



# Sweet Virgin

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**Category:** Erotic, Romance, New Adult

**Description:** I'm the world's most famous virgin

I've saved my virginity for years. It meant everything to me, but that didn't stop my father from trying to sell it on live television. So I ran. I ran from reporters, I ran from the tabloids and newspapers, and I ran right into the arms of the sexiest man alive. Kealen Knight; he's built from steel, like he was forged for my pleasure alone. Suddenly all those years of waiting are completely thrown out the window. That night, his hands found my body, his lips found my skin, and his. . . Well, you get the idea. But sleeping with him screwed my life up even worse. According to the contract my father made me sign, I belong to another man—the one I was supposed to sleep with on camera. I thought I could hide forever with Kealen. I thought I could escape the contract. I was wrong.

**Total Pages (Source):** 49

# Page 1

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## Chapter One

### Alaska

I tore the napkin into pieces, scattering small bits of white flakes around the floor beneath my feet. No one could see it, no one knew just how nervous I actually was, but I was a freaking mess.

My stomach was rolling in tangled knots, all of them careening around into each other like it was a damn bumper car session. Keeping my eyes in my lap, I took a long slow breath, holding it for a second. Letting it out, I lifted my head towards the door, never blinking once.

There he was, right on cue. Tall, light skin, a small birthmark perched near his lip. His hair was ruffled but perfect, his smile carved out from a piece of ivory and polished to the point of blindness.

None of this seems right. It's not natural.

The crowded restaurant slowed to a stop as my heart replaced the crickets chirping with deafening thumps. Each beat came in harder and faster, bursting against my ribs. Placing a gentle hand on my chest, I flashed a tight grin and waved him over.

Dropping the last few flakes of paper, I nervously stood up to greet the 'so called' man of my dreams. Garrett Dionne, a man built of money, power, and all the sex appeal two genes formulated in a lab couldn't create.

Running his fingers through his hair, he kicked his head to the side and let the thick locks fall with precision back into place.

I, on the other hand, felt awkward and uncomfortable; unfamiliar with a man of such magnitude.

To be honest, every aspect that came with men was foreign to me. But I couldn't let him see that. I had to be smooth and elegant, smart and perfect. That was what a man of his caliber deserved. At least that was what the fine print had read.

I think.

I don't know.

Shit.

Reaching for my hand, he lifted it to his lips and kissed the back of my palm. “Wow, you really are the most beautiful woman I've ever seen.”

Holding my arm up, he spun me in a slow circle as his eyes licked my body. My dress belled out, falling back down like satin petals slipping off granite. Holding his breath, he waited for that perfect moment. The long pause was placed methodically like the world would be sitting on the edge of their chairs, leaning into the screen with a subtle gasp. Then he nailed it, laying his ending line like a champ. “Perfect in every way, just like an angel.”

Alright, it was cheesy and I had to refrain from laughing. Angel lines were popular a decade ago, not now. But with his looks and the dimple that instantly broke on his right cheek with that smile, there was new life in that word.

It was my turn to return the compliment, telling him how handsome and sexy he was.

Tell him his body was insane and that his face was as sharp and sexy as a Greek god. I had to make it over the top, really cement the flash feelings we were supposed to share. Everything counted on the instant connection, the quick throw into love.

“You're not so bad yourself, hot stuff.”

Hot stuff! Really!

I'm a fucking idiot.

I wanted to slap my forehead with my palm and wither away off screen. I had all day to practice my opening line, I repeated it over and over in my head. I was supposed to ask him what stone he was carved from as I stroked his corded abs slow and sensually. That line should have been flawless, like I had written it myself while standing there.

And I fucking dropped the ball, replacing it with a lame-ass excuse for improv.

But this wasn't me, this whole facade wasn't me.

I wasn't made for the dating world, then again, how could I have been when my hormonal teenage years were spent behind four walls with a rigorous schedule of school, study, school. Put that on repeat, let it go for four years, then shut it off.

Where was the practice for dating in that?

My experience ended with a few local boys and a couple quick kisses here and there. That was sad training for a girl who was now nineteen and trying to play queen of the screen.

If I could count the pretend make-out sessions inside my head, I was a pro. Was I

pathetic? Was that absolutely—horrifically embarrassing. . . One hundred percent yes.

Garrett squinted with one eye, staring at me like he wanted to laugh out loud. Or maybe that face was embarrassment. Either way, he glared at me like I was leagues below him career wise and shouldn't have even be standing toe to toe with him.

Jerk.

All I could do was think it. I wanted to slap him and tell him he wasn't the gift he thought he was. But now was not the time for that.

## Page 2

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### Chapter Two

#### Alaska

The ground was cold and damp. Burying my feet into the sand, I plopped down and stared off into the sparkling ocean water. The sand spilled between my toes, crunching against my skin as I wiggled them in deeper.

I always loved the ocean, it reminded me of my mother. The last vivid memory I had of her was us walking down the beach, scanning the sand for seashells. I missed her, I missed everything about her.

Her hair and the way it would frizzle up when it rained, her eyes that would squint when she smiled. Even the sound of her voice was imprinted in my head even though I was barely four when she passed away.

So much time had gone by, and yet, that one day was still so fresh in my mind. Flicking a small twisted shell with my toe, I picked it up and tucked it into my pocket. Seashells had this special meaning, it was something tangible that seemed to help keep that memory alive.

I loved holding one in my hand, smelling the salt, feeling the crisp crunch of sand between my fingertips.

But everything had changed, my life had dissolved before my eyes in a matter of seconds. I never expected that one single, stupid show would destroy me the way it had.

How could I?

The past month had taken a downward spiral. I tried to accept what happened, I tried to find the good in what my father had done. But this gnawing pain kept twisting in my gut. There was nothing I could grasp onto that could help transform what he did into a different light.

He tried to use me to get what he wanted. Not once had he thought of me or how baring my virginity for everyone to watch could change who I was. My father didn't care if it would hurt me, scar me, maim me in the public's eye.

He just didn't care.

I had to get out, I needed to yank myself free of the chaos that controlled my life. And for the first time ever, I finally did something for me. I ran, hopping on a bus wearing a giant hat and dark sunglasses, praying no one would be able to pick me out of the crowd.

To my relief, it worked.

I kept my face buried against the glass, not talking to anyone else. I wanted to disappear, start over and finally be myself; even if that meant creating a new version that no one would recognize.

When I was little, I used to dream about exploring all this world had to offer. I wanted to travel the globe, visit the pyramids, feel the heat of the jungle forest, and smell the frozen air of an icy wasteland.

But I knew that would never happen. Not now.

Instead, my world would be consumed by living under the radar, I would need a new

name, a new identity, a new. . .Everything.I'd have to become someone else just to go to a store in a small town, I'd have to fabricate memories that never existed, all to have what everyone else did.

Normalcy.

Dropping my head into my hands, I let out a heavy breath.I don't have a life. . .

“Excuse me, Miss?”

Lifting my face, I looked up. With the sun bursting from behind the figure, a man stood over me, his face soft and curious.

“What?” I didn't want to talk, but I didn't want to be rude either. Inside, I was wishing he was just lost and looking for directions. I could tell him I was new here and send him on his way. Then I could crawl back into this sorry hole I dug out for myself.

“You're Alaska Landry, right?”

Shit. I knew I couldn't hide forever.

I couldn't take much more of this. The questions never stopped screaming from the front page, more poking and prodding was the last thing I needed.

All I wanted was to be alone. Cameras were everywhere, my face was plastered on every magazine, in every tabloid and news story. I was the virgin who vanished.

Squinting one eye, my head fell to my shoulder. My defense system had activated, a figurative wall now divided the stranger and myself. He couldn't see it, but it was there.



“That depends, who's asking?” My back stiffened, chest tight and itching with worry.

He knows who you are. Everyone knows who you are.

## Page 3

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“I’m sorry,” he said, holding out his hand. “I’m Dean, Dean Coswell. I work for the Valcor Press. I was wondering if I could get a quick interview with you?”

Jumping to my feet, I pursed my lips, and started off in the other direction. Reporters were vultures. There was no doubt in my mind about that. The top headlines I’d seen so far had punctured my heart and left me empty.

'Vanished virgin runs from past filled with sex, lies, and deceit.'

'L.A. pimp claims runaway virgin is a prostitute and he has the proof!'

'Alaska Landry, the virgin that never was. A look inside her secret bondage past.'

The lies never stopped, the false accusations just kept coming. I wasn't sure where the stories came from or who was getting paid to keep them alive.

But deep in my gut I knew it was probably my father feeding the hungry lions. At this point, I wouldn't doubt he would do and say anything just to get paid and slander my name.

I wasn't going to say another word to this reporter, he could shove his tiny little notepad right up his ass sideways.

No more reporters!

“If I could just have five minutes of your time—”

“No,” I snapped, picking up my pace and pushing through the sand. I tried not to look at him anymore than was necessary to get my point across.

Go away!

“Ms. Landry, I want to give you the chance to tell your side of the story. This could be your opportunity to get it out there. Tell the world why you decided to take off after such a bold attempt to claim your virginity was real.” Gripping my shoulder, Dean tried to slow me down, pressing his fingers into the dip of my collar bone.

“I have nothing to say to you, leave me alone.” Shrugging him off my arm, I was practically in a slow jog.

Doesn't he get it?

No. They never got it. Not one reporter, newscaster, blog writer, none of them got it. All they cared about was getting their story.

But their story was my life. I was done with all of that. And even now, after all this time, it was still fresh in everyone's head. Where had I gone? Who could find me first?

The show had been canceled and everyone still had questions. They wanted the runaway virgin to pop out of the shadows and expel her hidden agenda.

There weren't any skeletons in my closet, I had nothing to hide. I figured that this sensational craze over the show would eventually just disappear, but it only seemed to heighten the curiosity when I quit and slipped away.

I came to this small town with the hopes that I could escape all the craziness my life had turned into. In my childish imagination, a place like this still had drive-in movie

theaters and family-owned businesses.

There was this fictional vision in my brain that maybe cable was a luxury here and no one would recognize me. I was stupid for ever thinking I could get away.

“Miss Landry, DRC reported that you agreed to the show and they're willing to take legal action to get you back. Can you tell me why you ran?”

“I said leave! What don't you understand about that?” I tried to bite my tongue, I really did. “Just screw already!” Throwing my arms in the air, I came inches from shoving him.

“Why won't you talk to me? I'm not going anywhere, I'm not going away until you give me what I want. Isn't that what the show was about, giving some guy a piece of what you know you want to give? I bet you're not even a virgin. All the stories are true, aren't they? You really are a slut.”

That was it, he crossed the line. My arm was pulled back before I even had time to think about it. With one single swing, my fist hit the bridge of his nose. I felt my knuckles crack as his nose crunched under my hand.

“You fucking bitch!” He yelled, cupping his face.

Shit. That'll be plastered across newsstands tomorrow.

“I told you to—”

A long, thick arm slashed across my chest, grabbing the reporter by his bicep, and shoving him back. “The lady asked you to leave her alone.”

Huffing under his breath, Dean wiggled his nose. Wiping the front of his shirt, he

eyed the mysterious man who came out of nowhere. “Look buddy, this is none of your business. I'm trying to have a conversation with her, that's not illegal.”

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His dark shadow overpowered my small frame. Craning my neck, I looked up at the massive piece of man now standing between the dick-wad reporter and myself.

His back was curving and twisting with hard muscles. Popping up from under the collar of his shirt, the muscles of his neck pulsed with strength. Lowering my gaze, I followed the perfect v-shape down to his tight ass.

Sweet Jesus.

Instinctively, my fingers tingled by my side, eager to touch the dips and bulges. Reaching up to my neck, I stroked my throat. My heart just about threw itself out of my mouth and onto the ground. He was the purest form of man I had ever laid eyes on.

As I stood there in awe, my sex pulsed in lust-filled temptation. This raw feeling crept through my body, stealing me away from reality. I could hear my pulse, beat after beat as my heart sped up. This man had done something to me with just his presence.

I wasn't sure what it was or why it fluttered in so fast, but I couldn't deny, I liked it.

“No, but harassment is. She told you to leave her alone, but I don't think you're listening.” His voice flowed out, smooth and husky. Each word was built with intimidation and threat.

“Harassment? She hit me! She crossed the line, not me. Look, I don't know who you think you are—”

“I think—I'm getting really pissed, so I suggest you take a walk.” Flipping his fingers in the air, the man growled. “Now.”

Grimacing, Dean scrubbed his nose and gave me a sideways glance. “Whatever. This bitch is overrated anyway.” Rolling his eyes, he started back towards the parking lot, tucking his notebook into his back pocket.

Biting my lower lip, a smirk teased the edges. Ha! Take that! Asshole.

The brute man with muscles growing muscles flicked his head over his shoulder and looked down at me. “You okay?”

Nodding, my lips thinned. “Mm, hm.” I felt feverish. My body was warm, stomach twirling and jumping with a mass of butterflies.

What the hell is wrong with me?

He had just waved off a nuisance to my already horrible day, and all I could do was mumble. I suddenly felt so small, so vulnerable. And it turned me on.

I had never been this close to a man before. . . At least not a real man that wasn't hired to try and take the one thing that wasn't up for auction.

As he turned to face me, his bold blue eyes shimmered. They were huge and bright, drowning me in this feral attraction to just jump him right there in the sand. I could see it all in my head like a short film. Me lunging forward, pressing my lips against his as his arms curled around the small of my back.

Stop, Allie, just stop.

But I couldn't, despite how much I told my body to knock it off. The guy was hot,

peeled right out of Sports Illustrated and plopped down in front of me.

His hair was blowing in the ocean breeze, teasing his forehead. The deep tan on his skin was kissed with tiny grains of sand that speckled against the sun. His jaw was cut with sharp lines and covered in a light stubble. I had the urge to brush my hand against his cheek just to feel how rough it was.

Wrapping my arms behind my back, I teetered on my heels while a playful smile itched on my face. I had to get control of myself, it was ridiculous.

One of his brows shot up, head ticking a hair into his shoulder. “You sure you're alright? You have this. . .” Pausing, his eyes fell over my face. “Look.”

I could feel my cheeks flush, thinking he might be able to read my body language. Turning my lips down, my eyes shot wide. “No no, I'm good.” Taking a deep breath, I tried to calm my nerves. “Thanks for that. You didn't have to, but thank you.”

“I didn't have to?”

“No, I had it under control.”

A chuckle spilled from his mouth as his head raised towards the clear blue sky. “Right, right. He totally looked like he was about to give up and stop stalking you.”

He's right, that guy probably would've followed me for the rest of the day.

“Okay, so maybe I would've had a stalker today, but I would've worn him down. I know how to drop assholes like that.” Holding up one finger, I bounced it in the air.

“Do you? And what would you have done to get him to leave? You nailed the guy and he still didn't get it.”



He stumped me. I didn't have a clue. In all reality, I probably would've ended up giving him the finger, screaming profanities and having one hell of a front page news story tomorrow.

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I punched him. He's already got his headline.

And I'll probably have a lawsuit hanging over my head.

Besides, that certainly wasn't the type of behavior the world expected to see from its most famous virgin.

Because. . . That's who I was.

I hated the title those stupid tabloids made for me. But I hated that my father put me in that position to begin with. My virginity wasn't his to sell, especially for some stupid reality television show.

Nowadays, that was all it took to get noticed. My father wanted that, he craved that. He spent years trying to build a name for himself in Hollywood. . .

And sadly, he played me to get it.

I had no clue, not one fucking clue that they wanted it to be real.

A show, a fucking show was going to expose my most personal, intimate moment.

The sharks at his studio ate up his pitch, they offered him more money than he had ever seen to get the rights to his idea. And when he brought me the contract, I honestly didn't think they expected me to have sex with the winner.

I signed it blindly, trusting him.

If I had only known what the ink I was laying down in that moment meant for me, I would have torn that shit up.

“I don't know, but I'd figure something out.” I tried to play it cool, like it was no big deal. But just having this man standing less than a foot away was torture on my nerves.

The butterflies sped up in my gut, spinning and fluttering in a frenzy. It was like they had just downed an energy drink and hit warp speed. The handsome man's eyes licked my body, his teeth shining brightly as he smiled down on me.

That wasn't a feeling I was used to, but I was enjoying it. The dancing in my belly and the fire coasting up and down through my body was a rush.

Holding out his hand, he said, “I'm Kealen.”

I stayed static, fiddling with my fingers as my knees grew weak, and I tried desperately to keep myself upright.

His face grew hard, arm stiff. “And you are. . .” His words trailed off as he bounced his hand. “You realize this is where you shake my hand and tell me your name.”

For a second I had to replay his words in my head. He doesn't know my name? Seriously? No, he's screwing with me.

Holding my palm up, my brows crinkled into the bridge of my nose. “Wait, you don't know who I am?”

“Should I? Have we met before?” Scrunching his lips, his eyes slit tight. “Did we sleep together and I never called you back? Because if I did, I apologize.”

“What?No. No.” Shaking my head, my hair whipped across my face. Giggling, I suddenly felt lighter, like there was a chance that maybe I could create a new life for myself. “You really don't know who I am?”

“Look, I'm sorry if I should, but I don't. Did we go to school together, work together? Help me out here.”

Quickly I latched onto his hand, the spark of his skin against mine sizzled up my arm. It was an intoxicating sensation, making me feel numb. “Allie, my name's Allie.”

His grip was strong, his fingers speckled in small rough patches and coarse scars. He had the hands of a working man.

I suddenly found myself wondering if they would hurt if he ran them over my ribs or up my back. Would he hold me close and still tender, would his hands take what they wanted and not be forgiving?

“Well, Allie, you have yourself a nice day.” Letting his fingers loosen, his thumb grazed the top of my palm.

His smile was incredible, drawing me in. I wanted to smell him, feel him, taste him. Shaking my head, I glanced at the ground, afraid that I might kiss him if I stared at him any longer. “Yeah, you too. Thanks again.”

Stuffing his hands into his pockets, Kealen strolled off down into the sand.

And I was left with this heavy pressure on my chest as my lungs struggled to regain control and take in a breath of air.

Taking one last glance over his shoulder, a slight smirk hitched at the corner of his lip. I couldn't stop the smile that plastered itself across my face.

There could be a chance for me.

I can make it.

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### Chapter Three

#### Alaska

I stood motionless on the sidewalk, unsure if I wanted to go back to my hotel or not. Fiddling with the bag hanging on my side, I plucked my lower lip. I didn't know what to do with myself. There was something holding me there, keeping me from moving further away.

I kept looking back in the direction Kealen had gone, wishing he would emerge with that award-winning smile.

This is stupid.

He was just a guy who had spotted a girl in trouble, he did exactly what any other chivalrous man would have done. There was nothing special about it. Shit, I would have done the same thing too.

Shaking my head to myself, I started to leave. My feet slowly patted over the sand covered walkway, each step burning the soles of my heels. Moaning and groaning, I made my way to a shaded spot so I could slip back into my sandals.

“Hey, wait up!” The same deep, husky growl ricocheted off the sand dunes. “I can't just leave you out here like this, it doesn't feel right. Let me walk you back to your hotel.”

“What? No, it's fine, you don't need to.” Waving my shoe in the air, I dropped it to

the ground. "I'm alright, really."

Why the hell am I saying no?

You wanted this.

I had a habit of doing that, saying no when I really wanted to scream yes. I wasn't sure why I was predisposed to automatically say no, but I did it without even thinking about it.

Maybe it was because I had spent so much time after my mother passed away having to look out for myself. I spent my entire childhood practically alone. I was sent to boarding school during the school year and the only time my father was ever involved was when he shoved me into the star lights to find fame.

I had become so dependent on myself, that accepting help from another was like an out of body experience.

"I can't leave you after that jackass was harassing you, I'm walking you back." His hand found the small of my back, guiding me forward. "Where are you staying?"

"I'm only up the street a block or so." Pointing with my finger, I couldn't stop staring into his eyes.

They were mesmerizing, tickling my skin with light sparks of electricity. They were the same crystal blue as the ocean, white flakes were glittering around the rim of his iris', mingling with different shades of silver. There was no way for me to fully describe the way his gaze felt as it cast down on my body.

His eyes met mine, his fingers gently ruffled the trim of my shirt. Goosebumps shot across my skin, causing me to shiver as he spoke. "So, are you an official tourist or

have you been here before?" His legs started moving and mine quickly followed with the pressure of his hand against my back.

The scent of mint and pine blew through the air, curling into my nose with long strokes. My breath hitched as another wave of his cologne stole my senses.

My mouth wanted to speak, but my brain had melted into a pile of mush. "Uh, well, kinda. But. . . Not really." The words were hard to find, I was so lost in his presence.

"Okay, that's not a confusing answer at all." Chuckling, Kealen's thumb pressed into my spine. "So you've been here, but you haven't been here."

You sound like a fool, Allie!

Get it together!

"Well, I haven't been here before, but it reminds me of where I grew up." My fingers twined together nervously as my eyes darted to the ground.

It was like I had just dropped in age, turning from a young woman into a fidgety, insecure teenager. My heart was palpitating inside my chest, strumming long notes that vibrated my ribs. My palms were sweating and sticky as his hand stayed static on my back.

Smirking, Kealen pulled his hand away and tucked it into his pocket, reading my body language as a negative reaction. My energy wasn't sensual and sexy, I was pushing him away as my body turned stiff, unsure of how to react to the man beside me.

He had it all wrong. It wasn't meant as a sign for him to back off, I just wasn't used to the feelings careening around inside my body.



But I wanted his hand back, I needed it back. With Kealen, I couldn't help but want more of his touch, even if it was barely a touch at all. All of this came from one instant, one moment where he made me feel like I was worth something.

“That makes more sense. Where did you grow up?”

I knew I had to be careful of what I said. If he really didn't know who I was, I didn't want to give it away. The wrong detail could start a landslide of information that would stop the conversation right there.

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The runaway virgin was a target, no one would want to have their name slandered alongside my face. It could ruin whatever life they had created for themselves.

That was the last thing I wanted.

Tapping into the altered and watered down version of my past, I took a deep breath and answered. "On the west coast. How about you?" I wanted the focus off of who I had been and replaced with anything else at all.

It would be easier for me to listen than to give. I hadn't figured out what I wanted to share if it ever came up and I had only really planned on staying hidden, not thrown into the arms of a man.

"I'm from a little bit of everywhere. I moved around a lot as a kid and it kinda stuck with me. New places, new things, it keeps life colorful."

He had just stolen a piece of my heart. I always wanted to travel, always wanted to taste new and see the unseen. He was living the life I wanted, the dream of freedom in the best form.

"That's awesome, I never did much traveling until recently. I always wanted to, it just never worked out that way until now."

Be careful, be careful.

"I could give you a tour if you'd like. I've been coming here for years, I know a thing or two about this place."

Tilting my head up, I smiled. "I'd like that." Rounding the corner, I stopped outside my hotel. "Here we are." Cupping my hands in front of my waist, I rocked on my heels.

"What room are you?"

Scanning the top row of doors, I held my hand above my eyes and squinted. "Uh. . . The one on the—wait. . . What are they—"

The door to my room was open, the cleaning lady's cart of items were parked in the entrance. But she wasn't just cleaning it, she was emptying it out.

"You've got to be kidding me!" Running up the stairs, I flew down the open corridor to my room. "Wait! What are you doing? Why is my stuff outside?"

A short woman wearing a light purple dress and bright yellow gloves popped her head out the door. "Excuse me?"

"This is my room, what are you doing?" Standing with my hands out, my mouth hung open.

"I'm sorry Miss, you'll have to go to the office and talk to the manager."

"But this is my room, you can't remove my stuff." Shock coated my expression as confusion rattled my brain.

What the hell is going on?

"I'm only doing my job, please, head down to the office and talk to the manager. You'll have to talk to her." Flipping her finger up and pointing, she nodded her head down the stairs.

Grumbling to myself, I lifted my bag off the ground and turned to walk away. I wanted to say more, I was ready to give her holy hell for what she was doing. But it wasn't her fault and I knew that. She had orders to follow, I couldn't get angry at her for that.

I tried to convince myself there had to be some sort of mistake. Maybe I was being moved to another room, maybe there was an issue with the one I had. There were so many possibilities that could happen; leaky pipes, new paint, new carpet, anything.

“I don't know what's going on here.” Brushing past Kealen, I headed towards the office. That was the last thing I needed. To see my room, my home for the next week, being vacated without a valid reason had blindsided me. I paid for the room, I deserved some notification of any changes they might throw at me.

I could hear his feet behind me, his heavy steps matching mine. Looking over my shoulder, Kealen was following right behind me. “What are you doing?”

“I'm coming with you.”

“You don't have to do that, I'll figure out what's going on.”

“And if you don't, you'll need another option.”

Option? Something was going on with my room, that was all this was. I didn't need another option. They couldn't kick me out.

“Alright, you can come if you want, but I'm sure there's a reasonable explanation for this.”

Walking into the office, the woman behind the desk stood there gleaming with a smile. “Hello, welcome to Waterford, do you have a reservation?”

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Gripping the edge of the counter, I leaned in. “Hi, yeah, so I'm in room fifty-three and the maid said I needed to come talk to the manager. What's going on with my room?”

“Oh. . . Yes, Miss Landry, your room.” Tapping the keys on her keyboard, she glanced between the screen and my face. “I'm sorry, but the credit card you gave us has been declined.”

Wait, what?

Declined?

That wasn't possible, they accepted it this morning when I checked in. How the hell could it be declined?

“No no no no, there's some type of mistake here. My card worked this morning, I paid for a full week.”

“Not exactly. We took down your information, but we didn't try to run your card through until a little while ago, and it was denied. I'm sorry, the clerk should have informed you that we don't always bill for payment at time of check-in. If you like, we accept cash or check, would you like to pay that way?”

“I'm sorry, this isn't making any sense.” Yanking out my wallet, I tried to hand her my card. “Here, try again.”

“We ran the numbers through three times, I'm sorry. We do accept other forms of payment, but your card is no good. We could try another card if you have one.”

“I don't have another card.” Hanging my head, I laid my palms flat on the counter.

This couldn't be happening. There was nothing wrong with my card, I had plenty of room to pay for this. As I stood there dumbfounded and perplexed, it hit me.

My father must have canceled or frozen the card. That had to be the answer, that was the only thing that made sense. The card had my name on it, but he was the primary holder.

Damn it!

How could I forget that?

Dragging my nails through my hair, I cupped the sides of my neck between my forearms. I couldn't believe I had forgotten we had a joint account. I was broke. There were no more funds for me to tap into, no savings account or secret stash for me to use.

“Allie, let me—”

Holding up my hand, I cut Kealen off. “No.”

“You don't even know what I was going to say.”

“I don't need to, I don't want any more help.”

His fingers brushed the hair off my shoulder, tickling down my back. “I already told you, you might need another option.”

“And?” I asked, tucking my wallet back in my purse.

“I'm your option.” Kealen held his arms out, a big smile etched across his face.

The woman behind the desk let her eyes drift between us. The phone started ringing with different tones, chirping in like a flock of birds. Backing away from the counter, she said, “Honey, if I were you, I'd take option number two.” Winking, she sat down in her chair and answered the phone.

What is she getting at?

“Come on, I know what we can do.” Kealen went to the door and pushed it open, holding it for me.

There was no place else for me to go and I wasn't about to let him pay for a night. Tomorrow I'd be in the same boat; broke and homeless. But it wouldn't change anything, what harm was there in enjoying whatever idea sprung into his head.

Grudgingly, I threw my bag over my shoulder and stepped back into the bright sunlight. “Could this day get any worse?”

“It can always get worse, but it won't.”

“You can't know that, you have no idea what I've been through.”

“You're right, I don't, but that was before.”

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“Before what?”

“Before you met me.” Smiling, Kealen nodded for me to follow him. “Come on.”

I hesitated, unsure if I should trust a man I had just met. But I had nothing to lose, there was nowhere for me to go, no one to call, no one to come save me.

All I had was a life to run from.

Huffing under my breath, I pursed my lips. “Where are we going?”

“You're coming with me.”

“What does that mean?”

“You'll see.” His smile broadened as his full lips lifted from ear to ear.

Even with how horrible I felt, I still wanted to kiss him. His lips looked soft, smooth, and easy to kiss. I was riding this strange high, a mix of sexual desire and freedom with hopelessness floating in between.

It was easy for me to forget the situation I had just found myself in while he was near me. I hadn't completely been able to understand why, and right then, I didn't care. I was going to ride this rollercoaster till I hit the peak and dropped off.

Kealen walked back in the direction we had just come from, passing the stairs I had marched down and going up another set in the far back of the courtyard. Tugging a



key card from his back pocket, he stopped at a door and shoved it into the thin slot.

His arm pushed open the door as he twisted to look down on me. “Welcome to option number two, my room, the next stop in your tour of Waterford City.”

Who the hell was this man?

He had walked into my world, ready to fight off a man he didn't know for a woman he had just stumbled upon. And now he was swooping me under his arm and saving the day again.

How was I going to repay him for everything he was doing?

“You're kidding? We're staying in the same hotel?”

“Seems that way, and now it looks like we'll be staying in the same room.”

I couldn't understand his willingness to save me. Either he was just a really nice guy or he had ulterior motives.

Which I couldn't lie and say I would mind if he tried anything, but to agree to stay with someone I didn't know was crazy.

Except, what the hell was I going to do?

I was literally trapped and without a fucking thing to call my own. I was in an unfamiliar place, with no money, no way out.

Against all my gut instincts to just say no and walk away, I actually thought about it. The gesture was nice, but the risk in agreeing was huge. I had just met this guy, could I really stay with him in his room?

“So, what do you say?”

“I don't know what to say. I don't know you, remember?” Crossing my arms over my chest, I stood just outside the door.

“Well, you're about to get to know me.” Tossing the card onto the small table by the door, he turned to me. “I have two beds, so don't get any ideas.” His laugh hit my chest, forcing me to giggle.

I was already falling for this man and I knew absolutely nothing about him. But he had already done more for me than anyone else.

“I can't believe I'm agreeing to share a room with a stranger.” Taking a long, slow step into the room, he let the door swing shut behind me.

“I can't believe it either. Aren't there after school specials about shit like this?” A gritty chuckle hit his lips as he tipped his head back. “I'm kidding. Trust me, I'm harmless.”

### Chapter Four

#### Alaska

“You hungry?” Kealen asked, sitting on the edge of his bed, watching me sift through my bag on the floor. His hands were balled together, elbows resting on the top of his knees.

“I could eat, but. . .”

“But what?” Pushing up on his hands, he leaned back and cocked his head to the side. A tight smile fixed on his face as he watched me scroll through excuses inside my head.

There was really only one reason I couldn't go out and purchase an actual meal, I didn't have to tiptoe around the answer. He was already well aware of my lack of funds. I had agreed to stay with him in his room, if I could have afforded to pay for another room without using the only card I had, I would've.

“I have a hundred dollars left in my pocket, I should try and save it. At least until I can get some sort of job so I can get back on the road.”

“I didn't ask you if you had money, I asked if you were hungry. Let me buy you dinner.”

Sitting up on my haunches, I stared at him. It was a nice gesture, but he had already done enough for me by letting me stay with him. I didn't want to be a burden on him

anymore than I already was, and I definitely didn't want him to think I was trying to take advantage of his generosity either.

“No, thank you, but I can't let you do that. I'll just grab something from the vending machine.”

Scrubbing his jaw with his hand, his lip curled high. “You're pretty stubborn, huh?”

“What? No, it's just you've already done enough by letting me crash here.”

Standing up, Kealen walked over to me and flipped my bag closed. “Come on, lets go.”

Holding out my palms, I teetered on my heels. “No, it's fine, I'll grab some snacks after. Go get yourself some food, I'll see you when you get back.”

Staring up at him, I could see the thick outline of his cock against his pants. My eyes glazed over the bulbous head, following the shaft until it disappeared. I could feel my tongue swell as my mouth started to water.

Blinking quickly, I wiped my lips and glanced away. He was reeking havoc on my insides, disarming all my self control.

I wouldn't say I was a prude or didn't want to ever have sex. But the feelings he conjured in me were brazen, tempting me to surrender to him.

His hand came out hard and firm, fingers flapping wildly for me to take it. “It's not an option, I'm buying you dinner. Come on.”

Closing my eyes, I laughed, letting my head roll deeper into my chest. “And you called me stubborn?”

“I did, because you are. I'm determined, it's different.” Gripping my wrist, he pulled me to my feet. “What do you like to eat?”

As he lifted me up, I stumbled forward, pressing into his chest. My fingers hit the hard muscles of his corded abs, digging into a firm set of stepping stones.

Holy shit, he is as hard as he looks.

Kealen felt hard as granite, like a stone mason had carved him from one solid block. Expelling a breath, I danced my fingertips lightly over his chest. Swallowing hard, I steadied myself and took a step back.

Our eyes met, his clinched as his fingers gently trailed down over the back of my arms and cupped my elbows.

Everything was tingling; my hands, my arms, the space between my thighs. This man did something to me with just an innocent touch.

We were so close, inches from each other. My stomach was flipping, head whirling with images of ripping his shirt off and tackling him. A deep seeded need was strangling my insides. I wanted to feel him deep inside me, spreading me open and giving me my first taste of cock.

It felt wrong to have such naughty thoughts about a man I had just met. I couldn't understand where the desire to have this guy stemmed from. Never in my life had I ever wanted someone so badly—especially someone I didn't know.

But I wanted him.

I knew I was blushing, I could feel the blood rushing through my body in fiery waves. Clearing my throat, I rubbed the back of my arms. “You tell me, Mr. Tour Guide.”

“Well. . .” Folding his arms together, he tapped his chin. “Do you like seafood?”

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“I do.” Tucking a loose strand of hair behind my ear, I nodded, trying not to look him in the eye. It was these damn nerves driving me insane. My body was no longer under the control of my brain.

There wasn't any rational thoughts floating around inside my head. All I could see when I looked at Kealen was his naked form calling me in. Every move of his hands, every twitch of a brow or snap of his chest. . .

And I was hijacked by sexual desire.

“Then I know just where to go.” Taking my hand in his, he braided our fingers together and led me out the door.

The electricity spiraled up my arm, hitting my chest. My lungs felt heavy, my heart skipped beats as he squeezed his fingers around mine. It was the first time I had held a real man's hand.

The last boyfriend I had was almost three years ago, and holding his hand felt nothing like this. He was a boy, Kealen was a man.

Kealen held my hand with purpose, with strength and experience. Experience I didn't have, but wanted; experience I didn't know, but needed.

I wasn't about to let go. Not this time, this time I wasn't going to let myself become jittery and awkward. I wanted his hand around mine, even if it was only there to pull me along and not let me shy away.

Strolling down the street, his hand stayed firmly tangled in mine, not once did he try to let go. He held on, gripping tighter, and moving closer. There was this energy between us, so strong I couldn't ignore it.

What if it's just me?

What if he's just being nice?

This fear of unrealistic emotions sat in the front of my mind. I had no experience, I had no idea how to tell the difference between kindness and actual intent.

How could I know for sure that I wasn't over analyzing his actions or touch?

What if he was just old fashioned, raised in a family that burned respect and tradition into his bones?

Then all of this, every last ounce, could just be normal for him.

Kealen could be a man whose instinct was to coddle an old woman as she crossed the street or bringing out groceries to their car. Maybe he didn't even think twice about grabbing my hand as we left because it was the courteous thing to do.

I was struck with the urge to let go, to slip my hand free from his and stop thinking I was feeling something that wasn't really there. I didn't want to feel the embarrassment of being wrong. It was easier for me to push him away than it was for me to let him in. That's if he wanted to be'in'to begin with.

There was no way I was going to make a fool of myself and let my emotions get the best of me. Trusting my instincts wasn't second nature, it was hard to open up and not question the motives behind someone else.



Loosening my hand, I let the pads of my fingers break free first. Slowly I let my hand fall flat, drifting out of his.

But he didn't follow suit, he curled his fingers deeper, gripping tighter and sucking my hand back in. "How long did you plan on staying here?" he asked, bumping into my shoulder as we walked.

He isn't letting my hand go.

Maybe I'm not crazy and there is something between us.

I wasn't sure if the bump was intentional or by accident, but I couldn't help but feel the flirtation in his touch. Smiling to myself, I re-clasped my hand and glanced off to my left so he couldn't see the grin that had popped up on my face over something so small.

It was such a tiny gesture, but to me it was confirmation that I might not be imagining the energy between us.

"I planned on staying for a little while, but now I'm not sure." Shrugging my shoulder, I kept looking around at the beauty this little town sparkled with.

The street was lined with small shops that had hand painted signs hanging in the windows. There were no big flashy lights or giant billboards of models—or my face—set high in the sky.

The road was built with small cobblestones and shells, the streetlights all looked like they were the original ones from when the town first popped up on the map. The only notable difference was the soft glow of a luminescent bulb, replacing the natural flicker of a flame.

I felt his eyes watching me, observing my wonder around us. “What is it about this place that reminds you of home?”

“The ocean.” I didn't have to think about the answer, it was the only thing that gave me comfort. Taking in a deep breath, I let the salty air fill my lungs. “I love that smell, that sound. It brings back good memories.”

“If you love the memories, why'd you leave?”

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That was a question I couldn't answer, so I shook my head no. "I'd rather not talk about it."

That was exactly what I was trying to avoid. The past needed to stay where it was. I was on a mission to escape it all, to forget the shame and embarrassment of putting my virginity on a platter for the world to devour.

"But you do miss it?"

"I miss parts of it, not all of it."

Kealen's thumb worked its way over the nub on my wrist, drawing small circles against my skin and sliding down over my knuckle. "What are you hiding from, Allie?" His voice was delicate, caution layering his tone.

He caught me off guard. Silence consumed me as I tried to search for an answer to a question I never saw coming.

Am I that easy to read?

Can he really tell I'm hiding?

"I don't want to talk about it." The words came out more stern than I meant them to, but my past was off the table. I wished I could take everything I wanted to forget and throw it into a bottomless pit.

But telling my story, reliving it in words. . . That torture wasn't allowed.

Frowning, Kealen nodded, letting his eyes drift straight ahead. “Understood. Can you tell me anything about who you are? Or do I have to read between the lines and try to guess?”

Cocking my head, I eyed him under hooded lids. “Why all the questions?”

Kicking his head into his shoulder, his brows lifted high. “I like to know who I'm living with I guess. I mean, I have to make sure you're not a serial killer, so consider this formalities.”

“You realize that sounds backwards, right? Shouldn't I be wondering if you're a serial killer?”

“I'm not.”

“And I'm supposed to just believe you?”

Kealen winked, smirking a hair. “When was the last time you went swimming?”

“What?” Veering my stare, I brushed the hair from my face and let my mouth hang open.

What the hell is he talking about? How did we go from killers to swimming?

“You said you missed the ocean, but when was the last time you went in it?”

Glancing around at nothing, I let my mind bring me back to that day. That one memory I always carried with me no matter how hard things got. Stuffing my free hand into my pocket, I twirled the shell in my fingers.

“I was three.”

“Wrong.” His teeth shined as his smile widened. “Come on.”

Yanking my hand, he pulled me down onto the beach. Letting my hand go, he lumbered across the sand, straight towards the water.

Is he. . .

He is, he's heading into the water.

Tugging off his shirt and pants in one quick swoop, he dropped them to the sand and let the water crest his ankles.

His back was painted like a portrait, swirling in lines and bright colored images. Every muscle was highlighted, rolling and dancing as he stretched his arms over his head.

My eyes moved lower, watching his ass tighten in the briefs that hugged his hips. Turning to face me, I wanted to lift my eyes back up, but the shape of his cock was perfectly defined. It was taunting me with hidden bliss and unknown pleasure.

The thick muscle bulged beneath the fabric, jiggling up and down and side to side as he walked backwards. It was hard for me to think, to focus, to do anything. I was stuck in this awe of how large his cock would be if he was hard, how it would feel to have it slip between my lips and taste my walls.

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My thighs clenched as I pictured his rock solid dick pressing against my entrance. I could feel my panties dampen as my sex heated to the temptation staring me down with a one eyed wink.

“Well, are you just going to stand there?” The water flowed between his legs, forcing his briefs to tighten even more around his cock.

Curling my arms around my waist, I crossed my legs and dug my feet into the sand. “What are you doing?”

“Today is the next time you'll remember swimming in the ocean.” Splashing the water at me, he laughed hard, turning to dive into a wave.

I stood motionless, ready to strip and jump in after him, and yet I was stuck in place. I knew I was smiling, but in the same breath a hint of sadness swept in. A new memory would be welcomed, but the thought of covering the last ocean image was sad.

“Whatever you're thinking, this doesn't change it.” His body drifted up and down as the waves rolled in behind him. “Making new memories is what life's all about.” Throwing his hands into his hair, Kealen slicked the wet locks back, dragging his fingers down his jaw.

Plucking at my lower lip, I folded my arms tighter around my ribs. He was right, he was absolutely right. Nothing could ever make me forget the last memory of my mom, but not letting myself enjoy the moment would torture me forever.

Hiding had brought me here, but living wasn't something I could stop doing.

Kicking my sandals off, I took off through the sand. Laughter had already consumed me as the cold ocean water met my ankles. The sand felt silky as it slipped between my toes and covered my feet.

My clothing was drinking up the water as I moved in deeper, the cloth grew darker and my skin chilled with each step I took. But I never stopped smiling.

Kealen stood watching me with a childish grin on his face. "See, new memories." Holding out his arms, his chest puffed up, flexing into a wall of hardened stone.

The water trickled down over his chest, drawing long wet lines over his skin. I wanted to lick the salty brine off his body, run my tongue around each muscle and taste every inch of him.

"You can say that again."

His body was riddled in small peaks as the water glided effortlessly over his skin, leaving goosebumps in its wake. Each stain of ink, every thick line and bold image was glistening in watery perfection.

Kealen let his hands wave in and out of the water, his fingers opened wide, brushing the liquid behind his back. "Did you ever take any risks in your life before?" His eyes were set on mine, trying to read me, trying to see inside my soul.

I just wasn't ready to give it up.

Crinkling my brows, I lowered my body up to my shoulders in the water. "I might consider this a risk."

"I wouldn't." Stepping forward, Kealen curled his arm around my back and tugged me into his chest. "But this is." Bending down, he pressed his lips against mine,

kissing me deep and sensually.

My arms hung lifelessly by my sides as my back arched. I hadn't expected him to kiss me. I was standing like a doll, ready to be positioned however he wanted to move me.

I felt his fingers under my arms as he forced them up around his neck. The tips of his fingers traced my arms, turning my bristled skin into searing flames. His tongue swept through my lips, coiling around mine as it danced across the ridges of my mouth.

It had been so long since I kissed someone that I was worried I wasn't doing it right. But that concern disappeared as his hands skimmed down my back and gripped my ass.

My nipples beaded as my sex liquefied and pulsed between my thighs. I was a live wire as the voltage raged through my body and stopped my breathing completely.

Kealen's hands worked their way up my ribs and cupped my cheeks. Pulling his mouth from mine, his eyes danced under hooded lids. "Life is full of risks, you just have to know when to take them. . ." Strumming his thumb over my bottom lip, he held my face firmly in place. "And when to make them yours."



### Chapter Five

#### Alaska

My clothes were dripping large droplets of water as I stood behind Kealen while he opened the door. Dinner wasn't happening, not now, I was soaked.

And if he had suggested it, there was no way I could eat after that. The way he touched me, the way he looked in my eyes, the taste of his lips against mine. I wasn't ready to wash that away.

Stepping inside, I gripped the trim of my shirt and squeezed. "I think I took the ocean back with me."

"You should've followed suit." Winking, he pinched the corner of his shoulder and smiled. "Let's get you a towel." As he turned towards the bathroom, I couldn't stop myself from laughing out loud. "What's so funny?"

"Following suit would have left me with an ass like yours." Nodding my head, he twisted his body and looked down. "Maybe being wet all over isn't so bad."

Kealen's backside was drenched, soaked from his boxers. The water had seeped into his jeans, making it look like he had pissed himself. I was still giggling, unable to stop.

Waving a single finger at me, his lips thinned. "I'd be careful with that."

“With what?”

“Tempting me with your wetness. Don't make me regret getting you a towel, not that it matters. I could make you wet all over again.”

I should have been cold and shivering uncontrollably from the coldness of the clothes stuck to my body, but I wasn't. I couldn't think, he had shut me right up with an invitation to dare him.

And that kiss, that damn kiss was still smothering my brain. The way his lips felt on mine, the way his body felt when I was in his arms, the way my heart hammered inside my chest when he pulled me in; all of it was clouding my head.

Inside, I wanted to tell him everything, every minute detail of my life. The fear of telling him about who I was and where I came from was starting to fizzle away. It was like he could read my mind, knowing my darkest secrets and fears from just my expression.

He could see the pain in my face when I was thinking about my mom, he could sense my hurt and the worry of losing that memory. If he could read me then, he could read anything.

But it pained me to know I couldn't. He had questions, he was curious about who I was and I couldn't blame him. There was nothing more I wanted than to cuddle up beside him and tell him stories about where I came from, about what it was like for me growing up, what commercials he could find my young innocent face in.

Innocent. . .

I don't want to be innocent anymore.

The wonder of why he moved so much, where he came from and what he did to make a living was right there on the tip of my tongue. But asking meant answering, I wasn't sure I was ready for his reaction when he found out who I was.

It was refreshing to have someone beside me that knew absolutely nothing, it was a one in a million chance that I would run into the one and only person on this earth who had no clue who I was.

There was no way I could risk fucking that up. I purposely tried to not ask him questions about himself, just trying to keep my past a secret. If I didn't ask him, he wouldn't ask me. It was that simple.

Only it wasn't.

Kealen walked out of the bathroom, carrying two bright white towels. "They're not the thickest, I could give you something thicker." Handing me one, he threw the spare onto the bed and sat down beside it with a shit eating grin on his face.

He knew, I could tell by his eyes, he knew what he was doing. And he knew what he was causing my body to do.

Clutching the towel, I eyed him. I wanted to say something back, tease him with flirtatious bickering that could force him to swallow hard. But I had nothing, I was blank.

But watching his gaze fueled my mind. My nipples were hard, piercing through the fabric, and his eyes were set right on them. Arching my back, I pushed my chest out further.

I can tease you too.

But I have different assets to work with.

If I couldn't think up a quick whip to send his way, I would use the next best thing. Kealen might have been able to read my mind, to see my reaction. But I could read his body.

Grabbing his knees, he shifted on the bed. “Are you going to stay in those clothes?”

And. . . There it is.

Boom.

I wanted to fist bump myself for giving it back to him, so I did. . . In my head. It wasn't as fulfilling, but it did the job.

“Maybe. Do you want me to tell you I'll take them off?” Giggling, I dragged the towel down my arms.

“You haven't told me much.” Pressing his palms into his knees, his knuckles whitened as he eyed me under hooded lids.

Grimacing, I scrubbed my hair, pursing my lips. His stare was intense, scratching away like sharp burs rolling over my skin. He wanted answers, he wanted to know more than I was giving.

Relaxing, he sat up straight. “Look, I get it, you don't like wherever it is you came from, for whatever reason. It's just. . .” Taking a deep breath, his shoulders rolled forward. “I want to know about you. There's something there that makes me wonder, that makes me curious. What's so bad that you can't say it? Are you the daughter of a mobster, are you running for your life?”

“No, it's nothing like that. I just don't want to talk about it and we don't need to. Let's just enjoy this. . .” Tilting my head a hair, I shrugged. “Whateverthismight be.”

“What do you thinkthisis?” Folding his hands, he clicked the pads of his thumbs

together. "Tell me that at least, let me in on what you're thinking."

"You really want me to tell you what I think?" Lifting my leg onto the bed, I wrapped the towel around my thigh and wiped it dry.

Kealen stood up, slowly walking to my side. His hand swept through the tips of my hair, brushing it over my shoulder. The air I took in lodged in the back of my throat as his fingers kept moving over my back.

His touch was delicate, intricately pressing into the curve of my spine. My body shuddered, forcing lone water drops to cascade down my legs.

Curling his fingers under the hem of my shirt, he leaned into my ear and whispered. "Can I show you what I think?" The tips of his fingers spun over my skin, drawing lines and heavy swirls.

Prickles broke over my neck, the hair standing on end as I swallowed hard. I couldn't speak, I couldn't look away, I couldn't move.

What's he doing?

Biting my lower lip, I nodded yes. My mouth wanted to speak, it wanted to tell him he could show me anything, he could do anything. . . But the words were lost.

"Do you have any idea how sexy it is when you bite your lip like that?" His mouth hovered over the shell of my ear as he peeled my shirt over my head. I didn't resist, I lifted my arms and let him take control.

I wasn't afraid to let him see me, to let him see how vulnerable and needy I was. I wanted this man for so many reasons I wasn't ready to accept.

He made me feel, he made my body ignite, he melted my heart when he stood up for me. Kealen had taken a chance, opening his door to a woman who had nothing.

But he didn't realize how much I needed everything.

I had always thought that love went with sex, that being intimate meant giving more than your body in the moment. I thought your heart was the life that fed every single part of your soul. And giving yourself was a token of forever.

But right then, all I felt was the heat between us. It was raw, natural, and I was completely at his mercy.

The cold strands of my hair slapped down on my shoulders as he dropped my shirt to the floor. "I think there's something about you I can't figure out, something I want, something I need." Stroking my shoulders, his fingers rolled over my neck, massaging the muscle. "I think that when you look at me, you feel it too."

Dragging his tongue down the curve of my ear, his fingers glided down my back and found the clasp of my bra. Excitement had swarmed my body, riding my spine like an electric charge. This was the furthest I had ever gone with a guy and we hadn't even done anything yet.

Virgin, the word rings no sex, but I was the purest form of the word. Yes I had kissed boys, yes I had held hands and hugged boyfriends in the past. But that was as far as I had ever gone.

No man had ever touched or laid eyes on me naked, and now I was closer than I'd ever been. I was on the cusp of being topless, of possibly going all the way.

I hadn't even had the pleasure of seeing a real penis yet. My old roommate had thrown a dildo at me once, but I wasn't sure how close the two could compare.

Should I tell him?

Should he know that I have zero experience?

To say my nerves were in overdrive was an understatement. I could feel my stomach in my throat, I could feel my thighs trembling and the muscles in my gut twining around each other.



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*Source Creation Date: July 18, 2025, 4:42 pm*

A cold sweat had started to trickle over my skin as I felt my bra snap open in the back, and his palm press down between the center of my shoulder blades. I was so close to blurting out that I was a virgin, but I couldn't actually form the words on my tongue.

Say it!

Tell him so he knows!

Screaming at myself inside my head, I did the opposite of what my mind was telling me. Tucking my chin into my chest, I leaned my head to the side to make room for his face.

Kealen's lips met my shoulder as his thumbs slipped the straps down my arms, dropping my bra to floor. "You're skin is so soft, I could kiss it all day."

"Kealen—" Before I could tell him the truth about me, his mouth crashed into mine, silencing any words that tried to come out. The kiss was long and passionate as sparks exploded between us. I could feel them all over my skin, bursting with violent snaps.

Closing my eyes, his hand found my breast and squeezed. Pinching my nipple, I moaned into his mouth. Using his thumb and forefinger, Kealen plucked at the hardened bead. It felt incredible, euphoric, and more intense than any of the times I had touched myself.

Moving behind me, he drew light kisses across my neck. The coarse stubble scrapped

my throat, sending a thunderous wave of goosebumps over my body.

“Mm,” I moaned, letting my head roll back onto his chest. This, it felt natural, not forced or awkward. Kealen had the power to make me feel comfortable, so I embraced it.

All of it seemed so easy. The sounds, the movements, the way my back arched against his chest. He made me feel ready for whatever might come next. For some reason I trusted this man, I just couldn't explain why.

It was a feeling, a sense of connecting that made it simple for me to forget we had only met a few hours ago. I felt like I had known him for so much longer.

Sliding his hands down over my belly, he popped the button on my shorts. The metal ping of the zipper filled the air around us. I was soaked, dripping and eager to feel his fingers on my pussy.

For all the times I had told a man no; this time it was nothing for me to say yes, to welcome his hands against my skin in any way he wanted.

Right then, I was his.

Hot air rolled across my throat as he let out a weighted breath. A deep growl echoed from inside his chest, turning him from man into animal. His hands grew harder, more rough and intense.

Rocking my hips, I could feel myself getting lost in him—in this. I wasn't thinking anymore about my lack of experience or what I didn't know.

“I want to taste you.” Shuffling my wet shorts over my thighs, Kealen let them fall the rest of the way to my ankles. “I need to taste you.” His hand came up, curling

around my tit and squeezing firmly.

“Kealen, I need to tell you something.”

“Shh,” he hushed into my ear. “You don't need to say anything. Let me give you this.” Pressing his hand into the small of my back, he twisted my body and guided me onto the bed.

“No, really, I have to tell you—”

His finger flew up, pressing against my lips. “No talking.” Using the pads of his fingers, he pressed my shoulders down.

Rolling backwards, I let him take over. If this was going to happen, if he was going to be the one to claim my virginity, I was ready.

This is it. Holy shit

Am I doing this?

I'm really doing this. . . He's really doing this.

His hands cupped my knees as he spread my legs wide open. A deep grunt escaped his lips as he knelt down in front of me on the floor.

Leaning in, he took in a long deep breath. “Fuck, that's sweet,” he said as he exhaled.

I was trying so hard to stop my thighs from shivering, but it was no use. Just knowing he was about to lick my pussy made the butterflies tear through my stomach.

Flicking my panties to the side, I could feel his breath against my sex. My body

turned rigid, fingers curling into the blanket and digging in. I was bracing myself for this new experience, this new found feeling of ecstasy.

I heard his lips smack together and felt his body move in closer. The first lap of his tongue forced my thighs to slam shut around his head.

*Source Creation Date: July 18, 2025, 4:42 pm*

“Touchy, huh?” Chuckling, he pushed my thighs open and swept his tongue over me again and again.

It was incredible. Goosebumps surged over my body, my fingers gripping the blanket and holding on. I had never experienced that sensation, it was overwhelming and debilitating, freezing me in place.

Each time the tip of his tongue met my clit another wave of tingles flowed through each and every nerve. The air around us grew hot and thick, smothering my lungs. I couldn't breathe, I couldn't lift my head off the bed, I couldn't open my eyes.

Raking my nails through Kealen's hair, I dug into his roots and pulled. His mouth moved harder and faster, tongue wildly lapping my clit.

My belly tightened as the orgasm bubbled up from deep inside my core. My legs tried to close, but he held my knees open. His hands wrapped around the inside of my thighs, butterflying my legs wider. Flicking his tongue faster and faster against my swelling button, it was like he could tell I was so close and all he wanted was to feel me come.

My pussy pulsed, throbbing and ready to give in. I couldn't hold back, I couldn't stop the feeling as it took charge and sent me over the edge. Biting down on my lip, my back arched high, nails tearing at the hair on Kealen's head.

As my body relaxed and the feeling washed away, my arms and legs fell limp. “Wow,” I said through heavy exhales. “That was incredible.”

“I'm glad you liked it.” Kealen pressed up on his knees, laying his chest on my waist and wiping his chin.

“Liked it? I've never felt anything like that before.” Pushing up on my elbows, I blew a thin strand of hair off my forehead.

“I'm glad I could surpass past experiences.”

“No, I mean, I've never been eaten out before.”

Cocking a brow, he tilted his head. “Really? None of your old boyfriends ate you out before?”

I might as well tell him now.

“That's what I was trying to tell you, I'm a virgin, Kealen.” I waited for his reaction, unsure of what he would say.

“A virgin? Seriously, like through and through?” He had this look of disbelief, his eyes were crinkled tight, lips curved down in thought.

Smiling, I couldn't help but laugh. “Does that surprise you?”

“I guess I just figured that at this point in your life, some guy would have had the decency to give you that pleasure.”

“It's not that no one asked, I just didn't want them to.”

Thumbing my hips, his fingers tickled the dip in my spine. “Does that mean you've never gone down on a guy either?”

Shaking my head no, my lips thinned. “You're the first guy to even see me naked.”

“Really?”

“Yup.” Bending my leg, I pushed myself up on the bed. “You're lucky number one.”

Bobbing his head, Kealen's eyes twinkled as he smiled. “You're going to give me a big head, like literally.” Glancing down at his groin, he flicked his face back up to me. “I might have blue balls.” Adjusting himself, his shoulder rolled forward as he wiggled his hips.

“I'm a quick learner if you're a good teacher.” Licking my lips, I climbed onto my knees and perched in front of him.

There was this erotic wave that rushed through my body. I wanted to suck his cock, I wanted to hear him telling me what to do and how. I wanted to feel his hand in my hair as I took his length as far in my mouth as I could.

I didn't know what had gotten into me, but I felt different. The fear had vanished as pure woman came through, ready and eager to please my man the same way he had just pleased me.

Kealen wasn't my man, but in my heart I was hoping this little adventure wouldn't end. Reality was worlds away from here, and I was alright with the idea of time standing still and the world never recovering.

This. . . This could be my new life.

Because for once, I was actually happy.

“You think you're ready for this?” Grabbing his hardened shaft, he stroked the

outside of his shorts. “I don't want you to do anything you don't feel comfortable with.”



## Page 18

*Source Creation Date: July 18, 2025, 4:42 pm*

Crawling on my hands and knees to the edge of the bed, my eyes glazed over in sexual prowess. I was ready, I was more than ready. “Teach me.” Batting my lashes, I squeezed the trim of the mattress, letting my lips barely touch his. “I’m all yours.”

Freeing the button on his shorts, Kealen tilted his head. “Sweetheart, I hope you know what you’re getting into.” Slowly pulling the zipper down, he let them fall loosely to the floor. “Because once you start, there’s no turning back.”

My mouth was salivating, waiting to see the thick muscle he kept hidden. I wanted his cock in my throat, I wanted to touch it and stroke it, squeeze it and lick it. I wanted to know what it felt like with my lips wrapped tightly around the base, pulling and sucking.

Plucking the band of his briefs, Kealen rose to his feet, running his fingers through my hair and resting them on the back of my head. “Spit or swallow?”

Twisting to look up at him, I eyed him curiously. “What?”

“This is the only option I’m giving you, do you want to swallow my load or spit it out?”

I wasn’t sure how to answer or what I thought I wanted. I had never done this before. How was I supposed to know if I wanted either?

The two choices muddled my head, causing me to shift awkwardly on my knees. “I don’t know.”

Smirking, Kealen dug his fingers deeper into my hair. "Then I guess we'll just see what happens. You'll know what you want when the time comes." Turning my face towards his waist, I could still feel him smiling down on me.

His hand was hot against my head, singing my hair with need. His cock was bulging, so rigid that I expected it to burst through the fabric. His swelling tip brushed the edge of my nose, forcing a shiver through my body.

"Go on, slip them off." Thrusting his hips forward, Kealen tapped his dick against my face. "Don't worry, I'll be easy."

Curling my fingers into the trim of his briefs, I lowered them down over his thighs. Letting out a heavy breath, a husky groan spilled from his mouth. "Yeah, there you go, don't be shy."

His cock sprung free, bouncing lightly in the air. I felt a wave of heat surge through my core as my stomach tightened and churned with nerves. His cock was huge, thick and engorged.

I had always wondered what a real dick would look like in person. It was amazing, sending my entire body up in flames. My sex pulsed, clenching the air between my thighs. My heart started racing as a giant lump formed in the back of my throat.

A nervous fear began to work its way through my body. It started in my chest, causing the air to burn my lungs like the small wisp of ash off a blazing inferno. Swimming into my stomach, that same feeling forced my belly to bubble with hot steam and my toes to curl into the bed.

My hand trembled as I lifted it towards his length, reaching out then snapping it away. I had no idea what the hell I was supposed to do exactly. Do I grab it at the tip and slide down? Do I start at his balls and work my way up? Could I hurt him if I

grabbed too hard or pulled too forcefully?

Kealen reached down, guiding my fingers around the base. Wrapping his hand over mine, he squeezed and started to stroke his cock with me. "It's okay, don't worry, I won't lead you blindly. I like it tight and firm, just like this." His hand pumped up and down with mine, his hips rolling and moving in and out. "When you get to the tip twirl your thumb over the edge, follow the ridge, then stroke down." His waist kept moving, rocking back and forth. "Yeah, like that, just like that."

Looking up, I watched his eyes close, head falling back. His hand was clasped over mine, showing me exactly how much pressure he craved. The thick veins pulsed in my palm, each throb more intense than the last.

Kealen's hand slipped free of my hair and over the dip in my spine, clutching my ass. "That's good, really good. Now lick the tip, taste it, enjoy it."

Moving my tongue to the front of my lips, I watched his cock thicken. The head was swollen, glistening at the seam. Gently I let my tongue fall around the crown, exploring the salty flavor. A silky liquid spread over my lips, landing on my tongue and slipping down my throat.

Our hands still moved together as my cheeks hollowed to suck the large bulb in my mouth. I felt the need to take in more, to explore the entire length. Sucking harder, I pushed more and more of his cock into my mouth, slurping and lapping as my tongue flattened to glide down the underside.

"Fuck, Allie, keep going. That's perfect, just like that." I kept moving my eyes between his face and his dick. I wanted to watch him enjoy the sensation that was riding through his body and I wanted to see the reaction his cock had as it was touched.

His eyes had rolled back in his head, his teeth were crushing his bottom lip as his hand released from mine and firmly planted into my hair. Bobbing my head up and down, I kept stroking his thick muscle as his body moved with me.

Lifting my hand off the bed, I ran it up his abs, scratching my nails back down. There was a sense of knowing, an impulse that my body had to move and touch him in ways I couldn't have imagined.

I caressed his chest, digging my nails into his ribs while tracing the black and green lines with my fingertips. I suck and sucked, taking him deeper and deeper with each exhale. His chest was slick and damp, his grunts and groans were coming longer and harder.

Is he getting close?

How can I tell?

His balls slapped against the edge of my fist, each thrust of his hips met my lips with force. I thought he was rock solid before, but I had no idea how much harder he would get.

Tugging on my hair, Kealen moaned. "Mm, fuck, I'm close, I'm so close."

It was like his words were some sort of cheerleading pep talk. Knowing he was close to coming, knowing that he was enjoying the way it felt made me want to go faster. I wanted to feel him come, I wanted to feel his thick cream as it made its way down my throat.

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*Source Creation Date: July 18, 2025, 4:42 pm*

His cock throbbed, his balls became tighter and harder as they hit my palm. His voice deepened, turning raspy as he whispered words that I couldn't understand.

In one quick thrust, he stopped moving completely. I felt his shaft pulse as the thick veins beat like a heartbeat against the pads of my fingers. Wave after wave of hot come spilled into my mouth.

I didn't think about what I was going to do, I just reacted. Swallowing, the sweet and salty cream coated my throat. It wasn't nearly as bad as some of the girls from school had said in the past. It tasted better than I expected and was nothing like I had thought.

“See, you knew what to do.”

Sitting up on my haunches, I wiped my lips. “I had help.”

“No, Allie, that's what you need understand. You can't plan everything, you can't set every little detail and know how this shit will go. Some things come naturally, sex is one of them.”

Laughing, I rolled backwards and fell onto my back. “That's easy for you to say, you have experience. I'm nineteen and finally gave my first blow-job, you are my experience so far.”

Leaning over me, he pushed his hands into the mattress on either side of my head. “It has nothing to do with experience and everything to do with emotion. If you feel it, you won't need instructions. I might have given you a little at first, but the rest was all

you. You felt it just like I did.” Kissing my forehead, Kealen brushed his lips over my ear. “You can't guide feelings, they lead the way.”

The blue of his eyes exploded in silver sparks and teal fireworks, forcing me to hold my breath. There was something between us and I wasn't the only one who felt it.

Have you ever met someone and just known?

Could love at first sight really exist in the world, and not just in sitcoms and sappy love stories?

Could it be happening to me right now?

### Chapter Six

#### Alaska

The sheets were tangled around my waist, coiling my upper thighs. Shimmying my hips, I freed myself from the choking cotton holding me down. Rolling to my side, I noticed that he wasn't laying next to me—not anymore.

Glancing around, Kealen wasn't in my bed and he wasn't in his. The bathroom door was open, but the light was off. Sitting up on my hands, I yawned really big and rubbed my eyes.

The room was dark, the curtains were drawn tight and not a glimmer of sun was coming through. I still felt warm and fuzzy from the night before, the weight of his tongue against my pussy was draped over my mind like a hot shadow.

It was incredible, he was incredible. The taste of his cock was sitting in the back of my throat, the sweet nectar highlighted every swallow. Smiling to myself, I stretched my legs and stood up.

Where is he?

Strolling around the bed, I started towards the bathroom, then stopped in my tracks. Twisting rapidly on my toes, I searched the floor and all the dark corners for his stuff. But it was empty.

Bolting to the door, I threw it open and looked up and down the walkway. Nothing.

Leaning out the door like I might be able to see better, my foot kicked something light. A newspaper was sitting on the mat, the blue plastic that kept it dry and sealed from any disruption was blowing gently as an ocean breeze swept in catching the loose end.

Bending down, I swiped it off the ground and stepped back into the room. Closing the door, I fiddled with the paper, trying to make sense of it all.

He was gone. Not a trace of him was left in the room. I stood shocked and dumbfounded. The room was so quiet I jumped as the toilet made some strange sound, turning the eerie silence into a shit storm of questions.

Are you kidding me!

Are you fucking kidding me!

Why didn't he wake me up before he decided to ditch me?

Why did I let myself get wrapped up in a guy I just met?

Snapping my hands to my hips, I dragged my fingers through my hair and just gazed off into nothing. We didn't have sex, we didn't pour out our hearts and souls and promise our lives to each other. But I still felt something, and I felt as though he should have told me he was leaving.

Maybe he didn't want you to know.

Maybe this was his plan the whole time.

I had this sickening feeling of being used crawl up into my gut. Holding my belly, I walked in between the two beds and let the bag fall loosely in one hand. The paper



slipped free, spilling open like a carton of knocked over milk. The edges rolled smoothly, flattening against the rug.

There was no mistaking the headline, no question in my mind that the dick-wad reporter had taken full advantage of what happened the day before. There it was, written in larger than life, bold black print: Vengeful Virgin Takes Swing At Local Reporter.

Cupping my head in my hands, I scraped my fingers down my face in frustration. My picture was plastered under the title, my arm in motion towards the guy's face.

I didn't remember seeing a flash or anyone with a camera around us. But that didn't matter now, the damage was done.

He knows who I am.

Maybe he knew all along. . . Did he use me to get a headline of his own?

Anger started to coarse through my veins, my blood curdled to tar, thickening and hardening my muscles. My father, that show, it had ruined any existence I tried to carve out for myself.

Dropping down to the edge of the bed, I let my body fall backwards. The mattress bounced as the springs creaked under my weight. Flipping to my side, I curled my legs in and tugged the blankets up to my face. I wasn't going to cry, I hated crying.

But I felt this heavy weight on my chest as my eyes tried desperately to fill and the tears tried to steal me away.

I thought I felt something and I thought he had too. Obviously, I was wrong.

His minty pine scent rolled in with each breath, mingling with fabric softener. I hated myself for being so insane, for believing that my gut was telling me there was something there.

Letting out a loud grumble, I threw the blanket away, letting my arms fall limp and dangle over the edge.

*Source Creation Date: July 18, 2025, 4:42 pm*

I was at a loss for words, I didn't know what the hell I was going to do. Where was I going to go and how was I going to get there? That was on repeat in my head.

How could he do this to me?

No—how could I let him do this to me?

That was the question I should have been trying to answer. I had been weak, I had let emotions and false feelings sweep me away and into his arms for one night. I had let myself be vulnerable and he took total advantage of my trust in him. When all along he just wanted to cash in on a night with the celebrity virgin.

Rolling up slowly, I eyed my bag in the corner. I couldn't just sit here and feel bad for myself, I had to do something—anything. I was going to need a job, a way for me to get some extra cash to get out of this small town.

My face was on the front page of the local paper, there was no more hiding, at least not here. And after being here with him, experiencing my first real step into the wonderful world of sex; there was no way I would look at this place the same ever again.

I'd think of him every time, regardless of how much I might want to forget him, no matter how much I wanted to hate him; he had been my first true experience. I knew I'd never forget Kealen, but staying here wouldn't help at all.

Storming over to my bag, I started to grab my clothes out for the day and stuff everything else in. Cursing under my breath at everything under the sun, a bright

white piece of paper flapped against the air vent of the air conditioner, catching my attention.

Leaning in, the script was written in all block letters, neatly taped to the top. Tugging it free, I flicked the lamp on and sat back down on the floor, crossing my legs.

Allie,

I don't know where you plan to go, I don't know what you plan to do, but I do know one thing; I want to see where this goes.

I can't explain why I feel so connected to you even though we just met, I can't tell you in words the way my heart thudded when you were close to me and how hard it was for me to find the air to breathe while I laid next to you last night.

I'm sorry I had to leave before you woke, my flight was early and I couldn't find it in my heart to tell you it was time for me to go. I'm not ready to just end things this way. I want to know more, I need to know more.

You said you didn't know where you were going next, I'd like to think I do.

There's a ticket waiting for you at the airport, but it won't be there forever.

Risks are everywhere, make this one yours.

-Kealen

My jaw dropped to the floor, hanging wide open. I had never had a man who was so sweet, so rough, and so romantic even look in my direction. Then there was Kealen and this ticket to him.

My belly spun with knots and butterflies, all slamming into each other at full force. The realization had started to filter through my fogged up and delirious brain.

He didn't run off on me.

Holding the letter, I glided the paper between my fingertips, unable to put it down. A small lump caught the edge of my knuckle, taped neatly to the back. Rolling the paper over in my hand, there was three hundred dollars all folded up and secured tightly.

Who is this man?

There was so much about Kealen I didn't know and so much I wanted to find out. He made my heart skip beats, he made my chest flutter and my head spin.

He had fallen into my world and wasn't trying to run away. There wasn't a second thought in my mind, I wanted to go to him.

I wanted sweet, sweep you off your feet romance.

I wanted love and admiration.

I wanted it all.

And I wasn't going to give up on the dream. It was out there, waiting for me to find it.

Waiting for me to walk off a plane.

### Chapter Seven

Kealen

The time on my watch read five-thirty, fifteen minutes longer and her plane would be landing.

Her plane. . .

Even as I thought the words, it felt right, but I wasn't sure if she would come walking out that runway door. I hoped she would, but hope ran thin.

It was a chance meeting and I wasn't ready to watch it slip through my fingers. There was no way for me to know that I would find her there. Yet I did, and now I wanted her in my life more than I could have ever imagined.

Leaning against a cement post, I twisted my watch into the skin around my wrist. It burned, the red ring was spreading higher and deeper, but I couldn't stop myself. I had gotten the email that the ticket was claimed, there was just no possible way for me to know if she had actually had the balls to get on.

Glancing back down, I watched the second hand tick in slow motion, each second seeming longer than the last.

What if she doesn't come?

I wanted Allie to step out into the brightly lit terminal, gracing me with that big

beautiful smile. Nothing would make me happier than to see her face, her sweet lush body, and that ass I could ride for days.

When she told me she was a virgin—a full blown, never been touched virgin—I had to admit it turned me on. The idea of having a blank canvas really stroked my ego.

The animal in me wanted to show her what it felt like to have a cock buried deep inside her pussy. I wanted to feel her pulse around my length as her juice drenched our skin and her body rippled in waves of pleasure. The purity and innocence was begging me to steal it away, turning her into a sinful goddess.

I wouldn't force her to do anything, but damn, I was going to try like hell to make her mine. There was nothing I wouldn't do to have my way with her. But it wasn't just the thought of claiming her for myself that cemented my need to have her.

There was this rush, a spark that ignited someplace deep inside that was telling me to not let this one go. That small voice, that tiny distinct chirp that kept clicking in my ear, it wouldn't stop. So, I decided to listen.

Through the window, I spotted the nose of the plane as it rolled into position. The door lined up with the air-bridge, sealing around the edge. My stomach jumped into my throat, jumbling the air I tried to take in.

This is it.

Standing up straight, I tucked my hands into my pockets, waiting anxiously for the terminal door to open. I could feel my heart pick up, beating harder and faster than it ever had in my life. I had never really been someone who got nervous, but this was different.

I was putting all my faith in this gut instinct I couldn't shake off. There had been

something missing from my life, and I knew from the first time I saw Allie, it was her.

So many years of my life had been spent building my name and business. Now it was finally time to get what I really wanted.

The realization that I needed her set in the moment I touched her, and I haven't been able to get her off my mind since. She was there every minute, smothering my brain and taking over when I should have been focusing on the next project.

But even as I let the beginning lines draft to paper and the lead strokes form my creation; her smile would build the arches, her broad lashes would stencil the details I wanted in the wood.

I had drawn up two buildings since the first time I saw her, and in each one bits of her existed. She became my muse, my vision, the art I drew life from.

Folding the cuffs on my sleeves, I cleared my throat as I watched the people start to flood the small terminal.

An older couple came off first, the man was pushing his wife in her wheel chair, leaning in to kiss her cheek as they crossed through the gate. The flurry of bodies pressed in behind them, squishing and squirming to squeeze past the two elderly travelers.

Lifting my head to look above and around the unknown faces, I tried to see through the crowd. It was hard as hell to make out one person from the next as they all tried to scurry through.

Where is she?



Come on, Allie, tell me you took the risk.

A heavy voice wafted up from the onslaught of meddled tones. “Move, Grandpa!”

From the corner of my eye, I saw the old man's shoulder get thrown with a sharp jolt. His wife let out a light screech, reaching up to hold his arm. Her voice came out soft and light. “Joel, let him by, it's alright.”

Hardening my stare, I tried to ignore what was happening and keep my eyes straight. But I'm not that kind of guy, and just being a fly on the wall was something I could never do. Flashing a look behind me and back at the gate, I did my best to keep my ears open while still keeping watch.

*Source Creation Date: July 18, 2025, 4:43 pm*

A gruff voice, filled with way too much anger, peddled the couple. “Come on already, just get the fuck out of the way.”

Turning to see what the hell was going on, I was honestly shocked by what I saw. A younger guy, most likely early twenties, was shoving the man in his back, trying to make him move.

He was standing directly behind the old man, with his teeth bared like a rabid dog as if these poor two people were impeding on him on purpose. The kid had this arrogance that soured the air around me.

And I didn't like it.

The old man's face was scrunched up in anger, ready to give him a solid lecture on manners and respect. “Hey, Buddy—”

Taking one last look at the crowd still flowing out of the gate, I rolled my eyes and started towards them. “Excuse me, is there a problem here?” I asked, eyeing the young guy, and gently laying my hands on the couple's shoulders.

I couldn't just stand there and watch this dick of a human being bully around these poor people. It wasn't right and I wasn't going to stand for it. Straightening my back, I asked again. “Is there a problem here?”

My voice came out harsh as I talked more to the bully than the couple. The cocky kid chuckled under his breath. “Yeah, get these two old fucks out of my way. That would solve everything.”

The woman cupped her jaw and let her head fall into her hands. Her husband wrapped his arms over her shoulders, leaning in to kiss her head. “Don't let the ass behind us bother you. He can either go around us or wait.”

“Did you just call me an ass?” The kid cocked his head, furrowing his brows. “Don't make me—”

“Don't make you what?” Lunging forward, I slipped myself between the couple and the guy. This kid really had no respect for anyone around him, and it pissed me the fuck off.

There are plenty of things in this world I can deal with, but royal fucking assholes are not one of them. Balling my fists, my teeth ground down as my back snapped straight.

I was waiting for him to answer, to say the words so I could put him in his place. Fighting in the airport wouldn't end on a good note for either of us, but deep inside I wanted him to just give me a reason to lay him out.

An assault charge and a night in jail wouldn't color my career nicely, but it would be worth it.

He seemed to me like the type of guy who needed a good ass kicking to drop him off the fucking pedestal he had put himself on.

I towered over the young man, glaring down, daring him to speak. If he knew what was good for him, he'd turn and walk the other way. Those people did nothing to him, nothing was done purposely to piss him off.

And if he couldn't recognize that, I was more than happy to show him.

His chest puffed up, the testosterone filling the space between us as we both refused to break eye contact.

Come on, give me a reason.

All I needed was for him to say one thing, anything, and he'd have a whole world of hurt coming his way. The thing I kept wondering was would he recognize he couldn't win this battle or would his tongue get the best of him?

He honestly didn't have to speak for me to see the type of person he was. He was a spoiled rich kid, who had probably never heard the word no in his life. I could see by the way he held himself that he was used to people jumping as he spoke and bending over backwards to please him. He just spewed this stench of rotten asshole.

“Nothing to say?” I asked, folding my arms across my chest and arching a brow. “You had a whole lot to say to these poor folks, what happened?” Slowly, I rolled my sleeves up, never taking my eyes off him.

Fumbling his bottom lip with his teeth, he tried like hell to keep his shoulders from bending forward in submission. “Look, I'm just in a rush, I need to get by.”

“And that excuses how you talked to them?” Rocking my head to the other side, I lowered my chin into my chest. “Apologize, and then go on your way.”

Scrubbing his jaw, he blinked rapidly, shifting his eyes between my face and the room around us. He was rattled, either from me in general or because I wasn't going to let him get off easily.

“How about I just go on my way?”

Taking a small step in, I let my toes touch his, purposely scraping them together.

“That's not what I told you to do.”

“I don't have to answer to you.” The kid made an attempt to walk around us, trying to keep his eyes on the ground.

Blocking his path, I snapped my hand against his chest. “Apologize.”

“And if I don't? What are you going to do?” His cockiness reemerged, staining the room around me in red.

Did he really just tempt me?

I thought he had seen how serious I was, that his actions weren't okay and he needed to stand up and say he was sorry to these to people. He didn't.

Leaning into his ear, I whispered. "If you don't, you'll be leaving here in an ambulance. Can you understand that? Do not fuck with me."

His face drained to white as I watched him swallow a large lump down his throat. He heard me that time.

Turning to the couple, he nodded his head. "I'm sorry." His eyes moved rapidly around from ceiling to floor and back again, never locking on mine. It was the reaction I wanted, even if I didn't get to smack him like he deserved.

The old man nodded at him, rubbing his wife's back. Her hands were curled tightly into her lap as she smiled nervously and nodded too.

Stepping back, I fanned my arm out to let him pass. "That's better, now get the hell out of here."

He stood frozen, fiddling with his hands, then wiping them anxiously on his thighs. Laughing inside, I was tempted to lurch at him quickly just to fuck with him. But I held back, figuring his balls had just shrunk enough in size.

"Get out of here," I demanded, waving him off. The kid rushed passed me, breaking into a slow jog. After making sure he kept on his way, I turned back to the couple. "I

hope you both have a better evening.” Taking my wallet out, I tugged out a fifty dollar bill and held it between my fingers. “Here, have dinner on me tonight.”

“Oh no, no no no. I can't accept that. I should be paying you for teaching him a lesson.” The man shook his head, laughing. “I'm not as nimble as I used to be, these old bones can't handle it anymore. But, he deserved a good kick in the ass.”

“Joel.” His wife snapped her head up, giving him a nasty glare.

Smiling, I took his hand and folded it around the bill. “Dinner for you and your lovely wife.” While holding his hand, I shook it, letting go of the money. Flashing them one more smile, I walked back to the terminal door.

It made me feel good to know that they would have a better night, and even better knowing that another jerk had just been knocked down a peg.

Glancing around the room, it was mostly vacant now with a few stragglers hanging around, charging their phones in open sockets and rifling through their bags.

My eyes zeroed in on each and every face, but none of them were Allie.

Fuck!

She's not here.

She didn't come.

Letting out a heavy breath, I felt deflated. My shoulders fell forward, eyes dropping to the floor. I had been so hopeful she would take this chance on me, that she would feel the same excitement I had.

Dragging my hand over the back of my neck, I kicked a foot into the floor and turned to leave.

“Do you always put yourself in danger for people you don't know?” Her smile was sparkling, eyes squinted tight. “I was waiting for your head to pop off.”

There she was, right behind me, holding the same green satchel she had back in Waterford. Her hair was pulled into a high bun, loose strands dangled around her cheeks, framing her face.

She was beautiful, turning a bitter moment into a high I couldn't explain.

“You saw that?”

“I did.”

“And?” I asked, breaching the space between us.

“You're noble, that's a good thing.” Crossing one leg over the other, Allie leaned against the wall.

“Noble?” Laughing, I lifted a finger to her arm and stroked her soft skin. “I'm no prince, that's for sure.”

Tilting her head, she smiled big. “You came to my rescue, you came to theirs. . . That's pretty close.” Standing up, Allie leaned in, raising up onto her toes and kissing my cheek.

“I'm glad you decided to take my offer.” Drawing my fingertips over the curve of her jaw, I traced her throat. She was warm to the touch, cheeks blushing cherry red as I caressed her neck.



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“What did I have to stop me?” Falling back onto flat feet, she brushed a lock of hair behind her ear. Her lips thinned as she smiled, tucking her chin into her chest.

We stood quietly, not saying a word. I wanted to scoop her in my arms and hug her, letting her bury her face into my neck. I wanted to smell her perfume, feel her skin on my face and her lips on mine.

Allie twisted her toe into the floor, her fingers running long lines down the strap of her bag. “So, what now?”

“Well, I still owe you dinner.” Grabbing her hand, I twined my fingers around hers and led us away. “And this time, it won't be interrupted by salt water.”

Giggling, I felt her fingers tighten in mine. “I didn't mind that, not one bit.”

What she didn't realize was that this was just the beginning. I was a man who took the world and made it mine, I could give her more than she could ever realize.

Now it was time to show her. There wouldn't be anymore room for her to worry or hide from her past.

I was going to help her move forward.

She was about to create new memories.

Memories that would stick with her forever.

### Chapter Eight

#### Alaska

When the clerk handed me my ticket and I saw it was going to bring me to Los Angeles, I almost turned around and walked out. I had vowed to never go back, to never return to the source of all my troubles.

But I decided to take the risk anyway. Life was filled with challenges, ups and downs; how could I walk away from something that felt so right?

Kealen had this power over me, this heavy-handed, fall to your knees power. I wanted more, needed more. . . So I jumped.

Swallowing my stomach, I shut my eyes and took that leap of faith. I had nothing to lose. There was no place I could run to that I wouldn't be recognized. So, what did it matter?

It didn't.

I had literally made it to the other side of the country and still reporters were able to find me. The front page claimed my name as its own, I couldn't escape. Hiding didn't do shit anymore. I was found.

The soft flicker of the candle lit up Kealen's face. "This is really nice," I said, taking a sip of my water. "Thank you."

“Allie, this is just the start, I hope you know that.” Breaking a piece of bread in half, he popped it into his mouth and smiled.

I loved his smile. It was comforting and sexy, melting me from the inside out. This man went above and beyond to make me feel at ease, and it didn't seem like an act or ruse to trick me.

He seemed genuine, like the world was just a playground that you could enjoy. I knew it differently. I saw it as a place filled with deceit and lies that stalked you daily.

“I know a lot of things, but none of it is this good.” Twirling the ice in my glass, I stared blankly at the table.

Eyeing me curiously, Kealen leaned in over the table. “Look, I know you've been hiding from something, I know you want to disappear and pretend you were just born right before the moment we met. . .”

Snapping my eyes up to his, I inhaled a sharp breath. It scared me how well he could read me, how he could see right through me and know that much.

I wasn't sure how he did it, but it made it harder and harder for me to hold my wall up. Secrets weren't a healthy way to move forward. They devoured you from inside, eating away through your muscles until they finally breached the surface.

Pursing my lips, I leaned forward to speak, but bit my tongue. It's too soon. Let him get to know you so he doesn't get scared away.

Kealen stared at me through slit lids, waiting to see if I would answer. And I still couldn't. Not yet, not when things seem so good.

Scrunching his lips, he sat back in his chair. “What I can't figure out is why you haven't asked me anything. Aren't you curious about me?”

“I am.” Shifting in my chair, I nervously stroked my hair. His eyes lit up in the flame, twinkling with small sparks. My belly twirled and spun like strands of silk being weaved together.

He made me nervous, but it was the best kind of nervous I had ever felt.

The gray jacket he wore tugged on his muscles as he flexed his arms, drawing my eyes right to them. A tight, white shirt fixed to his chest, forming snugly against him like wrapping paper around a present.

Every contour, every groove and bulge were snapping and perking as he bent his arms and wiggled closer to the table.

I was suspended in thought, my brain skipping between where he was leading the conversation and the desire to peel the shirt off his body so I could run my hands over his muscles.

Tapping his fingertips together, Kealen rested his chin on his hands, smirking. “So why don't you ask?”

“I just thought it was easier to not know.”

“What's that supposed to mean?” Cocking a brow, he dipped his head.

“I mean. . .” Pausing, I lifted a spoon off the table and started to twirl it around. “If I don't ask you, you won't ask me.”

Laughing hard, Kealen rubbed his jaw, letting his hands fall down lightly. “Allie, I

already know you won't talk about yourself, but you can ask me anything you want. I'm not going to pry, but I'm an open book to you. All I can hope is that at some point you'll give up your secrets willingly.”

Not a chance in hell.

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Willingly—no, due to forces out of my control—maybe. If I could keep that stupid show in the pitfalls of my life, I would. And the man who put me there, pushing for me to give up my virginity for his own benefit could ride alongside it.

There was no way I was going to jeopardize whatever was happening between us. He seemed like a good guy, he didn't deserve to have his name in the spotlight, ruining him too.

I wasn't sure how long I'd be able to hide it from him, but for now, it wasn't worth it. Right then, that moment was all I wanted to focus on.

“Why?”

“Why what?”

“Why are you so willing to give yourself to me, but not expect it back?” Tipping the spoon up onto the thin edge of the curve, I spun it in circles.

I was having a hard time believing what he was saying. There was always an expectation, a return to a favor, interest on a loan; nothing came free. It didn't matter what it was.

If Kealen was going to let me into his world, there had to be something he wanted for it.

Right?

His palms flattened against the table, sliding across to grab mine. “Because what I feel isn't based off who you were, it's based off who I've seen.”

“But you don't know me.”

“That's what I'm hoping to do, I'm hoping to get to know you, even if it's just what you want me to see.”

My heart fluttered, pattering inside my chest like the quick drumming of a rabbit's foot against the ground. I felt my skin blush, the warmth running from my arms to my toes, and pooling between my thighs.

Crossing my feet, I squeezed my legs firmly together. My sensitive button throbbed, pulsing with a heartbeat of its own. The feelings rushing through me were new and unknown, they scraped me raw, leaving me open and vulnerable.

And I called it in, eager to explore all it had to offer. Why else would I have jumped on that plane?

I came because it felt right, I came because it was time for me to take my life back.

I came because I wanted to see where these feelings could go and how far I would let them push me till I decided to shut them down.

And maybe. . . Maybe a part of me wanted to give him more.

The smile spread across my face as tingles washed over my skin. “I don't know what to say to that.”

“I want to show you something.” Holding my hand, he stood up. “Come on.” Nodding to the waiter, he pointed at the check holder on the table.

The waiter nodded back, giving him a smug grin. “What was that all about?” I asked, looking between the two men, their unspoken exchange leaving me curious.

Shrugging his shoulder, his hand engulfed mine. “I’m a regular here.”

Kealen led me a block over from the restaurant and to a large office building. The building was amazing. It towered over the rest on the street, looming over the city like a watch dog.

As we approached from the sidewalk, I was in awe over the two large glass doors with heavy gold handles. The glass was cloudy, floral designs were crafted across the entire pane. Tugging out a key card, he swiped it through a box on the handle and opened the door.

The floor lit bright white in Italian Carrara marble, a center mosaic of a bridge over water drew your eye in. It was the most intricate piece of art I had ever seen. Each stone was laid perfectly, the colors all lining up to create the illusion that the bridge and water were real.

“Wow, this is beautiful.” Stepping around the image, I stared down amazed.

“That's the Bridge of Sighs.” Kealen walked behind me, his feet clicking against the hard stone.

“The what? It sounds so sad for something so beautiful.” Tucking my hair behind my ears, I bent down to look closer.

“It could be considered sad, but now it holds a different meaning. Maybe we can go someday, it's way better to see in person.”

“It's a real bridge?” Dragging my fingers lightly over the picture, I stared down at the



floor.

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Dropping down beside me, Kealen laid his hands on his knees. “The first time I saw it, there was something about it that just stuck with me.”

“Wait—” Flicking my face up to his, I pointed at the floor. “You made this?”

“I had a part in it.” Holding out his hand, he eyed his fingers. “See that scar?” he asked, pointing at a thick white line on his right middle finger. “I can thank this picture for that.” Standing back up, he held out his hand and lifted me to my feet.

“Where are we? What is this place?”

“This is my home away from home.” Chuckling, he led me to a row of elevators and hit the button to go up.

Everything about this building screamed money. It was fancy and flashy, with details on top of details.

The exposed wood beams were carved, burned, and etched. The ceiling wasn't just a ceiling, but a sheen that looked as smooth as the inside of a seashell with multiple colors all bleeding together.

As the double doors opened to the fifth floor, a huge desk made of dark cherry greeted me with the name Knight Architecture scripted into the wood.

“What's this?”

“This is my office.” He walked to a thick door, swiping a key card into the box on the

wall and punching in a set of a numbers. “If you won't ask me questions about who I am, I'll just have to show you instead.”

I didn't know what to say or think.

When I met him in Waterford, Kealen came off as just your regular kind of guy. A man who worked with his hands and spent his days outside. His skin was kissed by the sun, his hair had highlights that looked natural, not salon born.

All of this. . . This took me by surprise.

I guess it just showed me that you can't tell who someone is from just looking at them. I would have never thought that before. In my world, you knew the people who had money and those who didn't.

You could easily see when a family came from a long line of wealthy people in their tree of ancestry and the ones who found it by chance.

Then you had my dad. A man who wanted that life, a man who tried and did anything to give his name weight. We weren't poor, but he wasn't happy with what we had. He always wanted more.

My mother used to tell me that happiness comes from inside you, that material things only fueled greed and hatred for others. She used to say that it didn't matter how much you had, because there was always someone with more.

And if you spent your life trying to attain what someone else had, you'd lose touch with what was important.

Those words came true when I finally saw what my father was built from. He was greed, he was hatred. And he turned his back on me a long time ago.

Strolling into his office, I ran my hand across the seam of a black leather couch, leading myself heel to toe around the room.

There was a floor to ceiling bookshelf, filled to the brim with books. A huge mahogany desk was pushed almost against the windows with rolls and rolls of paper all piled up on top. Large pictures of bridges and buildings were hanging on the walls, all labeled with tags of where the photo came from.

“Alright, I have a question. . .”

“Ask, ask me anything.” The leather squeaked gently as Kealen sat down, resting his arm on the back.

I could feel his eyes watching me as I explored the room. Even though I wasn't looking at him, they burned my skin. Prickles excitedly rode my spine as I walked to the giant windows that created his back wall.

“Who are you?”

### Chapter Nine

Kealen

Allie's face was pressed against the glass, her gaze set forward on the blackened hills. They were hard to make out in the dark, but during the day, I had the best view in the city.

I spent two years designing this building, and the year before designing the restaurant we had dinner in. I loved watching my creations come to life, every last detail had purpose and meaning.

“Who am I?” I asked, letting my eyes lick her body. Her ass was the perfect bubble; plump, firm, and if I didn't know better. . . Begging me to slap it.

Her head twisted over her shoulder, eyes large and curious. “Yeah, who are you?”

“Well. . .” Tapping my hand on the couch, I looked around the room. “I guess that depends.”

Her hips swung around, leg kicking out to the side. I followed the lean lines of her muscles up to the diamond shape carved out between her thighs. Allie was tempting, she was temptation dressed in purity.

And I wanted her, I wanted her like you needed air to live.

“Depends on what?”

Fuck, this woman was sexy as hell. Her tits ruffled up as she crossed her arms over her chest, her long lashes fanned her lids like canopies. Every detail of Allie was a masterpiece.

She had these tiny freckles that rode the bridge of her nose and feathered out under her eyes. A light birthmark stained her right shoulder, shaped like a splashed drop of ink.

Details are what made us who we are. I always paid close attention to everything, even the most subtle of details could tell you more than anything someone might say.

And hers fleshed out in a way that let me in.

I could already see when she got lost in thought because her eyes would crinkle in at the corners and her brows would skip up. When she got nervous, her fingers tapped her thighs and danced around like she was conducting an orchestra.

But all of that still wasn't enough for me to see what I truly wanted—the real her.

“It depends on what you want to hear.”

Slowly walking back in my direction, Allie shuffled her feet across the floor. Her sandals echoed through the room in high-pitched chirps, her legs elongating with each step. “Tell me why you brought me here.”

The closer she got, the more I wanted to reach out and grab her. I wanted to feel her thighs straddle my waist and her tits press into my face. My cock thickened at the image, stiffening and growing.

Shifting in place, I pushed my back into the cushion. “You were talking about not knowing what you were going to do, I thought maybe I could help you. You could

work here—”

Cutting me off, she pointed down at me. “For you?”

“Yes, for me.” Nodding, I watched her face. I wanted to see her reaction and watch what she did with it.

Allie's face fell flat, her lids expanding as her eyes grew to the size of saucers. “You want to be my boss?”

“I guess you could put it that way. But I want more than that.” I wasn't going to tiptoe around it anymore. She needed to know what I felt and what I wanted.

If she wasn't going to open up to me, then I was going to make sure she knew what I expected. Life wasn't a game of chess where I was going to guess her next move.

I was determined to make her mine and I wasn't going to let her say no.

Her hands fell to her sides, weightlessly drifting back and forth. “You want sex?” Wrapping her arm around her waist, she pointed down at me. “Is that what you're telling me?”

“What?” Jerking my shoulders forward, I held my palms out. “No—I mean—if you want to, but no.” Smiling, I felt a quick flutter in my gut. “What I'm trying to say is that the job offer isn't in return for sex.”

What the hell?

That didn't come out how I meant it to.

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I wouldn't lie, yes, I wanted to fuck her. I wanted to the fuck the shit out of her right there. Shit, just the idea of being the one to pop her cherry mangled my brain.

I just didn't mean to make her think that was what I was asking for in return. I was a real man, I didn't need to bribe her for sex.

Allie was going to want it all on her own.

Giggling, she cupped her hands on her face. "Are you sure about that?" Her long legs took slow steps closer, hips swaying erotically back and forth. "The idea of sleeping with my boss is kind of a turn on." Stopping in front of me, she hovered like a hungry lioness ready to pounce. Her tongue dragged across her lips as she leaned down and cupped my knees. "What do you think?"

Dragging my finger down her chin, I leaned back, pushing my hips up. "I think you better stop before you regret doing something you're not ready for yet."

Squeezing her tits between her arms, she plumped them up over the trim of her shirt. "Who says I'm not ready? You?"

She had turned from temptress to siren, sweeping in and corrupting my mind. And yet, she was so irresistibly sweet.

If she kept this up, I knew one thing. . .

She wouldn't stay a virgin for long.



“Is that right?” I asked.

Thinning her lips, she smiled. “That's right.” Digging her nails into my knees, Allie brought her lips to the rim of my ear. “I think you should be wondering if you're ready?” The tip of her tongue flicked my lobe as her lips suckled it gently.

My cock jerked in my pants, pushing forcefully into the zipper. I felt my fingers tingling, ready to yank her down, forcing her pussy onto the hardened muscle. But I held back, keeping my hands at my sides.

She was saying she was ready, she was luring me in with her musical notes of desire. It was so fucking dangerous, she was so dangerous. Allie was playing with fire, lapping my body with a fatal lethargy.

Hormones are one hell of a drug, and hers had been held behind an electric fence, suffocated and dormant. I didn't want to corrupt her just yet—soon—but not yet.

“Let's slow down a bit,” I said, patting the cushion beside me. “Sit.”

Snapping her back straight, Allie threw her hands onto her hips. “Are you serious? I'm throwing myself at you and you're saying no?”

Holding up my hand, I wrapped my fingers around her wrist. “That's not what I'm saying at all.”

I didn't want her to misunderstand my intentions. I was more than willing to fuck her, I was more than capable to steal her innocence and make her mine. I just had to be sure she really wanted it.

There was no way in hell I wanted her to wake up tomorrow and regret giving her virginity away. I didn't want her to look at me with eyes of disdain and anger because

I took the last thing she had left for herself to hold.

If she had gone this long without letting one dick break down her wall, I wasn't going to allow mine to be her first taste of shame.

I wasn't doing all this just for a one night stand or to hold the title of being her first.

I wanted her, I wanted us. . .

I wanted it all.

Allie's arm went limp, her hand dangling lifelessly. "What are you saying?"

"Look, I don't want to just have sex with you." Taking in a deep breath, I looked up into her eyes. "I want your first time to be one you won't forget. And I can do that for you, but you have to know something. . ."

Blinking slowly, she stood silent. Her eyes were piercing, forcing my lungs to stop completely.

I didn't want to come on too strong, but after seeing her the first time, and finding her again. . . There wouldn't be another chance to make her mine.

"I won't make empty promises, but if you let me in, I'm never letting go."

### Chapter Ten

Alaska

What was he saying?

What could he possibly mean?

My chest was hurting from breathing so heavily, my ribs were aching from trying to keep my nerves in check.

He won't let me go?

His words were sweet and thick, filling my body with more than just this temptation to feel him inside me. I never wanted to just have sex with someone just to say I did it, and to hear him say something like that. . .

That was more than my mind could handle.

My eyes were baring down on his, trying to see if this claim was genuine or just a way to ease me into having sex. But he didn't break our stare, his eyes were static, reading mine too.

And I knew, Kealen meant what he was saying.

I knew nothing about him, but the feelings that hit me right then told me he wasn't bullshitting me. He wasn't holding me too close or being over dramatic and over

affectionate. He wasn't making me promises of love and forever like a lot of guys might do to get in a girl's pants.

He was waiting, holding onto the air around us until he knew it was safe to breathe.

Until he knew I could see he meant every word.

That was it, that was all I needed. I had thought I was ready before, I had already decided that he was the one I would give myself to, and this just cemented that decision.

In one quick swoop, I threw myself onto him, crushing my lips onto his. His mouth was stagnant at first, shocked from the sudden onslaught of emotion steaming from my body.

His arms found their way around my waist as he hoisted me higher on his lap. Gyrating his hips, he rubbed his hard cock up and down against my pussy. The thick bulge between his legs brushed my sex, sending an earthquake of tingles through my belly.

Rocking my waist, our bodies moved in sync, rolling and colliding together. Pulling his lips away from mine, he kissed my throat, gliding his hands down my back and around my ass.

Every inch of my body was alive like I had never felt before. I could see the heat between us, I could feel the air as I took in slow breaths, I could smell the hint of lust soaking my panties. It was all living and growing around me, surrounding my body in this bubble I never wanted to break.

I was on the verge of coming already and he wasn't even inside me yet. His hands were moving wildly over my body, tearing at my hair and scraping down my back.

“Kealen, I need you.” Kissing his jawline, I nipped his neck. “I need to feel you.” My breathing was weighted, coming out in short, fast bursts.

“Are you sure you want this?” he asked, barely removing his mouth from my skin. “I need to know you're really ready.”

His words settled over my brain, forcing me to question myself. Was this really what I wanted. . . Or was it just the excitement of going against the grain that lit my fuse?

The thought flickered, fizzling out as he stared up at me. I loved the way his eyes drew me in, I loved the way it felt to have him looking at me—just me.

Holding his cheeks in my hands, I forced his face up. “I'm ready, make me yours.”

There wasn't a doubt in my mind, I was his to take.

My skin was buzzing from head to toe, needy and delirious. I wasn't going to stop him, I wasn't going to change my mind. Tearing my shirt off, I started to stand and unbutton my shorts.

“Wait,” he said, reaching out and clasping my fingers. “Let me.” His hands tore at my clothes, determination coating his face.

Holy shit, I'm really doing this.

I was trying not to think, I just wanted to be in the moment. But that was hard to do when you knew what was coming. Baring it all, feeling it for the first time, it was a dream that had plagued me at night and boxed me in.

My heart palpitated inside my chest, careening around like a caged bird ready to be set free. A cold sweat beaded up on my neck, the icy droplets trickled down my

spine, sending goosebumps over my skin.

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Sex had this overpowering umbrella of good and bad. With it came euphoric sensations, feelings that could turn your head upside down and make you forget the world around you.

And then there was the dark side; broken hearts, jealousy, and regret. So many of the girls I went to school with had regretted sex at some point in their lives. They would live in the moment, letting their body take over and their brain to deal with the aftermath the next day.

That was something that had scared me for so long. I never wanted to feel bad about what I did with my body, and the boys I dated made that an easy decision to keep.

But Kealen was a man, he was a strong, firm, thick man. He was gentle and warm, mysterious and dirty. And in the depths of my soul, I knew. . .

I had waited for him.

Laying me down on the couch, Kealen stripped his clothes off, releasing his massive cock. Standing out straight, his dick was engorged, glistening at the tip. “Allie, I promise I won't hurt you.”

“I trust you.” I whispered, arching my back off the cold leather. “I don't know why, but I trust you.”

My body had taken over, bucking and rocking, waiting anxiously to feel him inside. My brain had finally released, shutting down the questions and fear I had about sex. Nothing was there, nothing but raw, gritty need.

His hand scooped under my neck, curling into the base of my skull. Lowering himself down, his chest tickled my nipples as he brought his lips to mine and kissed me softly. “If it hurts, tell me.” Licking my bottom lip, Kealen spoke into my mouth. “If you want it harder, tell me.” Biting my lip, he plucked it with his teeth. “I’m always listening.”

Bowing his hips, I felt the tip of his cock slip down and over my sensitive button. My pussy clenched as my thighs began to tremble. His engorged crown pressed my entrance, tempting me open.

My muscles strained, tightening into coiled knots. I could feel the blood as it rushed through my veins, heating my skin like I had just been standing next to an open flame.

The closer he got to being inside me, the more my body began to shake. Seeing his cock, feeling the thick muscle as it hinted its size outside my pussy was intimidating.

I knew the first time was supposed to hurt, that it could be uncomfortable and painful.

Can I even fit him inside me?

Holding steady, he brushed his fingers through my hair, tucking it behind my ear. “Promise me something,” he said, twirling a strand around his finger and tugging.

Running my nails over his back, I asked, “What?”

“That no matter what happens, you never look back with regret.”

“What do you mean?”

“Just promise me.”



“I promise.” As the words left my mouth, his cock slid forward, disappearing inside. Tensing to the pressure, a sharp pain punctured my lower belly, making me gasp.

“You alright?” he asked, stopping his hips from moving forward.

Nodding, I gripped his back, scratching my nails down his skin. It hurt, my body felt stretched already to its limit and only half of him was buried inside.

“Don't worry, it won't always hurt.” Kealen's eyes never left my face, watching me carefully as he pushed more of his cock in slowly. “Tell me if I need to stop.”

“I don't want you to stop.” Kissing his forearm, I wiggled my hips beneath him. “Keep going.”

Every inch felt like it was thicker than the last, the pain spiked as the last of his cock vanished into my pussy. Snapping my eyes shut, I bit down on my lip. I was about to stop him, seconds away from telling him it hurt too much.

Then it happened.

All the discomfort and sharp pains fizzled away. The cramp in my belly broke free, dissolving into a new feeling. A wave of fire sparked across my skin as my pussy tightened then loosened around his hard muscle.

“Mm, Kealen.” Moaning loudly, my hips rocked with his pace.

Digging his head into my shoulder, he bit down on my collar bone. “Fuck, Allie, you're so wet.”

Picking up speed, his hips bucked faster and faster, gliding effortlessly in and out with my arousal. Wrapping my legs around his waist, he rubbed my needy button

with each thrust.

*Source Creation Date: July 18, 2025, 4:43 pm*

I felt the tingles in my stomach first as my pussy pulsed with liquid fire. The orgasm filled my body, stealing my need to breathe, my need to speak, my need to move.

Kealen's mouth found mine as his breath hitched. His tongue danced inside my mouth, tasting and licking as his cock surged its life blood deep inside me. I felt the muscle thicken, jerking in quick spasms as his come filled me.

And as our bodies gave way and we both went limp, I could feel his heart beating fast against my chest. Pound after pound ricocheted over my skin and through my ribs, beating at the same rhythm with mine.

This wasn't just sex, this wasn't just a one night stand with some mysterious stranger.  
..

This was so much more.

Lifting his head, Kealen cupped my jaw, pinching my chin. "I hope you realize you're mine forever."

And as I peered into his eyes, I knew. . . He was right.

### Chapter Eleven

Kealen

Ilaid next to her, watching her sleep. Her nose twitched as she rolled over, wrapping her leg over my waist and an arm over my side. Allie was everything I had ever wanted.

She was beautiful, smart, sexy, and had this youthful love for the things around her. I knew she was young, but that didn't change how I felt. And now she was mine.

Holding her close, we squeezed together on the couch in my office, and I tried to close to my eyes to get a little sleep. It was the weekend, so luckily no one would be in the office for the next two days.

Not that I cared, I owned the place.

But sleep wasn't finding my lids, I couldn't stop staring down at the woman in my arms.

Caressing her back, Allie nuzzled her head into the nook under my chin. She felt perfect in my arms, like she was made to fit there. For the first time in years, having a woman in my arms felt right.

I didn't care what her life was like before me, I was going to make her future better. Kissing the top of her head, I closed my eyes. I didn't think I had been out long, but when I opened my lids, Allie was standing in front of the windows as the sun cast a

glowing ray on her skin.

She looked like an angel. Her skin was no longer ivory, but a blushed red. Her hair was shining, glossing the blonde with a bright orange streak. The curves of her back were slender, dipping into an hourglass, then flowing seamlessly into long smooth legs.

“Morning, Beautiful.” Sitting up on my elbow, I cupped the side of my head with a smile.

“Hey,” she said, smiling back at me over her shoulder. “This view is incredible.”

Chuckling, I grinned. “You're telling me.”

Letting my eyes ride her body, Allie giggled then wiggled her ass. “I'm glad you like it.” Leaning against the wall, she placed an arm on her hip and stared off into the hills. “I don't think I would ever get any work done if this was what I had to look at every day.”

Sitting up, I walked up behind her and wrapped my arms around her waist. “You get used to it, but it does make being stuck in this room bearable.” Pulling her in, her head fell back onto my chest.

This was what I had been looking for, this was what my life had been missing all along. For all the years I spent alone, it was worth it to have her here with me now. I didn't want the moment to end, ever.

Batting her lashes, she looked up. “So, do you still want to be my boss?”

“Honestly, I just want you. That's all I need, that's all I'll ever need.” Kissing her neck, she closed her eyes and moaned the sweetest sound.

My cock bucked, jerking at the soft coo rolling off her tongue. Pushing my dick into her back, I ran my tongue across her collar bone, nipping her neck.

“You're bad,” she said, curling her arm around my neck.

“I'm not going to apologize.” Suckling her lobe, I dragged my tongue over the shell of her ear. “You're everything I've ever wanted.”

Arching her back into my stomach, Allie rolled her hips. “Can I ask you something?” Rubbing my nape with her hand, her fingers found their way into the base of my hair.

“Anything, you can ask me anything.” Squeezing her hips, I slid my hand over her belly and around her waist, holding her closer. “I'll never tell you no.”

“How can you be so sure I'm what you want?” Twisting her body, she snuggled up to my chest. “We just met and you know nothing about me. How can you know?”

“Allie. . .” Cupping her cheeks, I lifted her face up to mine. “There's something you need to—”

Ding Ding

The beeps came from inside her purse, silencing my confession. Glancing to her bag, she cocked a brow. “That's weird, I haven't gotten a message in forever.”

“Do you want to check it?”

Shaking her head no, she met my eyes. “No, it can wait, keep going.”

“I want you to know something about me, and I'm not sure how to say it.” Thumbing her chin, I smiled.

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I knew she wanted to hide her past, but I didn't want to hide mine. Allie had the right to know before things went any further. If I wanted to keep her for myself, I couldn't keep pretending to be the oblivious soldier who rescued her from depths.

It was time.

“Kealen, stop.” Pressing her tits into my chest, her nipples hardened, beading up as tiny goosebumps slipped over her skin. “What would you say if I told you I didn't want to know?” Running her fingers up my arms, she brushed them over my jaw.

Finding the words became harder, making them form on my tongue was near impossible. I didn't want to fuck this up, I didn't want to push her away and make her second guess herself.

With her breasts scraping my skin and her scent filling the air around me, my cock throbbed, rippling from the tingles she forced through my body.

Stroking her hair, I pulled it back from her face. “I'd say you were crazy to not look for answers.”

Lifting up on her toes, her lips hovered close to mine. “Maybe crazy looks good on me.” Her tongue glided over my bottom lip as she sucked it gently.

My stomach heated, rolling and bubbling as my cock sprung to life, thick and firm. She took my breath away, making my brain swell and my heart hammer inside my chest.

Curling my fingers into her hair, I tugged her head back with a quick snap. “Are you calling me crazy?” Massaging her scalp in my hands with rough circles, I kissed the bare skin on her shoulder. “Because I’m about to be more than on you, I’m about to be in you, claiming you all over again.”

Allie gasped as her lids hovered open, lashes fluttering like petals in a breeze. “Mm, Kealen.” Her moan was long and soft, a mere whisper in my ear.

Releasing her hair, I scooped my hands under her ass, lifting her off the floor. Her warm body pressed against mine, legs wrapping tightly around my waist.

The heat off her pussy was scorching hot as her liquid ecstasy dampened my skin. I could feel her wetness smear over my stomach, her smooth lips spreading as she rolled her hips with eager need.

Holding her up, I crushed her lips with mine, our tongues colliding in raw passion. This woman made me feel, she had this hold on my insides that wasn't something I could explain.

How do you express in words the emotions that stream through your body when you finally know you found the one?

I couldn't.

Walking her to the edge of my desk, I sat her down, never breaking our kiss. Allie's legs spread wide, her pussy glistening in arousal. My hands rode her thighs, dipping in at her hips and sliding back down.

Thumbing the sides of her pussy, I teased her clit, getting close, then pulling away. Her back arched, nipples firming. I couldn't take my eyes off her as she went into this trance from my touch.



Allie's head fell back, her legs clenching my thighs as I kept flicking her tender bud. Stroking my cock, I dragged it up and down the center of her pussy, letting her juice slick the tip.

Swaying her hips, she rocked her ass on the lacquer finish, tempting me inside. "Fuck me, just fuck me," she moaned, reaching her hands up and pinching her nipples.

Dipping my head down, I licked her pebbled nipples, sucking and flicking them with my tongue. "You want this?" I asked, holding my dick at the base and slapping her clit with my swollen head.

"Yes, please, fuck me, Kealen, fuck me." Allie raked her nails down my chest, digging in hard.

A smile hitched at the corner of my lips, watching desire coat her body in hot prickles. Spreading her open with two fingers, I guided my cock to her wet center, pushing in gently.

I wanted to slam inside her, I wanted to split her open and fuck her so hard it would hurt her to walk for days. But she was still fresh, still new to sex, I didn't want to damage her.

She'll let me know. She'll tell me if it's too much.

Allie's breath skipped out of her mouth, head rolling to her shoulder as I slowly disappeared inside her. Her legs clamped around my waist, holding me close.

Dipping in and out, I started off slow, doing my best to be tender and gentle. But the animal inside me was lashing out, screaming for me to give her what she really wanted.

Her back curved high as she laid onto the desk, her moans becoming louder and stronger with each thrust. Picking up the pace, I started to lose sight of what I thought she needed and started to take her how I wanted to.

Snagging her hips, I dug my fingers into the bone, holding her steady. My cock was rock solid, taking full control of my brain and body. I pushed in deeper, bucking my hips with force.

And Allie loved it.

Her hands found the edge of the desk, gripping firmly to keep steady. Her voice came out in long waves, screaming for me to give her more.

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*Source Creation Date: July 18, 2025, 4:43 pm*

I felt my balls pull up into my gut, the tingles growing and sparking in my veins. My cock was in charge, stealing her all over again.

“Yes! Yes!,” she yelled as she stretched her hands into her hair and yanked on her roots.

Her thighs started to shake, trembling around my hips. Allie's teeth bit down on her lip, tugging it in as she screamed with pleasure.

That was it, that was all I needed. Knowing I was sending her over the edge, feeling her muscles tense and jerk as the orgasm floated through her body and reached her brain was enough to make me explode.

My cock pulsed, throbbing as I came deep inside her. Pump after pump of my cream filled her, spilling out around the edge of my shaft as my toes curled into the wood floor.

Sweat was pouring down my neck, trickling over my back and chest as I leaned over her stomach and breathed heavily. “Holy shit, Allie.” Taking in long deep inhales, I stayed still, trying to slow my heart down.

“I know, I know, wow.” Her arms went limp, falling over either side of the desk as her legs loosened and dropped down. “I don't even have the words for that.”

“Twirling a finger around her belly button, I kissed her soft skin. “I probably should've asked you before, but. . .” Lifting my head, I eyed her curiously. “Are you on birth control?”

I don't care either way.

Honestly, it didn't matter to me. I knew what I wanted, but that was just me. It was stupid not to ask her before, it was irresponsible to think she wouldn't care if I got her pregnant. I had been so headstrong on making her mine that her age had escaped me.

I was almost twenty-eight, she was only nineteen. There was enough of a difference in years to make our thoughts worlds apart. Allie had a whole life ahead of her, I was ready to settle down and start a new one.

An intoxicating smile filled her face as she ran her fingers through my hair, staring at me with those huge green eyes. Nodding yes, she started to speak. “I am, but not for the reason—” Her phone pinged again, shifting her attention away. “What the hell, who's messaging me?”

“Why don't you go check.” I wanted to know her answer, I wanted to learn something about her. I wanted to know what she felt about me, about us. She had said so little that not knowing anything was killing me inside.

But, I would wait for her to be ready to tell me the big details. I just wanted to know what she thought about the idea of having unprotected sex. . . Twice.

If I had thought we were going to have sex last night, I would have asked sooner. Allie surprised me, I was thrown off kilter, tossed into the pitfalls of lust-filled temptation.

I didn't have time to think about wrapping it, and honestly—I don't know if it would have mattered. Mute had been turned on in my brain and my cock had stolen the show.

“No, it's fine, probably no one—”

Cutting her off, I stood up so she could move. “Go, see who's trying to get in touch with you, maybe it's important.”

Rolling her eyes, she laughed out loud. “I doubt that.” Walking to her purse, her hips swayed erotically, sending the blood back down to my member. Shuffling through her bag, she bent over and dug around.

My eyes were drawn to her ass, the sweet supple cheeks—now tinted red—were shifting side to side as she dug around inside her bag. The tingle in my stomach kept growing, thickening my cock as I stared at her.

I was tempted to step up behind her and slip my finger in her pussy while I slid my cock up and down between her ass. It would be a new experience for her, a new position, a new sensation.

But as I watched her tug out the phone and glare at it, her entire expression changed. Her face fell, losing all its luster. Her skin turned ghostly white, eyes popping open.

“Everything alright?” I asked, stepping up behind her.

Her body went rigid as she slammed the phone back into her purse and whipped her body around. “I'm sorry, I need to go.”

“Wait, what? What's wrong?” Reaching for her arm, she jolted backwards.

What the hell?

What's wrong with her?”

Her eyes darted around, scanning the room, and moving to the windows. She wouldn't look me in the eyes, instead turning to the floor and scooping up her clothes.

“I’ve. . . I’ve just got to go.”

“Can you tell me what's going on? What the hell is wrong, Allie?”

Throwing on her shirt and shorts, she flung her bag around her shoulder and slipped her feet into her shoes. “It's just. . .” Tapping her chin, her phone pinged again. Dropping her eyes to her bag, her back snapped straight. “I'm sorry, I just have to go.”

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Allie's brows drew up, curving high as her mouth frowned. Before I could grab her, before I could utter another word, she was gone.

The door clicked shut with a gentle pop, her perfume lingering as the only reminder I had that she was even there.

And I was left confused, wondering what went wrong.

Did I do something, say something?

Throwing my hands into my hair, I tugged it back tight against my scalp. I knew it had to do with the text. She was fine, everything was fine until that fucking message.

I wasn't sure what it was or who it was from, but it didn't matter.

I wasn't losing her.

Not like this, not ever.

### Chapter Twelve

#### Alaska

When the phone went off the first time, I thought it was my head playing tricks on me. I figured it was probably just a wrong number, someone accidentally switching a digit for the person they were trying to reach and ending up with me instead.

The second time it went off, curiosity had gotten the better of me. I should have never opened that message. Had I not been in a delirious high from Kealen and the vibrant explosions hitting my brain, I probably would've deleted the text and not even opened it.

But I didn't do that, I opened the unknown number and my heart sank into my gut.

Holding the phone in my hands, the screen was shaking violently, causing the image to sway like I was standing on a boat being smacked around by rough waves.

My chest was heaving in rapid bursts, a vile taste rose in the back of my throat, making me sick. I couldn't believe what I was seeing.

The image was there; big, clear, and no denying it.

I could see Kealen's cock out, about to enter me, his face cut off from the nose down. I was laying on the couch, my head was turned perfectly towards the camera. There was no mistaking it was me in that photo and what we were doing.



It was the moment he took my virginity. I was no longer the woman who had been painted as the face of innocence for the world to see. And despite my attempt at keeping that special experience for myself, someone had tarnished it with a picture.

Who did this?

Who could have known I was there?

The message that followed the image was what scared me the most. There was no name to the sender, no single person claiming ownership of the horrific sight.

But the message was clear, there was no cryptic code I had to figure out. It said I had to come back to the studio, it said I had to do the show.

And if I didn't, the studio would file a lawsuit against me, claiming breach of contract. They would smear my name, taking me for all I had.

But I didn't care so much about that, I had nothing for them to take. You can't squeeze blood from a stone and I was bone dry.

It was the last sentence that made me cringe, the one that wasn't meant for me. As I read it over and over again, tears began to pool behind my eyes.

They planned on going after Kealen too.

I had slept with someone else, I had lost my virginity to a man who wasn't supposed to get it. I had been meant for Garrett, I had been given to him and him alone.

And I had agreed to that by signing my name in that contract.

Everything I had been running from was slapping me in the face like a ton of bricks,

it was all coming back to haunt me, trying to steal me again.

Someone had taken pictures of Kealen and I having sex and that someone was using it to blackmail me back onto that show.

My father. . .

It has to be him.

It was hard for me to wrap my head around the idea, but it was the only one that made sense. He had hired someone to follow me and it had gotten him what he wanted.

That would explain the picture taken on the beach when I hit that reporter, that would explain the weird feelings of being watched that had loomed over me day and night.

Hailing a taxi, I blurted out the address for the studio as I got in, feebly trying to swallow the tears that were teetering on the edges of my lids.

I'm screwed, royally fucking screwed.

What they had planned, what they might try to make me do; I didn't even want to imagine it. But I couldn't have this shit get in the papers, it could ruin Kealen and everything he had built for himself.

If he was slandered, if he was dragged down in this game, it could destroy his career and everything he'd worked so hard to get. He had a company, a business he prided himself in; now it was all at risk.

He has no idea.

And it's all my fault.

I felt like an asshole for putting him in that position to begin with. I should have never let him get close, I shouldn't have gotten on that plane. . .

And I shouldn't have slept with him.

Nothing in my life ever went the way I wanted it to. In my head I had this childish dream that we could build a life, a world together. And now that was all shit.

I could never escape the show, I could never escape my father. He had just sat back, twirling his thumbs, waiting for me to fuck up.

And that's exactly what I did.

My father was able to steal my innocence all over again. It wasn't enough that he had ruined my childhood by making it his, it wasn't enough that he had crushed my existence into a small mirrored ball of what he really wanted.

None of that was good enough for him, he wanted more, and that meant demeaning who I was just to have the world in his hands.

Slamming a palm to my forehead, I closed my eyes as the car made its way downtown. Horns blared around me, the bustle of the city was mixed with voices and engines as the worst headache of my life crept in.

I couldn't explain the sheer anger that painted my insides red. My tears weren't bubbling up from sadness, they were rolling from hatred. I had lost complete control and I wasn't sure how the hell I was going to get it back.

Rubbing my temples, I kept my head down, trying to force all these emotions deep into my gut. I didn't want them, I didn't need them, and they weren't welcome.

“Miss?”

Lifting my head, I wiped my cheeks. “Yeah?”

“I said we're here.” The driver eyed me over the headrest, one brow wiggling up. “Do you need me to wait?”

Shaking my head, I took in a few deep breaths, and sniffled. “No, thanks.” Handing him the last ten dollars I had in my pocket, I said, “Here, keep the change, thanks again.” Throwing the door open, I craned my neck to look up at the Hollywood sign set high on the hill behind the building.

It was the star, the bright white light that all the hopeful actors and actresses looked up to when they first arrived looking for their big break.

To me it was an eyesore, an open wound that caused chaos in my life. It's what drove my father to move here and it's the wedge that pushed him and my mother apart.

She followed him and his dream, she let him divulge in the fictional reality he created for himself of being famous and walking the red carpet.

But as that dream seemed to stay out of reach, the strain it took on them was so thick you could cut it with a knife. She never wanted me to be exposed to that type of world, she wanted to keep me grounded.

Grimacing, I swallowed the lump that formed in my throat and walked into the building. The cool air swept over me, taking the heat off my shoulders and washing my body in ice.

A few faces turned to stare me down, watching me with rubber necks as I made my way down towards the studio door. Glancing at each and every person as I walked by, I gave them all the biggest, most sarcastic smile I could.

Fuck these people.

I could see it in their eyes, they knew why I was there. It never took long for word to get around, and by the looks on their faces, they had to have some knowledge of what was being dangled over my head.

And if no one was going to stand up for what was right, for me and what was mine, they could go screw.

Unfortunately, that's how it worked in this business. People did what they had to do to keep their jobs, to rise up the corporate ladder for a glimmer of a chance at being a name on the screen, a small blip in the credits.

I was the odd one out, I didn't want any of that.

But here I was, chained to this studio by something that wasn't for sale.

Standing outside the door, I held the cold steel in my hand, trying to muster up the strength to open it and not turn to runaway again.

Everything inside me wanted to go, I wanted to flee and take another stab at becoming someone else.

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*Source Creation Date: July 18, 2025, 4:43 pm*

You failed at that, remember?

The metal burned into the pads of my fingers, my arms shook as I stayed stagnant and unable to move.

No. You can't run this time.

It's not fair to Kealen, it's not his fault.

I knew this time I had to bite the bullet and do what they said. I couldn't let them take Kealen down with me. He didn't know what he had gotten himself into, he had no fucking clue who I was and what being with me could do to him.

And I led him straight into the flames.

I had every chance to tell him from the beginning, I could have told him from the start who I was and let him decide for himself if I was worth risking it all.

But I didn't.

I stole that from him, not giving him the option to walk away on his own or make the choice to stay.

And I still jumped in with two feet.

“Look who's back.” A dark chuckle echoed over my shoulder, the voice low and ominous. “I knew you'd come back, couldn't stay away for too long, huh?”

My head ticked over my shoulder, eyes veering in. Garrett was hovering over me, stroking his jaw with a waxed look on his face.

I wanted to punch him, knocking that look right off his face. Balling my fists, I twisted around, lips curling high. “Fuck off, Garrett. I didn't forget about what you said last time I saw you and I don't really want to hear what you have to say now.”

“Oo, feisty little girl, I like that.” His teeth shone brightly, like he was enjoying the reaction he caused. “Save that for in the bedroom, Sweetheart.”

My nails dug into my palms, piercing the skin. “Why don't you—”

“Allie. . . That's enough.” The voice of my father snapped in my ear, stopping me from finishing my sentence. “Garrett, Marc needs you to go get ready.” Nodding his head at Garrett, my father placed his hand over my shoulder and squeezed. “Welcome back.”

“Don't.”

“Don't what?”

“Don't try and be sweet to me.” Swatting his hand off my arm, I stepped back. “We need to talk.”

“You're right, we do.” Fanning out his arm, he held the door open. “Let's go into my office.”

Cocking a brow, I asked, “Your office?”

When did he get an office?

“Well, after everything happened, the producers really loved the other ideas I had and well. . .” Fanning his arms out, he took a small bow. “Say hello to the new project coordinator.”

He tried to rest his arm over my shoulder again, but I stepped away. “Look at you, you're finally the closest you've ever been to being famous without my help. Good for you.”

“Allie, come on. Don't be like that, everything I've ever done was always for you.”

Stopping short, I stared him down. “You're so full of shit.”

My father looked down at me, his eyes trying to show the emotions he thought I wanted to see. “What's that supposed to mean?” He wanted me to think he was hurt, that me calling him out was in some way crushing his fatherly soul.

I knew better. He thought I was stupid, that I was still this immature young girl who would believe everything her father told her.

That wasn't who I was. And if he had taken half a second to ever step back and ask me what I wanted or what I thought, he would know that.

Fuck, even a, 'How was your day?' would have been nice from time to time. I never got more than a quick smile and a pile of papers in my lap telling me my next move.



*Source Creation Date: July 18, 2025, 4:43 pm*

Curling my arms around my waist, I stood taller than I ever had before. Taking a step in, I poked his chest. “Everything you've ever done was for you, don't try and make it seem like it wasn't.”

“Allie—”

Holding up my hand, I cut him off. “I'm not done. All of this, everything from here on out, it's your fault. I never wanted this and look what you're doing to me.” Lowering my voice, I spoke through thinned lips. “I can't believe you, I can't believe you would let this happen, that you would let them ruin me like this. I'm your daughter for fuck sake.”

He tried to speak, he tried to interject and say something. But I ignored him, walking right past him and into Marc's office instead.

I didn't care what he had to say, not this time. He wanted this just as much as the rest of the asshole creators of 'Sweet Virgin,' and he couldn't play it otherwise.

“Alaska, Honey, welcome back.” Marc stood up from behind his desk, holding his arms out to the side. “It's nice to see you again.”

Pursing my lips, my lids lowered as the corner of my nose twitched. I was ready to ream him a new asshole, make feel lower than dirt for forcing me back into this horrible place.

My father stepped in behind me, shutting the door. Marc glanced between us, a smug grin filling his face. The two were shooting blank stares at each other, signaling some

inside trader shit that only they knew.

Stepping around to the front of his desk, he leaned against the edge and crossed his arms. “I know, I can tell by your face, you're not happy right now.” One hand came out, bouncing gently in the air. “But, hear me out, okay?”

Standing silent, I decided to just let him have his moment at the podium. I wanted to know how he was going to try and twist this whole ordeal into something I might agree to.

I would never agree to this, not by choice. But they had me hog-tied by that fucking picture. With the contract and that dirty pic, no court would rule in my favor.

Cupping his chin, Marc dipped his head into his chest. “Shit, if looks could kill.” Pausing, he took in a long slow breath. “Let me start by saying that I'm sorry we had to go about things this way. But you left, you signed a deal and you took off running and you never gave us the chance to make it work for you.”

Work for me!?

How was having sex with a man I didn't choose ever going to work for me?

Smacking his lips, Marc dragged his tongue over his teeth. “I do have good news for you. . .” Pointing at me, he swirled his finger in a tight circle. “That picture, that can disappear, it can be erased like it never happened, if. . .”

My brow shot up, head falling to my shoulder. “If what?”

Throwing his arms up, he smiled. “She speaks!”

My father laughed, lowering himself into the chair at my side. “He's got it all figured

out, Honey, just listen.” Flipping his hand at Marc to keep going, he lifted his foot over his knee.

I hated how he looked so comfortable, like this was just another business meeting where he was tossing out his pitch. But it wasn't the same, it never was.

This was about me, about my life and my body, and he failed to see it. . .Again.

“So we know now,obviously—”Fiddling on his desk, he pulled out a much larger version of the image that was sent to me. “You're not a virgin anymore and we can keep that between us, only we'll know, the world doesn't have to.”

“Are you fucking with me? Do you really think that because I'm not a virgin anymore that I'd look at this whole thing differently?”

One hand found the trim of his desk, curling over firmly as he flicked the paper straight, taking a good long look. “That's what your problem was right? You didn't want Garrett to be your first? Now you went out, you did it, it's all done. You had your fun, you got your fancy on, so the show should be no problem now.”

“Are you delusional? It wasn't just Garrett, it wasn't just that I wanted to go out and have sex. I wish you would just fucking stop with all this bullshit! Just stop all of this, it's wrong, it's unethical! Can't you see that?” Throwing my arms up, I let them snap to my hip. “I don't want to do your fucking show, I don't want you to force me into it, blackmail me to do it, or ruin Kealan's life just because of me.”

How can they not see how horrible this is?

It was like their entire world was strictly onscreen, oblivious to the real damage they were about to cause. I couldn't fathom how they could live with themselves or how they could even think this was the solution.

They could find another virgin, the world was filled with them. I certainly was not the only one. But blackmailing me? That was low and out right cold-hearted.

“Kealen. . . So that's the mystery man, good to know. Alaska,” Marc said, lowering his tone. “Here's what you're going to do. . .” Setting the picture down, he started counting off the demands on his fingers. “One, you're coming back, starting tomorrow. Two, you cannot see or sleep with that man again. And three, you go through with every last detail of the paper you signed, and we don't leak this to the press or sue you.”

“Honey,” my father said, reaching out for my hand. “This is a good deal for you. If you don't do the show, we'll be forced to take legal action. And not just against you, but him too. Is that what you want?”

I couldn't believe what they were saying. My jaw fell open as I let out a loud sigh and tore my hand from my father's. “You guys are insane!” Dragging my hands through my hair, I fell back against the door. “Why? Why can't you just let me go? Why do you need me? Go find another virgin!”

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“Allie,” Marc said, rolling his shoulders forward. “The world wants you. I’ve had over a million emails from random people wanting to know where you are, when the next episode will air, when they’ll finally get to see the unraveling of a virgin on screen. They don’t want just anyone, they want you.”

“He’s right, Sweetheart. We aired the pilot last week and the ratings were through the roof.”

Did I heard him right? Did he really say the pilot went out?

“What?What do you mean?” Clutching my chest, I felt my knees begin to buckle as the weight of the world seemed to fall down on my shoulders. I wasn’t sure if they were just trying another tactic or were being totally honest.

My head was whirling at the idea of Kealen sitting down and watching my face on screen. I felt sick to my stomach as my tongue swelled inside my mouth, blocking my throat from getting air.

The room started to get hazy as my chest heaved for one sip of oxygen to keep my body upright. Everything was too much for me to handle, it was too much for me to digest and understand.

“We aired the pilot, Alaska.” Marc’s face held this childish grin, his eyes twinkling with the promise of fame. “It was incredible, we had—”

Slamming my fist on the wall behind me, I yelled. “I don’t care!” Lunging forward, I grabbed the back of the chair and leaned over it. “How long have you been following

me? How long have you been planning this?"

Marc and my dad exchanged glances as I steadied myself and let his words replay in my head.

They aired it. They aired it and now it's out there.

What if he sees it?

I couldn't stand the thought of Kealen seeing me that way. I was his, I had given myself to him and him alone. It burned me, turning my insides into ashes.

"We didn't know you were going to do what you did, but we didn't have anyone follow you. We got that picture anonymously, we just used it to our advantage. It worked out, we knew when we saw it that we could get you back." Marc stiffened his back, fiddling with random items on his desk.

Thumbing the chair, I looked between the two men in disbelief. "If you didn't do this, then why would you even think about airing the pilot? What would you have done if you didn't find me?"

My father started laughing, his head falling back like I had just told him a joke. "Allie, your phone is linked with mine, your card is under my name. Why do you think I froze your card to begin with? You were spending my money—"

"Our money. Or did you suddenly forget that I made most of that for you?" My fingertips dug into my palms, turning my knuckles white.

It was infuriating to have him drudge my name through the mud, as if all the time and effort I had put into those commercials meant nothing. He didn't give two shits about what portion was mine, in his eyes. . .

He had earned it all.

“ My point is, if I wanted to come get you, I could have, but I didn't have to, someone else did that for me. And honestly, I'd love to shake the hand of the man who did. I don't have time to be running all over this country looking for you.”

My head was spinning, twisting and turning in on itself. I had no idea who else could have hired someone to follow me. I was sure my father would have admitted to it.

If it was his plan, if he had been the star behind the picture, he would have claimed it. My father wouldn't miss a chance to be the one in the limelight.

Then who?

Who could have done this?

And as I stood there wondering and the room began to spin and fizzle with a black mist. It hit me. . .

Kealen. Could he have. . .

No, it couldn't be.

Could it?

The pieces seemed to fit, the puzzle with open gaps was starting to fill. He was there when the picture was taken of me hitting the reporter, he left before I saw the paper with my face on the front page, he led me back to this city, he swooned me into giving myself to him.

I didn't want to believe it, but it all seemed to make sense.

But why?

I wanted to think he was being real, that he was genuine and trustworthy.

Was I wrong?

My chest started to hurt like it was being stabbed with a serrated blade, the knife twisted in deep, slicing my heart in half.

Maybe he wasn't who I thought he was.

Maybe he had planned this all along.

And maybe he was getting something out of this too.



### Chapter Thirteen

Kealen

What the fuck was that about?

Allie flew out of my office like she had just woken up from a bad one night stand she didn't want to remember. And I was left standing in the buff, completely at a loss for her sudden departure.

Resting a hand on my desk, it was still warm from where her body had been just moments ago. A waxy hue clouded the clear lacquer, shadowing the exact position of her ass and back. Dropping my head, I ran my fingertips across the silhouette.

Something's wrong.

What was the message?

Whatever it was certainly shocked her enough to make her hightail it out of here. Storming over to my pants, I dug out my phone. I had to find out what was going on.

Scrolling to her name, I tried to call her, but she wouldn't answer. Hitting the button again, I let it ring until her voice sprang up letting me know she wasn't there.

Fuck! Come on, Allie, answer!

I dialed her number over and over again, pacing anxiously in my office. I didn't like

that she wasn't answering. I was getting angry and worried, hating that I didn't know what was going on with her.

Clicking the button again, I was going to try one last time. If she didn't answer, I was going to go look for her.

The ring was long, drowning my brain in white noise. Her voice popped in and I almost hung up, I came close, lifting the phone away from ear.

“What?” she asked, her voice short and gruff.

“Allie, are you there?” Slamming the phone back to my ear, I wasn't sure if I was actually hearing her or if it was just my mind playing tricks on me.

“What do you want, Kealen?” She sounded angry and depressed. The sadness worked its way through the receiver, hardening my heart.

“Tell me what's going on, Allie.”

“I don't know what you want me to say.”

“What the hell is wrong? Talk to me, maybe I can help. But you need to tell me.” Pounding my feet, I walked in a tight circle. This wasn't making any sense, none of it.

I thought things were going good, where the hell did this come from?

“Did you do it?”

“Do what?”

I heard her breathe out into the phone, the heat off her exhale was enough to burn my

ear. “Don't bullshit me, Kealen. Did you do this?”

Stopping short, I held my hip and glanced at the ceiling. “Do. What?” I asked again, trying to figure out what she was talking about.

I hadn't done anything to hurt her in anyway.

“Fine, maybe you did, maybe you didn't. Either way it doesn't matter, I can't see you anymore.”

“Allie,” I said, waiting for her to respond. “Allie. Allie!” Yelling into the phone, the silence was torture. I wanted to hear her voice again, I wanted her to let me in on what the fuck she was dealing with.

But she was gone.

What the hell was that?

She just tried to cut ties, she broke off what I thought was turning into a great thing. Clenching my jaw, it twitched to the side as I clutched the phone in my hand.

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I wasn't about to let her walk out of my life this way. It came out of nowhere and for no reason. Allie might be willing to give up on this, to give up on me—but I wasn't.

If she wasn't going to tell me why, if she wasn't going to let me in. . .

Then I'd find her and make her.

I didn't even have to think twice about it, tugging on my pants, I slipped my feet into my shoes and looped my shirt around my shoulders.

I have to find her.

Snatching the keys off my desk, I left my office, shirt flapping against my bare chest. The cool morning air hit my chest, forcing me to look down.

Shit. My fingers scrambled to push the small buttons into the tiny slits as I ran across the street to the parking garage.

The flash of yellow zipped by me, horns blazing as I tossed them a hurried hand and broke into a slow jog.

Nothing was registering, not the cars, not the other people on the sidewalk, nothing. I had this horrible feeling Allie was in trouble, everything else around me didn't matter.

I had her, all of her, and now she was gone. Vanished like a mythical creature I had been searching for, only to wake up thinking it was all a dream.

This wasn't a dream and I wasn't going to stop searching. I wasn't going to lose her, not again.

Where the fuck do I even begin?

She could be anywhere in this city, where the hell do I start?

The tires screeched as I flew out of the garage, my foot weighted like a cement block in my shoe. Glancing in the rearview mirror, a plume of white smoke dissipated into the air, leaving dark black tracks on the pavement.

Fuck, what the hell is she doing?

Twisting my head from side to side, I tried to make out her face in the herd of people that were swarming the sidewalk, but I knew it would be like finding a needle in a haystack here.

People were a dime a dozen in this city, they were spilling in from every direction; men women, short, tall; too many to pick out one single face.

My phone buzzed in my pocket, but I ignored it. I was on a mission, I had one goal and one goal only—find Allie.

Taking a sharp left, I headed in the direction of the airport, dreading the idea that she might have had the split second decision to get away for good.

I couldn't. . . I wouldn't let her.

The vibration radiated up my thigh again, forcing me to dig the phone from my pocket. Maybe it's her.

Thumbing the button, I slid the message open, and my eyes bugged out from my skull. My throat went dry as I tried to swallow, scratching my flesh raw on the inside. As I stared down at the screen, my lip curled from the rage billowing up deep in my core.

It wasn't Allie.

The words sent my head into a tailspin, forcing me to pull over to the side of the road. Squeezing the phone in my palm, I scrunched my face, punching the steering wheel over and over again.

I never wanted to see that message, I never wanted to hear from them again.

'We're back on. Be here tomorrow morning, eight am, don't be late.'

And I knew. . .

I knew why she ran.

### Chapter Fourteen

#### Alaska

Tugging the skirt down over my thighs, I wriggled my ass, trying to make it just a little bit longer. The wardrobe for the show was completely insane. What was I, a damn street walker?

Tiny skirts, short cut shirts, showing lots of skin and lots of half ass shots; I was the fictional dream of most men.

And my character—virgin, innocent, sexy as sin. According to Marc it would drive the ratings higher and hopefully increase the potential male audience.

But none of this was who I was. I wasn't the sweet innocent girl anymore, and I was never the skimpy clothing wearing woman, looking for a man to pop my cherry.

Kealen had done that, he had taken all of that away. And I was happy he had, even if I wasn't sure about the details.

I still didn't know for certain if he was the one behind that picture or if he had done this in some sick twisted way to steal a minute of fame.

But it didn't matter either way. The picture was out there and I was left without a choice. The show was being forced down my throat, there wasn't a way out. I couldn't afford some big fancy lawyer to help me get out of that contract.

And even if I could, my name was there in permanent script.

Grimacing in the mirror, I let out a huge sigh and lowered my head. Everything about this entire thing fucking sucked.

It cut me so deep to think he might have been the one behind my downfall. I wasn't ready to accept the idea, but I couldn't shove it away either. It was too hard to swallow and even think that he had hired someone to deface me that way.

I wanted to hate him, I wanted to slap him and kick him and tell he was a fucking asshole.

And in that same thought the butterflies would bustle about in my stomach, my fingers would go numb, and my heart would beat erratically.

He was still the man who claimed me, he took my virginity, he would always have that piece of me. I could never erase that memory and I wasn't even ready to start trying.

A knock on the door forced my head up. "Yeah?" I asked, twirling the trim of my shirt in my fingers.

"We need you on set in five." One of the set hands, whose voice I couldn't make out as anyone specific, spoke through the door, smacking it a second time before walking off.

Inhaling a deep breath, I flicked my head up to the mirror and swallowed all the anger and sadness that was trying to weigh me down. Forcing my camera face on, I painted my lips in the lipstick laid out for me and headed out the door.

Here we go.



I guess it's true. . .

The show will always go on.

The set was outside today, a nice change from the regurgitated carbon copy of a place inside. The whole episode was based around my second date, Fredrick. Another man who the studio chose as one of my potential suitors.

But they had me wrapped, sealed, and going to Garrett. They stole any voice I had in the matter, I didn't get one ounce of input on who I would like to give myself to. Knowing that I was going to have to have sex with that piece of shit made my skin crawl.

He didn't deserve to touch me, never mind getting to have his way with me. The saddest part about the whole ordeal—even the sex was written out, word for word.

Marc had written—in detail—how the whole scene was supposed to go. It was disgusting and horrible to think that even the sex couldn't happen naturally. The only part that really made any difference to me wasn't even mine to begin with.

Taking long steps on my tippie toes, I walked through the grass in heels that weren't made to even graze dirt. The spikes were well over four inches tall, the tip of the toes were embellished with sparkling gems that burst as the sun hit their surface.

A small crowd had gathered around the barricades, separating the city from the set. Their faces were all glued on me as I paraded across the lush green grass in the smallest skirt the world had ever seen.

Keeping my hands on my backside, I held the hem of the skirt, trying to keep my ass off limits to the ogling eyes. A few flashes from cameras popped in from different directions as the paparazzi pushed their way to the front.

Ugh, this sucks!

I'm a fucking spectacle to the world!

*Source Creation Date: July 18, 2025, 4:43 pm*

My face was stone, ignoring the onslaught of hoots and hollers. I was told to pretend no one was there, to not give them one thing to feed off of.

Marc climbed up into his high chair, holding a megaphone. "Alright people, quiet on the set!" Waving his hand, he ushered me in towards the fountain, patting two fingers for me to sit on the edge. "Right there, Allie, perfect."

Crossing my legs, I awkwardly leaned forward, hoping the wind would stay dormant and not blow my skirt higher than it already was.

I felt like a fucking barbie doll being paraded around for the rest of the world to scrutinize. This business, the whole haze that hovered over being a virgin and letting everyone watch, had gotten more than a few disgruntled complaints.

For every one person that found it exciting, three others thought it was ludicrous and absurd. I had seen the highlights before I disappeared. People wanted to ban the show, they thought it would cause more young girls to give away their virginity way too soon.

But that negativity drove the curiosity to levels I had never seen. Talk shows debated it, tabloids drew pro and con articles with what I was doing. And in the end it all came back to me, like this was my idea, my creation.

I didn't care either way, it wasn't my idea to make it real. But I did know one thing, and that was I didn't want to be the poster child of the promiscuous boom in the younger generation.

And I didn't want to be the one doing it on screen.

“Okay, here we go!” Marc yelled through his microphone, signaling my new date.

The crowd's voices hushed to barely an audible breath, making my heart pound harder. I sat with my face down, watching a small trickle of ants crawl in and out of a tiny hill at the base of the fountain.

My head should have been in the scene, it should have been trying to focus on my lines. But all I could think about Kealen and how his hands felt on my body, how his lips felt on my skin.

I couldn't get him out of my head. He was sitting there, blanketing my thoughts and sending electric sparks through my veins. Every deep husky voice, every subtle scent of pine or sound of moving water—He was there.

I couldn't even shower this morning without thinking about being in the ocean with him and how it felt to have his fingers run over my skin. The rough touch was mixed with salt and sand, scruffing my flesh in sexual tension.

Marc said something, but I wasn't listening. Lifting my eyes up, I watched him nod his head and lean back in his chair.

My date was coming, that was the signal, that was the cue for me to gaze off into the background, pretending to be unaware of his presence.

Heavy feet padded on the concrete behind me, the thick heat of a man's body wafted over my shoulders.

Alright, show time.

Before I could turn, before I could bat my lashes and put on my sexiest smile, a firm hand tickled over my arm, slipping sensually over the back of my neck, and down my spine.

Wait, that's not what he's supposed to do.

He's got it all wrong.

Tensing, I cocked my head towards Marc, waiting for him to stop production.

But he didn't yell cut, he didn't stop the introduction.

He made changes, of course he took the liberty of making changes.

It wasn't uncommon for things to change in a blink without the producer informing everyone. So I went with it, tilting my head and arching my back.

A deep voice whispered into my ear, the sound puncturing my heart with hot needles. His fingers worked their way over my ribs as he spoke so low only I could hear him.

“I found you.” His lips met my neck, kissing with need, with passion.

The world around me faded away as I recognized the voice and lips on my skin. My body trembled as prickles broke across my flesh, riding my body in waves.

I didn't expect to see him again and I never expected to see him here.

Kealen had found me.

And he found me just in time.

### Chapter Fifteen

Kealen

Her cool skin blushed, sizzling up my fingertips with force. I didn't want to have to see her here, I didn't ever want her to know.

Now she did.

Jumping to her feet, the tight smirk disappeared as her hand drove into her hip. “What the hell are you doing here?”

“Cut!” Marc screeched, jumping from his seat and storming over. “What the hell are you doing? That was good, all of it was so good. Why are we stopping?”

“Why?” Snapping her chin, Allie let out a sarcastic laugh, rolling her head on her shoulders. “Are you kidding me?”

Marc eyed me, then bobbed his head back to her. “Allie, let's do this in my office, not here.”

Her chuckle grew darker as her eyes enlarged. “And why's that, Marc? Is it because you forced him here too? Or are you both in on this together? Hey, where's my father? Shouldn't he be here for this grand reunion?”

Dipping my brows, I held my arms up. “Wait, what are you talking about?”

“Don't pretend like you don't know, it was you all along, wasn't it?” Pointing her finger between Marc and myself, Allie nodded her head. “Marc has it, don't play stupid.”

“Allie,” I said, reaching for her shoulder. But she stepped away, jerking out from under my hand. That sudden repulsion stung, it hurt to have her move away and not closer. “I really have no idea what you're talking about.”

I needed her to believe me, to trust that I wasn't lying to her. There was so much already that hadn't been said between us. But now, I was done pretending.

I was done pretending I didn't know who she was, I was done pretending that I hadn't seen her on the set the day she stormed off. And I was done letting this show control her.

When I spotted her that day on the beach, I couldn't have imagined how far she would go to try and be someone else. I had seen the stories and thought that they were probably blown way out of proportion, the same as any other sideline story about a high profile face.

But when I saw her expression dull with any question about her past, I knew it went deep.

There would be no more of that sadness in her life, no more regrets, no more assholes.

Stepping into her, I cupped her chin, forcing her to look into my eyes. Her face held mine, reading me, watching me. “You're serious?” she asked.

Thumbing her cheek, I rolled the pad of my finger under her jaw line. “Yes.” Breaching the space between us, her head tilted higher on reflex.

Allie's face fell flat, her lush lips thinning tight. "You really didn't have anything to do with that picture?"

Curling my arm around her back, I forced her into my chest. "Look, I have no idea what you're talking about, but I had nothing to do with it." Stroking my hand down the back of her hair, I held her close.

She was right where she belonged; in my arms.

Her eyes began to water, the tiny droplets pooled under her lids, just waiting to be released with a blink.

She looked so sad, so lost and alone. I wanted to steal her pain like I had her virginity, I wanted to be the reason for her to smile and the reason she would never have to feel this awful again.

Allie's face grew hard, scrunching up tight. "Then why are you here?"

"Allie, please, let's go talk in my office." Marc skittishly looked at the herd of paparazzi with their jaws hanging open, fanning his arm out to lead us away.

A deep giddy laugh echoed behind the crew as an arm flew up high, waving wildly in the air. "This is great, really great." Garrett stepped through the crowd, a smug grin plastered on his face. "I only wanted to get you, Allie, never in my life did I expect to get this rat bastard too."

I felt her body start to shake as her head ticked slowly in his direction. "You! You did this!"

Shrugging his shoulders, he let them fall weightlessly back down. "I didn't have a choice, you walked out, you were going to ruin my career. I had to do something."



Her small frame broke free from my arms in a rage. Angrily slamming her heels into the pavement, she kicked them off. “How dare you! How could you!?” Allie's long legs flew forward, inching her closer and closer to Garrett.

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*Source Creation Date: July 18, 2025, 4:43 pm*

“It wasn't personal, Sweetheart, it was business.” Dragging a thumb over his chin, he smiled. “Okay, maybe a little personal.” Squinting one eye, he held his fingers millimeters apart.

I was still confused over what picture she was talking about, but this asshole wasn't going to threaten her like that. The sky turned red, leaking in behind Garrett. All I could see was him and his stupid fucking smile.

Lunging forward, I snagged his shirt and yanked him in. “What the fuck did you do?”

Holding his hands up, he still had the fucking balls to keep laughing. “You mean you haven't seen it?” Cocking his head toward Marc, he spoke over my shoulder. “Wasn't that a nice little pic of him and the slut getting it on?”

It's of us!

Motherfucker!

My temper surged, flaring and embracing my muscles. Snapping my forehead, I slammed it into Garrett's nose. The soft flesh crackled as he yelped like a fucking animal stuck in a trap.

Dropping him, he fell to his knees, cupping his face and groaning in agony. I didn't even look back down at him, he could lay there for the rest of his life, I didn't give a shit.

Storming over to Marc, I latched onto his microphone and threw it the ground.

“Where is it?” Balling my fists, I held them by my side, forcing them to stay static. I wanted that picture and all of the negatives. I wasn't going to let him off easy if he didn't cough it up, but I couldn't hit him before he gave them to me.

Allie stood a few feet behind me with her arms folded together. Her lips were pursed tight, brows veered deep into the bridge of her nose.

I was aware of her, even if I wasn't looking right at her. Her safety came first, I wasn't going to lose track of where she was. I couldn't imagine how angry and upset she must have been after finding out about the secret image.

And to know she thought I might have been involved stung. I would never have done that to her, it wouldn't have mattered what they offered me to get her back here.

“It's. . . It's in. . . in my office.” Marc stumbled over his words, his arms curling up into his chest like a raptor. “And you can have it, but not until after we finish this show. You two can't be together until at least a month after we finish airing.”

He looked fucking pathetic. His demeanor was poor and lacked any true testosterone. That wasn't a man standing before me, it was a fucking child. He wouldn't look me in the eyes, he wouldn't stand tall and take any action.

He just stood there expecting his weak condition to hold enough weight for me to give in. But he was wrong.

“I want it, I want all of them. Now.” Gritting my teeth, I leaned in closer. “And you can take that demand and shove it up your ass. There's no way we're doing that. Not now, not ever.” Turning to face Allie, I held out my hand for her to take.

She looked resistant, unsure if she should or not. “Kealen, the contract—”

Cutting her off, I gripped her wrist and yanked her in. “I don't care about the contract.” Grabbing her face, I forced our lips together.

I didn't care what she had to say, I didn't care about a stupid piece of fucking paper. All I cared about was making sure she was mine.

Breaking away, I watched her lids open slowly. “Allie, do you know why I'm here?” Shaking her head no, she touched her lips softly with her fingertips. “I wasn't going to come, I was never going to set foot back in that building. But when Marc texted me the show was back on, I knew I had to. I knew you were here and I had to see you again. I couldn't stand the thought of this, of you being placed into the arms of another man.”

I had signed on to do the show looking to take the next step in my life; I wanted a wife, a family. But the whole premise of the show made me rethink it. Did I really want to deflower a young girl in front of the world just to get what I wanted?

No. I was about to walk out, to never look back, then I saw her.

And when she quite, I was glad to know she couldn't go through with it either.

But I never expected to see her again, even though she was all I could think about. So finding her second time, that meant something to me, it made my feelings legit, it made them real. It forced me to think that maybe some things happen for a reason, and not by chance.

“They have a picture of us, they told me that if I did the show they wouldn't use it against us, that it would all go away. But I didn't know you were on the show, I thought the guy's name today was Fredrick.”

“Fredrick Kealen Knight, that's me.”

Marc cleared his throat, trying to interject with his terms again. “We didn't want to do this, but we needed her back. And I'm sorry, it's all true. She signed the contract and so did you, Fredrick. But Garrett is the one who gets her, not you.”

Shaking my head, I bit my lip, releasing Allie and turning to him. “That's where you're wrong, I'm the one who comes out on top. Allie isn't yours to give away, you can't decide who she gives herself to.”

Clicking his tongue, Marc's head teetered side to side. “Actually, I can. She's supposed to give herself to the winner, Garrett's the one who's going to win, so—”

“No.” The words stopped him short, slicing whatever he was about to say in half. “I read the contract, I read every line and detail.” A dark chuckle slipped free as I pointed firmly in his face. “You think you have this all figured out, but you don't. The contract says she's supposed to give it to one of the contestants, not the winner, not Garrett. I am one of the contestants, so your contract doesn't mean shit. She didn't do anything to break it.”

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“Wait, wait. . .” Marc waved at the crew, calling one of the team to run out with a copy of his precious contract. His fingers shook nervously as he flipped through the pages, his eyes searching desperately for the answer.

Garrett groaned again, lifting himself to his feet. Rubbing his eyes, he wiped his hand on his shirt. “I’m the one who was going to deflower that little whore, you took that from me! You stole my prize!”

Allie started to turn to say something, but I stopped her with a hand on her shoulder. He wasn’t going to talk about her like that. Not now, not ever.

She wasn’t just some piece of property or an object he bought in some store. She was mine, she was my woman. And now he was going to learn to never disrespect her again.

Lunging forward, I grabbed him by his throat, lifting him to the tips of his toes. “You want to say that again?”

Garrett’s nose was already swelling, his eyes glimmering with a tint of purple. “Fred—”

“Don’t.” I growled, baring my teeth. “You aren’t winning shit, you got that?”

Nodding his head, Garrett held his hands out to the side, waving his white flag. Dropping him back down, I jerked my body in his direction, watching him jolt. I didn’t have to do that, I already knew I had made my point loud and clear.

But it felt good to watch the fear paint his skin in white. He was an asshole, had been since I met him the first time during the auditions.

Allie came up behind me, wrapping her arms around my waist. I felt bad for not telling her the truth, for never letting her in on my little secret. I just didn't want her to think I was only after her for the sex, that my only goal was to have what every other man craved.

Her virginity.

"I'm sorry, I should have told you." Dipping my head, I lifted one of her hands to my lips, kissing the back of her palm.

"You don't have to say a thing." Her hands gently touched my chest, teasing my shirt. I felt the weight of her head against the center of my back and it turned my cold heart warm again.

I was afraid she was gone, but her touch held the answer I already knew.

She was never really gone. . . Just lost for a moment.

I loved having her wrapped around me, I loved having her close, and all I wanted was to keep her there.

But for that to happen, she had to hear the words, she had to know all of it.

"No, I do. I shouldn't have acted like I was oblivious to who you were. And I should have told you that I was on the show too. But, I just couldn't."

"Kealen, stop. I didn't tell you either, we both left out bits of our past and who we were."

“Yeah, but it wasn't fair to you. I knew who you were, you didn't know me, you didn't know that I had already seen you well before we met on that beach. I just didn't want you to run off, afraid that I wanted you just for sex.”

Twisting me to face her, Allie curled her arms under mine, holding herself as close to me as she could. “I don't think that, I wouldn't think that. You were too nice to me to just want sex.” Arching her back, she looked up into my eyes. “But I need to know, where do we go from here?”

“Alaska. . .” Saying her full name out loud for the first time sent shivers down my spine. I hadn't been able to say it before then, having to always pretend that she was just Allie.

But she was more than her name. Alaska was beautiful, she was amazing, and she was mine.

Pinching her chin between my thumb and forefinger, I whispered so only she could hear me. “As long as you're with me, I don't care.” Lowering my lips, I hovered over hers. “I don't know if this is love, Alaska, but I'm ready to find out.”

She had dusted my world for a moment in time.

And she had stumbled back in by sheer chance.

Now. . .

Now, I'm never letting go.