. We can’t trust him.”

“He saw her.”

“He was also high, so he could have seen anything.”

“Wecan’t take any chances. She should have died years ago anyway.”

“Youknow we couldn’t have done that. Dante wanted her.”

“Everyone wants her.”

“She’s untouchable.”

“Not by Arlo.”

Arlo and I looked at each other. I didn’t know who these guys were, but they obviously knew us. They could have been anybody who obviously worked for Dante and his people. His family butted heads with mine for years. His dad was also jealous that he didn’t have a daughter. It made my father more powerful. More dangerous. It didn’t make sense to me but since I was the only girl for generations of boys that were born into this world, I was extra special in away.

Arlo had a target on his back because he was in love with me.

“We need to get this over with so I can take you home,” Arlo muttered from behind me.

“I am home,” I argued.

“I’m not leaving you again.”

“That’s fine. You can stay here.”

“No. We are not staying here. You will always have a target on your back because of who you are. Because of who your father was. Because you’re the only girl. So, we will travel. We’ll go to another country if we have to but you are no longer staying

here and I don't give a shit how much you fight me."

"So, we're going to run and hide?" What he was saying made sense but at the same time, I couldn't just up and leave.

"No. We're going to be safe. I will keep you safe. I promised your father I would watch over you and protect you."

"I don't need you to protect me. I'm the one who saved you a moment ago remember?"

"Just because I was distracted, it's not an excuse." He placed his hand on my shoulder, leaning down my ear. "We will fight. Even if it takes the rest of our lives. We. Will. Fight."

"My father would say the same thing. Dante would have said the same thing. Every guy in this world would say the same thing. A naked woman is no excuse to be distracted. You know that."

"You're not just any naked woman, Bunny," Arlo bit out through clenched teeth.

I huffed, cocking my gun and stepping out into the hall.

"Ginny, what the hell are you doing?" Arlo followed me, not letting me take these guys on by myself.

I was sick of this. It wasn't my fault that I was the only female in this world. I didn't ask to be born. I didn't ask to be raised in this lifestyle. I didn't ask to play with guns instead of Barbies.

When I walked down the hall, the guys that were talking a moment ago were around

thecorner. They looked my way as soon as they saw me approach.

“Hello,boys. It’s been a while.” I recognized them and had seen them over the years,but I didn’t know their names. I knew of this Jack person they were talkingabout though. He was a homeless guy who lived in the shadows of the city. Hemoved around often and was a drug addict. He also liked his alcohol. You couldpay him off to get whatever information you wanted. He was good that way butalso unreliable at times.

“Youkilled our boss,” one man said, raising his arm and pointing his gun at me.

“Dantetried to rape me. He also raped other women and girls. I was surprised that hewent after me though, seeing as I’m a little too old for him but he must havebeen desperate.” I shrugged, wishing this night would end already.

“Weall have a vice,” the younger guy pointed out.

“Yeah,but underage girls earns you death. Although, I should have tortured him a bit.It probably would have made me feel better.” I could feel Arlo coming up behindme. It was two of us against all of them. There were only three guys standingin front of us but I knew there were more in the house. Arlo said that help wason the way. If they were here already, they didn’t let themselves be known. Maybethey were waiting for something to happen before they took over.

“Youshould have been killed the moment you were born,” one of the men said.

Ilaughed, pulled the trigger, and watched him fall.

Arlo cursed.

The twomen looked at the bundled heap on the ground before looking back at me.

I continued pulling the trigger, not caring in the least if they did the same but none of them had a chance.

Arlo cursed again, probably wondering if the woman he was in love with was becoming unhinged.

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The men fell and I watched them die. I didn't know how many more men were in my father's house but the help that Arlo had requested, finally showed up. The men were dressed in black with their faces completely covered by black masks. They moved through the house, making sure no one was alive.

"We have to get out of here." Arlo's voice was rough and there was an air about him. He was pissed that I had taken control. "No I'm not pissed over that."

I didn't realize I had spoken out loud.

"I'm pissed because you did something stupid. Taking control is one thing but you had no idea if they would shoot back."

For the first time that night, I could actually see the fear in his eyes. They were wide, searching my face, for what I wasn't sure. I was surprised he didn't check out the rest of me to make sure that I was in fact fine.

"But they didn't shoot back," I told him.

"You are not invincible," he reminded me.

"No, I'm not but they are the stupid ones who were in my home, my father's home, my grandfather's home." I could have continued listing all the men who had lived here before me but decided against it when the scowl deepened on Arlo's face.

"We need to leave," was all he said.

I didn't bother arguing. So, I let him lead me out of the house.

Arlo pulled his cell phone from his pocket, pressed a button, and placed it against his ear. "Yeah, I'd like to place an order." He gave the address and disconnected the call, shoving his phone back in his pocket.

That order was the cleaning crew. They would clean up the mess and my dad's house and they would make it livable again, but Arlo was right. I couldn't stay there. Not for a while. Maybe never again.

When Arlo brought me to his car, another string of curses left him. Under normal circumstances, I would have laughed but I knew better. Sure, I liked getting under his skin, but I also knew when it would be a bad idea, especially when the tires of his car had been slashed.

"Looks like we were going to have to walk." Arlo grabbed my hand and brought it up to his mouth. His lips brushed over my knuckles, igniting a yearning I had always felt for him.

"Where are we going from here?" I asked him.

"We're going to go home, grab some things, take my SUV, and just drive."

"Where are we driving to?" I asked but a part of me really didn't want to know. I just wanted to leave and get away from there.

"I don't know, Bunny." He sighed, his shoulders slumping. "We're just driving."

-Ginny-

It had been over a year since that fateful night at my father's house and I hadn't been

back since. The house was still standing, and it had been fixed up by the cleaning crew.

I decided to rent it out as a bed and breakfast. I hired maids and cooking staff and a few security guards. I set up a Facebook page and rented it out to families, college students, anyone who wanted to just get away. The only rule I ever had was not to trash the place. From what I could tell, no one knew about these secret passageways through the house or if they did, they never said anything.

Arlo and I were now somewhere in the middle of Mexico. No one knew where we were. Arlo had befriended a few members of the local cartel after saving one of them. We didn't trust them but it was nice to have protection even if they were shady and unstable like half the people we knew.

I had given in to Arlo's request to be with him officially. I spent years fighting my feelings for him. Maybe it was because he was the only one I knew in this part of the world. That was what I tried telling myself. Truth was, I was thankful that it was just him and I, and that he never gave up on me.

I kept to myself most days. Said hi to our neighbors, was polite when needed but I made sure not to get close to anyone. It would be too dangerous for them and I couldn't handle having that on my conscience if something happened to them. I had already lost my dad because of who I was. Neither of us had control over me being born but that still didn't make me feel any better.

Arlo and I got married at a small church in a local village. The ceremony was in Spanish, and we had some local witnesses to help make it official. It was quick, romantic, and exactly what both of us needed.

He was still working on getting me pregnant, but I wasn't sure if that was actually what I wanted. I tried telling him this, but he wouldn't listen. It was like as soon as we

got married, his next step was to get me swollen with his child. I couldn't blame him really. Especially since he never had a family of his own. My father and I were the closest things he had to family, and I knew it was why he wanted to have children.

One day, I was sitting in the kitchen, holding a pregnancy test in my hand. Looked like Arlo's wish had come true. I actually thought I would be upset but seeing those two tiny lines on the test indicating that I was pregnant, I was actually happy and excited to be carrying his child. I was nervous but elated.

The sound of the front door opening and closing a moment later made my heart skip a beat.

"Hey, Bunny." Arlo came into the kitchen and placed a kiss on top of my head. "How's my—wait. What is that?"

I handed him the pregnancy test. Before I could say anything, he had me up and in his arms. He spun me around, placing gentle kisses all over my face. I could only laugh and wrap myself around him.

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Arlo carried me to the kitchen and placed me gently on the counter. “You’re pregnant.”

“Well, it wasn’t like we’ve exactly been careful,” I teased.

He chuckled, leaning his forehead against mine. “I know you’re concerned that Dante’s people will come after us.”

I sighed, looking away. It was a fear that was constantly nagging at me. I tried ignoring it and even though we were in the middle of a tiny village somewhere deep in Mexico, we could still be found.

“You’re safe, Ginny. I promise you that you’re safe.”

“How can you be so sure?”

Arlo tilted his head. “Because I’ve paid some people to watch after you,” he confessed.

“Really? You paid them? Paid them how?”

“You know how.”

That meant that Arlo had to take some people out, but I didn’t want to know more, so I never asked. I was trying to forget the part of my life I had been forced into ever since I was born. I didn’t blame my dad for raising me to protect myself but at the same time, I also resented him in a way. Arlo was also helping me through my guilt. While it had been better than before, now that I was out of that big house, the guilt was still

there. It probably always would be.

Arlo had set up one of our rooms in the house for protection, although it was more like a fortress. I didn't blame him really because even if we weren't together, I would have done the same.

"I love you, Ginny," Arlo said later that night with his hand on my stomach. He kissed my temple. "I love both of you."

I covered his hand and looked up at him. "I love you too. I love both of you."

It had taken me a long time to realize that we were meant to be together and now that we were, I wouldn't change anything.

Both of us knew how to protect ourselves. Together, we would protect each other and our unborn baby and all of the future babies to come. If we had to move again we would, but for now, we savored this.

We would live life as peacefully as we could because it was all we had. We would also raise our child to be able to protect themselves as well. If it was a girl, she would be a damn badass.

Even more so than I was.

-Arlo-

While Ginny took a bath and ran her fingers through the bubbles that popped around her, I held our daughter, Savannah. She was two months old, with a head of dark hair and had tanned complexion that matched my own. She was absolutely beautiful and both of us had fallen in love with her.

I was concerned that she would be treated the same way Ginny was throughout her

whole life but both of us promised each other that we wouldn't raise Savannah that way. When she was old enough to understand, we would teach her how to protect herself but we wouldn't prevent her from playing with Barbies or participating in sports. She could be a ballerina or a princess if she wanted to. Whatever she wanted, we would do whatever we could to make it happen.

When Ginny had stopped fighting this thing between us and agreed to marry me, up until the day she said I do, a part of me had feared she would change her mind and go back to her father's place. But she hadn't been back since.

I would often check in with the caretakers I had hired to look after the place. They said everything was fine. There had been no drama, but they did mention every now and again that a group of guys would stay there from time to time. They were young and kept to themselves.

I requested that they be looked after. I also requested pictures of everyone who had stayed at Ginny's father's place. Most I didn't recognize but this random group of guys that would stay there every so often, I knew they were trying to find Ginny and her location.

Nothing ever happened but I couldn't help but fear that one day it would. For now, Ginny and I would spend our days taking care of our daughter, watching her grow and raising her to be the best woman she could be. Until the day came, Ginny and I would do what we could to raise her right.

We couldn't dwell on the what ifs and I refused to constantly have to look over my shoulder. Ginny did that enough for the both of us. When Savannah was older, she would take over the family business and I hoped I was around long enough to see both Ginny and our daughter take out the rest of Dante's crew.