



# 'After': Close to Home: MM Romance Novella Short Story

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**Category:** LGBT+

**Description:** 'After' is a three part snapshot of scenes from Luca and Thorn's life together and a look at the way they grow together.

Close to Home is set four months after Afterglow and focuses on the first time Luca visits Thorn's flat.

'After' is the sequel to Afterglow, and the books must be read in order to fully enjoy each one. Any other books in the Trick of the Light series can be read as standalones. It is an MM novella containing explicit scenes and is recommended for readers 18+

**Total Pages (Source):** 4

# Page 1

*Source Creation Date: July 18, 2025, 3:08 pm*

My fingers slip and the egg falls into the metal mixing bowl, the shell shattering as it hits the bottom. I purse my lips, another flare of nerves rushing through me as I stare at the shell swimming in the yellow pool.

It's alright, it's only the third egg in the bowl.

I bought twenty-four just in case.

Pushing a quick breath out through my nose, I try to contain myself as I take the bowl to the sink and wash it out.

I've cleaned every room in my flat twice, changed bedding, blankets, even the rugs. Mopped, dusted, rearranged my bookshelves, even reorganised my pantry in a burst of anxiety yesterday. I began preparing the food at four thirty, so it will be ready in plenty of time before Luca arrives at six. Though it still feels as if it isn't enough. I want everything to be perfect for him.

I've hidden anything embarrassing, such as the A3 poster I have of us from our Calvin Klein shoot in my bedroom, and the candid shot from a year ago of him laughing on a beach on Instagram I love so much I printed it out and put it on the side table in my living room.

My clothes are laid out on my bed - I'll get changed at half five. I've put the plates, knives and forks in order and readied them in the centre of the dining table - I'll heat the plates and set them out properly after Luca is here. I've spent hours making a playlist of Lucas favourite songs - already downloaded to my phone in case he wants to listen to music. It doesn't surprise me that he likes fast and messy music, and there

are softer songs I can put on in the background that will hopefully create a relaxing mood.

I'm sure I've covered everything, but it doesn't stop the shake of my hands, or the tight anticipation that's been humming in my chest since I invited him to my flat two days ago when he came back to London.

Luca is booked with shoots for six months across Europe and Asia, and it gets harder each time he leaves. But this is the lifestyle we chose. Apart from the three day Versace shoot with Hayden last month in Tuscany, I've stayed in London for work.

I've spent a week preparing for this, running through every possible scenario in my mind, though I never get it right. Luca always surprises me, and he makes everything so much better than I originally planned.

Taking the bowl back to the counter beside the fridge, I scan the kitchen in case I've missed anything. I just hope he likes the warm palate of my flat. I enjoy muted tones, and I've painted my kitchen in a light yellow that matches the white fridge and surfaces. Luca prefers bright splashes of colour which occasionally feel as if they are shouting at me, depending on my state. I sigh happily at the bowl as I remember how, since I've told him, he always asks me what I'd prefer before we meet.

Smiling softly, I reach for the first carton of eggs to start again.

I really am so lucky.

The only person I allow in my flat is my dad, and that's on very rare occasions, such as birthdays or Christmas. But I'm ready for this.

Technically, Luca and I only said we liked each other four months ago. It's occasionally overwhelming that someone as wild as him wants to be in a relationship

with someone like me. I never knew the Luca who used to bully and tease me on shoots would also turn out to be so soft and gentle.

I roll back my shoulders, steadying myself before cracking the egg on the side of the bowl one-handed. A quick glance at the clock above the door while I whisk the new mixture tells me I still have an hour. I don't need to worry so much. There's plenty of time.

Though I have to make sure there are no mistakes.

For years I've been dreaming of ways to entice Luca to me, spending hours planning how to show him how I feel. As soon as I found out we'd be on a shoot together, I would craft meticulous schemes about conversations we could have, ways to flirt with him, even ask him out to dinner. But they all involved actually talking to him, and that's where I fell short.

Cooking for him in my flat has been steadily climbing up the list since our Calvin Klein shoot, and we're finally here.

I just hope he won't be disappointed when he arrives.

## Page 2

*Source Creation Date: July 18, 2025, 3:08 pm*

I checked the address on my phone twice before I ordered a taxi.

Though, really, I didn't expect Thorn to whip this out four months in. I mean, obviously I'm going to leap at the chance to visit my boyfriend's flat. Though, considering it took him a month to tell me he wore contacts, I'm fucking over the moon that he's invited me.

We text back and forth, but it's never the same as actually seeing my boyfriend blush whenever I tell him how fuckable he looks every single moment I'm with him.

I haven't been able to think about anything else all day, especially because he made the effort to come and meet me at my hotel room last night, fumbling around for half an hour before he finally went bright red and asked me to come over.

I've got no idea what we're doing. My boyfriend hasn't said he's planned anything, so I'm going in totally blind and it's seriously exciting.

I was in Thailand for two weeks on a shoot and finally got back last night. It's really fucking difficult being away from him. I've told my agent I'm not doing overseas shoots anymore unless Thorn comes with me. But he doesn't like travelling, and he's booked up until Christmas, anyway.

To be honest, I think he likes the space and he's too polite to say it. I'm the one who can't stand being away from him. I just want to meld myself to him so we're never apart.

Even though I'm sure I'm going to piss my boyfriend off by turning up half an hour

early, Im too excited to stay away. I did text him, but he hasn't replied.

Im considering waiting outside for half an hour, so I don't unnerve him, but I'm too desperate to see my boyfriend's flat.

Im so fucking addicted to the word 'boyfriend', though. I literally want to buy him a name tag that says 'Luca's boyfriend' so every single bastard knows how special he is to me.

After all the buildup of getting to his place, I didnt think Id crumple at the first hurdle. Because theres a wreath on his front door. A braided wooden wreath hanging bold against the dark green wood with a tiny yellow bird perched on the bottom. And it's peering at me like Thorn does every time I go down on him, wide-eyed, as if he can't believe it's happening to him.

I can tell this is going to be a struggle.

Taking a deep breath, I knock, a gentle rap which echoes out in the cosily lit hallway around me.

He's told me nothing about his place apart from his address, so Im just staring at this wreath, trying not to freak out over the fact my boyfriend is so fucking cute. And I haven't even stepped through the front door.

Im grinning by the time the lock clicks. The door opens a crack, but not enough for me to see him.

"You came early," he says flatly.

"Yeah, is that alright? I sent you a text. Did you get it? I can always hang out here for half an hour if you want?" I'm slipping into rambling territory already.

“No, I got the text...” There’s a stupidly long pause and before he replies. “It’s okay...”

It really doesn’t sound okay. The door opens further, revealing his dark hair as he straightens up and the gap widens. I shift my weight from foot to foot, so close to just shoving the door open so I can leap inside.

When the gap finally opens, the sight of him hits me so hard I nearly fall over.

“You’re-” I choke, swallowing my amazement as my gaze zeroes in on Thorn’s face. “You’re wearing glasses.” I say, my voice quivering as my bottom lip drops at the pure gorgeousness that is my boyfriend.

Im not even through the door and hes already swept me off my feet.

“Oh, I’m sorry.” Thorn jerks as he quickly lifts a hand to his cheek. He gets that panicked look on his face when he thinks Im upset, but its so fucking far from the truth I cant believe it even crosses his mind. I literally care about nothing else right now than seeing thick-rimmed glasses riding the bridge of his long nose.

Until he steps back, opening the door fully, and I gasp. My hand shoots out, slamming against the door frame to hold myself up as I take in the fucking glory of Thorn in an apron. Not just an apron, a black apron emblazoned with a white cartoon kitten surrounded by pink love hearts.

My other hand clamps into a tight ball as I suck down my need to leap on him. I told myself we’d at least eat before we fucked, but holy shit, I don’t know how Im going to hold back when he looks like this.

Every time we meet up, hes always dressed immaculately. Designer brands and styled hair, and he has a super intense obsession with moisturiser. Whenever we stay at a

hotel, he spends at least half an hour making sure he looks like a ‘real’ model before we leave. It’s so rare for him to be dressed casually that I’m straight up panting over him like a dog.

“I didnt have time to change.” Thorns throat bobs as his gaze slides from mine. “Do you mind waiting?”

“Not a fucking chance,” I say, mooning over all six-feet-five of him. Black sweats, a grey T and bare feet, topped off with his cute-ass apron hugging his thick hips. Yeah, hes only getting out of those clothes when I rip them off.

His eyes widen in surprise, and I bite the inside of my cheek as I realise Ive come on too strong. I need to calm the fuck down.

“Thorn, baby, you look so fucking sexy right now. Honestly, you know how much I love seeing you all ruffled up.” Though it was usually either during or after sex. “Now, come on, are you going to invite me in?”

He bites his bottom lip, and I nearly moan. Shy Thorn is one thing. Shy Thorn in an apron and glasses is on a whole other level.

“So, would...” He clears his throat, pink scattering his cheeks as he shuffles from one foot to the other. “Would you like to come in?”

Of course I fucking would. Why does he think I’d come?

“That would be great, yeah,” I say instead, lightening my smile, hoping I dont look like a lunatic. My eye is already starting to twitch.

Thorn disappears behind the door as he steps aside, letting me pass. I come to a sudden stop the moment I stand next to him, chest tight, my clenched fist growing



numb as my nails dig into my palm and I try to fucking breathe.

I've always wanted to know what kind of place Thorn lived in. Before our Calvin Klein shoot, I used to think he had no taste, that he probably lived in a beige box with beige furniture, beige pictures hanging on the wall and fucking beige clothes. My idea's changed now I know how much he loves to cuddle, which I am totally on board with. Maybe pastel pillows and soft throws, a recliner by the window so he can silently admire the skyline and contemplate life with a book or crossword or something else serene and uncomplicated.

What I didn't expect was an entire fucking jungle.

"Sorry," he mumbles from behind me. "It's a bit messy." He carefully closes the door before silently standing next to me. All while my mind is fucking blowing.

Because I had no clue Thorn likes plants.

Like, his living room is simple enough. A nice warm space with a terracotta shade couch, a wooden sideboard, matching coffee table, and all those other normal things normal people have. Except the entire place is covered in green.

Not just green. Endless shades of green weave around the room as sunlight dances on them from a large window to our left.

I look up at him, and he shuffles, rubbing his hands up and down his thighs as his gaze flicks around the room. I fucking love that I can tell what he's thinking now. It took me a month or two to get used to all his tiny facial expressions and actions, and there's a lot I'm still figuring out. But the corners of his lips rise and fall a touch as he looks at me for approval.

I know he's trying to figure out if anything's wrong. And I bloody adore the fact my

boyfriend is proud of the giant trellis dominating the wall behind the sofa, covered in vines that bloom with delicate purple flowers. That a sea of macrame pots with spider plants hanging from the ceiling like floating islands is ‘a bit messy’. Or that every surface is loaded with different plants in pots that match the sofa, from huge bushy things to minute bubbly ones I could hold between my fingers might be a problem. Or even that there’s a giant fucking palm tree scraping the high ceiling, casually tucked in the corner behind his TV.

“Wow, this is just... It’s amazing,” I say, drinking it all in. I reach for his hand instantly. There’s not a single chance I’m letting him think there’s anything wrong with this. “It’s perfection.”

I’m so tempted to tease him, wind him up so I can push him onto his plush sofa and make him moan. I’m so ready for it, and, goddamn, do I like making him squirm. But the moment’s too tense to try it on. It’s one of those moments that can make or break the evening. We’ve had so many awkward conversations since we first started dating, and it’s taken us time to find our balance. I’m not letting the dickhead side of my personality get in the way.

Thorn gives me a hard nod as I look up at him again. He’s gazing at me with his shiny-eyed look that means he’s so fucking happy he doesn’t know what to do with himself. I’m making a vow right now that I’m going to bring him flowers every time I see him.

I told myself to give him space and make him comfortable, but I can’t do it when his fingers are squeezing me like he does whenever he needs reassurance.

I lean into him, bringing my free hand up to his neck, burying my fingers in his smooth brown hair so I can lower him down to me. He lets out a tiny gasp of surprise, then instantly relaxes as I gently kiss him. “I mean it, Thorn,” I say against his lips. “It’s beautiful.”

He sighs, relaxing more than I thought he might in the first five minutes, and I grin as I nudge his nose with mine. I'm about to tell him there is absolutely no way we aren't ending the night with his cock inside me, but a ding comes from a doorway to my left.

His hands drop as he jumps back. "I'm sorry," he says breathlessly, his bottom lip plump and pink, ready to taste in a way that drives me absolutely insane whenever we're together. "I haven't finished cooking."

A burst of joy bubbles up through me and I laugh, the sound beating out of my chest, my hand twitching over the back of his neck.

"You're cooking!? Really?" I can't even remember the last time someone actually wanted to cook for me.

A cloud rushes over his face, and the proud Thorn disappears as I fuck up again. I don't want to be the one to take away his smile, not anymore.

I need to remember how huge this is for him, how huge it is for both of us.

"That's just amazing, Thorn," I say with a happy sigh. "Do you know how special that is to me?" I step in closer, rising to the balls of my feet to properly stroke his hair, nearly melting at the way he bends to my touch.

"Come on, tell me what you're making," I say softly, my fingers dancing along the shell of his ear. I grin as his eyes flutter closed.

There's a pause and another little blush fans across his cheeks.

"Baked squid frittata from La Boqueria," he mumbles, as I lower myself. "I've tried to make it authentic for you."

I pause, searching his face. The last time I was in La Boqueria market was two years ago on a shoot in Barcelona. And I haven't found a place that's done it quite right since. Though I've never told him that.

He opens his eyes, staring at me intensely as a teasing tone enters my voice. "Thorn, baby, how do you know that's my favourite food?"

He clears his throat as he straightens, the pink of his cheeks deepening to red as his chin dips, trying to hide from me. But he's so tall it doesn't work, and just makes my grin wider.

"Well, you posted it online a while ago," he mutters.

I'm trying to think back to the last time I actually posted anything. I gave up my account ages ago and let my manager run it now. All she does is stick up sexy pictures of me, which isn't exactly hard.

It must have been fucking years. So, how did he find out about it?

Before I can ask, Thorn's eyebrows shoot up, and he blinks heavily, his chest expanding as he sucks in a harsh breath. He steps out of my arms, dragging his gaze to the kitchen.

"I have to check on the food," he says, spinning and shooting off through the door, and I sigh as he vanishes.

I mean, yeah, it stings when he does it, but thank fuck I know why. I used to get so offended when he ran away from me until a couple of months ago. But knowing your boyfriend is so attracted to you that he needs space to process is a total head rush.

Besides, every time we fuck afterwards, he's usually ten times hornier because he's

had time to prepare. One of the few things I expect whenever we meet is that hell bolt at least once. And he always comes back if I give him time.

I'm basically vibrating as my eyes swept the room, taking in every tiny detail of my boyfriend's flat. Thorn's really letting me into his private life and it's so fucking special I can't stay still.

Well, of course, we're dating, so it was bound to happen, but it's so much better than I dreamt. It always is with Thorn. And it's getting easier as we learn to trust each other, less running away, less avoiding difficult emotions. Sometimes it's an effort to remember that Thorn's love language is straight up staring in silent concentration.

Every time I'm with Thorn, he ends up showing me something new about himself. And inviting me to his flat is like he's sharing one of his biggest secrets with me. I couldn't have predicted this blooming garden, and I'm pretty sure part of me would have called bullshit if he'd told me about the plants before I arrived.

It totally explains why he doesn't like doing overseas jobs, as well.

I stand in the middle of his living room, trying to absorb it all. He has a guitar fixed on the wall by the kitchen door, a wind chime hanging in a doorway that leads to what I guess is his bedroom. Modelling magazines on his coffee table, and I'm about to inspect a photo of two men beside the TV on my right when I catch a movement out of the corner of my eye.

My head snaps left and my gaze lands on the glass tank next to the sofa, half-hidden by another pot plant.

Something moves in the shadow of one of those full on hanging plants, and there's no way I'm not going to snoop.

I throw another look at the kitchen door before I carefully creep over. There's a bright yellow eye staring at me from behind the glass, blinking slowly, just watching me, fucking judging me.

The tank is such a dark green it's almost black. Im peering in, trying to figure out whats in there. Until there's a click, and I jump as a light switches on above me.

"What the hell?" I whisper as the entire tank lights up to reveal a tortoise or a turtle or something with a shell chewing on a piece of lettuce. It doesn't even bother with me, and just keeps on chomping away as I lean in to inspect it more closely.

Rude.

If I ever thought Thorn would have a pet, it would be one of these guys. Slow, chill, happy to get on with its own business, absolutely no fuss.

"That's Josephine," Thorn says quietly from behind me. I quickly whip around, my heart shuddering again at the thick glasses and cute apron I'm dying to pull off of him or slip under.

"What?" I ask.

"My tortoise," he says before he twists his lips, stepping closer. "I..." His lips perk up as he looks at the tank and then back at me. I'm next to him right away, taking his hand again, telling him its all okay. It's so fucking hard not to rub myself up on him when he's trying to say something important.

"What is it?" I ask with a smile, waiting for him to answer. It drove me insane when we first started dating that I need to be patient with him, but its always so, so worth it.

"I'm sorry I didnt tell you." He bites his lip, holding my gaze.

I swallow my laugh. I don't want him to think I'm making fun of him again. I hope he realises now that every time I laugh it's because I love him so fucking much that I don't know how else to show him apart from laughing or leaping on him. And I haven't even properly told him how I feel. People write hundreds of songs, poems and books about how difficult it is to say 'I love you', but I never believed them until now.

"Why are you sorry? It's totally fine." I honestly enjoy it so much more when he shows me these things naturally. Like, last month, I was bitching about my sister and, after an hour of self-absorbed ranting, he finally told me a little bit about his mum. But he choked up so hard I had to stop him and we spent the whole night cuddling, which was fucking bliss.

"Well, I wasn't sure if you wanted..." he sighs slowly and rubs the back of his neck as his chin dips to the floor.

"Wanted what?" I encourage him on with another squeeze of his hand.

"A pet," he says so quietly I nearly miss it.

Fucking hell, the hits just keep coming and coming.

I hold on to him, trying not to clench too tightly as my heart fucking implodes. I keep my breaths low, blinking away the stupid tears threatening at the corners of my eyes. Thorn always triggers when he says romantic shit. And he's staring at me expectantly, not realising how much it means for him to say something like that.

I've never been with someone who wants to give so much of themselves to me.

We're both just looking at each other, and I've totally blanked. I'm about to straight up tell him how much I fucking adore him, but I pussy out.

Ive said it before, loads of times, to loads of different people. Ive been with guys whove told me they loved me even before we hooked up. But Thorn is so fucking special and I can't even deal with the thought he might run if I push my feelings onto him. It's fucking terrifying thinking about what might change if I say it and he gets alarmed, even though Ive already convinced myself we'll be fine. It just might get a bit awkward for a while.

When he says anything like that, I swear he feels the same, that he loves me too. It's that sliver of doubt, that tiny piece of me that hovers on the 'what if?'. Because what if he doesn't actually love me as much as I love him? What if he doesnt feel as strongly as I do?

I rub my thumb over his, grinning up at him. "Thorn, baby, do you know how much that turns me on? Ive wanted a pet for fucking years."

He gets that gorgeous startled baby bird look, blinking so quickly Im sure he's going to burst. "Really?" he says on a rushed breath, his eyes shining, one hand pressing lightly to his stomach as his shoulders relax.

"Seriously. Years. Will you introduce me?"

Thorn pauses, his gaze jumping between the tank and me before twisting his head back to the kitchen.

"I have to check the frittata again," he says, dropping a quick kiss on my cheek that makes my toes curl. "Ill be back in a minute."

He gives me the cutest smile before stepping away, retreating to the kitchen. I chuckle to myself as he disappears through the door.

Im literally the luckiest person in the world.



What I like most about his place is that it's snug. It makes it even easier to picture us wrapped up on the couch, or eating breakfast at the table I can see through the kitchen doorway, or spending the day fucking in bed with nothing in our way.

And speaking of the bedroom...

My attention swings back to the wind chime, curious about the shadowy cavern beyond. It looks as if it's from Mexico, with a terracotta Aztec sun with square patterns between the spikes, with long silver chimes hanging from it. He hates noise, and he must hit his head on it every time he walks in there, so why does he have it?

I swerve past a macrame pot, a stray leaf brushing my ear as I make a beeline for it. I've been dying to see Thorn's bedroom since we first fucked, and I'm seconds away from sneaking inside when a sound drifts towards me from the kitchen.

I freeze, my eyes glazing over as I stare straight ahead at absolutely nothing, my heart fucking skyrocketing, blood rushing straight to my cock. All my attention is suddenly fixed on that sound.

The loudest noise I've ever heard from Thorn is his cry when I make him come. The softest is his gentle breaths as he sleeps. His choked out sentences, his awkward stutters, the way he pushes through to speak to me even though I can see how fucking difficult it is for him. I love them. I love every single sound Thorn makes, but I've never heard him hum before.

I spin on one foot, hoping the wooden floorboards won't squeak. It only takes me thirty seconds to get to the kitchen door, but I'm worried I'll fuck it up and hell stop.

Leaning against the doorframe, my heart fucking races as I watch him.

Thorn has his back to me, obviously fiddling with something on the counter in front

of him. The bow of his apron rides right over his lower back, the tail ends curving over his ass perfectly.

He stretches out an arm, picking up a pot of black pepper, grinding it over whatever's in front of him.

Thorn's moving around the kitchen, totally confident, no hesitation at all.

And he's humming.

My boyfriend is fucking humming.

And I know exactly why.

I press my lips together, trying not to get overwhelmed over how special he's making me feel.

No one has ever been so happy to have me in their house that they sing, and I never once expected that I would hear it from my bloody boyfriend, the quietest person I know.

"Thorn..." I fasten my hand to the doorframe next to my hip, holding on for support as I try to keep calm. "What are you doing?"

He twists his body, blushing, ruining me for the third time. "Oh!" he chokes with a look of surprise. "Sorry, I didnt realise." Uncertainty crosses his face that I have to wipe away instantly. "Is it annoying? Should I stop?"

I shake my head. Now Im the one whos speechless. I really hope he doesn't think like that again. Because everything he does is a fucking treat.

And I can't handle it anymore. Glasses, apron, plants, a pet, and now bloody humming and blushing.

"There's only so much I can take, baby," I say, my voice low as my fingers dig into the white paint of the doorframe.

Which is the wrong thing to say when he's already so self-conscious.

"What do you mean?" he asks, his eyes wide.

"I mean, I need you to turn the fuck around so I can kiss you."

## Page 3

*Source Creation Date: July 18, 2025, 3:08 pm*

Heat throbs through me as Luca growls. I can never resist him when he looks like that, and I never want to try.

His gaze is heavy, filled with need, tempting me as he notches his chin up and licks his lips, sending tingles flowing over my skin. It's not simply knowing he wants me, it's that Luca wants me so badly that he can't stop himself. I take away all his common sense, pushing him to the brink, and he's moments away from throwing himself at me.

I carefully put down the pepper grinder. The salad will be fine; it's the frittata that I'm worried about.

I have a brief second to check the timer, turning as Luca clears the space between us in three long steps.

And suddenly he's here, looking up at me, his braid swaying behind him as he swings his arms around my neck and tugs me to his lips, connecting us again.

I drop to him instantly, the food briefly forgotten. The moment he stepped through my front door, it became a fight to act like a real couple instead of sweeping him into my arms and pulling him to the bedroom. I wanted to do this properly for him, to create an atmosphere of romance, but the sight of Luca in tight black jeans and an open blue silk shirt is so distracting that I ran to the kitchen to stop myself from spoiling the evening by making love to him straight away.

And spontaneity is Lucas specialty, not mine.

Theres still the slightest jolt of surprise when his tongue flicks mine, but it quickly gives way to pleasure as I sink into him.

The small flutter of nerves dissipates as I reach for his ass. Its an easy journey, and Luca is always there for me to take.

My hands cup him, fitting perfectly like they always do. Relief flows through me in a wave, a moan bubbling up from my chest.

I sometimes worry he could revert back to the old Luca, the angrier Luca that would taunt me whenever we worked together, though my doubts never stay for long. Because he does everything he can to fasten himself to me. He rises on his toes as I lower to meet him, deepening our kiss, falling into his touch.

Using his body weight, he traps me against the counter, and I soften into his kiss. His cock is firm on my thigh and Im ready to take him, however he likes.

I trace one hand up his spine, pressing against the centre of his back. I want him closer. I always want him closer. Because Luca is all I need.

He pulls back from my lips, his eyes wild, his pale skin brushed with clouds of pink lust. “Where are your glasses?” he says, already panting, a slow grin creasing his lips.

I dont attempt to speak when my throat is dry and my tongue is wet with the taste of him. Its easier to simply nod towards the kitchen table. I just hope he doesn’t think Im weird, even though hes just seen me wearing them. Without them, everything behind Luca is blurry, but I dont mind. I like it when he’s the only thing I can see.

The frittata should be done soon, and Ive reset the timer so it won’t burn. Even though I can’t wait for him to taste the food, I really can’t resist him when he’s so worked up and obviously ready for me.

“Come on, baby,” he says with a low roll of his voice. “I need to see them on you again.” Luca bites his lip, stroking the line of my neck as he drops his arm. I push my chest out, wanting more of him as one hand trails between us, his thumb catching my nipple. I suck in a breath as his other hand rings my wrist and holds me.

My muscles relax, rightness settling over me; I’ll follow him anywhere now that he’s kissed me silly. He twists on one foot to lead me over to the table with such a serious look in his eyes that I’m melting already.

It’s a rustic piece I found cheap online, light wood worn smooth over years of use. It came with four sturdy chairs, one of which Luca hooks his foot around and kicks away from the table. Spinning on two legs, and it lands in the perfect position for him to line me up against it.

“Put your ass on the chair, baby. I need you looking up at me,” he says, desire splashed across his face.

It’s strange how I used to be so unnerved by him and now all I want is for him to use his special powers on me.

I land easily on the flat seat; the chair creaking under my weight. Luca knows what he’s doing in these situations. I’m learning more and more how to treat him right, and, for some reason, he loves my awkward attempts at seducing him. I can’t imagine being this confident with anyone else. Luca brings it out of me.

“What are you planning?” I say, my hands automatically rounding his hips, craning my neck. Any other words are lost as he leans over my shoulder, brushing his chest against my nose, my muscles relaxing as his clean scent surrounds me.

It’s just the smell of his clothes, nothing entirely unique, but it’s as if I’ve trained myself to respond to every aspect of him. I’ve spent so long loving him from afar that such

simple things still make me dizzy. An easy inhale and Im his.

“You’ll see,” he says, his lips skimming my ear, and his grin shows in his voice.

Bent at the hip, Luca’s shirt falls forward as he grips my shoulder, and I catch the sleek lines of his chest disappearing beneath blue silk.

Luca rocks back, my glasses hanging off of the tip of his finger, rising over me like a king in command. “You’ve got to put these back on you or I swear Im going to go insane,” he hums.

I pluck my glasses from his finger, a smile tugging at the corners of my lips. I love him when he looks seconds away from devouring me.

My hands only shake once as I lift my glasses, dipping my chin to hook them over my ears. I lift my head to meet his eyes, amusement curling through me as he moans sweetly. Its always the strangest things that turn him on. The hand on my shoulder slides to my neck, his thumb pressed to the beating vein under my ear.

I use my middle finger to push the glasses up my nose, seating them on the bridge, waiting for his reaction as I draw it out, going as slowly as I can, never breaking my gaze, winding him up in a way I didnt know was possible until we made love for the first time. His bottom lip drops open and a deep sigh echoes from the back of his throat as he shifts close, inspecting me. I drop my hand to make space for him, all his attention is fixed on me.

“You are so fucking sexy, you know that, right?” Luca says tenderly, sweeping his other hand up to run his finger along the top of my glasses. “I seriously cant get enough of you.”

“Then dont try,” I reply quietly.

Sparks scatter across my skin at his intense gaze, pleasure making itself at home inside me. I can practically feel heat coursing from him.

“I don't want to. Ever,” he sighs softly. “It seriously blows my mind that you keep getting hotter every time I see you.”

It's when he says things like this that I hope he really wants a future together, that I'm not just a visitor in his life that will one day be a memory. I told him to give me a chance four months ago; I asked him to try, and he said yes, and he's still saying yes now.

He bends down to steal my lips again, happiness lighting me from the inside. If I could only do one thing for the rest of my life, it would be kissing Luca, or cuddling Luca, or fucking Luca. Simply being with Luca is enough.

His hands slide to my thighs, pushing the apron up to my hips. I'm sure he wants easy access, and I want to help. Hooking my fingers around the hem of my apron, I lift it up to my stomach, excitement buzzing through me as I reveal my grey sweats, my cock tenting the material.

“Fuck, Thorn. You're already this hard for me?”

I want to tell him ‘of course I am’, that there's no way I wouldn't be turned on, but my blush spreads up to my ears, and I bite my lip shyly instead. I shouldn't be embarrassed. We spend every evening together when he's in London, but it's the way he looks so hungry, so pleased that I'm responding to him. I've never told him it's always been more difficult for me not to respond to him, that even being in the same room as him sets my body alight.

“Come here, Luca.” I drop the apron and it catches on my cock, bunched up around my hips. I'm glad he can see how much I want him. I reach out a hand, sighing gently



as my muscles relax. “Let me feel you too.”

I’m so aware of him with me, in my space. The oven hums around us; the ticking of the clock to my left sets a faint beat in the background. Though my kitchen is thin, the windows at both ends of the room spread light around the room, highlighting every fine detail of him as he shudders against me.

His hand joins mine, both of us entranced as he runs his thin pale fingers over my thick ones, slotting them together: a perfect fit.

“I don’t know what I want more,” he says softly, turning his gaze back to me. “To hear you talk or to kiss you. Just looking at you like this is driving me fucking wild.” He chuckles as he presses the centre of my glasses, running down the line of my nose before his hand rests on my collarbone and bites his lip. “What do you prefer?”

“Hmm, its too hard to decide.” I blink, tilting my head, seriously contemplating his question even though he’s simply flirting. “I want all of you.” I murmur as I lift my hand up to cup his cheek, my thumb sweeping the corner of his smooth smile. “I never want to leave you,”

He stills over me, his breath caught in his throat as he meets my sincerity with a look of surprise. At least, I hope it’s surprise. I don’t know how I would stand it if it was disappointment or disgust.

He does this whenever I come close to telling him how I really feel. Sometimes I forget myself, forget how terrifying it is to confess how much I want him after years of silence. I want to tell him so badly that I love him, that Ive loved him for so long that I dont remember what its like not to love him. Its these slight pauses that hold me back.

“So kiss me,” I say, encouraging him to return. I just hope I didnt get it wrong. I dont

want him to struggle or make him uncomfortable because I push my feelings onto him.

But, I hope if I wait long enough, he might fall in love with me too.

Even if Luca just wants someone to hold him, I can be that for him. If it means I can stay with him like this, Ill do what I can to make him happy.

I bring him closer, and he comes willingly as we sink into our kiss again. Every time I touch him, it's like I become whole, as if Im dust flying around a room, only settling when he's with me.

As we kiss, I release his cheek and sweep my hand downwards, finding his nipple, pressing hard, tasting his high moan. His fingers clench in mine, and I hold on tight. Ill never let him go if that's what he wants.

I move from his nipple, luxuriating in the delicate curve of his waist as I reach for the button of his jeans. Im too caught in the storm of Luca's kisses to do anything but fumble. I want his cock as much as his lips.

Twitching as he slides his hand through my hair, I tilt my head back so he can kiss me more deeply. There's so much happening; soft frantic kisses, the tight squeeze of my hair, Luca's gasps as I press against his cock through his jeans. All that combined with the low hum of the oven, the rich smell of food, and my struggle to pop the button.

I try to concentrate, but the moment the button frees from its clasp, I give in and let Luca lead us. He takes care of me when Im overwhelmed, though Im sure he doesn't know it. Im practising staying with him even when it becomes too much. If I don't fight it, if I let all the sensations flow over me, then Luca's presence soothes me.

I moan against his lips, keeping him close, spreading my legs so he can step nearer. Though Luca has other plans.

He pulls back from the kiss, both of us melting at the sheer joy of touching each other. I hope we never stop, that it will always be so wild and fresh, like a storm in the springtime.

I've tasted every inch of his skin since we first made love, and Lucas smile makes me want to taste him again and again. I'll cover his body so my lips permanently imprint on his skin like the freckles I adore.

He sighs faintly as his fingers break from mine, returning to my thigh. "You look so fucking sexy when you're needy," he murmurs.

This time, the stroke of his nails doesn't stop at the crease of my hip. Instead, his hand brushes inward, a single finger outlining the shape of my cock.

Eyelids fluttering, familiar pleasure tremors through me as I attempt to widen my knees, offering myself to him. My hips shift forward on the chair, and I fall into his beautiful strokes. He looks as obsessed with me as I am with him, as if his mission in life is to make me collapse. All his focus is on me, and it turns me on even more.

I shudder under him, my chin notching back as my lips part.

"Luca," I cry as he stretches out his fingers, his hand covering me, his palm gently pressing my cockhead. "Please. Keep touching me." I lift my hand to his hip again and hold on tight. "Don't let me go."

He drags in a slow breath, only to look at me so softly that my heart is nothing but his. Its incredible what he does to me.

“I won’t, baby. I won’t,” he hums as he shifts his hand, stroking my cock from base to tip through thick material. “Can you be patient for me?” His sweetness falls away, his sharp cheekbones lift as his impish grin returns. “Because those sweats definitely have to go.”

My cock completely agrees. The strain against the fabric is rough, and I want Luca to feel how hot and ready I am for him.

I want him with everything I have, and the tension building between us vibrates in a way that only Luca can conjure. It’s how millions of people lust over him because of one simple photo. He knows how to use his body, how gorgeous he is, and he knows exactly what he’s doing as I arch my back, sucking in my stomach to give him room.

If I told him I loved him now, how much would change? Would he still reach for me like this? Would it become even more romantic because he’d confess he feels the same way, too?

That’s another secret fantasy I keep close to my heart. But, when he lets go of my cock to hook his finger under my waistband, murmuring, “You’re so fucking hot,” I really think he might love me. One day I’ll tell him the truth, even if it becomes a burden for him. Just not today.

And it’s there, right at the moment he tugs on my waistband, that the oven timer goes off.

A rush of air leaves us both, and we pause.

It’s clear what we’re thinking.

Even though it’s difficult, I release him, my hand falling away from his hip, the other from his jeans. Luca will always be my priority, but the squid was expensive.

I twist my lips, eyebrows raising behind my glasses. Either he steps back or I make him. Whenever Luca kisses me hungrily, it usually means we'll be distracted for at least an hour, and I don't want to end the evening because the kitchen is on fire.

One way or another, I will save the food.

Luca's fiery stare morphs into a wicked smile as he releases me. My waistband snaps back to my hips, the strain on my cock returning.

"Well," he gives an exaggerated shrug. "I guess someone has to check on the oven," he sighs heavily.

His other hand leaves my neck, a whisper of his fingers curl around the shell of my ear. I nod, my whole body hardening as he climbs off of me. I press my lips together. I can't complain because it's important. I really want to see Luca's face when he tastes my cooking for the first time, and it can be reheated.

He groans as he leans back, his gaze dancing over me again. "Fuck, I love it when you pout. It's even better with the glasses. You're so bloody cute." He leisurely steps away from me, tilting his head. "Or would you rather eat? Because I can stop," he teases, flipping his hair over his shoulder as he straightens his shoulders and pops a hip, lifting his nose in the air. "You know, if you want to eat instead?" He peeks at me from the corner of his eye, and I feel as if he's asking me to give him a quick answer. But I falter when he challenges me, a tingle running up my spine, but he lights up when I reply.

"But you need me, don't you?" I say. My gaze drops to his crotch, where he is so obviously hard that I feel uncomfortable just looking at the tight stretch of his jeans.

Luca laughs as he grabs the front of my apron, bunching the material in his hands as he drags me back into a sudden kiss.

“Fuck, yeah I do.” He says, his soft breath sparking tingles over my cheeks. “So fucking badly. Now get those sweats off and wait for me, okay?”

I nod quickly before he hurries, grabbing the mitts lying on the counter next to the oven; white and pink, shaped like kitten paws, matching my apron. He gives me a quick smirk, quirking a brow before slipping them on, and there’s another pierce of fear that he might be making fun of me. Im distracted by the steam billowing from the door as he opens it. I really hope the food isnt burnt. I made the frittata three times in the last month to make sure the timing was right.

I hurriedly push at my waistband, lifting my hips to slide them under my ass. My bare skin presses into the wood as I tip forward, getting them over my knees, but Im so hot it makes no difference that the seat is cold. Its not the first time Ive sat here naked.

My cock rubs the inside of the apron as I lean back in the chair, watching Luca in my kitchen like he belongs here. Im already imagining sleepy mornings by my coffee machine and cooking after late nights at work, chatting and laughing, planning dates, adventures I feel safe enough to take when I’m with him, maybe even a holiday, and living peacefully together.

Theres a clunk as the baking dish slides onto the counter and Luca waves away the light steam swirling above it. I love seeing him doing such normal things. I placed him on a pedestal before I met him on our first shoot, assuming he was far beyond me, even though we are the same in so many ways.

The silence stretches on for too long as he presses his mittened hands on the counter, leaning over the frittata, my blood picking up, my nerves stepping in to interfere with my happiness. My mind races, looking for something I could say to ease the tension, but he speaks first.

“This really is my favourite food,” he sighs, his head bent forward, his braid hiding

everything except the gentle smile on his lips.

And my nerves float away at the easiness of his smile. He lifts his head, swinging his attention back to me.

I swallow the quick thump of my heart. “I know,” I reply quietly.

He licks his bottom lip, and I think he’s looking at me with love in his eyes, though I try not to assume, no matter how much I want it.

I don’t plan on telling him how much I actually know about him, that I scour his social media accounts at least once a month since I met him, absorbing anything I can about him. That I’ve been studying him for years and fantasising about moments like this so strongly they are like memories instead of dreams. I hope Luca doesn’t find out how obsessed with him I really am.

But what he tells me about himself is far more precious and real than anything I’ve learnt.

His eyes drop to my cock as he twists, throwing off the mitts, totally fixed on me. Apparently my kitten apron is a turn on, because the heat in his eyes deepens as his gaze flicks over me.

“Would you take your trousers off too?” I ask, bordering on a stutter, but I manage to hold it back. “I want to see your cock again.” I give him a shy smile as I rub my palm over my forearm, hunching my shoulders, waiting for his response.

“Oh damn,” he says, shaking his head and rolling his eyes. “I just love it when you say cock.”

My smile stays, ease drifting over me. It’s still unusual to speak so much, but he

reassures me without even realising it.

My eyes widen as I remember the one extra thing I prepared for him.

“Oh, Luca...” I say before he comes back. “Theres, um,” I clear my throat, lowering my voice. “Theres lube in the drawer by your hip,” I mumble.

Another jump of my heart, another squeeze of tension in my stomach as Luca runs a hand through his hair, pushing red strands back from his face with a laugh.

“That has got to be the sexiest thing you have ever said to me. Holy shit.”

He quickly wrenches open the drawer, and the grin on his face as he spies the clear bottle tells me everything I need to know. I bought a six-pack, and it was definitely the right decision.

“Well, hello there,” he says to it with a smirk as he lifts it out. “A squirty top, too. My, my, you just think of everything, dont you?”

Heat floods my cheeks again as he nudges the drawer closed with his hip.

When we first began dating, there were times when Luca chose an AirBnB over a hotel; nice flats or houses in quiet parts of the city. As soon as I arrived, we would tear each other’s clothes off, nearly fucking against the wall. We only had to stop for lube and condoms, desperately ripping through his luggage, making love on the floor in a messy pile of his designer clothes.

So now I always prepare. It was just luck that the sex toy website I use had a special deal on.

“Okay, ready?” he asks, lifting up the bottle. From the way he swings his arm, I’m



sure he's going to throw it to me. I really can't take that level of tension, yet I still nod.

A sigh of relief follows when, instead, he walks towards me, his hips shaking in a way I love as he drops the bottle into my lap. I just manage to catch it, cupping the bottle as I rest it on my lap.

"Good, good!" He beams. "Now! Watch as your perfect boyfriend unveils himself!" He laughs as he props his hands on his hips, and my fear of dropping the bottle vanishes as excitement rushes through my veins like fireworks.

I love it when he calls himself that. It makes everything even more real for me.

He quickly flings off his t-shirt before ripping the fly of his jeans, all while admiring me. "Ugh, actually, fuck it. Sorry, baby. I was going to turn this into a show, but you seriously wind me up." His eyes jump over me. "Im so fucking horny I dont think I can wait." My brow furrows as he kicks off his trousers. Im trying to think of what Ive done thats worked him up. I did some research on how to be sexy when you invite someone to your house and I was planning on trying it out later, though I havent implemented any of the techniques so far.

"Seriously, it's only been a day and I'm so desperate for you," Luca says as he comes in close. "You just drive me crazy."

He presses himself to me so quickly I barely have time to react as he sticks my thighs together, crushing them between his knees before he steals my lips in a frantic kiss.

He moans, and I open for him automatically. Ill do anything if it means hell come closer, and he does. Small nips on my bottom lip, a swipe of his tongue over mine, and his cock firm on my chest as he leans over me.

My hands are on his hips again. I want him to use me. However he wants to come, whatever way he wants, I simply want to taste his pleasure and all the sounds he makes. I wanted to show off and cook for him, but I also want to fuck him so badly that I'll let anything go so I can hold him against me.

There's a final sigh as his breath melds with mine, the soft taste of us lingering as we part again.

Lifting a hand, he brushes the back of his nails over my left cheekbone, caressing the blush that hangs there like a portrait, a permanent brushstroke painted by him.

Even closer now, the tension builds around us. It's not sex, it's not the pounding desire that takes us in moments like this. He drapes his arm around my neck, closer still, his knees caging my hips as his cock sweeps my apron. It feels like we belong together.

Luca presses his forehead to mine, stealing away the rest of the world with a delicate sigh that covers my lips. We're melded together. It's as if nothing could ever break us apart.

"How did I get so lucky?" he whispers, clasping me, his gaze so intense that tingles flow throughout my whole body, love flooding me as I melt under him, for him, with him.

Silence surrounds us and every emotion, every need, each piece of me that sings for him surges up, demanding to be free. I try to say it. I try to tell him the truth I've kept buried for so long.

But the same fear comes back to wind its way around my throat and silence me again. Because what if he leaves? What if I say I love him and he rejects me? I've lost so many people because of the words I didn't speak. I don't know if I could handle losing

him because of the words I say.

I would rather keep these feelings clasped tight, holding them in like I always have so I don't lose him. Even if it hurts to hide myself from him.

"Luca..." I murmur, my hand creasing his thigh as a quiet peace settles between us. It's like the crazy wildcat Luca I first fell in love with has been tamed, and all he does now is to curl himself on my lap. I hope that's it, because I don't need anything else. All I want is for Luca to hold me like this, to keep him close, with the warmth of his skin under my fingertips and the beat of his heart echoing in me as I press my ear to his chest.

He can only take my feelings for so long, and by the time my breaths fall in time with his, he's tucked that part of himself away.

"Now, spread those legs for me, baby." Luca grins as he leans back, pulling away from me. The moment vanishes as his hand moves from my cheek, tracing down my chest, following the path of a crease in the apron, dancing to my cock.

Some days he lets me lie on his chest so I can listen to the sound of him. I like to see if our heartbeats align. The best days are when they do.

The disappointing loss of our tenderness is quickly wiped away as gentle fingers caress my hard cock, and he groans with me as he wraps his hand around me.

Heat flashes through me, swirling around my cock, surging out to my fingertips as he easily strokes from base to tip.

I'll never stop wanting him. My bottom lip drops and I lift myself up to him, needing his lips again. No matter how many times he touches me, it's always as good as the first.

I go to push my hips forwards, but his knees on my thighs keep me fixed in place.

“Come on, thats it. Just relax for me, baby.”

He never lets his gaze falter, his bottom lip dropping as my hips jerk and sparks scattering throughout my skin. Pleasure sweeps through me, and I notch my head back, sinking into the pure feeling of Luca.

He hums as I shift my hips, trying to find more of him; hes in charge when we're like this.

His hand leaves my neck, scooping up my bottle of lube and freeing my hands. Then its my chance to reach for him, my wide hands cresting his hip, my thumb scouring his perfect freckles as if I could polish them. My hands span the full width of his hips and I relax, happily kneading his skin, holding him close.

“I love that you're so considerate,” He chuckles as he scans the label on the bottle, his eyes sparkling as he dangles it above my cock.

Another grin spreads across his face as he presses the top. A long strand of cold lube drips onto my cock, a bead running down my shaft to pool around his hand. I can tell its coming, but I still jump as he saves it by gripping me, spreading it over my cock. My thighs shudder, and the only thing that saves the lube from dropping to the chair is his hand enveloping me. My back arches, and I let out a stifled moan. “Luca, it's-” I press my hips up into him, the lube quickly warming as he caresses me.

His palm glides down my shaft, hot on my cock as I writhe under him. I try not to hurt him, to keep back my full strength, but he drives me wild with one stroke, and my fingers bury into his hips as I hold on tight.

I cry out when he twists his wrist, another squirt of lube dropping from the bottle. The

cold lube is a relief on my hot cock, and this time he uses his thumb to spread it across my cockhead.

“Luca,” I groan, shuddering at his firm brushes. “Wait...” I can’t stop myself from thrusting upwards. It’s too good, and I need him too badly.

“Fuck yeah, baby, that’s it. Just keep moving for me,” he chuckles as he strokes my full length, easily playing with me like he usually does.

My gaze drags from his glistening hand, sliding up and down my cock to meet his fiery gaze, and my heart catches in the back of my throat. Luca is always beautiful, it’s just a fact of life. But, when he’s wound up, absorbed in me, holding himself back so he can tease me, he’s breathtaking.

Pink cheeks against pale skin, wild eyes, his plump lips parted as his heaving chest shakes the stray red hairs that have fallen around his face and shoulders. His long neck, deep collar bones, toned arms, and pink nipples I would taste if it wasn’t for how easily I’m succumbing to the pleasure bursting through me as he takes care of me.

“Dammit.” He grins. “I can’t stop myself when you make that face.” He chuckles softly as his strokes grow tender. “You’re going to make me come straight away,” he moans as he squirts more lube on his hand before setting the bottle on the table and rubs his hands together. “We’re going to need more of this later. What do you think?”

I nod, crushing my fingers together to stop my nerves bursting free. “There’s more. I, er...” I swallow, squeezing my eyes closed as I dip my chin. “I bought more, just in case.”

Another silence has my pulse jumping in my throat. Until he notches a single lubed finger under my chin and lifts my head up to look at him, meeting me with another

one of his mischievous smiles.

“Then weve got a lot to work through, havent we?” he chuckles.

He fans his fingers across his stomach, sliding down to press over his cock. “This is what you want, isn’t it?” he hums as he grasps himself. “And you’ve been waiting for me?”

My mouth waters at the slick sound of the lube as he cups himself, rubbing his thumb over his shaft.

I should have stroked his cock. I was so taken away by his kisses and his fingers made it hard to think.

“You’re killing me here,” he murmurs as his eyes run over me again.

I suck in a breath. I have to apologise before he gets the wrong idea. He always talks about treating me, and I want to make sure hes loved, too.

But he gets there first. “And I literally can’t even fucking deal with the glasses-apron-combo,” he groans as he steals another kiss. One brush of his hand, one sweep of his tongue on my lips, and Im falling into him all over again. “Youre so fucking beautiful,” he whispers as he strokes us both.

I’m caught by him, by his words. I’ll give him everything of myself if I can. If I could place my heart in his hands, I would be happy.

His smile is light, laughter brightening his face, though I don’t know if I can actually tell what hes feeling. He’s been acting all his life. The realest he ever is with me is when we make love. He can’t hide himself when I’m buried inside him.

His hands drop to mine, riding his hip and thigh, his lubed fingers clenching mine as he lifts them. “Let’s see how long it takes us to get through a bottle,” he hums before his hot gaze runs over me again. “Hands on my ass, baby. You gotta start exploring. Get me ready for you.”

My eyes flutter closed and my whole body relaxes at the love that beats through me. As he lubes my fingers up properly, I follow his lead and firmly grasp his ass. Just his softness filling my hand is enough to make me moan. We made love in his hotel room last night, and his ass is still loose for me. I deliberately call it sex when I say it out loud to him, even though it’s like Im flying so high every time Im inside him that it has to be love.

As soon as I press his hole with both my middle fingers, I’m inside him, and he cries out my name. His tight muscle and warm entrance encourage me further. I want to bury myself inside him, whether its my fingers or my cock.

“Fuck yeah, baby.” A shudder rushes through him, his other hand gripping my shoulder for support. “Thats it. Get me deeper.”

Theres a stretch, but the more I massage him, the more he gives way, all to the chorus of his moans.

He shouts as his knees buckle, and I quickly catch him, lifting him up as best I can. “Yes. Oh, God...” He pushes his ass out, and I’m digging in more firmly as I spread my fingers, widening his ass. “I fucking love your hands, baby. Youre so good to me.”

I should say that to him. Watching Luca come undone for me is one of the best presents Ive ever had.

“Harder, Thorn. I need you deeper.”

I release one ass cheek. Hes grasping onto my shoulders so solidly that one hand can keep him up while I press two more fingers against his ass.

His whole body jerks and he thrusts his hips forward before quickly shoving himself backwards. Its a harder stretch with three fingers, though with his leaking cock twitching on my chest, staining my apron, Im sure Im doing a good job. His head flies back, the smooth curve of his neck asking for my lips, but Im so content to follow Luca's expressions as his composure shakes with every movement that I simply wait.

"Oh God," his voice trembles, as my fingers bottom out. "Thorn, baby, just keep at it. Its so fucking good."

The further I grind into him, the further he falls towards me, groaning, shifting his hips.

He cant stroke my cock anymore, too lost in his pleasure as his manicured nails digging into my shoulder. "Fuck. Thorn. I need you," he cries out, his thighs quaking. The only thing holding him up now are my fingers.

His bright braid falls over his hip to brush my arm as I push at him again, and it's difficult not to thrust into him as hard as I can.

"I need you inside me," he gasps, straightening his back. His hands tear off my shoulders, reaching behind him to firmly grab my wrists, and I let him take control.

"Luca?" I tilt my head curiously as he lifts my fingers away, the warmth of his body fading quickly on the tips.

"Just work with me, baby. I can't hold on for much longer," he says as he tugs my hands forward. "Hold your cock for me. I want you to see my face as I slide down on



you,” he moans, and my heart leaps at the pure pleasure riding his face at the sight of me. I’ve barely touched his cock and he looks as if he’s about to come, but it’s the same for me. I hold back because I can’t live without watching Luca dissolve first.

Wrapping my fingers around my cock, I straighten my back as I adjust my hips on the chair. The chairs were advertised as ‘sturdy’, and now its time to put them to the test.

Its the way he looks at me that splits through the cloying fear in my chest. I already feel so close to saying the words I shouldnt, that I dont want him to escape if I do.

Need clouds my judgement. With each hot stroke of my cock, the wet sounds of our love grow louder between us. I can’t stop any more.

“You’re incredible, Luca.” I say as I twist my neck, gently kissing the inside of his elbow while capturing his hot gaze. “You’re the best thing in my life.” I lick him before I place the smallest of bites on delicate skin. He has a shoot in two days, so I cant leave a mark.

Pulling back, I tip my head, just catching the pain that spreads on his face, the one that only comes when he opens his heart to me.

I wish I could soothe him, to ease away whatever has stolen his smile from me. Ive been hurt so often by other peoples words, and I never want to harm anyone with mine.

He shudders, a slow blink, hiding himself from me again. His body stills, and my heart freezes. I know I’ve made a mistake, but I can’t let it stop me. Only with him do I feel like I can really fix it when I do something wrong, even though this might have gone too far.

He arches a brow, his perfect camera ready smirk falling into place. And the old Luca

returns. “That’s kind of sad, isn’t it?” he replies, brushing me off like he tries to whenever I show him my true desires. He can say anything to me, though it doesn’t go two ways.

He scoffs, avoiding my gaze. “I mean, you aren’t exactly-”

I tug at his shirt before he can finish and he tips forward, surprise forcing him to lose his composure.

“Don’t run away from me,” I say, tugging him down to meet my glare. I need him to see how serious I am, even though my mind is begging me to stay quiet.

I stare at him, searching for any sign that he doubts what I’m saying. His eyes widen as he sucks in breath, gasping, swallowing heavily. There’s only so much I can endure before the tension vibrates so strongly that something between us has to break. I can’t take it anymore.

I quickly press my lips to his, kissing him deeply, praying he can taste what he means to me. I wish I could treasure him fully, so he knew that each kiss we shared came from love.

My hand joins his, settling, and a sigh echoes in the air around us at the rightness of it all. This is how we always need to be. Together, so close that only our skin keeps us apart.

“I really can’t with you,” he says as he shakes his head.

A frown creases my brow as I search his face, trying to understand what I’ve done. I wanted to fix it, but I feel as if I’ve somehow made it worse.

He sweeps his thumbs across my cheeks, his smile tender. “I’ve been waiting months

for this, Thorn. To be here with you,” he says as he drops, his knees bending, tight on my hips as he lowers himself towards my cock.

I line myself up easily, anticipation thrumming through me as I spread my knees between his thighs. I need to feel him again so badly. I need to be deep enough inside him that I can believe hell never leave.

“Me too,” I say carefully, my voice trembling. “Luca, I...”

Before I can say another word, he pressed his ass to my cock, and he yells, shaking, the chair rocking back on hind legs as Luca slips, and I glide inside him. He’s only halfway down, but I feel like I’m going to come already. The back of the chair hits the table, the cutlery I’d laid out earlier rattling. It’s drowned out by our cries as he slides downwards, his ass engulfing me. “Fucking hell,” he chokes. He’s writhing his hips to adjust to me, stars bursting behind my eyes as I grip him tight. “Move your hand, Thorn. I need all of you,” he gasps as his back arches. He clings to me, as if I’m the only one who can ever support him.

My hand slips away and I shudder forward, burying my forehead into his chest. Moaning under him, my tongue finally finds his nipple, taking the soft bud between my lips and tugging as he writhes his hips. Just a few more inches.

I gasp in shock as he grips my shoulders even harder, pain zipping out from his fingertips. “Yes, like that, Thorn. Keep going,” He groans as he lifts his leg from the floor, his knee pressing against my right side. He bites his lip, and we both prepare ourselves.

“You look so good on my cock,” I say, my voice strained.

“Shit,” He gasps. “Shit! Thorn!” He chokes, his hands tightening around my neck. “Baby, do you know how fucking crazy you make me when you say stuff like that? I

nearly came on your apron.”

“I want to feel you come, though.” I always have a huge surge of confidence when my words drive Luca to the edge.

“One more sound from you and Ill be done for,” he moans, low and rough, rocking gently as he sinks deeper, pleasure scattering across his face. I hold him tight, guiding him, leading him, even though we’ve done this so many times it’s as natural as breathing.

We belong together. We were made for each other. And I want him to see that too.

“Are you ready for me?” I say, just seconds before he releases his weight, dropping straight down onto me.

“Fuck!” He cries out. “Yes, Thorn. Yes, Im ready.”

His back arches as he shouts my name, while my body jerks forward. My chest against his, his stomach against mine, we slip into heaven. Feeling each other, loving each other, settling into the comfort of being together again.

Were both panting, watching each other. We don’t need words. The bliss burning through me from being inside him can never be matched, especially when hes in my home.

One foot of his remains on the floor, and its not enough. He has to be completely free to become mine. And I have to move. I can’t process being inside him and not feeling how good he is. But Luca has this magic power that allows him to sit on my cock and watch me struggle. Its evil, and I love him for it.

“My other thigh,” he gasps, and Im there before he can say another word. “Grab my

other thigh, Thorn. I need your help.”

I wrap my fingers around him just as his foot gives way. With my legs spread and his bent, it is the perfect angle to surge forward as he drops, his ass on my thighs. And we both cry out as I hit home.

His hand moves from my shoulders, folding around my neck as he moves me close. His cheek pressed to mine, his thighs quiver in my hand, our groans echo in my small kitchen as we shift and shuffle on the creaking chair.

Holding each other, falling into each other, all while the world disappears. Everything I want is right here in my arms.

He leans back, his gaze filled with such heat that I stretch up to kiss him, until he pushes at my neck and keeps me down.

Luca releases a shaking breath, deep, heavy, right from the centre of his chest. “Thorn,” he murmurs, and my heart stills. “I can’t put into words what it means that you’ve invited me here.”

His ass squeezes me and, as he returns to me, I greet him with a soft smile.

“But you’re the one who does all the talking,” I say, my fingers clasping him. The tight burst of tension disappears as Luca responds instantly.

“Oh my God,” he laughs as he tugs on my shoulders, bringing me closer. “You’re amazing,” he moans as I press my hips up and his head tips back. “You’re so fucking amazing.”

The tenderness of the moment is swept away as he uses my shoulder to hike himself up, the hot slide of his ass stealing all of my senses. When he lets go, releases all his

weight to drop down on my cock so solidly his eyes roll back into his head, I know I never want to leave him.

His back arches as he gives me one of his full grins as he rises again. This time I rock my hips, meeting his rhythm, the chair groaning under our weight, its front legs banging on the floor each time Luca crashes into me and I bury my cock inside him.

I try not to disturb my neighbours when I am home, and make as little noise as possible, apart from when Im working out. I hope they assume Im using the treadmill next to the bathroom extra hard...while crying out my own name...

Luca moans as he sinks onto me, and I move with him. If I ever had to paint a picture of happiness, it would be this.

A year ago, we were on set, and I was doing everything I could to speak to him properly without collapsing, unable to interpret his frustration with me. And now we're making love in my kitchen, and I can talk to him properly and even turn him on with my words. But I cant say the thing that means the most to me.

I close my eyes, loving how warm his body is over mine. I slip one hand down his thigh, hooking it under his knee to lift his leg high, spreading him to find the right angle to make him cry my name even louder. I just have to hold him and he will stay close to me like this.

My eyes shoot open, but Luca isnt looking at me. His gaze is over my shoulder, and I wonder if hes going to reach for the lube again.

“Thorn?” My heart leaps at the crinkle in Luca’s brow. I can tell something is wrong. He stops moving, even rocking his hips despite being rooted deep on my cock. “What’s that?” he asks, leaning back, his hips arching.

Twisting my head, I follow his gaze to the cabinet under my kitchen window.

I bend over, hiding myself in Luca's chest, struggling as the air is punched out of my lungs.

I've made a horrible mistake.

The worst thing I could have done.

Blood floods my face, my veins burn as horror plunges through me, bile rising in the back of my throat.

I wheeze as I realise I didn't find everything when I was cleaning.

Tucked between my cookery books sits an A5 light blue picture frame I painted myself.

Shame flushes through me, squeezing my eyes closed in painful embarrassment. I didn't want him to know. I didn't want him to see.

Even though I'm buried inside him, clinging to him, desperate to move, I'm the one who wants to run away.

I grit my jaw at his shuddered breath, praying for some way out of this.

"Baby," Luca's voice lowers as I swing my gaze back to his and he sees the truth splattered on my face. "Is that a picture of me?"

## Page 4

*Source Creation Date: July 18, 2025, 3:08 pm*

It isn't just a picture of me. It's a picture of an ad I did for Heinz, where I'm standing by a fucking stove. As if I'm cooking with whoever's viewing the advert. As if I'm cooking with Thorn as he has his breakfast or his lunch or whatever the fuck he does when he sits in the seat on the chair on my right and looks at the photo propped up on the shelf across from him.

It's an advert I did three years ago. Before I met Thorn. Before I even knew he existed. It was just some shitty promo that they paid me so much money for that there wasn't a single chance I was saying no, even though it was cheesy as fuck. It came and went and everyone moved on. I wanted to forget it so badly I removed it from my portfolio when the term was over. And no one gave a single shit about it.

Apart from my boyfriend, apparently.

"Thorn," I say carefully, arching my back, grinding my hips to force him to focus, pulling myself even closer to him. "How long have you had that photo?"

He drops his head to my shoulder, his forehead pressing firmly against me, groaning, avoiding me as my body shakes.

"A while," he says, clearing his throat. My chest tightens so hard I can barely get a word out. I can already feel those dreaded fucking emotions swelling inside me.

I should stop. I should fucking stop asking because I'm getting close to something that scares me too much to really say, even with Thorn.

But I'm holding him, my arms draped around his shoulders, his cock deep inside me,



staring wide-eyed at this fucking picture as he meets the drop of my hips with a surge of his own.

“Thorn,” I cry out, trembling, half a question, half a pure response to the way he’s lodged so firmly inside me.

He rocks back to look at me, rattling the chair as I clutch at him. Another grind of my hips and his bottom lip drops. His entire face is red as he tries to keep himself together.

“I forgot,” he moans, his fingers digging deep into my thighs, the intense bite of pain eating at me.

“What? What do you mean you forgot?”

“I thought I’d taken them all down.” He chokes out, screwing his eyes closed in that way he does when he thinks he’s totally fucked up.

My entire body stiffens around him as I stare down at him, trying to process what he’s saying.

He never asks me for pictures. I’m always the one snapping photos of us when we’re out. Hell, I even changed his phone background myself.

I try to heave in a breath, but I’m already choking up.

I honestly thought there was a point where I couldn’t love a person more. Like there was a cutoff or a peak. I’d get to that peak and say, okay, I’m in love with you, that’s it.

But every single time I’m with Thorn, he fucking destroys me with shit like this.

I keep thinking we've found our limit. That we'd just go along as we are. Some days would be better or worse than others, but my feelings would mostly stay the same.

"You, um..." Thorn's gaze dips. "You've done some great shoots." He clears his throat. "And I really like the images."

No, he doesn't. He doesn't just like the images. That photo is dumb as fuck. I can just fucking tell it isn't the poses or the set or the brand or whatever excuse he might make if I ask him. He might tell me the truth as much as he can, but he hides so much from me that I have to find the right way to ask him.

"How long?"

He presses his lips together as the muscles of his jaw tense.

"Thorn, baby, how long have you had that photo for?"

He's groaning as his chest heaves. I shouldn't force him; I might make him close up even more. I have him pinned by his cock and I'm not letting up.

I roll my hips and he shudders again, his back falling into the chair, his body slack.

Because maybe he had the photo lying around in an old magazine or something. Maybe he found it online because Heinz refuse to remove it from their fucking online archives. Maybe he'd only had it sitting there for a few months since we started dating, and he's taken the time to put it in a little blue picture frame, so it had to be special.

I want to hear him say it. I need him to tell me.

"Three..."

“What?” I say too harshly as I squeeze my ass around him. I have to know.

He’s gasping, his expression too stark, wheezing under me. We’re reaching the danger zone. Shaking hands, pupils blown, his mouth opening and closing.

I grind on him, trying to bring us back down, sparks of pleasure whipping through me as he responds with a thrust that has my eyes rolling into the back of my head, but theres no escaping.

If I push him any harder, he might end up hyperventilating. I try as much as I can to watch out for it, to make sure he’s always surrounded by fucking peace because he deserves it so much after what he’s been through since he was a kid. But I need answers.

“Thorn,” I say, leaning forward to nudge my nose against his cheek, dropping kisses across his forehead, trying to sooth him even though both of us are trembling.

He opens his mouth just as I place a soft kiss on his brow above his glasses, pulling back to hear him properly.

“Three years,” he rasps, barely getting the words out. But they still come.

He coughs deeply enough that it vibrates through my body. Hes panting, looking up at me with fear etched into him, and it’s my fault, Ive done that to him And I’m too taken away to control myself.

“Fuck,” I say on a hushed breath. My trembles turn into shakes as he holds me, his nervous look boring into me. I lift my hands, cupping his face, my index fingers on his glasses so he can’t escape. “Fuck, Thorn. Three years?”

“Something like that,” he says quietly. “Though I didnt start feeling like this until our first shoot together.”

And then there's no stopping me.

I close my eyes, trying to force back the tears, but it's useless. I choke out a cry as Thorn's hand slides up from my thigh to stroke my neck. His arm under my knee keeps me in place.

"That's still two years, baby." I choke out. And I spent almost all of it treating him like shit. He made me so mad I would spend days beforehand planning of ways I could get a rise out of him, and then spend days afterwards being pissed off that I didn't. Whenever a shoot with him came up I'd get worked up about him for a week, and I didn't even realise why the fuck I was so obsessed with him.

And he's spent the whole time enduring me, watching me play out the same thing over and over again as I tried to get his attention. Even after all that, of all those ways I taunted and teased him, he wanted me. He still wants me.

Disappointment sinks through me at myself. I mean, I felt guilty when we started dating about what I'd done to him, especially after I found out about his mum. I'd apologised so many times to him since, and he keeps insisting it's okay.

And he's been feeling this way for years. Fucking years, and I've barely been able to handle it for four months.

"What's wrong?" he asks, his voice tinged with panic.

I've been so scared to tell my boyfriend that I love him and he has been waiting this long for me to wake the fuck up and notice him.

I've spent two months trying to find a right time, trying to figure out if I was telling him too soon, or even how the fuck I was even meant to tell him. And he'd been with me this entire time, not saying a single fucking word.

I'm hit with the weirdest mix of frustration, annoyance, and hardcore fucking awe that I'm with a man like this.

My grip tightens, squishing his cheeks as I glare at him.

"I love you," I gasp, clutching at him as if he's the only thing that's keeping me alive. "I love you so fucking much and I can't stand it. I can't fucking deal with how good you are, Thorn. I don't deserve you."

And he just stares at me, his face blank, not saying a single word. Even though I know he always needs a minute to process, it's the most terrifying minute of my life. I don't know what the fuck I'm supposed to do, so I shift my legs, moving around him, slowly fucking him to get him to at least react, and to give me something to hold on to.

He finally returns, cupping my cheek, and brushing away my tears with his thumb.

"You deserve everything," he says simply, as if that is enough to take away the realisation that he has spent three fucking years with that picture and I'm such a cunt that he's never had space to say anything. Or maybe he never would have if I hadn't had Hayden invite him on that shoot. Or if he hadn't messed it up. Or I hadn't dragged him back into the studio and fell for him in the space of a few hours because he is so fucking perfect that I still can't believe it.

"For fuck's sake, Thorn." I want to shout at him, to tell him off for hiding himself from me for this long, but he's busy wiping away my tears, kissing my cheeks, wrapping his huge body around mine as he brings me to his lips and thrusts up inside of me.

I gasp as his hand drops back to my thigh, moving me, grinding my ass as I fucking cry. I can't stop and I hate myself for it.

“I love you,” Thorn says so purely that I want to devour him just so I can keep him inside me and never let him go.

I didnt know it was even possible to be furious and completely in love with someone at the same time.

“I really love you, Luca.”

I laugh through my fucking tears as I fall on him. I dont ever want to run from him. Ive been trying to escape myself for too long and hes been waiting for me to turn to him.

Pulling his lips to mine, I search his face for something that will tell me he’s hiding from me, but it’s all there. It had been there from the start and I just hadn’t seen it until now.

“I know, baby. I know.” I say as I sink down onto him as far as I can. As we both come, I’m totally certain now that he’s what I’ve been waiting for all my life, and I’m never hiding from him again.