



The Billionaire's Naughty List

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Category: Erotic, Romance, Billionaire Romance, New Adult

Description: My favorite sassy girl is a spicy cam girl?

Turns out, my best friend's daughter is raising money with an OnlySantas account to start her business.

At first glimpse, I'm shocked. I know that tattoo. The curve of her lips. But I don't stop watching, even though she's off limits.

As a successful tech tycoon, I could bank roll a thousand doggy day spas and she knows it. But I have a sinking feeling the reason she didn't come to me is because I turned her down a year ago.

Seeing her on camera unleashes a possessiveness I've never known. I duck out of an important meeting, jump on my private jet, heading for the mountain cabin where she's live streaming. I need to get to her before she peels off those candy-striped stockings.

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1

LILY

I'm so close I can taste it. Ten grand more and I'll have enough money to launch my doggy daycare and spa.

At least, I hope so. My senior project in business school gave me the leg up on writing a business plan and running the numbers. What it didn't provide was the capital to start said business.

And even though Daddy offered me the money, twice, I'm a bit stubborn about making my own way. No one will ever accuse me of being a nepo baby.

Besides, he paid for college, and that was more than enough.

So here I am, ankle deep in the cold Montana snow, four days before Christmas, taking photos for my OnlySantas account. My cam show ended an hour ago and I don't have much time before the good light is gone for the day.

The sun peeks out from behind a cloud and I plant my boots at a photo-friendly angle. The snow glistens like it's covered in diamonds. Christmas carols pour from the speakers of my phone, echoing gently through the winter wonderland. I hold my phone at my mid thigh, and snap a shot showing off my red, green and white striped thigh-highs.

Though the site is called OnlySantas, I sell Miss Claus content. People are crazy for

marabou and red velvet, which is why I bought this costume. The slinky fabric skims my body, hinting at what's beneath.

Speaking of...

I cock a hip, bend my knee and flash the bottom half of the skirt, along with a bit of skin.

I'm careful to never show my whole face. At most, I've shown my lips—when I feel like doing my make-up, that is. I'm more of a lip gloss girl unless I'm working. Who wants dog fur stuck to their lips all day?

Not me.

I'm not ashamed of my content, it's a fun, creative outlet, but I also don't want the hassle of being recognized. Or worse. Harassed. And I definitely don't want to explain to my dad why men across the world are willing to pay to see me covered in sugar cookies. Or dressed up to look like a Christmas wish come true.

As a lifelong rancher who uses minimal technology and never even watches television, he would never understand. He's barely embraced YouTube. And don't get me started on my brothers.

Heck, I'm not sure I understand.

But I'm also not about to look a gift pony in the mouth.

Bending over, I adjust the ruby red pom-poms dangling from my off-white duck boots. Cold air blows up the back of my thighs and I shiver as I stand and get ready for another photo.

According to the family group text, I have two days before my dad, brothers, and Elliot arrive. Best not to think about my dad's best friend, though.

Thinking about him makes my heart ache and my brain play the ever frustrating 'what if' game. So yeah, it's better to push all feelings for Elliot Rivers down as deep as they'll go and cover them with a thick layer of metaphorical snow. Like an avalanche worth.

Two whole days to decorate the cabin, bake cookies and get as much content created while the weather is picturesque.

After snapping a handful more shots, I reach for my tripod and look around for another picture-perfect spot to set up. Some full length images are in order. And I can always do some creative cropping on them.

I'd rather take more than I could ever use.

The more the merrier.

Or at least until my extremities start to develop frostbite. I shoot a longing glance at my coat hanging from a branch. Maybe I should do a collection of 'can you guess what's underneath the red wool coat' photos? At least then I'd be warmer.

But this is why I came to the cabin two days early. Seattle doesn't see nearly this much snowfall in a year, much less at one time. And I want to open my doggy day spa sooner rather than later. With snow on the ground and more on the forecast, it's the perfect opportunity to get some more authentic shots in, which will keep me at the top of the Miss Claus category.

There's a lush evergreen closer to the lake's edge, so I set up my shot and grab the little fob that lets me snap pictures remotely.

I carefully angle everything so you can't see the cabin in the background. Satisfied with the lighting, I approach the tree and snap a couple of shots from the back. Like Miss Claus is rushing through the woods to deliver cookies or something.

I like to make up stories in my head, about the photos and the outfits. It makes it all easier and I think, and I could be totally wrong, but I think that's what's made me so popular.

Miss Claus, in my mind anyway, is very much single. Today, she's out for a walk, gathering branches and pine cones to decorate with. And yes, she's wearing a sexy outfit because elves don't get cold, right? Plus, you never know when you're going to meet the man that jingles your bells.

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Best to look your cutest at all times.

I snicker at the silly thought and then cozy up to the snow-cruled branches of the fir tree. My boots slip on the slick rocks and I shoot a wary glance at the lake as I right myself. I'm perched only a handful of feet up the slope from the water's edge and though it's a dreamy spot for a summer swim, I have no doubt it's only a hair warmer than hypothermia right now.

Returning my attention back to my phone, I hit the button on the remote and start taking pictures. Flirty shots. Demure ones. My subscribers like both.

I hum along with Santa Baby, turning this way and that. Reaching into the tree like I'm searching for just the right branch. December is by far my most lucrative month and I've already broken last year's record. By like a mile and a half.

Taking these two days to myself was such a good idea. I can relax before the chaos.

A twig snaps behind me and I jerk away from the tree, whirling.

2

ELLIOT

Lily's startled cry echoes over the sultry rendition of Santa Baby and her boots slip as her arms whirl through the air like helicopter blades.

I yell her name and race forward, miraculously finding purchase on the rocky ground

beneath the snow.

She skids and stumbles down the embankment, landing ass first into the frigid water. Her shriek echoes across the icy wilderness. My heart stops.

“Holy shit. Lily?—”

Her candy-stripe covered knees poke up out of the water and a halo of red velvet and white marabou trim float around her. She brushes a handful of long brown hair out of her face. Then her eyes lock with mine.

Her fear and shock dissolve as her lips twitch. She sucks in a shaky, shivery breath, then exhales a cloud.

All the turbulent emotions that brought me to Love Valley crystallize as I slide down the hill after her.

"Are you okay? Give me your hands."

She laughs as she reaches for me. “Oh my god, Elliot, you should see your face.”

Her icy fingers wrap around my left hand, chilling me to the bone. The dress clings to her like a second skin.

A very red, very thin second-skin that leaves nothing to the imagination.

Her nipples poke the fabric like twin gumdrops. The velvet shows off the dip of her belly button, and every other feminine curve I should not be memorizing.

"Seriously, you look like I just fell in a pit of lava with impervious crocodiles swimming around." Her teeth chatter.

"You have such a vivid imagination," I mutter.

She slips as her boots connect with the icy shoreline. I can't have her pulling us both in the drink.

After shaking her hand loose, I hook her beneath the arms and haul her out of the lake.

Water drips off her, down the front of me, but I couldn't care less.

She's soaked like a kitten in the rain.

The once fluffy strips of feathers lay plastered against her skin. She grips my biceps as she gets her footing, those big caramel colored eyes blown wide.

Her teeth clank harder, making her words sound slurred. "I'm okay, Elliot."

She's not okay. She's freezing to death before my eyes. Her skin is bright pink from the icy water.

I slip off my coat and slide it over her shoulders. The soft lining will help warm her up.

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“Thanks.” She slips her arms into the holes, but her shivering intensifies. “It’s so warm-mm.”

“Let’s get you inside.”

She nods, some of the humor leaving her eyes, and she starts past me. Her boots are filled with water and every step makes a terrible sloshing sound. I can only imagine how cold her toes are.

“Fire sounds go-ood right about n-now.”

“I bet.” I shouldn’t be mad, but I am. There’s so much going on in my head. It’s hard, almost impossible, to latch onto a singular train of thought.

But my chest is tight, gripped with anxiety. And my mind won’t shut-up with the what-ifs.

What the hell is she doing out here, barely dressed, standing so close to the lake? I’m not that surprised, honestly. She’s always been a force of nature, coming and going as she pleases. Filling the world with laughter and the sweetest smiles.

We’re halfway up the incline when her boots hit an icy patch and she slides backward with a yelp. I put out my hands to hold her up and grab two perfect round globes covered in sopping velvet.

“Up. Now.” I push her the rest of the way until we’re standing next to the tree.

My fingers are cold. So are my ears and my nose. I crouch in front of her and unzip one of her boots and then the other. “Kick them off, okay?”

“What?”

I rise to my full height and she cranes her neck, arms wrapped around her waist as she shivers, staring up at me with pinched brows and a dropped jaw. Fuck, it’s cold out here.

I scoop her up, high against my chest. “Kick them off.”

Biting her lip, she does as I ask and then I double time it back to the house. She wraps her arms around my shoulders and her icy fingers brush my neck.

Heaven help me.

Her gorgeous young body is wracked with shivers. It’s like holding a vibrating teddy bear. Except that she looks nothing like a teddy bear. And I’ve never felt this protective over a toy.

Which, as a geek who loved his Star Wars merch, is saying something.

After scrubbing my boots on the mat, I bend down and she reads my mind, immediately reaching for the doorknob. That shouldn’t be a turn on. It shouldn’t make me think of a wedding night and carrying her over the threshold to our honeymoon.

It simply shouldn’t.

But it does.

She twists the knob and gives the door a little shove. I nudge it open with my boot,

hustle through, then kick it shut before stalking down the hall to my suite. I have no idea which room she's staying in and it's second nature to push my way into the large bathroom.

"Here," I say, setting her on the vanity. It can't be any colder than the lake.

She's slow to let go. Poor woman is half-frozen already.

"Let me turn on the shower and we'll warm you up. Okay? Slowly," I add.

She sends me a sour look and her hands drop to her lap.

Of course she knows how important it is to warm up slowly and not shock the system.

"I'm not five."

And there it is. The reason I'm here and not at one of the most important meetings of my career.

"Trust me, honey, I know."

I know that all too well.

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“D-do you-uu?” she insists.

If she wasn’t shaking so hard, it’d be an earnest moment. Full of meaning and nuance and all sorts of things I don’t want to see. Nope. No way.

I step across the space and reach into the large tiled shower, adjusting the knobs until the water runs luke-warm. She might agree to warming up slowly, but I know her. She never does anything in half measures.

Like the time she found an injured baby owl and by the end of the day had the vet out to look it over and her brothers built it a cage to her specifications. That owl grew up and kept the vermin out of the barns for years.

Living life at full throttle is just one of the things that makes her her. One of the things that I adore.

Steeling myself, I turn back to my best friend's daughter. Definitely not a little girl. She’s all woman. Funny and stern and bossy as hell at times. When I tell you she ran our shit when she was little. I guess growing up without a mom will do that. She kept her younger brothers in line like a shepherd herds sheep. Tirelessly, with plenty of bark, an occasional bite, but also love.

She's also the sweetest, kindest person I’ve ever met.

And she’s shaking like a leaf in a hurricane.

“Let me grab you a towel.” Two steps carry me to a small linen closet and I pull out a

fluffy white bath sheet that will wrap around her at least twice. “Do you?—”

3

LILY

“Do I?” I prompt when Elliot doesn’t finish his sentence.

I’m freezing my tits off, but man-oh-man, is he tasty looking. My fingers feel so brittle they might snap, my toes burn like I just stepped in a puddle of lava, and I’m pretty sure the girls could cut glass. Talk about high beams.

As much as I hate the thought of getting out of Elliot’s coat, I want in that shower. Clothes or no clothes, it’ll be worth it. Heck, just being in the warmth of the cabin is enough to make my eyes roll back in my head.

He stares at me like I’m the ultimate puzzle. I shouldn’t enjoy his attention so much. He’s always enjoyed games and mysteries, which is putting it mildly. The man owns one of the premier game development companies in the world.

What is he doing here, anyway?

I didn't tell anyone I was coming early.

If my nose wasn’t forming icicles, I’d snort at the thought. With him around, I won’t be coming at all.

Handsome jerk.

“Do you need help?”

Alarm zings through me, making my already prickly extremities even more painful.

I wince.

He steps forward, crowding me, and reaches for my hand. “You okay?”

When I take too long to answer, he closes the distance between us and wraps one of those strong arms around my waist, lifting and stepping at the same time. Until we’re in the shower.

Together.

Both of us, fully clothed, beneath the rain showerhead.

“Elliot!”

Everything hurts. There’s no point in denying that. But there's a fresh ache blooming inside me because being this close to him is painful. He's never going to see me as anything but his best friend's little girl.

Logically, I appreciate that. Respect it. But the part of me that started crushing on him at my graduation dinner... she's not so thrilled.

She planned out the rest of her life in sixty short minutes. Business to babies. And that infatuation only grew with time and space.

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Gently, he sets me on my feet beneath one of the two rain showerheads. He doesn't step away, not even letting my full weight down onto the charcoal grey tile. My fingers cling to what they can—a forearm and an awkward grip on his thigh.

Water showers over us, getting him just as wet.

“I had to park on the road,” he says, voice rough.

There's a tiny but accusatory note lingering beneath his words. Big, bad, billionaire has gotten used to the finer things in life. Seattle is hundreds of miles away from the farm where he grew up shadowing my dad, and it's leaps and bounds more polished. About the most rustic thing in the big city are the puddles when it rains.

“I'll have it cleared in the morning, but there's no way to—” He bites off the rest of the sentence, however I know what he was going to say.

Even through my partially frozen brain, I get it. The cabin is nestled in the mountains surrounding Love Valley. And with a fresh layer of snow and more on the way, we're as good as stranded up here.

“It's okay. I'm fine.”

I hope I got some usable shots before I took my ice bath. My dress is almost surely ruined now.

“You're not fine. You're a human popsicle.” His words have more bite than I'm used to.

He didn't freak out this much when I told him I wanted to get a tattoo and I was going with or without him. He'd mumbled about how my dad was going to kill him, but he wasn't about to let me go to some seedy tattoo parlor by myself.

Joke was on him. I went to a beautiful, upscale shop owned and operated by a woman who only inks women.

He looked like a broody viking amongst all the pink, but I give him credit because he stuck it out.

It took dear-old-dad two years to notice said tattoo across the top of my foot. Unlike Elliot, he's not terribly detail-oriented unless it deals with the ranch.

Elliot rubs his hands up and down my arms, lighting a fire in my veins. "Are you warming up?"

I can't bring myself to tell him that's an understatement.

Bending his knees, he ducks down, looking at me closely. Those gray-green eyes steal my breath. I ache to run my fingers through his dark hair. It looks like he's already done so multiple times today.

How many times have I imagined climbing him like a tree, kissing that wide mouth, rubbing my cheek against his stubble?

A shiver quakes through my belly as he awaits an answer. He's persistent, I'll give him that. "It's better," I say.

"Your skin isn't as pale."

"Elliot..."

His big hands freeze on my shoulders. My stomach tingles and all the emotion that I pushed down deep swells up in my chest, threatening to burst out. I blink away frustrated tears and try to take a step back, but he holds me still.

"Stop. We've got to warm you up."

"I'm perfectly capable?—"

"Really? Because I found you standing in subfreezing weather, ankle deep in snow in this scrap of—" He lets the words hang between us unspoken as he nods to my soaked dress.

I can't exactly argue with that, which is extra frustrating because he makes me sound reckless. And I'll admit to being an idiot where he's concerned, but not about my own safety.

"Honestly, I was fine until I fell into the lake." I remember his shocked expression and can't help but giggle again.

"What the hell were you doing out there in the cold? Tell me the truth." There's something about the way he says those words that makes my spidey senses tingle. Like he knows something, and he wants it confirmed.

But there's no way for him to know that I'm on OnlySantas, so what is it he thinks he knows?

Licking my lips, I shrug out of his coat and shove it against his chest. "I've warmed up, thank you."

He tosses it out the open door, then strips off his sweater and sends that sailing, too. I get a little pang in my stomach because his button-up shirt is plastered to his chest

and I can't help but want to feel all that muscle against me.

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"Lily—"

I force a smile, but my heart aches worse than my toes did.

"Seriously. All warmed up." I flash my hands, showing that the color is returning to normal. "And if you don't mind, I need to see if I can salvage my dress."

"I mind. Tell me what's going on." He crowds closer.

"Nothing's going on." I give his chest a little shove. "Now go. Let me get the lake water out of my hair in peace."

4

ELLIOT

"I can't do that," I admit, emotion making my mouth feel dry and cottony, which is ironic given the humidity.

"What? Yes, you can. You walked in here. March right back out again."

I shake my head, pressing even closer to her. Lily backs up a step. Then another. Until her shoulder blades are pressed against the tile. I feel a momentary satisfaction when her chin tips up and a little gasp leaves those sexy lips. My inner cave man likes crowding her, which is probably a little messed up, but true nevertheless.

"Later. After we've talked." I reach over and turn the water to a warmer temperature.

Then I plant my hands against the wall, next to her shoulders, caging her in.

She gives a soft little huff of indignation, but her hands come up, resting just above my hip bones. Is she holding me at bay or keeping me close? I can't quite tell.

"There's nothing to talk about?—"

"Yes, there is. I didn't get a card from you this year."

Her mouth drops open comically. "There's no way you came out here because I didn't send you a Christmas card."

"So you admit you didn't send one." Maybe it's silly of me, but I was looking forward to her card, to that connection with her. Especially since I hadn't seen her this year. Like clockwork, a cute seasonal card has been in my mailbox on December first every year since she came out to Seattle for college.

The first of the month came and went with no word from her. No card in my mailbox. No heart dotting the line in her name.

She cocks her head to the left, staring at me with open astonishment. "Why on earth would I send you one? You crushed?—"

She bites off the words, but I know what she was going to say and I hate the truth. That I hurt her. I hurt her and then spent the whole year thinking about her. I lost count of how many times I started to text her, only to delete them. All with the misguided belief that I could survive without her.

"I was wrong."

In any other moment, the look on her face would have me doubled over laughing.

There's a shocked triple blink, then her eyes widen and her lips part as her jaw drops and her head jerks back.

She snaps her lips closed, but only for a second. "What—what were you wrong about?"

Steam swirls around us, thick and seductive. This is not how I planned for this conversation to go, but I need to be flexible.

"I was wrong when I told you that what you felt was just a crush. I lied when I told you I didn't feel the same way. I lied when I told you I don't think of you, because I do. Lily, I wake up wondering if you've had your first cup of coffee yet. And I go to sleep wondering about your day."

There. I said it. I admitted it. I might burn in hell, but it'll be worth it.

She stares at me for several long seconds. Is time standing still? Why isn't she blinking?

She shakes her head. I can't be sure if it's in disbelief or she's trying to clear brain fog.

"Back up?—"

"What?" I lean away, my brittle heart cracking, but she holds tight to my hips.

"We need—you need to go back to the beginning." She closes her eyes and her nose does that cute scrunchy thing it does when she's upset or sad.

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See, I know these things about her. Because I know her. And I'm sick of denying it.

I study the freckles smattered across her skin and ache to press my lips to each and every one. But that will have to wait.

She needs words, and I will find them for her.

"Last year at that party, I shut you down and I'm—" I swallow. "I'm sorry I hurt you that night. I was suffering a dump truck full of guilt for watching you move in that pretty little party dress and feeling all kinds of ways that I definitely shouldn't have been feeling for a woman half my age. Mentally smacking myself because you're Colt's daughter."

Lily remains silent, almost transfixed, with those warm brown eyes watching me. I did that. Broke her trust. Bruised her heart.

Damn, that hurts more than I thought.

Because she's the same woman who trusted me to go with her for her tattoo. She trusted me with her grades and her goals and her plans to start her own business. But this last year she cut me from her life and then held me firmly on the outside. I've missed her inappropriate laughter, near constant smiles, sassy comebacks and quiet confidence more than I can convey.

"Say something—" Why isn't she saying anything? "Yell at me. Anything."

"I just... What made you change your mind?"

I hate—hate—how small and unsure she sounds. It kills me that this confident, incredible woman who is so much to so many could doubt herself.

But I'm really not sure how she's going to take this. I'm not sure how I feel about it. I need answers.

So I step back, pacing away, dodging the hot spray. Who knew all those years ago when Colt and I bought this place that this ridiculously large shower would come in handy?

"I saw your picture. On OnlySantas."

Her inhale is louder, sharper than the water raining down on the tile.

I don't know why it feels so important to me to explain that I wasn't perving on her. Well, it started innocently enough. "One of the programmers downstairs was showing me a feature on the site that he thought we should implement on ours."

"How did you know it was me?"

I turn back to her.

She's not denying her participation on OnlySantas.

I'm not sure if I was holding out hope that another beautiful woman had the same tattoo and a proclivity for playing Miss Claus. Maybe I was, in my heart of hearts. And yet, I knew it was her, didn't I? I was so fucking sure, I upended my schedule and flew out here.

"Your tattoo." I glance down at her stocking-covered foot.

Something makes me cross back to her and drop to my knees. "May I?" My fingers ghost up her calf to the edge of the striped fabric.

She's got one hand pressed to the wall next to her thigh and the other against her heart. Desire and fear swirl in her eyes and there's a cute little furrow between her dark-chocolate brows that I want to kiss away.

But first I need to see that tattoo again. Prove that I'm not crazy.

She nods, a bit shakily, but I'll take it. "Y-yes."

Without missing a beat, I roll down the stocking revealing a cute knee, smooth skin, a sexy calf. She lifts her foot as I reach her ankle and toss the sodden stocking over my shoulder.

Her nails are polished a merry red. But it's the black ink across the top of her foot that holds my attention. Delicate and detailed, the design starts between her toes and then branches out, connecting and bisecting with small swirls and dots before connecting around her ankle.

Lightly, I trace the design before wrapping my hand around her lower leg.

"Now it's your turn. Why are you on a site like OnlySantas?"

5

LILY

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This is easily the weirdest conversation I've ever had. And that includes the bizarre birds and the bees convo my older brother started that my poor dad had to finish. Not that I didn't grow up seeing cows and dogs and pretty much every other animal on the ranch mating.

It's not that this conversation is uncomfortable, but because I'm fully clothed. In a shower. With the man who I thought I could never have. The man who told me there could be nothing between us. And as much as I hated it, I pushed my feelings for him down deep and kept on with my life. Because that's what good girls do. Right?

But here he is, telling me that my feelings aren't imaginary. That I'm not dreaming this connection between us. That he does, in fact, want me the way I want him.

The Dad problem still remains, though.

I mean, my father and I don't really talk about dating and partners and stuff like that. Not since the previously mentioned weird birds-and-bees discussion. Honestly, it's a miracle I didn't turn out to be a total tomboy.

I'm sure Dad expects me to settle down and pop out a few kids. Someday. Because again, that's what good girls do.

My lips part as I stare at Elliot, a vision of sweet little babies with his eyes and my nose and the cutest little grins?—

I shake my head. That's a dangerous line of thought. This whole thing is dangerous. Mostly to my heart.

"Lily—" he prods from his spot at my feet.

Right. He asked a question. Why am I on OnlySantas?

"Sorry. Lost in thought." Which is not unusual for me.

"You could show me."

Now my ears are failing me because there's no way he just said 'show me.'

"What?"

"If you won't tell me why you're on the site, show me what you do there."

How does he make that statement sound both earnest and mischievous at the same time? The corner of his mouth pulls up in a sexy smirk. Does he know what that little hitch does to me? It's such a small expression, subtle to everyone, perhaps, but me. I see the subtext because I've seen it before, hoping every time I was reading it right. A flirt without flirting. A question without questioning.

His cellphone rings a familiar tune and we both freeze.

"That's my dad," I whisper-yell.

Unease settles in my stomach, which is weird because I've thought of being with Elliot a thousand times and never once did my mind consider how weird it'd be if my dad interrupted us.

Elliot's lips twitch. "Let me worry about him."

Oh...that's so sexy. Confidence radiates off him and my shoulders drop from my ears.

I'd be lying if I said it didn't feel good to be taken care of.

I nod. "Okay..."

He reaches into his pocket and pulls out his phone as he steps out of the shower.

"You're going to talk to him right now?"

What about our conversation? What about the touching and the heat in his eyes?

I sag with disappointment and confusion.

"Hold that thought, kitten."

I watch, jaw dropped slightly, as he taps the screen and lifts the phone to his ear.

"Hey Colt."

All my breath leaves me, because watching him is so much more erotic when I'm standing in his shower, my outfit leaving nothing to the imagination. He's talking to my dad but his gaze is locked on me.

"Yeah, I was just getting into the shower. Oh? I hadn't seen?—"

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Gosh, he's handsome. Nothing like the rugged cowboys I grew up around, but just as capable on horseback. My gaze skips over his broad shoulders to where his shirt is plastered to his torso. Then down to his hips where I want to wrap my legs around and hold on tight.

There's no mistaking the bulge behind his zipper.

My pussy clenches. Needy little hussy.

Was he serious about showing him what I do on OnlySantas?

"Mhmm. Yeah, no, just arrived myself." He glances to the window over the bathtub and I follow his gaze in the mirror. "Yeah, it's picking up."

The more I think about it, he didn't seem mad about OnlySantas, but rather curious.

I slide my hands down my thighs and gather the material, hiking it a few inches. His attention swerves back to me and I swear I feel his gaze like an actual touch. Like his fingers and lips move across my skin, heating every inch.

This feels similar to the rush I get when I go live, but it's so much...more.

Because this is Elliot.

And there's no mistaking the look on his face as he watches me pull my dress just high enough to make him wonder what I'm wearing beneath.

“What was that?” he says, clearly missing what my father said.

I smirk and pull the soggy velvet higher, flashing a peek of my panties.

He inhales sharply.

Emboldened, I hook my thumbs over the edge of my panties and start pushing them down. The skirt of my dress follows my hands, sliding down around my thighs.

Impatience rolls off him, making his answer short and clipped.

When the red satin and lace panties hit the floor, I step out of them and kick them to the side. Then I hold my breath, waiting to see what he’ll do.

He doesn’t disappoint.

“Yeah. Looking forward to it. Don’t worry, I’ll take care of everything here. Travel safe.”

He disconnects the call without looking at his phone because his eyes never stray from mine. He’ll take care of everything here? There’s a note in his voice that says that statement includes me.

I shiver despite the heat of the shower.

My strong independent side turns up her nose at the idea of being taken care of. But even she melts under Elliot’s gaze as he steps back to the shower, phone forgotten. I watch him through the spray of the rain showerhead and my heart thumps against my ribs.

I finally have all his attention. And not the platonic kind.

This is the heated look a man gives to a woman, the look I've dreamed about for years. Long before I ever looked at Elliot that way, I wanted the kind of passionate, all-consuming relationship that people write stories about. I want a love that my grandkids will revere.

Taking a deep breath, I nod. This isn't a topic I thought I'd ever discuss with him.

I close my eyes, because I can't look at him and form complete sentences at the same time. But we need everything out in the air if we're going to take the next step.

"I'm saving money for my business," I say carefully.

"You know I'd give you the money." His voice is raspy with disbelief and something darker.

"Dad offered," I say quickly. "But I wanted... I need to do it myself."

"Why...this?" He traces a finger down my side. Such a teasing touch.

As if my nipples needed to be any harder, crying, begging, pleading for attention.

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His attention.

Only Elliot's attention will do.

That's what terrifies me.

I open my eyes and stare up at him.

"I'm saving as much as I can, as quickly as I can, and people like my content. It's all frosting. My day job pays my bills but the pictures..."

He crowds me against the wall, caging me in.

"Right. They're frosting."

I'm so wet and it has nothing to do with flying ass over tits into a lake. It's the way Elliot gently kisses my forehead, as if he can't help himself. Can't hold back a second longer, but is unsure of his welcome.

"Are you mad?" I whisper, because suddenly this is all so real and his opinion has always carried so much weight with me.

"No, kitten, I'm not mad. Disappointed that you didn't come to me. That you didn't let me help you. But I understand why you didn't."

I nod, then blink up at the man I measure all others against.

It's no wonder my dating life is nonexistent. I've always been judging everyone and finding them lacking. They're all rulers and he's a yardstick.

I lick my lips because, despite the steam, I feel parched. "How did you know I was here?"

He drops to his knees again, moving to my other leg, rolling down the stocking, lifting my foot. I'm keenly aware of the fact that I'm no longer wearing panties. He knows it. I know it. My muscles tremble with anticipation.

He smirks, looking way too handsome for my own good. "I get a notification any time someone enters this place." He wiggles his wrist, showing off his watch.

Oh.

I guess I should have figured that. He loves his technology.

"So how close are you to your goal?"

And that's what I love about him. It's not how far away I am. It's how close. Because he's nothing if not optimistic.

"Ten thousand or so."

He nods, kisses my knee and then stands.

I swear I'm going to swoon. Maybe I'm overheated now. Something. I just— he?—

"So here's the plan," he says, taking my hands, "you're going to forgive me for being a dumbass."

He lifts my hands and presses a kiss to my knuckles.

Maybe I hit my head on a rock out there.

Did I drown? Is this heaven?

I'm either dreaming or dead, because I've only seen this look in Elliot's eyes in my dreams.

Desire. Pining. A plea.

He's got a bit more silver in his sideburns than the last time I saw him. But he's still handsome as always. Even in a soaked shirt and ridiculously sexy, dark jeans.

"And we're going to start again," he continues. "But this time, I'm going to kiss you."

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"That's it? Elliot, I don't want some careful relationship with kisses and then you send me off to?—"

He moves like lightning, dropping my hands, cupping my cheeks and pressing his lips to mine.

My lashes flutter closed and I grab at the wet layers of his clothing, needing to be closer. He takes control, pouring everything into this language. Where words are no longer necessary.

Warm, firm lips move against mine. His breath on my cheek. His body pressing into me. Learning, exploring, teasing past my lips with his tongue.

Pleasure pulses through me and my body goes soft, needy. I slip my fingers beneath the sodden fabric, searching for his skin, needing more connection. As soon as I feel those scorching muscles, my ire floats away on the steam and swirls down the drain.

Oh my god, this is heavenly.

And wild.

And crazy.

He still has his boots on.

I grin, and he lifts his head.

"What's put that smile on your face?"

"You." I huff a laugh. "You're wearing boots in the shower."

"I'd wear boots in the pool so long as it means I can kiss you."

I grin at him, delighted by his zaniness. His smile is wide, full of joy and humor. I love that about him just as much as I love that we can laugh together.

His dark gaze drops to my lips again and my stomach does that swoopy-swirly thing. Almost as if it had never been, his humor fades and seriousness takes hold again. Heavens help me, they're both good looks on him. Both make me tingle with need and wet with desire.

He tugs my hips forward until there's no denying the hard length trapped between us. "There's nothing chaste about this, Lily," he says, his rough voice reminding me of my earlier plea. "Let me wipe away that notion right now. I want to fuck you in every room of this house. Twice on the porch. I want your scent all over me so I can fill my lungs with you whenever I want. I want your toothbrush next to mine and your clothes in my closet."

Wow.

Wow. Wow. Holy wow.

That's— that's so sweet and serious and I fling myself into his arms. Happiness is a living, breathing beast inside me, ready to burst out. I kiss his throat, his jaw, over to his chin, then his lips.

He touches me all over. Hands gliding down my sides to cup my ass. I hike a leg up over his hip and he wastes no time rocking that glorious erection against my clit.

I pull my lips away, sobbing a breath, as my eyes roll back.

"Elliot—"

6

ELLIOT

My name has never sounded better than it does rolling off Lily's tongue. Her sweet voice is breathless, needy, full of wonder.

And god, I'm feeling all that myself.

This is really happening.

We're really here, together.

"I love the way you say my name," I say against her throat. She smells of sugar and peppermint and I can't resist licking the pulse thumping beneath her skin.

Her hands move to my shoulders, clinging like a little kitten and she keeps her head carefully tilted to give me access to all that soft skin.

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Fuck, I want to mark her there.

But I won't. Not there. Not with her family showing up in a few days.

My erection is hard evidence of where this is going. Just how far gone I am for her. Nothing's ever felt as naughty as Lily's slender thigh hooked over my hip, that hot little cunt pressed tight to my crotch.

Pantyless.

I need to make sure she knows how much I like it. That I've thought about her nonstop and I can't go back to ignoring things. She needs to understand just how deeply I want her.

"More—" Another sweet plea from her lips. A breath against my skin. A single word that quakes through me.

"I'm going to give you everything, kitten. I have a whole naughty list of things I want to do with you. To you."

She nods, on board with that idea.

Finally!

The snarl comes from deep inside, the beast I've kept locked away is unleashed. Free to go after what it wants, no longer hiding in the shadows and ignoring my darkest desires.

I've pushed all that aside for too long. Decades too long. Keeping myself in check as I built my career and lately because of fear and propriety and ill-guided respect. She's finally given me the freedom to act on the feelings I've kept carefully locked away.

Frustration twists in my chest. She gave me that permission a year ago, and I was an idiot.

Pushing aside the remorse, I focus on the present and our future. Because one kiss and I'm a goner. With chemistry like this, what else could I possibly want? With a woman as smart and poised and caring as Lily, I'm the luckiest man in the universe.

Lily drops her foot to the floor and grabs the hem of her dress, gathering the soggy fabric. "Off—" She grumbles as she wrestles against the weight of it. It's plastered to her skin.

Which is where I want to be.

I chuckle at her twisted lips. Such a cute little pout.

I drop a kiss there. "As adorable as the situation is, it's time for that dress to get out of my way."

"Yes, please."

I've been dreaming of getting her naked and feeling all that perfect skin against mine. I help her remove the dress. It joins the quickly growing pile of clothing on the bathroom floor.

Fuck me. She's perfection. A curvy, feminine package that makes my cock even harder as I imagine her without the red bra.

"It's like you wrapped yourself up for me."

She smirks. "Maybe I did."

"Lily—" Her name is a warning. "Do not tempt a hungry man. A man who's been dying for you, kitten."

She unbuttons my shirt, a saucy expression on her youthful face. "And whose fault is that, Mr. Rivers?"

Damn, she's going to keep me on my toes, isn't she? I love it. Her spunk, her mind, the way she's never backed down from a challenge in her whole life.

"Mine. Entirely mine." I trace the edges of her bra with my fingertip.

She shivers beneath my touch, then makes a pleased sound. "At least you own up to it."

That sobers me. I hook a finger beneath her chin, forcing her to look up at me. "Always. I will always own my mistakes, especially where we're concerned."

I'll do what it takes to build her trust.

She pops the last button free and pushes it out of the way, hands gliding over my torso. Slowly at first, reverent, and then bolder, exploring me. I try to stay healthy, but I'd rather go running or hiking than spend hours in the gym.

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Still, she stares at me with an open fascination. Greedy fingers glide over my pecs and down my flat stomach. With a little whimper, she leans forward, planting a kiss over my heart. I suck in a breath, a feeling of rightness settling in my chest.

Together, we work off my shirt and her hands immediately go to my belt. I cover them with my own, halting the movement. "We can slow down."

"We're not even at a simmer yet. I've been fantasizing about this for years. I don't want to slow down."

"Years?" I quirk an eyebrow, pleased at the revelation.

She worries her lower lip. And I get it. We're sixteen years apart. Her dad is my oldest friend. Her brothers trust me. But it wasn't until I saw her Miss Claus pictures that I trusted myself. Until I stopped denying what I want. Because seeing those pictures of my girl out there for everyone to see, they lit the fuse.

Lily nods, reaching behind her back. My brain goes staticky. The white noise between my ears drowns out the splatter of water against the tile. The bra gives and slides down her arms with the help of a little shrug. And then she's bare. Topless and gorgeous. High, full breasts with dark pink tips that call to my lips.

Groaning, I cup them, teasing her nipples with my thumbs. She hums her pleasure, pressing herself into my hands. Unable to wait another second, I duck my head and suck one needy tip into the heat of my mouth. She wraps her arms around my shoulders, holding on tight.

I suck and massage, lick and nibble until she's squirming, coming out of her skin with need.

"Are you wet for me, kitten?"

She nods, sort of frantic-like, wide eyed and needy. Breathless.

Moving to her other breast, I give it the same treatment. How is this my reality? How is it possible that this beautiful young woman wants me with the same burning desire?

Flicking the tip of my tongue against the tight bud of her nipple, I absorb her shudder. She's fucking delicious. Her sweet skin and her response.

"I'm the luckiest man alive," I murmur, kissing and licking my way back to her throat.

At the same time, I slide a hand down her belly.

Her curls are wet, soaked and my middle finger glides with ease, finding her clit. With a little gasp, she tips her hips, offering herself to me. Goose flesh teases her skin and I spin into the stream of water.

Her moan makes my cock weep. Who am I kidding? It's been weeping for her since I saw that first photograph of her delicate, inked foot so artfully styled in a marabou kitten heel.

My balls draw tight, primed and ready to give her my seed. She just has to say the word, or breathe in my general direction, and I'm going to erupt. On her, in her, hopefully not in my pants.

"You," she mutters, fingers fiddling with my jeans. The wet fabric gives her a hard

time. "Need you out of your clothes."

I grab her hands. "Are you sure, kitten? Because I don't think I can be naked with you and not make love to you."

She pulls me down for a deep kiss, tongue sweeping into my mouth. Her fingers are in my hair and her body presses so tightly to mine, not even air could get between us. My toes curl and when I lift my head, a goofy grin stretches my lips.

"You're going to be the death of me, aren't you?" I ask.

A few kisses, a few touches, a taste of her sweet body, and I'm such a goner.

I kick off my boots, shove my pants and boxers down, hopping on one foot as I try to free myself.

"Fuck." I trip, feet tangled in the wet denim, landing hard on the bench seat.

"Are you okay?" I can tell she's stifling a giggle.

She kneels and helps me out of my predicament. But once I'm as naked as she is, cock pointed at the sky, she stays there on her knees. Water rains down, hitting her tits, creating two tiny waterfalls off the tips.

I bite my lip to keep from coming.

I clamp down harder when her hands coast up my shins, over my knees, and up my thighs. Every hair she touches sends a jolt of pleasure straight to my brain.

Fuck me. This is straight out of my most forbidden dreams. This goddess on her knees, looking at me with so much heat in her eyes. All that slick skin waiting to be

explored. Her touching me, learning me, watching for every spot that drives me wild.

Newsflash, it's all of them.

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Reaching up, she rubs a thumb down the underside of my shaft. Electricity spikes through me and my dick jumps. She giggles, a sweet, girly sound. But that's also a hint of mischievousness, like she knows exactly what she's doing and loves making me come out of my skin for her.

And I am.

She wraps her hand around my erection and it pulses against her palm, straining the bounds of what's possible. A happy moan bubbles up her throat and she flashes a smile. "I think he likes that."

"He loves that."

"What else does he like?"

"You." I keep my palms flat against the tile so I won't haul her into my lap and fuck her like I've dreamed of. Not yet. She needs this time to explore and adapt and get comfortable.

My dick, on the other hand, needs no time at all. He's paststart your engines, checkered flags waving, ready for launch.

Another moan, a bigger smile. "What else?"

Lifting up onto her knees now, she bows her head, places a sweet kiss against the plump crown of my cock. I press my head against the wall and shut my eyes because it's too good. Such an innocent gesture, but also the first time her lips have been

remotely close to my dick, and he's aching for more. To slide inside that hot, wet mouth and feel that tongue massaging him.

"Oh, he definitely likes that. Wants more kisses."

"Oh really?" Taking me in hand now, she leaves a trail of kisses straight down to my sac and I slide two inches up the wall.

"Fuck yes."

More throaty moans. She sounds so pleased with herself and god, do I love that. Her confidence, even in a new situation, just does it for me. She's innocent and bold at the same time, happily learning as she goes and?—

Oh, damn.

She sucks on that delicate skin at the base of my dick.

Precum dribbles from my tip. I cup the back of her head and spread my thighs wider, letting her know without words just how much I like that. Exactly like that. She continues her expedition. Nipping. Sucking. Licking.

There's no way to stifle my groans.

If anyone else was in this house right now, they'd know something's going down in my shower.

7

LILY

I've never felt so powerful.

Not when I was a rodeo queen. Not when I slung hay bales at the ranch.

Making Elliot squirm and groan is the ultimate high. He's always been in a world of his own. Not just because of his business, but because of the way his brain works. Sure, he's silly and fun and funny. He laughs and jokes with me and my brothers. But he also gets lost in thought and sometimes I wonder where he goes.

Underneath the casual clothes and friendly smile is a world class brain I can't begin to comprehend.

But right now, in this minute, he's with me. Back down here on earth with us mere mortals. And I have zero doubts that all those lofty thoughts have boiled down to his most base urges.

I lick my way back to the tip of his cock and his lips part with expectation.

The first taste is salty, slightly tangy.

I sink down, taking the fat head into my mouth. His hand tightens against the back of my head and I relax into his touch, letting him show me what he needs.

With one hand braced against his thigh for balance and the other holding his cock at just the right angle, I slide my mouth up and down his shaft, using my tongue to tease the sensitive underside.

He's one long chorus of groans, a delightful symphony of lust.

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"Oh, fuck. Kitten—" He releases me. "I'm going to come."

It's my turn to moan.

I've dreamed of worshiping his cock. Fantasized about all of it, from start to finish. Many times. Sometimes we're in the shower, in the bed. One time, we were in the forest.

Those fantasies were missing some important details. Like the sting of my scalp when he grips my hair. The earthy scent of him that mingles with the crispness of detergent and deodorant. The way his thick shaft pulses between my lips.

So I suck harder and keep my tongue pressed against his sweet spot. His muscles tense and his head drops back against the tile. "Jes?—"

Part of me wants to do a touch down dance and gloat about making Elliot Rivers lose his cool. But the other half of me, the greedier side, wants to just see how much farther I can push him.

He looks down at me again, gaze soft. "You really like that, don't you?"

I murmur my agreement, but it's completely garbled.

There's a flash of a smile, and then he's sucking in another deep breath. He cups the side of my throat, his thumb stroking down over my pulse point.

"Can't wait to feel you swallow."

Feeling the challenge hovering between us, I take him as deep as I can and the instant he hits the back of my throat, he starts to unleash. Jet after jet of hot jizz hits my tongue and I jerk back, letting the flood fill my mouth. His hand is still on my throat as I swallow.

I wish I could see the look in his eyes, the ecstasy on his face, but I have no doubts because he's still moaning. Lifting my head, I take a deep breath and wipe my mouth with the back of my hand.

"Fuck, Lily."

He breathes hard, that hair-smattered chest heaving as he swipes a hand down his face and then runs it through his hair. I sit back on my heels, pretty pleased with myself. Smug even. He seems...shattered.

Like he wasn't expecting a blow job to be that good. Or maybe he wasn't expecting me to be that good?

"I don't want to know where you learned to do that." His tone is one quarter jealous, one quarter impressed, and fifty percent wonder.

"Oh?"

He pulls me up off the floor.

"It's better I don't think about it."

Hands flat on his chest, his half hard cock between us, I gaze up at him, seeing something I've never noticed on his face before.

Jealousy.

Elliot Rivers isn't a jealous man. Ambitious, sure. Competitive? Don't challenge him to chess if you want to win.

But this...

Why does the raw emotion make me so wet? It shouldn't. Jealousy isn't something I condone.

Reaching over, he turns off the water. Snagging a towel, he dries my skin gently, reverently. I close my eyes, making a memory of this moment. This exact moment when it's cold and snowy outside, but quiet and romantic in here as the walls finally crumble between us.

I should tell him he doesn't have anything to worry about. Or that I've never given a blow job before, so he can put his mind at ease. But I'm enjoying this new broody, silent side where he's singly focused on drying me. Touching me everywhere, lingering, feeling me through the thick towel.

"What are you thinking about?" I ask, keeping my voice soft.

"That I have no right to hate the thought of you with another man."

He really doesn't. But again, I'm not going to tell him that.

"I hate the thought of you with other women."

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He swipes the towel down his face, over his chest, and then those dark eyes lock with mine. My stomach does a somersault.

"Up," he mutters, scooping me up.

I scramble up into his arms, wrapping my legs around his waist, and for a moment, the world stands still. The gravity of the situation thrums heavy in my veins. The taste of him is fresh on my tongue and we're naked.

"You'll never have to worry about that again." His expression is completely serious.

"Promise?" The word comes out softer, more naïve than I intended.

"Cross my heart."

We stare at each other for another beat. His scruff is growing in. And his hair is a little on the long side. Time for a trim. He's got a guy that comes to his office once a month.

I know all these things and yet, it all feels so new. Shakey and wondrous.

I've studied his lips covertly. Now I can stare openly.

I swear he's thinking the same thing because he stares at my lips even though he could be kissing them. And when I grin at him, he smiles back.

Then he's on the move, long legs eating up the space to the spacious bedroom.

"Tell me you want this," he says. "Once I lay you down, I don't think I'll be strong enough to pry myself off of you again."

I tighten my legs, using the leverage to grind myself against his cock. He groans and I smile, feeling light and powerful again. "If you lay me down, I don't know that I'll let you out of that bed for days. We have a lot to make up for."

There's a quick inhale, followed by a hearty groan that sends a tingle across my skin. "You can't say things like that, Lily."

"Why not?" I rake my fingers through his hair, reveling in the ability to touch him.

Is this all a dream? Where I finally get to live out my fantasy? My most forbidden desires?

Emotions flash across his face. A face I know as well as my own. He's got laugh lines, which I love, and that salt and pepper thing going on that makes me swoony.

Confusion, desire, awe, and fierce need flick like changing TV channels through me.

"I'm going to be honest with you?—"

"You'd better?—"

"From here on out?—"

"No more secrets, Elliot. No more half truths. I can't take it."

There's a long pause and in those precious seconds, I feel everything shift. From candy coated fantasy to real and serious. It's wild to be having this conversation while naked, wrapped around him like a horny little koala.

Then again... Maybe this was what was missing before.

There's nowhere to hide right now. There's no sense in denying how hard my nipples are. How wet I am. How much I want him—this—us. And there's no way he could deny the steel hard length currently nestled between my pussy lips like he has no intention of leaving.

"You're getting my hopes up," he murmurs.

"Same."

"I don't deserve you." He tips his forehead against mine.

I give his hair a gentle tug. "I think you do."

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ELLIOT

This whole afternoon has been a concoction of wicked daydream and bizarre nightmare.

I press a kiss against her lips, needing the connection because this conversation is wild. But here we are. Lily in my arms, saying I deserve her.

I want to.

There's a year worth of time and hurt feelings to make up for and mend.

But her husky confession is the best idea I've ever heard. Since the moment I plucked her out of that frigid lake, everything's felt straightforward. Like we're on the right track and there's no getting off. "If you don't want to let me out of bed, how can I resist?"

I take the final step to the big bed and lay her down on the soft quilt. The mattress is high off the ground, putting her pussy at almost the perfect height for my cock. Straightening, I coast my hands down her legs. Her ankles are still locked behind my lower back, holding me to her.

"That's the answer, Lily. I can't resist you anymore. I won't. Maybe I never should have."

She's so sexy, curvy and strong from her years riding horses and working on her father's ranch. Always competing with her brothers. Their faces flash through my

mind.

She brushes the hair off my forehead, a serene and knowing smile hovering on her puffy, well-kissed lips. All thoughts and images leave my mind as I zero in on her. "You can make it up to me."

I kiss my way down to her breasts, sucking each peak to an achy point. "How should I do that?"

I want to hear the words. Want her to tell me what she wants, what she fantasized about.

"Never stop touching me."

I'm halfway to her pussy when she drops that tasty treat. Nipping the skin next to her belly button, I look up at her, meet her warm gaze. "Deal."

I touch her everywhere, filling my hands with her curves. My little Christmas vixen.

"Scoot back," I instruct, following her as she crab crawls up the mattress, making room for me between her thighs. I moan, kissing one knee, then the other. Her legs fall open, welcoming me. And I'm on her in an instant, needing a taste of her sweet little cunt.

She's hot and so wet, a sweetness I never knew existed. One I'll never get enough of. I grind my cock against the quilt, needing relief, but it's not enough. I get the sinking sensation that nothing will ever be enough again—except for Lily. Lily's touch. Her kiss. Her pussy.

I push down the thought of how I could lose my best friend over this. I could lose the family I've built.

"Elliot?" Lily's voice is full of gentle curiosity. It's almost like she can see the change in me. The fork in my road.

I'm choosing her.

Always her.

Holding her gaze for a moment longer, I will her to understand those things. To take them to heart and memorize them. Then I duck my head and nuzzle her mound. Kiss her clit. Then swipe my tongue through her slickness.

She gasps, reaching for a pillow and slams it over her face. With my tongue speared inside her, I shake my head, give a few quick licks and then reach for that stupid pillow.

"I want to hear you, kitten. Every last purr. If I earn them, I get to hear them."

She melts.

Right there atop the mattress. My sweet little kitten goes warm and soft, her knees lifting toward her chest, offering me better access. And because I'm not a total idiot, I take it.

Lapping at her slit, teasing her lips apart, drowning myself in her scent. Sliding a finger deep into her snug heat. God, I can't wait to do the same with my cock. To feel her strangle me.

And when I lift my head, I give her another round of filth because it makes her squirm in the best way. "You taste like heaven. Hope you're enjoying yourself, beautiful, because I want to eat this pussy every night for dessert."

Then I get back to it. Adding another finger and shoving them deep, twisting and turning, learning everything that makes her gasp and moan.

She brushes her fingers through my hair and pleasure ripples down my spine.

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I lock onto my target, loving her, lavishing her with attention until her muscles start to quiver and her thighs clamp around my head.

"Give it to me," I say with my mouth full.

Her hips buck, sliding her clit where she needs it most. Fuck yes. Just like that. Use me, honey.

A groan rumbles from my chest and I swear she can feel it through my lips because she freezes for a split second and then she shatters. A scream, not a word, just husky babble, fills the air. Her cunt clamps down on my fingers, shudders rolling through her like waves crashing against the shore. She whimpers my name and fuck if that doesn't make me feel like the king of the universe.

Her slow, sated smile makes me even harder. What the hell? I'm straining the bounds of my skin, wanting her something desperate. And I swear she knows it. Watches me from her spot against the pillows, hair fanned out, fingers wrapped over the headboard.

I take my needy cock in hand and give it a slow stroke. She watches me with hazy, lust filled eyes.

"Fuck, Lily. Just... Fuck?—"

She shudders. "You're so big," she moans the last word, and my vision blinks out.

"So I can fill you up, kitten."

"Mmm."

"You're going to like that, aren't you?" No more holding back. Now that I know she likes my words almost as much as my touch, I'm going to give her both. Readily.

"Mmmhmm."

"Have I shocked all speech out of you?"

She grins, looking almost delirious. "Yep."

I crawl forward, settling on top of her. Her legs wrap around my hips and lock behind my back. Gods, if the cradle of her thighs isn't the best thing I've ever felt. All this soft warm skin, supple flesh.

"I like seeing you happy."

Which isn't new. But this is different. This is a new sort of happiness. Where her skin wears the gentle scratches of my scruff and her eyes are unfocused because she's out of her mind from the orgasm I gave her.

It takes considerable effort to lay here, when what I want with every breath is to shuttle my dick into her waiting wetness and feel her flesh hug me close. But I also love feeling her like this. Soft and supple beneath me, breathless with anticipation.

We were made for this. Two puzzle pieces a moment away from clicking into place.

"Please— Elliot?—"

"What is it?"

"I need you. Stop teasing me."

"I like teasing us both. Once I give in, there's no going back. You understand that, right?"

There's a soft little whimper that sounds utterly delighted.

She wants this. Me.

"I like the sound of that." But it's clear by the quiver in her voice she more than likes it.

"Yeah? You want me to keep you?" Because I will. I am. "Kiss and lick every inch of you? Eat your needy pussy for breakfast, lunch and dinner?"

Her eyes roll back in her head and she shudders.

9

LILY

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"More than anything," I admit.

I sink the fingers of my left hand into Elliot's hair and curl my right over his shoulder, clamping myself to him. He's not getting away again.

He ducks his head, licking and nipping my neck.

"Anything?" he purrs.

He's going to be the death of me.

It's been a good life. I don't mind dying happy and sated, glowing from orgasms.

Not only do I love—all capital letters, L-O-V-E—love the idea of being naked in his bed every day, my soul feels calm and whole. For maybe the first time ever, every element of my life feels right. Like I'm exactly where I'm supposed to be, and with the person I'm destined to be with.

I answer his question with a nod, so happy I could explode.

Then he reaches between us, swiping his dick back and forth in my wetness, coating himself. I urge him on with my heels, needing this final bit of connection. He pauses, holding steady as a curse tumbles from his lips.

"What's wrong?"

He drops his head next to mine. "What's wrong is I'm not even inside you yet and

you already feel like utopia.”

I run a hand down his back, a husky laugh bubbling up my throat. “That’s not so bad.”

There’s a pause. He inhales like he has terrible news to share. I hold my breath.

“I don’t have condoms,” he says.

Oh. Right.

“I’m clean,” I say. “I haven’t been with anyone since?—”

He kisses me. Hard.

When he lifts his head, he grinds out a handful of words. “Please don’t finish that sentence.”

Smirking, I press a quick kiss against his lips. “I’m protected.”

“I don’t know whether to love or hate that.”

“Oh?” I quip.

“I haven’t been with anyone since my physical a year ago.”

I tighten my legs, pulling him deeper. His brow furrows and when he's finally in, stretching me wide, hips pressed so tightly to mine, we both exhale what can only be a sigh of relief. I've wanted him for so long. Didn't think it'd ever happen. Had given up.

But here we are, with his arms bracketed around me, and my arms and legs wrapped around him like a human pretzel. He lifts his head, staring down at me as he pulls his hips back.

I adore that we communicate without words. It's almost like we read each other's mind.

He bottoms out again and my head tips back as he reaches the most delicious spot inside me. Over and over, he teases that special spot, driving and grinding his cock inside me as if fucking me is his life's purpose.

He pulls out and sits back on his heels, the most indecent sight. "Roll over, kitten."

I do his bidding, getting on all fours. My muscles feel like gelatin.

He shoves a pillow beneath my hips, then trails his hands over my ass. I'm utterly exposed in this position. But there's no time to second guess or feel shy. He's on me like a proud lion, covering my body with his. Wrapping an arm around my middle, he holds me up and pulls me back against his lap. I rotate my hips, rubbing against his erection.

He groans, then nips my shoulder. "And all this time, I thought you were innocent."

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“Me?”

He lets my middle go so he can line his cock up again. “Mhmm.”

I press back, taking him deep. We both sigh again. “Are you saying I’m not innocent?”

“With the way you’re taking my cock right now? No way. Such a good girl, though.”

He goes back to pounding me in earnest. Each thrust fills me to the point of bursting.

It’s my turn to hum my pleasure.

Soon, we’re both crying out, cresting the mountain together.

“So good,” he groans.

My arms give out, but my knees and hips stay locked. All I can do is lay there while happy chemicals saturate my system and Elliot fills me with his cum.

When I wake up from my orgasm induced nap, my phone is on the nightstand and my red coat is draped over the back of a chair in the sitting area. I can't help but grin.

Elliot didn't need a nap, apparently. He's so sweet to go get my stuff. I was so wrapped up in him that I'd completely forgotten about my phone still sitting in the snow on the tripod.

At the foot of the bed, I find a robe and slip it on. It smells faintly of him: hints of fir

and something slightly musky.

Seriously, he's so good to me. Always has been. When I first moved to Seattle and guys from school were only interested in themselves, Elliot proved to be thoughtful, even as his company was exploding.

I find him in the kitchen. He's sliced the loaf of bread I brought and I smell tomato soup.

Drawn to him, I slide my arms around his waist.

"Hey, sleeping beauty."

I make a happy sound and squeeze him tighter. This whole day is straight out of my dreams.

"Hey, handsome."

You'd think I'd be sated after all those orgasms, but lust burns through my veins. I'm afraid he's created a monster. Nipping his nearest shoulder blade, I delight in the way his muscles twitch.

"If you keep that up, I'm going to have you for dinner."

My pussy weeps at the prospect. Seriously, does he know how delicious that sounds? How long I dreamed of this sort of easy going domesticity?

I don't need to look at the clock on the stove to see that it's well after dinnertime. There's an inky darkness outside the windows that tells me just how late it is.

I press tighter to his back and let my hands roam.

"Lily..." He says my name like a warning, but there's underlying humor.

"It's not my fault you smell so good."

"That's the basil," he deadpans.

"Mmm..." I shake my head and press a kiss to the spot I just nibbled. "It's man. Hunky man zest."

He flips the burner off, moves the pot to a cool spot, and turns in my arms. I grin up at his stern expression, need burning through me. My breathing shallows as he wraps his arms around my waist and seals us together.

"Time for my appetizer," he murmurs, dipping his head.

I loop my arms around his neck, fingers in his hair. Stretching up, our lips meet and for a heartbeat, everything goes quiet.

There's no sound, only pleasure. Connection. Rightness.

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Eventually, his groan ends the silence. My pulse is loud in my ears, our breathing growing labored. He swipes at the seam of my lips and I open for him, only too happy for him to stake his claim.

Without severing our kiss, he scoops me up and deposits me on the oversized island.

He grabs the belt of the robe, pulling me forward until my ass teeters at the edge of the solid stone countertop. “Fucking delicious,” he says against my lips.

Then he’s kissing me again. Heat shimmers across my skin. He yanks the robe open, revealing my breasts to the cool air.

Lifting his head, he glances down, his expression so hungry my clit twitches. He’s not aggressive by any standard, but he looks at me and touches me with a possessiveness I never expected. And I love it.

I love how gruff his movements are, as if he’s so wound up, all finesse is gone. He can’t contain himself and he can’t slow down enough to be gentle. I don’t need gentle right now, I just need him.

“You’re perfect. Do you know that?”

“No.”

“You are.” He lowers his head, sucking on one of my aching nipples.

A harsh cry leaves my lips and I cling to him, loving the way he caresses me. There’s

a reverence I wouldn't have expected.

He moves back and forth between them, teasing each nipple until I'm crying out. Needing that last little bit to get me over the edge. And just as I'm about to beg for it, he pulls back and finishes opening the robe.

The counter bites into my ass, but I'm not going anywhere when he's looking at me like that. When he's dropping to his knees, shoving my thighs wide and sealing his mouth over my pussy.

He groans, tongue sliding up and down my slit.

I lay back, cupping my breasts.

He was serious about making me his dinner. Another fantasy come to life.

"Was this on your naughty list?"

"You know it," he says and dives right back in, spearing me with his talented tongue.

Knowing that he probably tastes himself is extra wicked, and clearly he doesn't mind it. He's a broken record of moans as he eats me out.

I pinch down hard on my nipples and the flames licking my skin intensify. Anyone on the side porch could see what's going on in here. The pendants over the island cast us in a spotlight. Just thinking about being watched gives me a rush.

"That's it, honey." Lick. "Give me everything."

He moves his attention to my clit, replacing his tongue with two thick fingers. I whimper at how good it feels. The gentle suction on that tight bud, the way those long

fingers curl and press against my g-spot.

“Come on my tongue, honey. Drown me.”

My orgasm explodes through me. So much pressure. So much heat. Is it possible to come out of your skin? Because it feels like it. It also feels like better than anything ever has.

Elliot pulls back just far enough, just long enough for my breathing to almost return to normal. My pulse, however, continues to thunder in my ears.

“Again.”

My thighs snap closed around his ears as he leans back in, hot breath against my sensitive skin.

“What? No— El?—”

He twists his fingers gently. Flicks my clit with the tip of his tongue, like he’s coaxing her to come play again. And I don’t hate it. His touch is more delicate this time, and I’m already primed.

Flicking my nipples with my thumbs, there’s a corresponding jolt straight to my core. He feels it. Hums around my clit. My eyes roll back because seriously, I shouldn’t be on the precipice of another orgasm. Not this quickly.

“Put your feet on my shoulders, Lily.”

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Oh my.

But I do it. I can't say no to him and my body couldn't say no to this if I tried.

Building tighter, coiling deeper and deeper.

And then I shatter. Right here on the kitchen island, robe gaping open, feet propped on Elliot Rivers' shoulders. I shatter and come back together, reassembling into a woman I don't even recognize.

But I like her. I like this. The new me. Us.

As I lay staring up at the pendants, panting... I can't wait to do that again.

10

ELLIOT

Lily looks gorgeous and adorable, a combination I wouldn't have expected. The red coat, white ski pants, the striped scarf and earmuffs. My god, she's wearing ear muffs.

Kids wear ear muffs.

But she's all woman. Grinning at me from across the large ski room. It's basically a mudroom with lockers for everyone's gear and direct access to the outdoors. In a different setting, it'd connect to the slopes. But here, it meets a freshly shoveled

walkway and the forest beyond.

What's the point of having money if you can't spread the wealth? The local kid, who's actually twenty-three, never minds coming out to plow or shovel for us.

Fuck. He's only two years younger than Lily and I still think of him as a kid.

Closing my eyes, I take a steadying breath and remind myself that she's plenty old enough to decide who and what she wants. It's not my place to feel like a creepy old man.

How has it only been twenty-four hours since I arrived and found her in that sexy Miss Claus outfit? It feels like a year has passed with as much talking and making love as we've accomplished.

"Ready?"

Her voice calls me back and I find her looking at me with an expectant smirk, almost like she's reading my mind.

"Let's do it."

We're on the hunt for a Christmas tree.

Normally, we find a tree on Christmas Eve, but who could say no to her?

Not me.

I already checked on the saw. She made a thermos of hot chocolate and packed a few cookies. From the time she was little, she took care of everyone.

Maybe that's what happens when you grow up in a houseful of men and don't have a mother.

But I don't want her taking care of me. The opposite. Still, I let her fuss over me, all the while, wondering how exactly we're going to make this work.

How are her father and brothers going to take the news that we're together? I know I told her to let me worry about it. And now I'm worrying.

But not for long.

Once the cold air hits me in the face and her gloved fingers lace with mine, I forget all about my worries and focus on her and the elusive just right evergreen.

"It's perfect!" Lily steps back from the tree, admiring her handy work.

It only took a handful of hours to locate, cut, haul, and decorate the tree. Now it stands in front of the large windows in the great room, white lights twinkling. Shimmering ornaments grace its limbs.

I hand her a mug of hot chocolate. "Extra marshmallows."

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She beams up at me. “You’re the best.”

Then she fiddles with a silver ornament, mug in the other hand. Her nails are a cheerful red.

I sip my own cocoa as I cross to the couch facing the window. “This afternoon is straight out of a Christmas movie.”

I can already see the rest of my life unfolding before my eyes. I’m a happy yes-man, keeping his girl happy. Making her happy brings me a ridiculous amount of joy.

“You think?”

She’s still smiling and fuck if I don’t love seeing her smile. It damn near killed me to stifle her interest last year. Never again. This was the longest, loneliest, hardest year of my life and I’ll be happy to never repeat it.

Knowing she was somewhere, pulling away from me, protecting her heart, I’ve been a bear. Especially because I thought there was no hope in overcoming it.

She puts her mug on the end table and climbs on the sofa next to me, arm around my shoulders, legs in my lap. I love that she can’t stop touching me. Now that we’re started, there’s no turning this off.

“You’re perfect,” I murmur, echoing her earlier sentiment. It’s cheesy and I don’t even care.

That's what seeing her on OnlySantas did. It unlocked this side of me and I don't hate it.

"Stop. But don't stop," she says with a laugh.

"Never."

She makes a happy sound, cuddling closer. It's only been a few hours since I last had her, but my cock surges beneath my fly, eager for her again. I try reminding it, and myself, that we don't need to fuck her every hour of every day.

Cuddling like this is amazing, even though I've never been much of a snuggler.

But having her at my side makes relaxing pleasant. Her presence is calming. Soothing.

I've never had this before. Not growing up on the ranch. Not while building my company. Those parts of my life were rough, harder, without much softness.

The wood in the fireplace hisses as it burns. Outside, it's almost completely dark now, snowing hard. But inside, it's warm and cozy, and smells like fir sap and chocolate.

She reaches up and gently presses against the side of my chin. "Sorry, just checking to make sure you're real."

After putting my mug next to hers, I curl a finger around a lock of her hair and give it a tiny tug. "Yep, you're real, too."

Her smile is a little watery, and it hits me that she really had walked away when I told her to. She respected me enough to do the hard thing. The hardest thing of all - push

her feelings down and walk away.

I pull her into my lap, press a kiss to her hair and close my eyes.

She's the perfect mix of strength and softness. Fight and surrender. Determination and acceptance.

And she picked me.

I'm a lucky bastard. And I don't care what dragons I have to fight, I'm not going back. I can't.

She cups my face between her hands, studying me closely. "I don't want to ruin such a perfect moment."

"But?"

"I'm worried what's going to happen when the others show up."

Right. I told her to let me worry about it, but she's a team player.

"Do you want to wait to tell them?"

She shakes her head, eyes widening. "No. No way. Plus, I don't think I can stop touching you that long."

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“Same.” Hell, the idea of flying back to Seattle without her by my side makes the hot chocolate curdle in my stomach. “Why don’t I tell him I’ve met someone? Break the ice, so he’ll be warned when he shows up.”

She slouches in my lap, brain going a hundred miles an hour.

Did I mention she runs our shit?

“What if he asks about your mystery woman?”

“I’ll tell him he’ll learn more when he gets here.”

She purses her lips. I cup her cheek and pull her down for a quick kiss.

“We’ve got this. I’m not going anywhere and neither are you. You’re stuck with me. He’ll just have to deal.”

“What if he’s mad?”

“Then he’s mad. I can’t control him. I wouldn’t want to.”

“I just don’t want anyone to be hurt.”

“Lily, I hurt you last year when I turned you down. Doing that hurt me too. I’ve lived in a hell of my own making. I’m not willing to do that again, not even for my best friend.”

Her smile is even more watery now, but I'm pretty sure those are happy tears.

11

LILY

Is there an equivalent of rage baking for when you're worried? Whatever that is, that's what I'm doing.

Don't worry. I sanitized everything before I set up my little bake shop.

Two days have passed since Elliot stormed back into my life and I got the shock of a lifetime. I'm not talking about the lake, although that was cold as heck, but his heart felt admission.

He's since sent the promised text to my dad, and here I am. Up to my elbows in cookie dough, frosting in my hair.

I'm scheduled to do another live today. Elliot sent his plane for my family, but the snow is keeping everything grounded. Which is saying something about the amount of white stuff on the ground out there.

The mudroom door opens and closes, pulling my attention from the dough beneath my rolling pin. Elliot strides down the hall looking sexy as sin in his thick flannel shirt. He's straight out of my dreams.

"Now I remember why I have Kyle shovel snow. My ass is frozen." He grumbles about the resort keeping Kyle too busy, as if it's not Mother Nature's fault that we woke up to another six inches of snow.

I make a commiserating sound. "Are you a popsicle?"

He slides in behind me, wrapping his arms around my waist and rests his chin on the top of my head. “I am. You gonna warm me up?”

“Did you find any mistletoe?”

He dangles a sprig over my head. With a happy gasp, I turn in his arms and stretch up, pressing my lips to his. He’s icy cold, but not for long. The mistletoe hits the counter behind me and he wraps me up in a hug so tight I never want to escape. He sweeps his tongue along the seam of my lips, begging entrance.

I open for him and he doesn’t waste a second. My body comes alive, lighting up with delight and desire in every place we touch. Moaning, I suck on his tongue. His hands coast down my back, grabbing my ass and hanging on tight.

Every moment we’re not touching is too long and now that we’re chasing away the chill, one minute stretches into the next. And the next.

Only when his phone chimes do we pull apart, breathing hard. It’s my dad’s text tone.

I turn around, keeping my back pressed to his front. “Read it.”

He keeps an arm wrapped around me, hand splayed across my lower belly, as he fishes his phone out of his pocket.

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This morning he texted, telling my dad he'd met someone.

"He says he's glad to hear it, and I quote, 'can't wait to meet her.'"

I reach for the rolling pin, needing to keep my hands busy. "Well, that's gonna be a fun conversation."

He squeezes me. "It'll be fine."

His phone chimes again and we both still. I feel his exhale against my shoulder blades, then a chuckle. "You're not going to believe this, but?—"

There's a pause that stretches on for five years.

"What?" I prod.

"He says he met someone, too."

My jaw drops and I spin, snatching the phone from his hand, reading my father's message. "I tried to get him to find someone, but he always brushed off my concerns saying it wasn't the time. So now's the time?"

Elliot laughs again, wrapping me in his arms.

"Is he bringing her?"

"Ask him."

I type out a message and hit send. Only then does it hit me that I'm writing to my dad on Elliot's phone, while standing in Elliot's arms. Maybe to some people that wouldn't be a big thing, but this is what I longed for. These Hallmark moments.

And of course, the more X-rated moments.

Which reminds me, I'm supposed to be prepping for my live. Elliot wants to watch. It's hard to read him sometimes and while I wholeheartedly believe him when he says wants to see it for himself, there's got to be a difference between seeing and imagining, right?

"What's wrong?"

"Hmm?" I glance up.

"That look. What are you thinking about?"

I stare up into those gorgeous green/gray eyes, my stomach flopping and flipping.

What if he hates that my followers talk to me? They can be racy. Hell, they can be downright crude. Most of the time, the other guys nip that in the bud, because they know I'll only tolerate so much.

Elliot's phone buzzes between my hands. A text from my father appears in a bubble across the top of the screen. He reaches for the phone, wrapping his hand around mine and wordlessly aiming the screen at his face. It unlocks with a soft clicking sound.

It's not lost on me that last year he was on a list of the top-ten most generous billionaires and he's just handing over his phone like it's no big deal. There are probably senator's phone numbers in here.

I mentally shake the awe and trepidation away and read my dad's text.

Colt: Thought about it. But I'm not sure that's a good idea. Especially at Christmas.

I read the text to Elliot.

"What does that even mean?" My brows are sky high as my brain spins in circles like a top, trying to figure out who my dad's mystery woman is.

If he's talking like that, he must really like her. They must be serious. I mean, I get that Elliot and I are serious and that it was super fast. But that—this wasn't the plan. This just happened. A happy accident, as Bob Ross would say.

"Beats me. Should I ask?"

"I mean, if he's getting on a plane tonight..."

He takes the phone from me and steps away. I appreciate the space, even as I miss his touch. I need to focus. Who am I kidding?

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I can't focus.

"How am I supposed to frost these cookies with all this," I wave a hand at his phone, "going on?"

"I'll frost your cookies." His lips pull into a naughty smirk.

"Elliot!"

"Too much?"

I cover my face with my hands, laughing because even as his words shock me, I love that he said them. That he's himself with me, not holding back any more.

"Has he replied?"

"Not yet." He places the phone on the counter, then juts his chin toward the trays of freshly baked sugar cookies. "Can I do anything to help?"

I bite my lip. "Those are for my live..."

He lifts his chin and takes a deep breath. "Right." Then he tips up his wrist and consults his watch.

I'm going to be a nervous wreck. But it'll be okay, right? If Elliot's not okay with this, that'll be a discovery. We'll figure things out from there.

But right now he's glancing between me and the cookies like he's not sure which he wants to snack on.

12

ELLIOT

I'm going to perish before I ever get to taste one of those cookies.

There's a tripod set up on the counter in front of Lily. She said she's always careful about the angles, not showing too much of her face. All they get is her lips, which had the green monster in my chest snarling until I realized I get those gorgeous eyes.

Fuck, I get the entire package.

The whole delicious, curvy, sinfully sweet package. It's a Christmas miracle.

"Oh, I'm sure you'd love my cookies," Lily says to the camera on her tablet. "I'm using my grandmother's recipe."

A dozen teardrop shaped bags are spread out in front of her, full of different colors of frosting. A cheerful green, brilliant red, crisp white, inky black, golden yellow.

She pauses the decorating as she reads the comments scrolling up her screen. Her laugh rolls through the cabin, a husky delight. I shift in the overstuffed chair I pulled up so I could watch the show. Now I'm second guessing that decision because these jeans are not erection friendly.

And I sprouted wood the second she walked out in that little red chemise.

"Of course Miss Claus is a baker," she says with a scoff. "Who else would keep the

elves' tummies full?"

There's a hint of censure in her voice that's laced with sugar. In the five minutes I've been sitting here, I've been impressed with how she leads the conversation. Effortlessly weaving a story, teasing her fans, never revealing too much.

Now she's squirting frosting across the cookies, decorating little Santas and snowmen. A dollop of white frosting misses the cookie, and she wipes it up with her finger, smiling at the camera before lifting it to her lips. But as her tongue stretches out to swipe away the sweetness, she glances past the screen to me.

I close my eyes and fight back a growl because I promised to be on my best behavior. And my best behavior doesn't include growling with need or stalking around the island and pulling her into my arms, knocking the tripod to the ground and ravishing her amongst all that sugar.

"Mmm, this frosting is amazing." Her attention is back on her fans. "Yep, grandma's recipe."

She bends over a cookie, giving a decadent shot of her cleavage, and I almost come out of my chair. The red lace cups her succulent mounds. Her curves threaten to spill out, to show every last secret to the world. How far does she go?

I wasn't sure I wanted all the details earlier and I'm totally second guessing that decision right now.

She straightens, picking up the red piping bag and aiming it at a fresh cookie, and it's back to business. Chatting. Asking questions. Lots of laughter. A hand to her collarbone, distracting every single person watching. She's a fucking tease.

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How did I not know this?

This side of her is temptation personified. She keeps glancing at me, just quick looks, like she's checking in. Her gaze follows my hand where I stroke my cock through my jeans. It's not enough. Not nearly enough.

"I can't resist anymore," she purrs and I swear to all the gods that I almost come. Right here in the kitchen, in my jeans like a randy farm hand. "These smell so good. Sugary with hints of vanilla. So very Christmas."

She picks up the Santa cookie. "I know the frosting needs to dry, but if you don't tell, I won't."

Fuck. Me.

She flashes it to the camera, giving us a quick glimpse of red, white, and tiny black eyes.

Then she lifts it to her lips and takes a bite, moaning. I shove a fist into my mouth and bite down. My pulse fires through my veins, pumping hard. I'm so damned turned on right now.

As she pulls the cookie away, a ribbon of the wet frosting clings to her lip and then drips down over the top of her breast. I shove out of the chair and stalk forward a step. But I stop when her gaze meets mine.

"Oops."

Oops? Did she just oops me? God, she looks so innocent, but there's mischief in those brown eyes.

She gives an exaggerated swipe of her tongue over her top lip, gathering the red frosting, pulling it inside. My cock bobs, eager. Worse. Needy. How is it possible to have this much sex and still want more? To need more?

She moans again. "So good."

After cleaning her bottom lip, she gives a sad smile. "I'm sorry you guys can't taste this. Just use your imagination."

Oh kitten. Their imagination is firing on all cylinders right now, I promise you that.

I grab my cock again, molding my hand around the length, staving off the fire. She's not even touching me and I ache. Heat scorches the back of my neck. Am I sweating? I think I'm sweating.

Her red nail polish flashes beneath the warm overhead lighting. She starts at the end of the string of frosting. Atop her right breast. Then, so slowly it's almost painful, she swipes up the strand of sugar before sucking her finger between her lips.

I close my eyes again because it's too much. Sensory overload. The setting, the twinkling Christmas lights in the corner of my eye, the delicious scents in the air. And her. In the middle of everything, teasing and tempting me.

Doing it so willfully.

And knowing...knowing there are men around the world probably yanking one out because of her. For some reason, I don't care. Which is shocking, because I really wasn't sure how I was going to feel watching her talk to and tease other men.

But she's a natural. Such a people person.

"Mmm...I have a surprise for everyone." My eyes pop open. A scrap of red dangles from her fingertips.

My brain screeches to a halt. Are those her panties?

"You guys liked that little white mask so much last week, I found a red one. Isn't it pretty?"

A mask.Oh. Okay.

I exhale. But my heart continues to thunder like a runaway Thoroughbred.

She takes both sides and presses it to her face, securing a red ribbon behind her head. "It's getting late," she murmurs. "Any final?—"

Her lips curve, and she steps back. "Here you go. The whole outfit."

Pinching the hem of the skirt between her fingers, she flairs it out and does a little twirl. The satiny fabric looks amazingly soft and shimmers in the light. It makes me want to drop to my knees, grab her by the hips and nuzzle her belly.

"I've still got cleanup to do, yes. A Claus's work is never done." She smirks and huffs a little laugh. Leaning forward,toward her tablet, she catches up on the comments, giving everyone another glimpse at the girls.

I grab the edge of the countertop for strength and support.

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“Oh, the back?” She takes a step backward and turns. Glancing over her shoulder, she gathers her hair, draping it to one side. “I love this little bow detail.”

She drags a fingertip over the tiny red bow attached to the shoulder strap. Then she makes a small movement and the strap falls, sliding down her upper arm. “It can be a little loose, though, depending on how I move.”

Facing the camera, the cup caressing her left breast is dangerously low. Can they see how hard her nipples are through the lace?

She likes this. It’s all there in her smile. Power, connection, pleasure.

There’s that laugh again, jangling me out of my reverie. Unable to stop myself, I reach for the button of my jeans. I drag the zipper down slowly. Her attention snaps my way and for the first time since she turned the OnlySantas app on, she falters.

Those perfect breasts lift on a shuddering sigh and her left breast escapes the confines. Just her nipple, but it’s out. It’s hard and pink and pointed right at me. My mouth waters and I imagine sucking it between my lips. Thrashing that needy tip with my tongue until she cries out and wraps around me like a starfish.

I swear she’s thinking the same thing because for endless seconds she’s completely still except for the rise and fall of her chest.

Then she licks her lips and returns her attention to the comments.

“Do you have any fun Christmas traditions?”

She leans back against the counter next to the stove and I pull my cock out. Her attention is divided now. Me stroking myself, trying to remain silent as possible. Those guys lusting after my girl, probably answering her so eagerly.

Her lips turn down. “Ahh, yeah, that’s hard. I’m sorry.”

As she speaks, her hands move across her body. Skimming lightly. Teasing the cup of the chemise down further. But it feels accidental. And yet, I know it’s purposeful. She’s giving them a show. Making them want to see everything.

It’s fucking brilliant.

“I’m glad you’re here.”

Is she talking to me?

No. She’s still reading the screen, her expression changing with each word she reads.

But damn, she sounds like she’s talking to me and when her gaze meets mine ever so briefly, I realize she is. She’s talking to them too, but she’s talking to me. She’s letting me see this side of her, into the vivacious sexy woman who’s found a way to entertain and capitalize on all of it.

The story telling, the teasing, the conversation. I never guessed at this creative side of her.

“Oh, that sounds lovely. I might steal that idea.” A little laugh rings in the air. “Hope that’s okay. Aww, thank you. That’s so sweet.”

She answers questions and asks everyone what their favorite cookie is. The whole time, I stroke myself, just enough to ease the ache.

LILY

It's official.

I feel more alive than ever when I'm in front of the camera and Elliot. First with him silently watching me from his chair, and then how he bolted out of it. Now he's stroking that magnificent cock, teasing me. Making me want him.

I don't think my viewers know he's behind the camera, watching me with a scorching gaze. And that secret feels extra delicious.

Planting my hands on the counter behind me, I give myself a little boost. The surface gives the lake water a run for its money. Crossing my legs, I settle a hand on my knee, drawing their attention to the lacy hem.

With the font size on my tablet turned up to max, I can just make out the comments.

HotForClaus99: r u ready for christmas?

This is part of the game. Keeping up the steady stream of chatter while teasing and tempting them.

My tone is husky when I answer. "Almost. I have one more gift to wrap for a special someone."

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And by gift, I mean me. But they don't need to know that.

SeattleNeil: don't you mean unwrap?laughing emoji

My lips twitch as I pull my hand up my thigh, dragging the sheer material north. Closing my eyes, I imagine that it's Elliot touching me. A soft caress that makes me wet with need.

But then, rougher as he grows impatient. I slide a hand up to my breast, kneading it, swiping a thumb across the aching peak. My moan is loud in the silent room.

Shoving my hand between my thighs, I slide a finger down the center of my satin panties. The slight friction is such a fucking tease. Pressure but no real pleasure. But I continue stroking myself because I like the stimulation.

I lose myself for a minute, until my panties are soaked and need coils tight in my muscles. Only then do I open my eyes, immediately seeking out Elliot. There's a bottle of olive oil on the counter next to him. I didn't even hear him reach for it. But his cock glistens as he fucks his fist.

Spreading my thighs, I match his speed, imagining my finger was that magnificent length gliding over my pussy lips, brushing my clit.

When I can't take the teasing any longer, I yank the crotch of my panties to the side, tip my pelvis and shove two fingers into my pussy. I'm obscenely wet. Will the camera pick that up?

I glance at my tablet and skim the comments.

MisterNorthPole01: so hot

NickTheMixer69: come for us Miss C!!!

TorontoGuy_: I wish she'd cover herself in frosting.

KingChristmasMo: I'll cover her in frosting

There's only one man I want to cover me in his frosting, and he's standing five feet away. Phantom flames lick over my skin and I pick up the pace, urgency pumping through my veins. I'm ready to end this live.

Circling my clit with my middle finger, my muscles convulse as I hit just the right spot. "This feels so good."

TorontoGuy_: look how wet she is

I glance past the screen. Elliot slows his hand to long, languorous strokes. Which is the opposite of me. I'm racing toward climax as fast as my finger can go, no longer caring about the performance or the shot, the lighting, nothing. Only coming. Letting Elliot see what he does to me. What I do when I think about him.

My orgasm crashes into me and my muscles go so tight I start to slip off the counter. This isn't the ending I wanted, but I'll take it. Smirking at the camera, I give them my naughtiest "Merry Christmas to me."

Then I make a quick show of tucking my tit back in the cup, righting the bustier. "Thanks for helping me make Christmas cookies. I'm off to wrap that package. See you next time."

Tapping the stop button, I sag against the counter, the remnants of my orgasm tingling through my veins. But since I never quite trust that I've managed to stop the live feed, I put the tablet face down, tripod and all.

Then Elliot's behind me, his hands on either side of me bracing against the countertop. "That was so fucking hot, Miss Claus."

Pleasure purrs through me at the nickname. He's playing along and I couldn't be more thrilled. I'm such a slut for Christmas.

"Glad you enjoyed it."

His cock slides up the slippery fabric, grinding against my ass. There's a deep ache between my thighs. The kind that makes me want to spread my legs and shove a big toy inside and ride it until I'm a sweaty mess.

Luckily, I don't need a toy anymore. Oh, I'll keep them around. Elliot travels a fair amount.

"I more than enjoyed it." He sweeps my hair to the side. "You're so creative. Poised. Sexy."

His voice gets deeper with each word and there's a reciprocal heaviness beneath my breastbone. He trails kisses over my shoulder, sending a shudder through me. The sensation that books talk about? Weak knees? I totally get it now.

"Did you enjoy yourself?" he asks. "It looked like you did."

Those big hands slide up my torso and close over my breasts. I don't care that they're oil slicked and probably ruining this outfit. He can buy me a thousand more.

Yanking the cups down, my breasts pop free and he tweaks my nipples until I'm a moaning mess.

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“So those sounds were real,” he murmurs. “You like performing, don’t you? Getting strangers off. Making them want you. Makingmewant you.”

His voice is deeper than before, hard with frustration. My core clenches around nothing and I whimper as I nod. He picks up the white frosting bag and aims it at my right breast.

I gasp when the sweet glob hits my nipple.

“God, I can’t wait to make a mess of you, Lily. Just like you’ve made a mess of me.”

He decorates my other breast, then tosses the bag aside before his thumbs sweep through the frosting, smearing it over my skin. I press myself into his hands, needing a firmer touch. As much fun as I have in front of the camera, it’ll never be as good as when he plays with me.

Uncaring of his sticky hands, he grabs my hips and turns me, eyes narrowing in on my sugar-coated nipples.

“You’re too good to be true, Lily. A fantasy come to life.”

“I am to please.”

“I’m kicking myself,” he murmurs as he bends over me, hand boosting my right boob.

“Why?” I reach for his cock.

“I could have had this for the last year, but I was too stupid to see what you were offering.”

I give him a firm stroke just as he latches onto my nipple. He sucks hard and I whimper, knees giving. He holds me up, pins me in place, and doesn't stop thrashing me with that talented tongue until I'm clean of frosting.

“You think I was offering this last year?”

He switches breasts. “Weren't you?”

I close my eyes. He knows me so well. But I like to keep him on his toes. “Perhaps.”

“Minx!”

His lashes flare with challenge and all softness leaves him. He spins me around again, pressing me tight to the hard countertop. My hands land on my cookies, crushing them. Frosting oozes between my fingers.

“You can play hard to get, Lily, but you've already agreed you're mine.”

Gosh, I love sassing him. His hands are rough, positioning me exactly how he wants me: ass up, head down.

He yanks my panties down, leaving them stretched between my knees. Then he gives my ass a little slap.

“Say it.”

“Hmm?” I know what he wants. Not giving it to him makes me so fucking wet.

He kneels behind me, shoving the chemise up my hips and pulls my hips back until I'm spread for him. Cool air caresses my most heated skin. He spans me again and I yelp, the sting hot and pleasurable. My nipples are impossibly tight against the cold granite.

"Tell me you're mine and I'll give you what you want."

"Oh—" I wave my ass in his face.

He traces my slit with the tip of his finger before dipping inside. The tease. He doesn't give me more than a knuckle's worth.

"Elliot—"

"Lily—"

He laughs at my grumble and seals his mouth over my pussy.

"Oh! Yes?—"

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I stare at the face-down tablet. Would I ever do this on camera? Gosh, right now, I would. I'd let him do anything because the man knows how to eat pussy and that's maybe the best surprise I've ever gotten.

The way he hums around my clit has me vibrating.

“Is this what you want, kitten? To come in my mouth again? All over my face?”

“Mhmm!”

He slaps my left ass cheek again. “Say it.”

“Say what?” I tease.

He launches to his feet. “Tell me you want this?—”

“I want this.”

“You've got me wound so tight.”

“I can help with that.” I press my hips tight to his, that thick cock snuggled between my cheeks.

He barks out a curse, and then he's filling me. One hard shove and he's all the way inside, balls deep. The cookies turn to crumbs beneath my hands.

“Oh god.”

“Fuck—” He pulls back until just the tip is snug in my entrance. “Just—fuck.”

Then he thrusts deep again. Hard. Harder. His hips slapping mine in the perfect rhythm.

“Elliot!”

His hips crashing me against the edge of the countertop hurts in the best possible way. I’m going to remember this for days. A lifetime really, but I’ll feel the effects till the New Year.

He gathers my hair in his fist and pulls my head back. “Say it.”

“I’ve never come like this.”

His hips stall as he absorbs my words. “Like what? With just a cock?”

“Mhmm.”

He finds the rhythm again, his hand gentling in my hair. Blessedly, it takes no time at all for him to hit that special spot again and send me soaring. He curls over my back, groaning as he lets loose, thick hot jets coating my pussy.

We lay in the aftermath, surrounded in the destruction we created, chests heaving. I have no doubt he was planning on making me say those two words before letting me come, but it’s too late now. Lips twitching, I grab a chunk of cookie and nibble it. The frosting’s only partially set up and the sweetness explodes over my tongue.

“I’m yours, Elliot. And you’re mine.”

ELLIOT

It's nice to know that even after all the years I've lived in the city, I haven't lost my touch with the fireplace. Flames lick the logs I just added. There's a soft hiss, a little crackle, and a blooming heat. I put the tools back in their holder, then lift my hands to the fire for a few moments.

Lily has the TV in the den cranked with Christmas tunes. I find her singing along in the kitchen. "Smells amazing in here."

Like brown sugar glaze, evergreen and gingerbread. Maybe it's my new rose-colored glasses, but the cabin has never looked better.

She pops a sugar-coated candy in her mouth and smiles across the island. My heart squeezes in my chest.

"I was just thinking the same thing," she says with a smile.

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Tiny snowflakes flutter by the window and while we're no longer snowed in, it feels cozy.

"Colt said he and the boys are on their way," I tell her. I offered to pick them up at the airport but I haven't heard back yet.

My nerves are surprisingly settled because there's nothing I wouldn't do for this woman. Like she said yesterday, she's mine and I'm hers and that's how it is now. That's how it's going to be.

Mostly, I'm eager to learn about the mystery woman he's seeing.

That's news to me. He hasn't dated anyone in years. Says he doesn't have time to, which is only partly true, especially now that the boys are grown and helping around the ranch.

"Okay," she murmurs, back to gluing the walls of the gingerbread house together with a thick white paste.

I circle the island and wrap my arms around her middle. "You don't sound excited. Are you worried?"

"A little."

"Don't be."

"How can I not be? What if he's mad and you guys fight? I don't want to cause a

rift.”

“If he’s mad, I’ll handle it.” Gently, I take the bag of frosting from her and set it to the side. “Look at me, Lily.”

She turns immediately.

“I can’t promise you that it’ll be smooth sailing, but I can promise we’ll get through it together. Nothing could change my mind about us. Because we’re,” I wave a finger back and forth between us, “an us from now on.”

She slides her hands up my chest and nods. “You’re right. I know all that. I just?—”

I duck my head to meet her eyes. “You what?”

“This feels fast and I don’t want you to ever regret—” she waves her hand at herself.

I grunt a laugh. “Never happen.”

“How can you be so sure?”

“Let’s look at the facts. I’ve never been interested in settling down before. And I’ve been thinking about you every day for the last year, wasting away from my own asinine reluctance. If anything, I’m worried you’ll regret being with me.”

Her brows lift as her jaw drops. “What? Why?”

“I’m older, for starters?—”

“Not that much older,” she contradicts. But we both know the math.

“I’m on the verge of needing reading glasses,” I tease.

“That is old.” She gives my nose a playful tap that makes me grin.

“Thanks. My life is busy and my time isn’t always my own. The tech news probably won’t care about our relationship, but the regular media might. Especially once they learn about...”

She nods and takes a deep breath. “I don’t care about that.”

“I don’t either. We know the truth.”

“That I’m crazy about you? You bet.”

The brown of her eyes is warm, alight with love, and happy crinkles frame them. I hope we can always find ourselves back to this sort of happiness, where the world doesn’t matter as long as we’re together.

“And I’m crazy about you.”

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We stare at each other for a long, charged moment. “Okay,” she says again, giving a decisive nod. “That’s settled.”

“That you’re stuck with me? You bet your favorite Miss Claus costume.” I drop a chaste kiss on her lips. I’d love to go farther, but I don’t want to mess up her red lipstick.

She reaches up and wipes my lips with her thumb.

And that’s when I see movement in the corner of my eye. Adrenaline zings through my veins as I turn my head toward the foyer.

Colt stands there, a frown firmly in place.

We obviously didn’t hear anyone arrive over the ruckus rendition of I Saw Mommy Kissing Santa Claus. But the way his gaze pings between me and Lily tells me he saw me kissing Miss Claus.

Lily’s younger brothers pile into the room. “Tree looks great, Lils. Hey El,” Jace says, oblivious as usual.

“We brought that toffee you love,” Ryder adds, glancing around, clearly picking up on the undercurrent.

A pixie blond steps around Colt, arms full of festively decorated packages.

“Emily?” Lily exclaims, pushing at my chest because I have her pinned to the

counter.

Thank fuck we have our clothes on.

“Elliot. A word.” Colt nods toward the hall.

“What are you doing here?” Lily asks, ignoring her father’s demand. She scoots out of my arms and circles the island.

When I give the other woman a second glance, I recognize her as Lily’s childhood friend. They used to ride horses after school and give their brothers a run for their money.

The two of them embrace, fussing over hair and outfits.

“It’s so good to see you,” Emily murmurs.

As I recall, she was perfectly happy with small town and ranch life. Lily, on the other hand, embraced city living.

Colt’s oldest, Maddox, barges in with a cooler. The boys waste no time and start making a dent in Lily’s cookie tower. The boisterous conversation is louder than the Christmas carols now. Out comes the egg nog, and the celebration is on.

But Colt and I need to talk if there’s any hope of a peaceful holiday.

I squeeze Lily’s shoulder as I pass, a gesture that doesn’t go unnoticed by her father. Colt follows me down the hall to the study, a room he calls ‘Elliot’s domain.’ Lily decorated the mantel of the small fireplace with bows of greenery and strands of red and silver beads.

As I'm shutting the door behind him, I hear Lily yell "you what?"

My instincts scream for me to go to her, but I have a feeling I know what she's surprised about. Emily is Colt's woman.

Lily's childhood best friend is Colt's girlfriend.

He glances at me, then at the gap in the doorway, as if he too is debating if he should race back to the kitchen. But all is calm and quiet.

"It seems we both have some surprising news," I hedge as I finish closing the door.

He pauses at the center of the rug and grunts, which is an answer of sorts. I'm under no illusion that this will be easy or that I'll even be able to count him as a friend once we leave this room.

But I'm ready for those eventualities. If he needs me to, I can buy him out of his part of the cabin. I want to hold on to the place where Lily and I found each other.

"You and Emily?" I ask, making sure to keep my surprise in check.

The thick jacket stretches across his shoulders as he crosses his arms over his chest. "Yeah."

Colt is four years older than I am, so the age gap is even bigger between him and Emily. Now I understand his hesitation to tell Lily. Especially considering they were once close.

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“I’d love to hear how that came about. But I’m sure you’ve got more immediate questions.”

This time, he sighs and shoves a hand into his hair. “I don’t know where to start.” Anger and confusion lace each word.

And I get it. In a perfect world, we could have broken the news more gently. Maybe gathered in the den.

But somehow, they made up time, and he saw me kiss his daughter.

“Let’s start with the fact that I adore her. She’s smart and sassy and funny and she doesn’t take shit from anyone, especially me.”

He tips his chin up, staring at me with brown eyes that see so much. “Keep talking.”

“You know she comes to my company Christmas party.”

He nods.

“Last year, she told me she had a crush on me. That she’d never liked anyone else the way she liked me. I shut her down and told her we couldn’t be together like that. That I didn’t look at her like that.”

“You better fucking not have, Rivers.”

The threat sounds so similar to my dad’s that anxiety spikes through me. My spine

straightens. “Well, I spent the year thinking of nothing else. How she is everything I’d ever looked for and never found. It’s like my algorithm got tweaked, so I saw her in everything I did, wondering what she was up to. Because she respected my decision. She backed off, and I didn’t see her at all this year. Not once. And I missed her. I’m never living like that again, Colt. You can’t ask me to. I won’t. When I saw Lily arrive here earlier than expected, I followed her. She showed me how much the rejection hurt her, and I regret that so damn much. So now she’s mine, and I’m hers. I’m not apologizing, and I’m not asking for permission.”

The fire crackles as he stares me down. Then he nods, glancing down at the thick area rug as if it holds the answer to some cosmic question. His hands drop to his hips and after several long moments, he nods again and meets my gaze.

“You always were two peas in a pod.” He stretches out a hand. “Welcome to the family, I guess.”

15

LILY

I rub a finger between my eyes and Elliot immediately cuddles me closer.

“Everything okay?”

It’s late. Christmas dinner is done. Presents unwrapped, paper and bows are in the trash can. Everything is clean and tidy and tomorrow, the guys are going to hit the slopes so everyone went to bed early. Elliot and I are curled up on the sofa in his room, enjoying some quiet time.

“I love my family, but they can be a bit loud.”

His laugh rumbles through me. “You work with dogs all day. How are you not used to chaos?”

I shrug. “Dogs are different.”

“I’m surprised you don’t have half a dozen of your own.”

“I will. Just as soon as I start my business. I want to feel settled,” I say. Speaking of settled... “I can’t believe my dad and Emily are together. Did not have that on my bingo card.”

Now that I’ve had a full twenty-four hours to digest that surprise, I get it. She’s good for him. Caring but doesn’t take his shit. He’s been set in his ways since I was little, but I see him bend for her.

“Yeah.”

I turn in Elliot’s arms, kneeling next to him and slide my hands up his chest. He tugs me closer and I throw a leg over his lap. I gasp at his hardness.

“Sorry. Can’t help it,” he grouses and I immediately press my lips to his.

“Never apologize for wanting me.” I roll my hips against his hard length.

“Fuck yes. I’ve needed this all day.”

He doesn’t even have to ask, just strips me out of my chunky, cable knit sweater. His groan sets my nerves aflame. “I finally get to unwrap my present,” he rumbles and I smile.

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“Ditto.”

His lips tug into a lusty smirk and he leans forward just enough to strip his own sweater off. Then his t-shirt. When he lays back against the corner of the sofa, he’s bare chested and glorious.

I give his left pec a nip. “You just unwrapped my present, sir.”

“You can unwrap the rest. I won’t stop you.”

So I do. Off with his jeans and mine. When we’re both fully naked, he pulls me back into his lap, lining that gorgeous cock up with my pussy. Tomorrow doesn’t matter when we’re locked in this moment together, hands roaming, lips locked. His breath is mine and mine is his.

I grind myself against his lap, soaking up his heat at the same time. He squeezes my ass, encouraging me to keep up the rhythm with my hips.

“So naughty,” I tease.

“You’re at the top of my naughty list, kitten. Do your worst.”

Gah, I love that. Being at the top of his list. His naughty list, at that.

Reaching down as I lift up, I guide the tip of his erection through my slickness. We’re both holding our breath as I slide downward. It’s still not an easy stretch, despite the zillion times we’ve done this in the last five days. The pressure builds and I bite my

lip.

He moans, cupping my cheek with one hand while keeping the other firmly locked over my hip, almost like he's afraid I'll change my mind. But that'll never happen. Not when he loves me like this. Not when he's so easy to be with and thoughtful.

“That’s it Lily. Take all of me. Every last inch.”

Hands on his shoulders, I slide down the last little bit. We exhale at the same time, then grin at each other like two love struck fools. I guess we are. And I love it.

Pressing against him, I let the hard points of my nipples brush his chest. He sucks in a sharp breath, hands locking around my ass. Sealing my lips to his, I make out with my billionaire geek like it's our first and last kiss. And then, when I lift my hips and that long, hard cock teases all my most sensitive areas, I nip his lower lip.

“Fuck,” he utters. “Such a good girl.”

His praise is like a silky blanket, warm and soft, filling me with happiness. Just like his cock.

I nibble my way to his ear, not missing a thrust. I'm chasing the high I've only felt with him inside me. Deliciously naughty.

“Hold on,” he grunts and then topples us to the side before tucking me beneath him. My legs lock behind his back, as if that's where they've always belonged. “Fuck yes, kitten. Just like that.”

He drills into me, harder and faster with each stroke until I explode. He lifts his head, groaning, muscles tight. I sink my nails into his shoulders, holding on as the pleasure rolls through me in waves. Building and building, a tsunami of sensation.

“That’s it, kitten. Mark me. Claim me just like I’m claiming your pretty little pussy.”

His naughty words send a ripple of delight from my brain, straight to my core, which he can apparently feel if his animalistic groan is any indication.

Dropping down, he curls his hands beneath my shoulders and gives a few more pumps, sliding easier now that I’m filled with his cum. “You like it when I talk about your sweet pussy, don’t you? You want me to fill it up every night?”

I hum an agreement. “Every day.”

“Every day. Every night. You’re going to be so sick of me.”

“I highly doubt that,” I say, pulling him down for a kiss that’s teasing and full of promise. I’m pretty sure I’ll get sick of sugar cookies before I get sick of Elliot.

16

LILY

Three years later

Elliot’s chuckle is dark and rich in my ear. I smack his shoulder, smiling.

“Shh...”

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“Hmm...see, that’s the beauty of this house, kitten. Emily and your dad are on the opposite side of the cabin. There’s no chance our little monster can hear us from his sleepover in Grandpa Colt’s rooms. Now, if you don’t mind, I have important business with Mrs. Claus.”

I grin like a Cheshire cat every time he reminds me that I’m now his wife. That I gave up my singleness almost two and a half years ago. These days, he’s my number one fan since I no longer have an OnlySantas account. That suits both of us, but I still like to put on the occasional show and he’s only too happy to watch.

Sometimes we sneak out here to the cabin and recreate that first livestream. And just like that time, when I’m done, he claims his cam girl.

“Important business?”

The cabin is quiet because it’s Christmas Eve. My menagerie of dogs are tucked in their beds near the fireplace. Upstairs, my brothers are squared away in their rooms. Our son, Easton, has his grandfather wrapped around his pudgy one-year-old finger. I’ve never seen my dad so...mellow. It’s like he’s a different person these days. Softer, gentler. Plenty of that is thanks to Emily. But a large dose is the little brown-eyed boy who he takes everywhere. Riding horses, playing with the barn kittens.

Easton spends the night with Grandpa Colt and GG Emily every chance he gets. Which is a lot, now that Elliot and I have built a house up the hill from the home where I grew up.

We divide our time between there and the city. One of these days, I’ll actually open

my doggy day spa. But I've been too busy using Elliot's connections and money helping homeless animals around the world. He's only too happy about it, since I'm always with him and whatever makes me happy, makes him happy.

With promises of Santa and presents, everyone is on their best behavior. Except my husband.

“Mhmm. I think it's time to put another baby inside you.” He splays a massive hand over my lower belly, a mischievous grin tugging his lips. “And by my calendar?—”

Of course, my computer geek of a husband tracks my cycle.

Shaking my head, I huff a laugh. “Stop talking and get to work, handsome.”

“My pleasure, Mrs. Claus. My absolute pleasure.”