



# Bossed (Spicy Bites #1)

**Author:** *Loni Ree*

**Category:** Romance

**Description:** The boss. The temptation. The red-hot secret affair.

Hes my grumpy employer. Hes off-limits. So why cant I resist him?

I never expected to fall for Declan McDaid, the stern CEO of McDaid Security.

But one late night at the office changes everything.

Now, Im caught between professionalism and passion.

Can our forbidden affair survive the complications of mixing business with pleasure?

Will I risk it all for a chance at love with the most unlikely man?

Sparks fly in this steamy office romance full of tension, red-hot desire, and unexpected emotions.

Bossed is the first book in the Spicy Bites series. This scorching short read proves that even opposites can attract when desire ignites. Dont miss out on this irresistible journey from explosive lust to profound connection.

**Total Pages (Source):** 12

# Page 1

*Source Creation Date: July 20, 2025, 8:30 am*

DECLAN

The McDaid Security lobby is a meat locker.

The whole place smells like cold steel, lemon disinfectant, and the terror of the underprepared.

I'm three minutes early, which is three minutes later than I like to be, but my commute was sabotaged by a Prius rolling ten miles under the speed limit in the fast lane.

I take the stairs to the main entrance two at a time, boots hammering out a cadence on polished marble that Mrs. Thomas, the one true queen of admin before her grandbaby lured her into retirement, used to call my "goddamn war drums."

I still expect to see her behind the lobby desk, spine ramrod straight and reading glasses low on her nose, but it's been nine weeks since she left, and in that time, a parade of temp PAs has cycled through.

None lasted more than a week. I fired the last one on day two for confusing "urgent" with "eventually."

I steel myself for whatever new torment the latest temp might unleash upon me. Last week, I could barely hold back the overwhelming urge to throttle the irritating little fucker.

The first thing I notice is a pair of very nice calves, legs crossed with military

precision.

Then, a tailored skirt suit in navy, fitted and appropriate but not apologetic.

Finally, a woman who's giving me the kind of up-down you reserve for a misbehaving Rottweiler.

Oh hell. Lewis the incompetent is gone and a gorgeous angel is sitting in his place.

She's fucking young. I'd say somewhere in her mid-twenties. Her hair is dark and wild at the ends, but smooth and pulled back at the top, and her heart-shaped face gives her the girl-next-door look. The suit and sexy ass round glasses perched on her button nose turn my cock to stone.

She doesn't rise when I stop at the counter, just pivots slightly to face me head-on, eyes level with my own because she's sitting tall in the chair and I'm refusing to hunch down for anyone. Stand-off. I count five seconds. She doesn't blink.

I try intimidation, which works on ninety percent of people in this building. I give her the stare I perfected during four years in the Marines, four years in private ops, and three years running this fortress with a rep for zero tolerance.

Her response is a slow, deliberate flick of her gaze to my boots, then up to my face. "May I help you?" The "sir" is omitted with military precision.

Shocked to have this gorgeous woman stand up to me, I let the silence stretch. "I'm Declan McDaid. I own this place." I pause, letting her absorb that before asking, "Who the hell are you?"

She finally stands, heels clicking on the marble. She's not tall, but she uses every inch to her benefit. Her posture is a lesson in "fuck you," and she doesn't break eye

contact. “Natalie Hollister, Mr. McDaid. Your new PA.” Damn. She somehow manages to make my name sound like a swear word.

My jaw tightens. “I didn’t know I had a new PA.”

She cocks a brow. “You’ll have to take that up with your HR department, sir.”

The “sir” is delivered with the barest hint of snark. I remind myself not to take the bait, but my chest has that fluttering, pissed-off bird sensation I get before a fight. Fuck. I haven’t felt this alive in years.

“Where’s the temp I had last week?” I ask, figuring this little firecracker probably ate him for breakfast.

She shrugs, and the movement is so clean, I almost believe she’s relaxed. “He quit after you threw a stapler at his head,” she says, then adds, “He was worried your aim would improve.”

“I’d have hit the little fucker if I wanted to.” I defend my aim.

“Uh-huh.” She starts to turn away like the conversation’s over.

“Wait,” I bark. Not a request.

She halts and pivots. “Yes?”

“Who gave you access to the building at this hour?”

“Your new Head of Facilities. Trey, the ex-cop. He vouched for me.” She waits, shoulders squared, daring me to contradict.

I feel the muscle in my jaw flex again. “Do you know what time it is?”

She checks her old-school analog watch, which is the first point in her favor. “Zero-six-zero-nine,” she says. “Four minutes off your usual.”

“Don’t get comfortable.”

Her smile is quick, sharp, and gone. “I never do.”

I lean in, just enough to make her tilt her chin to keep the eye contact.

“My schedule. On my desk by six fifteen. Prioritize the congressional call, bump city council until after lunch. If there’s another meeting with those limp dicks at the public defender’s office, reschedule it to after hours.” I pause. “Got all that?”

She’s already pulling a tablet from the crook of her arm. “Congressional call at the top. City council after lunch. Public defender moved to post-close. Anything else?”

I want to say, “Let’s see how long you last,” but I bite it down. There’s no point in giving her ammunition.

“Just keep up,” I say, and walk past the counter. I don’t glance back, but I can feel her watching, measuring, running the same background check on me in her head. “And I might give you a chance to keep this position.”

Inside the private corridor, the temperature is even lower, and the lights have that fake-dawn hue that’s supposed to keep people awake but just makes me feel like I’m in a hospital.

I pull up short at my office, take one steadying breath, and clench the door handle until the metal creaks.

I can't shake the sense that I'm off my game.

\* \* \*

The quiet inside my office is absolute, sealed by two inches of soundproof glass and a decade of not tolerating bullshit.

I start pacing, six steps from the door to the window and back again, hands behind my back like a cartoon general.

Every step is supposed to bleed off the irritation, but all it does is wind the spring tighter.

I replay the lobby scene. Her voice. The way she actually looked me in the eye without flinching.

Trying to focus is a waste of my goddamn time.

I have an o-seven-thirty call with the mayor's office to discuss our security audit proposal for the new courthouse building.

Then immediately following, another call with the IT contractor who's probably overcharging me by twenty percent and laughing about it with his pals.

There's always an endless line of things to do, but the most pressing is figuring out Natalie Hollister and why she has this crazy effect on both my heart and my cock.

Those two organs haven't ever given me this kind of issue, so I'm a little thrown off my game.

I click on my laptop to check my calendar.

The congressional call is already highlighted, moved to the top just like I told her.

City council is bumped. There's a line item about the public defender meeting, annotated with "per your direction, rescheduled after close." I click into the notes.

"I assume you'll want a double bourbon on the rocks after," it reads.

Fucking hell. This woman already knows me.

At six-sixteen on the dot, there's a knock at the door. One knuckle. The short, precise sound sends a little spark through my blood.

"Come in," I bark, sharper than intended.

She strides into the room, a sleek tablet already in her grasp, her fingers delicately poised on the stylus as if ready to capture thoughts at a moment's notice.

She remains standing, a subtle assertion of her authority.

"You said you wanted to see the agenda," she states firmly, her voice devoid of any questioning lilt.

With a swift, fluid motion, she places the tablet on my desk, smoothly rotating it until the screen is angled toward me. Then, she retreats a step, her hands seamlessly folding behind her back, embodying a stance reminiscent of a soldier at parade rest.

I examine the first page with keen eyes.

It's flawless. Priorities have been meticulously reordered, leaving no room for unnecessary clutter.

Every inch of space is utilized efficiently, presenting just the schedule and essential supporting documents.

The briefing packets I had requested the previous night are already preloaded, waiting at my fingertips.

The memos are carefully redlined, and for each call, the talking points are neatly accompanied by links to pertinent news clips, ensuring I'm fully prepared.

"You accomplished all of this since six?" I inquire, a hint of admiration in my voice.

She shrugs, not casual, not defensive, just stating a fact. "I got in at five. Needed time to review the contracts from last week and your last three memos to the city manager." A half-beat pause. "Your writing style is quite bracing."

I arch a brow. "Didn't realize you were a literary critic."

She allows herself a tight smile. "I've read worse. I've written worse, probably. But your point comes through."

I look up. Her gaze is steady again. She's not staring me down, just refusing to drop her eyes first. It would be impressive if it weren't so annoying. And so goddamn appealing.

"Where'd you work last?" I ask, already knowing the answer but wanting to see how she delivers it.

"Lusk Holdings," she says. "Executive admin for their COO."

"They let you go?"



She shakes her head. “I let myself go. HR issue with the EVP. He liked to corner female employees at after-hours events. I told him to go fuck himself. He didn’t appreciate my candor.”

I stare, trying to figure out if she expects sympathy or if this is a warning shot. Her expression is flat, not a trace of wounded pride.

“You’ll find I don’t tolerate that sort of thing here,” I say.

She smiles, for real this time, and it transforms her face into something softer, but not softer in the way I’d like. “So I’ve read,” she says. “That’s why I applied.”

I scroll through the rest of her agenda. Every name and time are double-checked, links and call-in numbers triple-confirmed. The IT guy even has a sticky note attached to his time slot, which reads, “Possibly padding invoices. See attached spreadsheet for questionable line items.”

“Do you have a problem with authority, Ms. Hollister?” I say, and it comes out harsher than I mean.

She tilts her head, considering. “Not if it’s earned.”

And there’s the challenge. Not overt, but as clear as day.

I fold my arms across my chest and lean against the desk. “I run a tight ship here. If you can’t keep up or if you get in the way, you’re gone. No drama, no hard feelings.”

She nods like this is the most reasonable proposition in the world. “That’s my preference, too.”

We’re back to silence, the air charged but not uncomfortable. She’s not waiting to be

dismissed, and I realize I like that.

“Fine,” I say. “You can have a six-week trial period. Don’t make me regret it.”

She offers her hand, not for a shake but more as a symbolic gesture. “Looking forward to it,” she says.

I hesitate, then take her hand, grip firm. Her skin is warm and silky with short, well-manicured nails. Electricity courses down my spine, reminding me of the pesky feelings she causes. She lets go first and I breathe a sigh of relief.

She collects her tablet, pivots toward the door, then stops. “You should eat breakfast before your seven-thirty. Sugar crashes make you snappish.”

She says it without inflection, and before I can retort, she’s gone.

I sit in my chair, staring at the closed door. I’m not sure if I want to fire her, promote her, or fuck her until we’re too tired to argue. And for the first time in weeks, the idea of getting through a Monday doesn’t sound like a punishment.

This is going to be motherfucking interesting.

## Page 2

*Source Creation Date: July 20, 2025, 8:30 am*

NATALIE

I'm busily rearranging the files on my desktop when my new grouchy boss strides past my desk and mutters, "Bring the agenda." I grab the printout and tablet and hustle behind him. His sleek, cold office reminds me of an expensive plastic surgeon's office.

He gestures for me to sit but takes the seat closest to the door instead of his giant desk. I wonder if it's a power play, a test, or if he just likes being able to escape quickly.

"Go," he says, not looking up from his phone.

I read aloud the list of items I've discovered that require further investigation.

"There's a double entry for the software license fee," I announce, flipping through my own printout to the section marked with a bright yellow flag.

The paper rustles as I turn it, highlighting the irregularities.

"I cross-checked the invoice," I continue, "and noticed there's a fifty percent markup over the current market rate.

I've already arranged a call with their account manager and have shared the detailed talking points with you. "

He stares intently at the paper, his brows furrowed, then shifts his gaze to me, a hint

of disbelief in his eyes. "How on earth did you even catch that?"

I offer a nonchalant shrug, a small smile playing on my lips. "I simply read the invoice."

The expression on his face is a fascinating blend of shock and admiration, his eyebrows lifting slightly as he processes my words.

Suddenly, his phone buzzes loudly, vibrating insistently against the wooden surface of his desk.

He snatches it up with a swift motion, his voice booming as he barks into the line.

With a sharp gesture, he holds up a finger to silence me, signaling that this conversation demands his full attention.

As he paces back and forth, his eyes flicker back to me, and I feel something shocking and very unwelcome cut through me. Hunger for my grouchy boss.

The call ends and he sits again, silent, then gestures at the memo packet I prepped. "What's in there?"

"Background info for the congressional call. Clips of news coverage. The mayor's likely to bring up the contractor controversy, so I included the relevant statement from last year. And a quick readout on the city's response to that ransomware attack."

He flips through the sheets, faster and faster, then tosses them onto the table.

"Plus, I've highlighted the three clauses that need legal review. You could sign off now, but if you want less blowback, I'd wait until after the Congressional call." I keep my voice level, even though I know he's trying to catch me in some mistake.

He sits back, crosses his arms, and finally smiles. It's a dangerous smile, the kind you only see on apex predators ready to pounce.

"You're a lot better than the last PA," he says.

I ignore the compliment. "I'd like to survive the first week," I say instead.

He barks a laugh and shakes his head. "Good luck." He says it like he means it.

\* \* \*

By nine-thirty, I've wrangled four more phone calls, fielded a flower delivery intended for the last PA, and written a summary of his meetings that morning. I barely have time to hit the restroom or reapply lipstick before the city council liaison arrives, forty minutes early and radiating terror.

"I'm Natalie Hollister, Mr. McDaid's personal assistant," I say, my tone firm yet polite. "He's currently engaged on a call, but you're welcome to wait in the conference room. We have fresh coffee and a selection of pastries available."

The councilman, a haggard figure whose pallor suggests he's battling his third ulcer this year, opens his mouth to protest. However, I fix him with a pointed gaze that leaves no room for argument.

It's enough to send him retreating, his shoulders slumping slightly as he murmurs, "Thank you, Ms. Hollister," before scurrying into the chilly conference room.

I'm entering data in the shared drive when I feel a presence behind me. I glance over to find Declan leaning over my shoulder to point at something on the monitor. His arm brushes my own, and for a split second, I'm hyper-aware of the way his chest practically blankets my back.

“Why is there a delay on the perimeter upgrade contract?” he asks, his warm breath brushing against my ear. I don’t let myself shiver but it’s a close call.

“Because the supplier’s customs paperwork isn’t done. I emailed their rep yesterday and copied Trey on the correspondence.”

He studies the screen too closely for comfort. “Trey’s lazy as fuck. CC me next time.”

I glance up, and our eyes meet. His irises are so dark they’re almost black, and they are close enough for me to see the gold flecks at the edge. He doesn’t move away. He isn’t hitting on me; he’s testing for weakness, and when he doesn’t find it, he lingers just long enough to make a point.

He straightens, the heat of his body gone, and says, “You’re good at this.”

“Thank you, sir,” I say, not quite able to keep the sarcasm out of my voice. He smirks, like he heard it and approves.

He walks off. I sit there for a moment, letting my pulse slow down.

When the next meeting begins, Declan is all business.

His demeanor is sharp and focused while exuding an air of impatience that occasionally veers into abrasiveness.

Each time I pass him a document, I feel the fleeting brush of his fingers against mine, a jolt of electricity sparking through the air between us.

Once could easily be dismissed as an accident, but twice begins to form an intriguing pattern.

By the fourth time our hands collide, the heat of his touch lingers in my mind, and I find myself caught in a whirlwind of thoughts about what those strong fingers would feel like against my skin. The realization sends a flush of embarrassment through me, and I want to slap myself back to reality.

We're reviewing a security proposal when he snatches a sheet from my stack, only to toss it back a second later. "You missed a line in the city's bid," he snaps, tapping the page.

I don't even blink. "No, I crossed it out. That line's from the old request for proposal. They updated it last night." I grab the tablet, pull up the email, and hand it to him.

He reads, his eyes scanning the lines intently, then frowns deeply, creasing his brow before finally looking up at me. For the first time, he appears off-balance, as if the ground beneath him has shifted. "You're right," he admits, his voice carrying a note of grudging acceptance.

"I know," I respond, and even though I intend the words to be firm, they emerge softer, almost gentle.

Silence envelops us, not an uncomfortable hush, but one heavy with unspoken thoughts and emotions. His jaw clenches and unclenches as though he's wrestling with the urge to speak, yet unsure of the words. Ultimately, he opts for a simple nod, acknowledging the moment.

After the meeting, he follows me to the breakroom and stands there watching as I pour coffee. "Do you ever get flustered?" he asks, like it's a genuine question.

"Not unless someone's bleeding," I say, dropping a sugar cube into my mug.

His lips twitch. "Good. We need that around here."

\* \* \*

When noon rolls around, I'm barely holding it together.

He's everywhere—on calls, in meetings, hovering near my desk, always with some new crisis to triage or paperwork to review.

Each time we're in the same room, my awareness of him sharpens.

The way he sits with his legs sprawled and his hands steepled is seriously hot.

The slight rasp to his laugh when someone actually surprises him sends a shiver up my spine.

The scar on his right knuckle that catches the light when he taps the table for emphasis makes me curious as to where he got it.

I should be annoyed. I mean, he's rude, impatient, and impossible to please.

But I'm not. Or, I am, but only in the way that makes me want to lean in and argue more.

The more he pushes, the more I want to push back.

And that's starting to bleed into other thoughts: what it would feel like to be pinned against that glass wall, what he'd sound like in bed, and whether he's as bossy naked as he is in a boardroom.

I shake myself. This is not the plan. The plan was to impress him, get a solid reference, and move up the ladder somewhere less unhinged.



I pull up the next call on his calendar, dial it, and buzz his office. “Your two o’clock is ready,” I say.

He picks up, voice low and gruff. “Send them in.”

I stand, straighten my skirt, and ignore the tremor in my knees.

One more meeting, I promise myself. Then I’ll get a grip.

But when he walks past, so close I can smell that clean, spicy cologne, my hands shake just a little on the folder.

Goddammit, I think. This was not supposed to happen.

\* \* \*

By the time I’m done wrangling Declan’s inbox and cleaning up after a city council disaster, I’m running so hot that my lips buzz every time I close my mouth too hard.

I keep looking up from my keyboard, expecting to find him lurking behind my glass partition, but he’s gone into one of his closed-door rages with the IT contractor.

If I ever want to survive this job, I need to figure out how to reset my system before I do something reckless, like unbutton my blouse just to see if I can break his goddamn poker face.

At exactly thirteen-o-eight, I snag my purse and duck into the ladies’ room.

The McDaid Security ladies’ room is probably the nicest I’ve ever seen, with marble counters, gold fixtures, and spa-tier lighting.

I choose the stall at the end, lock it, and let my spine melt against the cool tile.

My hands shake just a little as I dig through my bag for anything to fixate on that isn't the heat in my stomach or the memory of Declan's hands on mine.

## Page 3

*Source Creation Date: July 20, 2025, 8:30 am*

I stand there, breathing slow and even, like I'm prepping for a presentation.

It takes almost a full minute for my pulse to drop under one hundred twenty.

I count tile grout lines. I try to list the names of every US President in order.

None of it works. All I can see is the way his mouth moved when he said, "You're good at this," like it was both a threat and a promise.

I want to scream. Instead, I press my palms to my cheeks, then force myself to unlock the stall and face the mirror.

My hair looks okay, but my skin is flushed, high on my cheeks and down my throat. I run cold water over my wrists until the tingling goes numb, then blot my face with a paper towel. The chill helps for maybe two seconds.

That's when I catch myself in the mirror and realize I'm still trembling, a livewire in a buttoned-up suit. If I don't get this out of my system, I'm going to melt down in front of the entire floor.

I stumble back into the stall, my legs trembling like a fucking earthquake, and collapse onto the closed toilet lid.

My skirt rides up my thighs, exposing the creamy skin of my inner legs, and I don't even bother to adjust it.

Fuck modesty. The air is thick with the scent of my own arousal, and I can feel the

slickness pooling between my thighs, soaking through my panties like I'm some kind of desperate slut. Which, let's be honest, I am right now.

I listen for footsteps outside, but it's dead fucking silent. Everyone's at lunch, stuffing their faces while I'm here, about to stuff something else entirely. No excuses left. No one's coming to save me from myself. Good.

I slide a hand under my skirt, my fingers trembling as they hook into the lace of my panties.

I yank them to the side, and the cool air hits my pussy like a slap.

I'm so fucking wet it's obscene. My juices are practically dripping down my thighs, and I can smell myself.

The heady mix of musk and desperation makes my clit throb like a heartbeat.

I bite down on my lip so hard I taste blood, just to keep from moaning loud enough to bring someone running to check on me.

I drag two fingers along my slit, slow and deliberate, savoring the way my pussy clenches around nothing, begging to be filled.

My clit is swollen, aching for attention, and I circle it with my fingertips, teasing myself until I'm panting hard enough to make myself dizzy.

I close my eyes, and the fantasy takes over, hot and immediate, like a porn reel playing in my head.

Declan slams the glass office door behind him.

His eyes fill with hunger as he stalks toward me.

He's wearing a fancy suit that clings to his broad shoulders and narrow waist, and I can see the outline of his cock straining against his slacks, thick and hard and ready to ruin me.

He grabs my wrist, pins it to the wall with one hand, and his other hand tangles in my hair, yanking my head back so hard it hurts.

His mouth crashes down on mine, rough and demanding, his tongue forcing its way past my lips like he owns me. And maybe he does.

He shoves my skirt up around my waist, no time for finesse, and I hear the rip of my tights as he tears them apart. He slams his fingers deep inside me before I can even gasp. They're thick, fast, and relentless, curling against the sweet spot that makes me see stars.

I'm making soft, pathetic whimpers that I'd be embarrassed about if I could think straight. He growls against my neck, his teeth sinking into my collarbone as he works me over, his fingers pistoning in and out of my dripping center.

"You're so fucking wet for me," he rasps, his voice low and rough like gravel. "You've been thinking about this all day, haven't you? Thinking about my cock filling you up, making you scream?"

I can't even answer as my hips buck against his hand while my pussy clenches around his fingers. He yanks my blouse open, sending buttons flying everywhere, and then his mouth moves down to my tits, biting and sucking until I'm writhing against him.

He pulls his fingers out of me, and I whine at the loss, but then he's unbuckling his

belt, shoving his slacks down just enough to free his cock. It's huge, thick, veiny, and glistening at the tip with pre-cum, and I can't wait to feel it splitting me open.

He grabs my hips, lifting me up and slamming me against the wall.

One hand wraps around my throat, not hard enough to hurt but enough to make me feel owned, controlled.

The other hand guides his cock to my entrance, and then he's pushing inside me, inch by agonizing inch, stretching me so wide I can't breathe.

I'm so stuffed full of him, and he groans like he's in pain, his hips snapping forward until he's buried to the hilt.

"Fuck," he growls, his breath hot against my ear. "You feel like heaven."

He starts fucking me in earnest then, his hips slamming into mine with a rhythm that's almost brutal.

My tits bounce with every thrust, and I can feel every inch of his hard cock as he drives into me over and over again.

My pussy is so wet it's practically squelching with every stroke, and I can feel a tight coil of pleasure building in my belly.

"Come for me," he demands, his voice rough and commanding. "I want to feel you drench my goddamn cock."

My orgasm hits me like a freight train, white-hot and all-consuming.

My pussy clenches hard around his cock like a vice as I scream his name but he

doesn't even pause.

Instead, he fucks me through it, his thrusts getting harder, faster, until he's growling my name and spilling inside me, his cum flooding my pussy in hot, sticky waves.

Back in the stall, I'm shaking so hard I can barely keep myself upright.

My fingers are still working my clit, fast and frantic now, chasing a second orgasm that's just out of reach.

My pussy throbs, aching for more, and I can't stop thinking about Declan's cock filling me up, stretching me wide open.

I'm so close. I rub one hard circle around my sensitive clit and another wave of pleasure so intense it feels like I'm being electrocuted flows through me.

My hips jerk off the toilet seat as I come again, my pussy pulsing around nothing as I bite down on my hand to keep from screaming.

When it's over, I'm in even worse shape than before. My thighs are slick with my own juices, my panties are ruined, and I'm breathing like I just ran a marathon. But at least I might get through the rest of the afternoon without jumping my boss.

I clean up with a handful of toilet paper, then stand and fix my skirt. I make myself look in the mirror again. I look exactly the same as before, but now my eyes have that heavy, post-release glaze, and my lips are swollen from biting them.

I blot my face with another paper towel, reapply lipstick, and pin my hair back with the emergency clip I keep for bad days. My reflection is cool, crisp, and fully in control. Nobody would ever guess I just came in the bathroom thinking about my boss.

I leave the ladies' room with my head high, striding past an admin who barely glances up. Back at my desk, I dial up the next conference call, ignoring the vibration in my bones.

The only thing more dangerous than working for Declan McDaid, I realize, is wanting him. And I want him so bad, I'm already counting the hours until I see him again.



## Page 4

*Source Creation Date: July 20, 2025, 8:30 am*

DECLAN

Wednesday hits me in the face like a flashbang.

I'm five minutes deep in a conference call with a tech billionaire who treats human resources like a vending machine when Natalie walks in carrying three boxes.

I notice every goddamn thing about her. If she notices the way I'm tracking her, she doesn't let on.

She sets the boxes down on the table with a muted thud, then leans into my ear and whispers, "Client files for the security proposal. Also, your one o'clock moved up thirty minutes."

Her warm breath brushes against my skin, causing my jaw to clench. My cock's been semi-hard for days, ever since the first meeting, but now it goes from at-ease to full salute. I shift in my chair to hide it, trying to focus on the call, but my brain's got other ideas.

As the arrogant asshole drones on about "synergy" and "horizontal integration," I'm barely listening.

Natalie bends over a side table, arranging paperwork, and I get a full view of her round, tight ass outlined perfectly by her skirt.

My hands clench the edge of the table. She glances over her shoulder and catches me staring.

No smirk, no raised brow, just a split-second of direct eye contact.

I grind my teeth and stab at the mute button. “Are we done with the setup?” I snap, more harshly than necessary.

She straightens and gives me this blank, polite look. “Two minutes.” Then she’s right back to work, hips swaying in a way that feels deliberate. Fuck. I’m going to have a goddamn aneurysm.

She finishes, slides into the seat next to mine, and flips her hair back so it brushes the side of my neck. It’s accidental, but my whole body reacts like I just got hit with a motherfucking cattle prod.

When my client finally hangs up, I kill the call. “We need to get through these files before lunch,” I manage to say, and she nods, laser-focused.

But all I can think about is the way her delicate perfume lingers.

There’s a hunger flowing through my veins that refuses to fade.

I shift again, try to will it away, but she uncaps a pen and starts scribbling notes with one hand wrapped tight around the barrel.

I picture those fingers on my cock, nails scraping lightly up the shaft, and I bite down on my cheek until I taste blood.

“Mr. McDaid?” she says, catching me zoning out. Her face is innocent, but her eyes say she knows exactly what she’s doing.

“What?” I bark, then instantly regret it. “Sorry. Long week.”

She nods. “Do you want to lead on the scope of work or should I?”

“You do it.” I need to get myself under control, and the only thoughts going through my mind are fantasies of her curvy little ass naked on the conference room table.

She does, and it’s fast, efficient, and brutal.

She tears through the spec sheets and vendor profiles, cross-referencing numbers with impressive speed.

I barely track it. I’m staring at the line of her jaw, the way she bites her bottom lip when she concentrates.

My hand drums out a rhythm on the desk, and it takes me three full minutes to realize it’s in sync with the motion of her legs crossing and uncrossing under the table.

At one point, she leans over to point out a highlighted paragraph, and her arm brushes my own, just a glancing touch, but it feels like a shot of electricity straight to my bloodstream.

My cock jumps in my pants, so hard it’s physically painful.

I suppress a groan and shuffle the files in front of me as a shield.

She doesn’t say anything, just glances at my hands, then back to the paper. I know she knows. I want her to say something, call me out, break the tension so I can at least yell, but she just keeps reading.

I look away, try to focus on the words, but my brain is shot.

Instead, my fantasies kick into high gear.

In my mind, Natalie kneels under this table and yanks my belt open with those quick, precise hands.

The next thing I know, her warm, wet, and merciless mouth closes around my cock.

She doesn't look up, not even when I grab a fistful of her hair and hold her in place.

I force her to take it, and she does. She smiles around my cock, and I can feel myself pulse, right there in the fantasy.

I realize I'm gripping the edge of the table hard enough to turn my knuckles stark white. I force myself back to the present, where she's neatly stacking the finished reports.

"We can push the vendor call to tomorrow if you need time to review the notes," she says. Her tone is neutral, but the set of her mouth is not.

"No, let's do it now," I say, just to prove I'm not totally fucked in the head. Which is a lie. I am one hundred percent fucked in the head.

She gives me the number and I punch it in.

The call goes smoothly since she fields most of the questions, making the vendor rep squirm with the same polite aggression I once saw a sergeant use on a raw recruit.

I don't remember a word of it. I'm just staring at the way her throat moves when she talks and the faint shimmer of sweat on her collarbone.

As the call concludes, she rises gracefully and extends her arm toward the top shelf of the credenza, her movements fluid and precise.

Her blouse shifts slightly, offering a brief glimpse of her pale, delicate skin and the elegant contour of her waist. The sight is so captivating that I find myself almost involuntarily reaching out, tempted to trace the gentle curve with my fingertips.

To restrain myself, I press my hands firmly against my thighs, anchoring them in place.

To cool my jets, I grab my water bottle and drain it in two gulps. Still hot and thirsty for her.

She sits back down and starts organizing the next set of files. There's a sticky note on one that says, "Needs boss approval." She peels it off and sticks it to my shirt pocket.

"You're the boss," she says low.

I look down at the note, then up at her. Our faces are close. I can see the flecks of gold in her brown eyes. I want to slam my mouth against hers, bite her lip until she bleeds, but I don't. Instead, I take the note and crumple it in my fist.

"Anything else?" I ask, and my voice sounds like gravel in a cement mixer.

She smiles, small and sharp. "That covers the first review."

"Fine. Take a break," I say, and she rises, gliding out with the same goddamn perfect posture.

The door closes and I let out the breath I've been holding since she walked in. My cock is still hard. I haven't ever been this worked up.

I curse under my breath, shove the files into a neat pile, and call the next meeting early, just so I can stop thinking about her. It doesn't work. Every second she's not in

the room, I'm counting down until she's back.

\* \* \*

Mid-afternoon, there's a budget review with HR and IT.

The HR guy drones on for a while, but I can't focus.

Natalie's sitting across from me this time, taking notes.

Her perfume smells a little different. Now, it's more musky, almost spicy.

I picture licking it off her neck. I can already imagine what her skin will taste like.

Fuck. I wonder if she'd let me bend her over this very table.

My eyes flicker to her hands again, tapping out notes on her tablet, her nails short and practical. I think about how those hands would feel on my thighs, nails digging in, scraping marks down my back. These inconvenient motherfucking fantasies won't let up.

At one point, she looks up and catches me staring again. Her eyes go wide for a second, then she looks down, and I swear her cheeks flush just a little. It's enough to break my composure.

I interrupt the HR guy mid-sentence. "Unless there's something you need urgently, I think this can wait until next week."

He glances at Natalie like she's going to overrule me. She just nods, stone-faced, and says, "We'll reschedule."

The meeting adjourns. The room empties. Quiet. Natalie finishes tapping her notes, stands, and gathers her things. She's halfway to the door before I say, "Hold up."

She turns, closes the door quietly behind her, and stands with her back to it, folder clutched to her chest as if it might stop a bullet.

I want to fuck her against that goddamn door, but what comes out is, "You don't hesitate much, do you?"

She weighs this before responding, "I prep. I don't like surprises."

I step closer. "Good." I never liked surprises much either until Natalie walked in the door and turned my life upside down and inside out.

## Page 5

*Source Creation Date: July 20, 2025, 8:30 am*

DECLAN

It's Friday and I'm losing my goddamn mind.

Here I am, mid-afternoon in the fucking conference room, actively hallucinating about what it would feel like to shove my cock deep in my PA's sweet, little pussy.

She's wearing this soft blue blouse today, tucked into a skirt that rides just this side of acceptable for professional settings.

Every time she bends to pick up a paper or reaches for her phone, I have to dig my fingernails into my palms to keep from reaching for her.

She never breaks character, never lets the mask slip, but I see the way her pupils dilate, the flush under her skin when we lock eyes.

I see the way she avoids sitting directly next to me unless it's necessary.

I see it all, and it makes me want to eat her alive.

She's halfway through presenting a proposal to the IT team when Harris Smith, who has a wandering gaze, leans forward and lets his eyes drag all the way from her face to her hips and back. The fucker licks his lips. It's not even subtle. It's like he wants me to see him do it.

I have a fleeting fantasy of yanking Harris by his tie, hauling him across the conference table, and slamming his face into the neat stack of project reports.



I want to say something. I want to rip his tongue out and make him apologize to her on his knees, but I can't, because that's not how grown men behave in offices, and because she's perfectly capable of handling it herself.

She does, too. She pivots toward him and hits him with this icy, polite smile that is all teeth. "Is there something you need clarified, Mr. Smith?" she asks, her tone so icy you can feel the temperature in the room drop several degrees.

Smith recoils, grunts something about line items, and stares into his coffee mug for the rest of the meeting. I catch her eye and she gives me a look like, "Handled, boss." It's smug, and she's right, but it only makes me want her more.

She's fucking magnificent. And I'm going to self-destruct if I don't do something about it soon.

I let the meeting run another fifteen minutes, just to make everyone squirm, but mostly to see if Natalie will ever look at me again. She doesn't. Not once. When the last agenda item is dead, I dismiss everyone, and Smith is the first to scuttle out.

Natalie stands to collect the folders. "Mr. McDaid, do you want a copy of the?"

I don't wait. I cross the room, close the door, and click the lock shut.

She freezes, folders tight against her chest. "Sir?" she breathes out. Her pulse is visible at the hollow of her throat, jumping with every beat.

I could play it off, act like there's a "business matter" or some scheduling issue, but I'm done pretending. I'm sick of the cold, empty nights dreaming about her.

I move closer, crowding her against the conference table. She doesn't back away, but her breathing turns shallow and fast, eyes locked on mine. There's a moment of

perfect, unbearable silence.

“Natalie,” I say, and my voice comes out like gravel. “Have you ever wanted something so bad you can’t sleep? Can’t think? Can barely keep it together long enough to do your goddamn job?”

She nods, a faint shiver coursing through her body, as if a cool breeze had swept over her. “Yes, sir,” she responds, her voice barely a whisper.

I gently take the folders from her hands, feeling the weight of the moment, and place them on the table with a deliberate motion. “Say it,” I urge, my gaze steady and unwavering.

She swallows hard, her throat working to form the words. “I want you, Mr. McDaid,” she confesses, her voice carrying a mixture of vulnerability and determination.

The sound she makes when I kiss her is something between a whimper and a growl. Her hands go straight for my hair, yanking me closer, and it’s so fierce I almost bite her lip.

There’s no softness here, no tentative exploration. It’s raw, primal, and fucking filthy. Our tongues clash, teeth scraping, and I can taste the days of pent-up hunger on her breath. She’s trembling, but it’s not from fear. It’s pure, unadulterated lust.

I back her up against the glass wall, the cool surface pressing into her back as I hoist her onto the edge of the table.

Her skirt rides up, and fuck me, her thighs are smooth, perfect, and begging for my touch.

I run my hand along the inside of one, my fingertips skimming higher, higher, until I

feel the heat radiating from her pussy.

She's already soaked, her slickness coating my fingers as I tease her.

"Jesus Christ, you're fucking drenched," I growl, my voice low and rough.

She laughs, breathless and wild, and her hand cups my cock through my pants, squeezing hard enough to make my knees buckle. "You're not exactly subtle either, sir," she teases, her voice dripping with mischief.

"You drive me fucking insane," I snarl, and I don't waste another second.

I push her panties aside, my fingers sliding into her wetness with ease.

She gasps, biting her own lip to stifle a moan, but I don't let her hold back.

I curl my fingers inside her, finding that sweet spot that makes her hips jerk and her breath hitch.

"Declan," she breathes, and fuck, it's the first time she's said my name. It's like a punch to the gut, and I almost lose it right there. My heart squeezes in my chest, something changing deep inside my soul, and I have the feeling I'll never be the same again.

I pull back just enough to look her in the eye, my fingers still buried deep inside her. "Is this what you want?" I ask, my voice rough with need. I'm not going to take her like this unless she says it, out loud, where anyone could walk in and hear.

She nods, frantic, and grabs my wrist, pressing my fingers deeper. "Yes. Please. Don't stop."

I growl, actually fucking growl, and drop to my knees.

Her thighs part for me like it's the most natural thing in the world.

The first taste of her is so fucking sweet I almost black out.

I bury my face between her legs, licking and sucking her clit while my fingers fuck her hard and deep.

She fists her hand in my hair and drags me closer.

She comes fast, loud, not even pretending to hold it in.

Her hips buck against my mouth, and she clamps down on my hand so tight I feel the pulse of her orgasm from wrist to shoulder.

The sound of it echoes in the glass-and-steel conference room, and if anyone is outside, they'll hear every fucking second.

But I'm not done with her. Not even close.

I stand up, my cock straining against my pants, and I yank them down just enough to free myself. She's still panting, her chest heaving, but her eyes are locked on mine, dark with hunger. I grab her hips and pull her to the edge of the table, lining myself up with her dripping pussy.

"You want more?" I ask, my voice a low growl.

"Yes," she gasps, her nails digging into my arms. "Fuck me, Declan."

I don't need to be told twice. I thrust into her hard and fast, burying myself to the hilt

in one smooth motion.

She cries out, her back arching as I start to move, each thrust deeper and harder than the last. Her pussy is so fucking tight, so wet, and I can feel her clenching around me with every stroke.

“You feel so fucking good,” I groan, my hands gripping her hips as I fuck her relentlessly. “So fucking tight.”

She moans, her head falling back as I pound into her, the sound of skin slapping against skin filling the room. I can feel her getting close again, her body trembling as she clenches around me. I reach between us, my thumb finding her clit and rubbing it in tight circles.

“Come for me,” I growl, my voice rough with need. “Come on my cock.”

She does, screaming my name as she shatters around me. Her pussy clenches me so tight it almost hurts, and I can’t hold back anymore. I thrust into her one last time, deep and hard, and I come with a roar, filling her up as she rides out her own orgasm.

We collapse against each other, both of us panting and trembling. Her legs are still wrapped around me, and I can feel her heartbeat racing against my chest.

“Holy cow,” she breathes, her voice shaky. “That was... insane.”

I laugh, low and rough, and press a kiss to her forehead. “You’re fucking incredible,” I tell her, and I mean it.

But even as we catch our breath, I can feel the heat building between us again. One round isn’t going to be even close to enough.

For a minute, neither of us moves. The world is silent except for the sound of our breathing and the faint hum of the air conditioning.

Finally, she rolls onto her side and looks at me. Her glasses are crooked, her lipstick is smeared, and she's never looked hotter. "That was unprofessional," she says, deadpan.

I wipe the back of my hand across my mouth and laugh, sudden and loud. "Best meeting I've had in years," I tell her.

She grins, then pushes up on shaky elbows and starts gathering her clothes. "Should we... talk about this?"

I shake my head. "Not yet," I say. "Not until I'm sure I haven't dreamed it."

She buttons her blouse, fixes her hair, and gives me a long, searching look. "You're not going to fire me, are you?"

I tuck myself back into my pants, zip up, and close the distance between us. "If I fired you, who else would keep me in line?"

She rolls her eyes, but she's smiling. "You're a mess, Mr. McDaid."

I lean in, kiss her one more time, softer now. "You have no idea, Ms. Hollister."

She laughs, and the sound is sunlight after a long, black winter.

\* \* \*

By five o'clock, the office is empty except for the cleaning crew. I sit at my desk, staring at the city skyline, feeling alive in a way I haven't since before the Marines.

My phone buzzes and I glance down to find a message from Natalie.

Natalie

Same time Monday?

Me

Don't be late. We've got a lot to catch up on.

She replies with a single thumbs-up emoji.

I shut off my computer, stretch, and let the anticipation pool in my belly. For the first time in years, I'm looking forward to Monday.

I think, maybe, this is what it means to be at war with your own fucking heart. And for once, I don't care if I lose.

## Page 6

*Source Creation Date: July 20, 2025, 8:30 am*

NATALIE

Monday morning, and the air at McDaid Security is thick with disinfectant and denial. My phone dings three times before I even hit the lobby. The first is a calendar reminder, the second is a threat from our IT contractor, and the third is a terse all-caps text from the man himself.

The Boss

COME STRAIGHT TO MY OFFICE.

It's seven o' two, and I'm already at my desk, hair brushed so smooth you could ice skate on it.

I've worn my most boring blouse and buttoned it so high it might double as a nun's collar.

I'm also wearing new lipstick. It's a shade called "neutral assertion," which is total bullshit, because every time I catch my reflection, I remember Friday and my knees get wobbly.

There's a flicker of motion in my periphery, a shadow that moves with military precision.

He's across the atrium, already scanning the lobby.

He wears a black suit like it's body armor, his gait as loose and predatory as a wolf in



a tie.

His beard is trimmed shorter than last week, but the scar on his knuckle is the same.

It flexes when he clenches his fist, which he does as soon as he spots me.

I pretend not to notice, but I do. I notice everything. He keeps walking, not a word, but as he passes my desk, I hear the low, vibrating growl of his voice: “My office, ten.” Then he’s gone, trailing the sharp scent of his aftershave and pure command.

I check my pulse and find it beating at one-thirty, which is normal for me any time Declan McDaid is around.

Nine minutes and thirty short seconds later, I’m standing outside his door, my heart pounding like a jackhammer in my chest. My hand hovers over the wood, trembling embarrassingly.

I knock, and his deep, commanding voice slices through the air. “Come in.”

Taking a deep breath, I push the door open to find him sitting behind his desk like the king of the corporate jungle. His suit is immaculate, tailored to hug every inch of his broad shoulders and chest.

“Hi,” I say, my voice barely above a whisper as I wonder if I just dreamed what happened Friday. God, I hope not. My pussy is already throbbing, slick with anticipation, and I haven’t even taken a full step into the room.

He stands up, and fuck me sideways, he’s so damn tall. His hands go to his tie, and he starts pulling at it, his eyes locked on mine like a predator sizing up its prey. My breath hitches, and I can feel my nipples hardening under my blouse, begging for his touch.

“Close the door,” he says, his voice low and gravelly. I obey, my fingers fumbling with the handle before I finally manage to shut it. The click of the lock echoes in the room, and I swear I can hear my own heartbeat in my ears.

He steps around the desk, and I can see the bulge in his pants, straining against the fabric like it’s trying to break free. My mouth waters as I remember what’s hiding in there. His cock is so thick, hard, and ready to ruin me in the best way possible.

“We’re not going to pretend Friday didn’t happen,” he growls, sending shivers down my spine. He prowls over to me and stands so close I can smell the faint scent of his cologne mixed with something darker, more primal.

“No,” I whisper, my voice trembling. “We’re not.”

His hand reaches out, and I sigh as his fingers brush against my cheek. They’re warm, calloused, and they send a jolt of electricity straight to my clit. He tilts my chin up, forcing me to look into his dark and hungry eyes. What I see shining from his gaze causes my knees to go weak.

“Good,” he murmurs, his lips brushing against mine in a soft, almost cruel kiss.

As his tongue slides into my mouth like he owns it, I grip his shoulders for dear life.

Damn. My heart squeezes in a funny way that’s terrifying.

Having hot, monkey sex with my boss is one thing, but actually falling for him is something else.

His hands move all over my body, starting at my waist and moving to my ass then my tits, and I can’t think straight.

He pulls my blouse open with a force that makes me gasp.

Buttons scatter across the floor, and I don't give a damn because his mouth moves to my neck, sucking and biting in a way that's going to leave marks I'll have to explain later.

"Please," I whimper as his hands find my bra, unhooking it with practiced ease.

My tits spill out, and he groans, his mouth latching onto one nipple while his fingers pinch and twist the other.

The pain is sharp, delicious, and it makes me arch into him.

I should be embarrassed that my pussy is so wet I can feel it soaking through my panties, but my brain isn't firing.

He pulls back for a moment, his eyes raking over my body like he's memorizing every inch. "On the desk," he commands, and I don't hesitate. I climb onto it, my skirt riding up to expose my thighs, and he's there in an instant, pushing my legs apart with a force that makes me gasp.

His fingers slide under the edge of my panties, and I can feel how wet I am, how ready.

He growls, low and deep, and then he's pulling them down, tossing them aside like they're nothing.

His mouth is on me in an instant, his tongue lapping at my clit like it's the sweetest fucking thing he's ever tasted.

"Oh God," I moan, my hands tangling in his hair as he eats me out like a man

possessed. His tongue is relentless, flicking and circling in ways that make me see stars. I can feel the pressure building, coiling tight in my belly, and I know I'm so close.

But then he stops, pulling back with a smirk that makes me want to scream. "Not yet," he says, his voice rough with need.

He stands up, unbuckling his belt quickly, making my head spin. His thick, hard cock springs free and I can't help but reach for it. I wrap my hand around the base and give it a slow stroke.

He groans and thrusts deeper into my hand.

Before I know it, he pushes me back onto the desk and spreads my legs wide.

The head of his cock presses against my entrance, and I can feel how wet I am, how ready.

I hold my breath as he slides in slowly, inch by torturous inch, until he's buried to the hilt.

"Fuck me," I gasp, my nails digging into his shoulders as he starts to move. His thrusts are deep and hard, each one hitting the spot inside me that makes me see stars.

"Come for me," he growls, his voice rough with need. And I do, my body convulsing around him as wave after wave of pleasure crashes over me. He follows me over the edge, his cock pulsing inside me as he fills me up with everything he's got.

We collapse onto the desk, a tangled mess of limbs and sweat and cum. His breath is hot against my neck, and I can feel his heart pounding against my chest.

“We’re definitely not pretending this didn’t happen,” he murmurs, his voice soft but firm.

“No,” I agree, my voice barely above a whisper. “We’re not.”

\* \* \*

The next two hours are a slow-motion trainwreck as I attempt to put on my “work” face and ignore the electricity pulsing between us.

Every time he walks past my cubicle, the fine hairs on my arms stand at attention.

He barks orders with his usual snarl—“Print those contracts, Hollister,” “Conference room, five,”—and I volley them right back.

By eleven, I’ve edited three decks, fact-checked six pages of legal jargon, and survived two meetings with only minor bloodshed. The city council liaison tries to corner me by the Keurig, his eyes flicking to my blouse, but before he can say a word, Declan appears at my elbow.

“Ms. Hollister,” he says, voice low. “Walk with me.”

The liaison melts away. I walk at his side, my heels echoing his boot steps in perfect counterpoint.

He never looks directly at me, but as we approach the glass-walled conference room, he leans just close enough to say, “You’re good at keeping secrets.” His breath is hot on my ear, and the words slide into me like a knife.

“Part of the job description, I think,” I answer, keeping my tone as cool as possible.

He almost, almost smiles.

We hit the conference room and he's back to business, bulldozing through the agenda with zero patience for small talk. But I see the way his fingers drum against the table whenever I speak, and how he tracks every motion, every shift in my seat.

Lunch is a bottle of Smart Water and a Luna bar. He skips food altogether, just stands in his office, staring out at the city, fists clenched behind his back. I catch him doing this three times. By two-thirty, I'm convinced he's going to implode.

\* \* \*

At four, the admin pool starts thinning.

By five, it's just me, Declan, and the ghost of Mrs. Thomas, whose retirement photo still sits at the front desk like a guardian spirit.

I begin closing down for the day, double-checking his next-day calendar, when he appears in my doorway.

He's leaning on the frame, arms folded. He's lost his tie and unhooked the top button of his shirt.

He doesn't knock. He just says, "You're staying late."

I look at the stack of files on my desk. "Is it a problem with the software invoices?"

"No." He shakes his head, jaw flexing. "I need to talk to you."

"Of course, Declan," I say, standing up. Since it's after work hours, I use his first name and hold my breath, waiting to see if he objects. When he lets it slide, I slowly

exhale.

“I wanted to set some ground rules between us.” He runs his finger over his bottom lip. “Because you’re the best goddamn PA I’ve had since Margaret retired and I don’t want our sexual relationship to interfere with our work relationship.”

“Okay.”

He seems almost relieved that I didn’t make a joke or blush or flinch. “First rule,” he says, and steps fully into the room, shutting the door behind him with a soft click, “neither of us brings it into meetings, into email, or anywhere the rest of the company could see it.”

“Fine.” I nod. It’s easier than I thought it would be.

“Second,” he says, searching my face for any sign of rebellion, “if you ever get tired of this, or even think you want to stop, you say so. I’ll listen. No drama, no reprisal.”

That one lands differently. I can’t see ever getting tired of this, but I keep that little tidbit to myself. Instead, I just say, “I agree.”

He nods, silent for a breath or two longer than I expect.

There’s a knot in his jaw like he wants to say more, but the words don’t come.

I wonder, for a heartbeat, what would happen if I reached out and ran my thumb over the angry curve of his mouth.

Instead, I button my jacket and reach for the stack of folders beside the monitor.

He opens the door to see me out, but before I step past him, he catches my wrist

gently. "Third rule," he says, voice pitched so low it's more vibration than sound, "you can always tell me if I'm being an asshole."

I grin broadly, unable to suppress the amusement bubbling up inside me. "That will be an ongoing theme, I'm sure," I tease, my voice light and playful.

He's trying hard not to smile, a subtle twitch at the corners of his mouth betraying his effort.

It's as if he's forgotten how, like this simple act of smiling is foreign to him.

"Maybe," he concedes, his voice low and smooth.

His eyes, deep and mysterious, are so dark they nearly swallow all light, rendering them almost black in the dim room.

"Since we've got that all cleared up," I relax a little, "I think we should also agree to keep our hands to ourselves during working hours." I propose the rule, my gaze steady and challenging, like a chess player daring their opponent to make the next move.

"Agreed," he responds promptly, without a flicker of doubt, his tone firm and resolute, like a knight accepting a noble quest.

Over the next week, we slip into a well-worn routine, spending our days side by side, diligently focused on our tasks.

It's as if an invisible line separates us, a silent agreement holding us in check.

The air around us hums with unspoken tension, yet we move through our work seamlessly, as if nothing is simmering beneath the surface.



Then we spend the evenings upstairs in his penthouse exploring this insane connection between us. Several times, I have to bite my tongue to keep from blurting out my growing feelings for him.

## Page 7

*Source Creation Date: July 20, 2025, 8:30 am*

DECLAN

It's been one hell of a day, and I'm dying for her. Fuck. It's been a crazy week, and I'm ready for two whole days off with Natalie. In Natalie. Surrounded by everything Natalie. Goddamn. She's managed to wiggle her way under my armor and into my heart.

The elevator doors slide shut with a soft hiss, and I'm alone with the hum of machinery and the faint scent of Natalie's perfume lingering in the air.

My thumb hovers over the keypad, scanning for the thirty-eighth floor.

The penthouse is my fucking sanctuary, my lair, and now, my goddamn playground.

The city sprawls below, a glittering mess of neon and shadows, but up here, it's just me and the anticipation of what's coming.

Natalie's heels click against the marble floor exactly one minute after my "come up" text.

She's a fucking vision in that navy suit, her skirt hugging her hips like it was tailor-made to drive me insane.

Her hair's pulled back tight, her face all business, but I know better.

I know the way her breath hitches when I'm inside her, the way her nails dig into my skin like she's trying to carve her name into my flesh.

She stops three feet from me, drops her bag with surgical precision, and meets my gaze.

There's a pulse in her neck, a tiny SOS I want to lick, bite, and claim.

"Good evening, sir," she says, and fuck, that word does scary things to me.

It's a fucking trigger, a switch that flips something primal in my brain.

"Good evening," I reply, my voice low and rough. I open the bedroom door and wait as she walks in first. "Strip." I can't wait another second to have her soothe the spot deep in my soul only she can reach.

She doesn't hesitate. Her blazer comes off first, sliding down her arms with a whisper of fabric.

She drapes it over the back of a chair, her movements deliberate, calculated.

Her blouse is next, pale blue and innocent-looking, but under the candlelight, it clings to her skin like a second layer.

She unfastens the buttons one at a time, her eyes locked on mine, daring me to look away. News flash, I don't.

"Slower," I growl, and she obeys, her fingers trembling just enough to make my cock twitch.

When she shrugs the blouse off, her tits push against the cups of her plain black bra, and I swear I can see her nipples hardening through the fabric.

She stands there, exposed and waiting, her chest rising and falling with every breath.

“Skirt,” I command, my voice tight with restraint.

She unzips it, lets it fall to the floor, and steps out of it.

Her panties match the bra, and her legs are bare except for the faint, healing lines on her thighs.

Not my marks but old scars from a car accident she had in high school.

I have the urge to kiss them, to trace them with my tongue, but I hold back.

Though my words say this is only sex, in my heart, I know it’s so much more.

This relationship with Natalie is everything.

She stands before me in her underwear, shoulders squared, jaw set. I walk a slow circle around her, savoring the tension. My hands never touch, but the air between us is charged enough to set my hair on end. At her back, I let my breath warm her spine. Her skin pebbles in gooseflesh.

“On the bed,” I say, and she moves.

She sits on the edge of the navy silk sheets and squares her shoulders. Ready for me.

I retrieve the riding crop from its place by the headboard. She sees it and her lips part, but she doesn’t flinch.

“Do you trust me?” I ask, voice low.

She doesn’t answer. Instead, she tips her chin up, biting her bottom lip.

I make her wait several seconds while the sound of our breathing fills the room.

The candles hanging on the wall slowly drip was as I whisper, "You're fucking gorgeous."

She spreads her thighs apart, hands behind her back. Her eyes shine. There's a tremor in her left shoulder, and I know it's not fear. It's need.

I run the leather tip of the crop over her collarbone and down the swell of her cleavage. Her nipples harden instantly as I tap the right one.

She shivers and moans. The sound goes straight to my cock, and I have to count backward from one hundred to cool my goddamn jets before I go off like a teenager.

As I kneel on the bed behind her, the room fills with a tense silence, broken only by the soft rustle of fabric and our breathing.

I slide the smooth, cool leather of the crop down her spine, feeling her shiver beneath its touch, and tap once, lightly, at the base, where her back curves gracefully.

She inhales sharply, her breath catching in the quiet.

"Count," I command, my voice steady and low.

"One," she whispers, her voice barely audible.

I deliver the next tap just above the curve of her ass, with a touch more force. "Two," she counts, her voice a little stronger yet still tinged with anticipation.

I continue the rhythm, making her count to ten. Each tap lands with increasing intensity, and by the time I reach the final one, she's breathing in shallow, quivering

gasps, her resolve unwavering as she holds her position, her body taut like a drawn bowstring.

I toss the crop onto the nightstand, where it lands with a soft thud, and pull her curvy body back against me.

My palms glide over her ribs, feeling the warmth of her skin beneath my fingers, before traveling upwards to cradle her breasts.

I squeeze, starting with a gentle pressure, then increasing it, feeling the soft resilience beneath my hands.

She releases a soft, involuntary sound, not quite a moan, more like the sigh of wind through a crack in the door, and melts back against my body.

"Good girl," I murmur, my lips brushing against the delicate skin behind her ear, the warmth of my breath mingling with the faint scent of her hair.

She melts, her tension slipping away like snow under the first rays of spring sunlight.

I move back a little bit and move her forward onto all fours, then hook my fingers in her panties and slide them off. Her pussy is slick and pink, the lips flushed from anticipation. I spread her knees further apart, then slide two fingers in, slow and steady.

She gasps, arching her back. I work her with my left hand, thumb flicking her clit in a rhythm that matches her breath. My right hand snakes up and laces into her hair, pulling gently to keep her head up.

She's wet and hot and clenching around my fingers. I fuck her slow, never losing the tempo, and she starts to whimper with every thrust.

I release her hair, shift my angle, and replace my fingers with my cock. She doesn't make a sound, just braces herself, waiting.

I enter her in one long, slow motion, letting her feel every inch. She groans, low and guttural, but never asks for more. I set a pace of three slow thrusts, then one hard, then back to slow and steady. She adapts, matching me move for move.

"Don't come yet," I say as I fight not to go off like a goddamn firecracker.

She moans, buries her face in the comforter, and clutches it so hard her knuckles go white.

I hold back as long as I can, but her silky walls are clenching my cock in a velvet vise. When I can't hold off any longer, I growl, "Come for me."

Her entire body trembles as she comes and I follow right behind her, biting her shoulder as I empty deep in her sweet pussy.

I turn off the light and pull her close, already anticipating how I'm going to wake her up in the morning.

\* \* \*

My eyes snap open at the ass-crack of dawn, five goddamn AM sharp, and my dick is already throbbing.

Natalie's still out cold beside me, her soft, curvy body sprawled across the sheets like a fucking masterpiece.

Her skin glows in the dim light, smooth and warm, and I can't resist. I slide closer, my cock pressing against her ass, hard and insistent. Fuck, she's perfect.

I nuzzle into the back of her neck, breathing in her sweet and musky scent. My tongue darts out, tracing the delicate curve of her spine, and she stirs, a soft moan escaping her lips. “Mmm... what are you doing?” she murmurs, her voice thick with sleep.

“Waking you up,” I growl, my hand sliding down her side, over the swell of her hip, and down to the soft curve of her ass. I give it a firm squeeze, and she gasps, arching into me. My cock twitches against her, and I grind into her, letting her feel just how fucking hard she makes me.

“Oh, good,” she says, but there’s a smile in her voice, and I can feel her body responding, her ass pressing back against me. I slide my hand up her side to cup her tit, and her nipple hardens against my palm. I pinch it gently, and she moans again, louder this time.

“You love it,” I whisper, my lips brushing against her ear.

I slide my other hand down between her legs, and she’s already wet, her pussy slick and ready for me.

I slide a finger inside her, and she gasps, her hips bucking against my hand.

“Fuck, you’re so wet,” I murmur, my voice rough with desire.

“Only for you.” That’s for sure. If any other man even thinks about touching her, I’ll break his fucking neck.

I can’t wait any longer. I roll her onto her back, spreading her legs wide, and she’s so fucking beautiful, her pussy glistening in the early morning light. I lean down, bury my face between her legs, and she cries out as my tongue flicks over her clit.



“Oh God,” she moans, her hands tangling in my hair as I lick and suck at her, driving her closer and closer to the edge.

Her hips buck against my face, and I can feel her trembling, her body tightening as she gets closer.

I slide two fingers inside her, curling them a little, and she screams my name as she comes while her pussy clenches hard around my fingers.

But I’m not done with her yet. I pull back, wiping my mouth with the back of my hand, and she’s panting, her chest heaving as she looks up at me with those big, dark eyes. “Fuck me,” she whispers, and I don’t need to be told twice.

I grab her hips, pulling her closer, and she wraps her legs around me as I slide inside her in one smooth thrust. She’s so tight, so fucking wet, and I groan as I bury myself to the hilt. “Damn,” I growl, my hands gripping her hips as I start to move, thrusting into her hard and fast.

She moans, digging her nails into my back as I fuck her. Her pussy clenches around my cock, and I can feel her getting close again, her body tightening around me. “Come for me,” I growl, and she does, screaming my name as she shatters around me.

I’m not far behind, my own orgasm building as I thrust into her one last time, deep and hard. I come with a roar, filling her up as she grips me, milking every last drop from my cock. We collapse together, sweaty and spent, and she curls up against me, her head resting on my chest.

“Best wake-up ever,” she murmurs softly. I lean down to kiss the top of her head, inhaling the subtle scent of her hair as I pull her closer. This connection we share has already grown beyond a mere physical attraction for me. Now, I need to discover if

Natalie feels the same way.

“I know,” I say, drawing a deep, steadying breath as I prepare to test the waters. “I usually have Sunday brunch with my grandmother. Would you like to join me tomorrow?” The words hang in the air, a tentative invitation, and I’m not sure who is more surprised by my invitation, her or me.

“I’d love to,” she replies, her smile brightening the room as she snuggles even closer. Hell fucking yes.

## Page 8

*Source Creation Date: July 20, 2025, 8:30 am*

NATALIE

I wake up next to Declan, enveloped in a cocoon of luxury and something more profound, a comforting weight that grounds me. The room is still cloaked in the soft darkness before dawn, but I'm fully awake, my senses alive and craving the familiar warmth and taste of him.

I'm curled up against his bare chest, feeling it gently rise and fall with each deep, even breath, confirming that he is still deeply asleep.

With all six-foot-seven of him slack and sprawled, I have time to study him.

This is the first morning I've ever watched him sleep, and I take full advantage.

His face, unguarded, is almost gentle. The usual scowl has smoothed out, the line between his eyebrows barely a crease.

His lips, usually clamped tight, have parted just enough that I can see the glint of his straight, white teeth.

I imagine kissing him awake, slow and lazy, until those lips start issuing orders.

His arms are thrown above his head, giving me an unfiltered view of his tattoos.

There's the snake twining up his left arm, scales black as a war story, a dagger clutched in its mouth.

On his right arm, he's got a full black arm sleeve.

He has a scar over his right collarbone, pale against his tan skin, and I find myself wanting to trace it, just to see if he'll twitch.

It's been a few weeks since I let him fuck me over his glass desk.

Our lives since then have been a blur of contracts, conference calls, and fighting our desire for each other until the end of the workday.

I tell myself it's just the thrill, the adrenaline rush of being with someone so intense, but that's a lie I can't even sell myself at seven AM on a Sunday.

I've fallen for him, hard and fast and completely against my better judgment. It should terrify me, but instead, it feels like walking into a hurricane on purpose.

He shifts, and his arm falls down around my waist, his massive hand splayed across the small of my back. Even asleep, the guy's a control freak.

I lie there, breathing in his scent, sharp and dark and clean, and for the first time in my adult life, I wish I believed in things like fate, or destiny, or happy endings.

Instead, I just close my eyes and savor the moment, because I know these things never last. The universe has a sick sense of humor, and I'm always the punchline.

Still, I let myself hope, a little.

Maybe he's not just fucking me. Maybe he feels something, too.

Maybe this isn't just sex, isn't just the weird magnetism that's kept us orbiting each other in ever-tighter circles.

Maybe last night, when he asked if I wanted to meet his grandmother, he was taking a step toward cementing our relationship.

I wonder what it would be like to actually tell him how I feel.

If I just blurted out, “Hey, I know you’re a walking fortress of emotional repression, but I think I’m falling in love with you,” would he even care?

Would he smirk, or would he freeze and eject me from his bed and his life in the span of a single heartbeat?

I want to know, but I also don’t. There’s something delicate about this, a balance I’ve never managed before, and I’m terrified to tip it one way or the other.

His eyes open suddenly, not fluttering or blinking, just open, sharp as a wolf’s and focused straight on me.

“Hey,” he says, voice gravelly from sleep.

“Hey yourself,” I answer, and his arm tightens around my waist.

“You were watching me.” He doesn’t ask, just states it like a fact, like he can read my mind and is mildly amused by what he found there.

I consider denying it, but then realize how pointless that would be. “You drool a little in your sleep,” I say instead, poking him lightly in the side.

He grins, a real one, all teeth and no restraint. “You snore. Loud.”

I gasp, mock offended. “I do not.”

He flips me over so fast the world spins, pinning me under his weight. “Loud enough to scare small children.” He nuzzles into my neck, biting just hard enough to make me squirm. His cock is already hard, pressing between my thighs with perfect aim.

I wrap my arms around his back, hands skimming the ridges of muscles there, and decide to go for it, just a little. “Are you always this handsy in the morning?”

He pulls back to look at me, eyes hooded but awake now, dangerous and electric. “With you? Yeah.”

“Good,” I whisper, and he kisses me so hard I forget my own name for a second.

\* \* \*

By the time we make it to the shower, my knees are already shaking. Declan slams me up against the tile, water scalding hot, steam rising around us like a screen. He crowds into my space, hands braced on either side of my head, and the look in his eyes is pure, undiluted hunger.

“Do you trust me?” he asks, voice low and rough as he kisses a line down my neck to my collarbone.

“God, yes,” I gasp, clutching at his shoulders for support. He’s got me so worked up I can barely think.

He drops to his knees, not worshipful but ravenous, and drags his tongue down my body, tracing a slow, wet line over my stomach, pausing just long enough to swirl over my belly button before moving lower.

He slides my leg over his shoulder and pushes his tongue against my clit, and the sensation is so intense I nearly scream.

He doesn't just lick me—he devours, holding my hips steady while he works me over with ruthless, military precision.

He flicks and circles, alternating pressure and pace, never letting me settle into a rhythm.

I can feel my body coiling, tightening, desperate for release.

I grip his hair and ride his face, no shame, no hesitation, just raw need.

He slides two fingers inside me, curling them slightly, and I shatter, clenching around him as the orgasm rips through me. I sag against the wall, boneless, but he's not done. He stands, lifts me effortlessly, and I wrap my legs around his waist, letting him support my entire weight.

He kisses me hard, biting my lower lip, and I taste myself on his tongue. He lines up his cock and pushes in, slow at first, stretching me until I'm full. He waits just a second, letting me adjust, and then slams into me with a force that rattles the heavy glass door.

I brace my hands on his shoulders, nails digging into his skin.

The angle is perfect, every thrust hitting exactly where I need it, over and over.

He growls against my ear, words mostly nonsense, just raw, animalistic sounds.

I feel his hands tighten on my ass, lifting me higher, changing the angle, and I come again, white-hot and blinding.

He follows a second later, hips snapping into me as he spills inside, biting down on my neck to muffle his own shout.

For a minute, we just stay there, water beating down on our tangled bodies, his heart pounding against my chest. I hold on to him like I'll drown if I let go.

He sets me down gently, brushes my hair out of my face, and kisses my forehead.

"You okay?" he asks, voice soft for once.

"Better than okay," I say, meaning it.

We towel off, get dressed, and when he hands me a fresh cup of coffee, exactly the way I like it, I wonder if maybe, just maybe, I have a shot at a happy ending with Declan McDaid, after all.



## Page 9

*Source Creation Date: July 20, 2025, 8:30 am*

NATALIE

I'm not prepared for how fast it happens, the shift from bedroom to battlefield, from intimate to intimidating.

Declan, for once, is in an outfit that doesn't look like it belongs in a boardroom.

The aqua blue polo shirt he's wearing makes his eyes glow, and his faded jeans scream "designer" from a mile away.

He orders me to drive his Corvette, claiming he wants to relax, but I think he really just wants to give me a chance to drive my dream car.

The city bleeds into bland suburbia in twenty minutes.

The further we get from steel and glass, the more Declan seems to decompress.

His hands relax, his shoulders drop, and he lets himself smile for no reason.

I get the feeling that, for him, home is a place you protect by pretending not to care about it.

I park in front of an adorable, white-brick bungalow with geraniums in the planters and a miniature Irish flag flapping on the porch. The lawn is aggressively green and trimmed within an inch of its life. The house is small but radiates a kind of stubborn, permanent coziness.

Declan unbuckles, leans over, and kisses me. “Ready?”

“No,” I admit, “but let’s get it over with before I chicken out.”

“I can’t see you ever chickening out.” He laughs, for real, and grabs my hand, pulling me up the walk. The front door swings open before we even hit the first step.

“Declan McDaid, if you don’t wipe those boots, I’ll have your arse,” comes the voice, thick with Irish vowels and sharper than a shot of whiskey.

I fall in love with her on the spot.

A tiny woman stands in the doorway, maybe five feet nothing, with hair the color of snowdrifts and eyes the same deep green as rolling Kentucky hills.

She’s wearing a pastel pink sweater and what looks like very expensive pearls, but the way she sizes us up makes me think she could still take out a burglar with a frying pan.

She hugs Declan first, standing on her tip-toes to slap the back of his head. “Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, I haven’t seen you in three weeks, you ungrateful wretch.”

“Hi, Gram,” he says with a look that’s equal parts affection and abject fear.

Then she turns to me, and her face softens into a wide, genuine smile. “And you must be the girl who’s been keeping my boy busy.” Before I can say my own name, she’s got me in a bear hug that smells like lavender and home.

I hug back, slightly dazed. “I’m Natalie.”

She pulls back to arm’s length and inspects me.

“You’re a strong one. I can tell from your grip.

” Then, turning to Declan, she says, “Well, you finally brought home someone with a proper arse. God love you, but I was beginning to think you were practicing for the priesthood or batting for the other team.”

Declan actually blushes.

Gram ushers us in, bustling around like a cruise missile of maternal energy. There are doilies and tea cozies and about a thousand framed photos on every wall, all of them featuring a much younger Declan.

“Sit, sit,” she orders, pointing at a couch that’s so overstuffed it practically swallows me whole. Declan sits next to me, his hand dropping to my thigh automatically, like we’ve done this a hundred times.

Gram brings tea and biscuits, sets them down, and plants herself in the armchair like a queen on her throne. She doesn’t waste time.

“So, Natalie, how did you meet my grandson? He’s a pain in the arse to get to know.” The way she says it, I know she means it as a compliment.

I look at Declan, who is definitely not going to save me.

“At work,” I say. “First day, he tried to scare me off, but I held my ground.”

“Ha!” Gram crows, clapping her hands. “That’s the way to do it. Never let a McDaid push you around, dear. It only encourages them.” She sips her tea, then fixes me with a piercing stare. “Do you like it? The work?”

I think about this. “It’s growing on me,” I say finally. “Kinda like a fungus.”

“I like her spirit.” She glances at Declan. “She’s able to hold her own with you. Don’t screw it up.”

“I don’t plan on it,” Declan mutters.

Gram leans forward, not bothering to pretend she’s not interrogating me. “And your family? Where do they live?”

I hesitate. This is always the part where people get awkward, apologize, or completely withdraw. “I don’t have one,” I say, keeping my voice steady. “I grew up in the foster system. Moved around a lot.”

Gram just nods, not missing a beat. “Makes you tough, that does. Good. You’ll need it.” She looks at Declan again, and there’s something in her eyes, some secret message only grandmothers can transmit. He holds her gaze, jaw flexing, but doesn’t say a word.

She turns back to me, softer now. “You’ve got a family here now. If you want it.”

Something in my chest squeezes tight. I wasn’t expecting to be welcomed this fast, or this completely. I try to say thank you, but the words stick, so I just smile and eat a biscuit, which might actually be the best thing I’ve ever tasted.

Declan squeezes my hand tightly, and I feel it all the way to my bones.

\* \* \*

We have brunch at a little place called The Revolving Blue Door, which is exactly as homey and over-the-top as it sounds. Everyone knows Gram; the hostess greets her by name, and the server hugs her before taking our order.

We get the “Sunday Special,” which is a tower of pancakes, eggs, and at least three varieties of sausage. I try to keep up, but Gram and Declan are both Olympic-caliber eaters, demolishing plates like it’s a competitive sport.

Gram is relentless with the questions. “Natalie, where did you go to school?”

“I went to the University of Houston for my Bachelor’s and Rice for my Master’s.” Her eyebrows shoot up, and I can tell I’ve managed to impress her.

“Do you like dogs?” She jumps to the next question.

“I love them.” I give a little smile. “I’ve always promised myself I’d get a cute little fuzzball as soon as I get settled.”

“Every girl should have a fuzzball in her life,” Gram agrees before turning to Declan. “Have you told her about the summer you set fire to the neighbor’s shed?”

“It’s on my to-do list,” he teases. “Right after I tell her about that bad case of jock itch I had in ninth grade.”

Gram turns to me and rolls her eyes. “It was a particularly bad jock itch.”

The silly expression on her face causes me to choke on my orange juice, and Declan gently pats me on my back until the coughing subsides.

He teases Gram about her reality TV obsession, and she retaliates by telling embarrassing childhood stories. There’s a rhythm to their banter, an ease I’ve never seen in him before.

Eventually, Gram leans in, voice dropping to a confidential whisper. “So, are you two serious?”

I nearly choke on my orange juice again. Declan says, “Deadly serious,” and looks at me, an eyebrow raised like he’s daring me to disagree.

I want to tell Gram the truth, that I’ve never felt like this about anyone, that Declan terrifies and excites me in equal measure, that I’d follow him into a burning building or, worse, a city council meeting. But instead, I just nod, unable to find the words.

Gram beams, satisfied. “Good. He needs someone who can keep him in line.”

Declan rolls his eyes, but there’s a hint of a smile there. For a second, I think I see what he might have been like before all the scars and discipline, before the world started needing him to be so hard.

When the bill comes, Gram refuses to let anyone else pay. “You two are young. Save your money for something stupid.” She winks at me, and I can’t help but laugh.

Outside, the sky is clear and blue, and I can smell honeysuckle on the breeze. Gram hugs us both tight, then whacks Declan on the arm. “Bring her by again. Sooner this time, or I’ll come find you.”

He promises, and I believe him.

On the drive back, Declan’s hand never leaves my thigh. The silence is warm, companionable. For the first time in my life, I feel like maybe I belong somewhere.

Maybe even here.

DECLAN

As I navigate the winding roads back from Gram's, my right hand rests firmly on the curve of Natalie's thigh. My left hand clutches the steering wheel with a firm grip, turning my knuckles white against the black leather.

The air inside the car is thick with the subtle aroma of her jasmine perfume, mingling with the faint scent of pine trees from outside.

The rhythmic hum of the engine underscores my thoughts, and I glance over at her, seeing the soft glow of the dashboard lights dance across her serene face.

She's woven into the fabric of my daily life, and the very thought of facing a day without her by my side sends an unsettling pang through my chest.

She's humming some shitty pop song under her breath and drumming her fingers on my knee.

Her nails are short, efficient, painted a muted pink I bet she picked out thinking it would disappear.

But nothing about her disappears. She infects every surface, every sense, every synapse.

I'm so fucking happy it's almost unrecognizable.

If I didn't know better, I'd think I was coming down with something.

She doesn't say a word for the last ten minutes of the drive.

Just stares out the window, watching the scenery flicker past. When I pull up to the building, she unbuckles her seatbelt and turns to look at me.

Eyes all molten, lips soft. I want to say something like, "You're home," but the words jam up in my throat and all I can manage is, "Let's go."

We take the elevator up in silence. Not the charged, about-to-explode kind of silence we have at work, but the heavy, sleepy, domestic kind you get at three in the morning with someone you trust.

She walks out ahead of me when the elevator doors open on the top floor, but I catch her wrist and haul her back, not rough but not gentle either.

She lets herself be pulled, lets me tuck her against my chest like she's made for it.

Her hair smells like my soap. Her heart hammers against my sternum.

I scoop her up, one arm under her knees, the other bracing her back. She's light and warm, and she yelps in surprise, arms flying around my neck. "What are you doing, you lunatic?"

"Carrying you to bed."

"You do realize I can walk, right? It's called walking on two legs, a modern wonder."

I ignore her and carry her through the entryway. She laughs, that rare unguarded laugh that always knocks the wind out of me. I set her down at the threshold of the bedroom, but my hands linger at her waist, digging into the soft flesh there just to prove to myself she's real.



I expect her to say something snarky, but she just turns, hands still braced on my ribs, and looks at my face like she's trying to figure me out.

She's got no idea how much she's rattled me. No idea that I haven't slept a full night since the first time she rolled her eyes at me, and I wanted to slam her against a wall and never let her leave.

I can't hold it in anymore. I slide my hands up to her cheeks, my palms all callused and rough and probably too big for her delicate face. I make her look at me.

"Listen," I say, and my voice comes out gritty as a back alley. "I can't wait another second."

She blinks. "For what?"

I can feel myself flush, embarrassment boiling under the skin.

"To make you mine." Confusion enters her gaze as I fight to find the words, to admit what I need to admit.

"You're the only person I've ever wanted to wake up next to.

The only person who makes this place feel like a home.

The only person who'll ever own my goddamn heart. "

She just stares, lips parted. I can see the pulse racing in her throat. I press on because, if I stop now, I'll never finish.

"Every day, I get a little crazier. You're in my head all the goddamn time."

She makes a little sound like she wants to speak, but I barrel right through.

“I don’t want just your body,” I tell her. “I want every goddamn part of you. The smart, stubborn, back-talking, all of it. I want you here. With me. Not just tonight, but every night. And I want the entire world to know you’re mine.”

My hands are shaking, which is the most humiliating thing that’s ever happened to me, but I refuse to let go of her. I frame her face in my hands, thumbs stroking along her jaw because I don’t know what else to do with the energy trying to break out of me.

She’s not saying anything, and I start to panic. Did I fuck this up? Did I come on too strong? My mouth keeps going, desperate to fill the silence.

“I know you’re independent. I know you don’t need me. But I fucking need you, Natalie.”

I swallow hard. “So, if you’re in, I need to know. Because I’m all the way in, and I can’t go back.”

Her eyes shine in the dim light. She’s trembling, but not from fear. She bites her lip, hard, and I want to do it for her, want to taste her. I can’t stand it.

I tip her chin up, bring my forehead down to hers, and breathe her in.

“Say something,” I whisper, but it comes out more like a threat than a plea.

She laughs, shaky and wild. “You’re a fucking idiot,” she says. “I love you, too.”

I am a goddamn idiot. I should’ve started with those three words. “I love you more than life itself,” I mutter as she grabs my shirt and fists it tight, dragging me down

into a kiss that burns every doubt out of my system.

She's in. I can feel it all the way down to my bones.

I let myself breathe for the first time all day. And I kiss her like I'm never letting her go.

\* \* \*

She looks right at me, tears streaming down, mouth twisted in something between a smile and a grimace. I reach to wipe her cheek and she grabs my wrist and holds it, anchoring both of us to the moment.

"I've been waiting for you to say that," she whispers, voice raw and sharp as a new blade. "I thought if I said it first, you'd run."

I'm so stunned I can't even move. This is the part where I'm supposed to be in charge, supposed to take her apart and put her back together.

Instead, I just stand there like a fucking idiot, letting her feelings wash over me in waves.

"The only running I'll be doing is straight to you.

" I drag her even closer. She's crying, and I want to fix it, but she's also laughing, which soothes me all the way to my soul.

She presses her palm to my chest, right over my heart, and I know she can feel how hard it's pounding. Maybe she's always known. Maybe she's known longer than I have.

She drags me down into another kiss, and it's so different from the others, I almost don't recognize it. Less hunger, more reverence. Like we're learning each other all over again, cataloguing every taste and sound and gasp. It's enough to make my knees buckle.

She pulls back and presses her forehead to mine. We stand there, breathing the same air, not moving, not talking. Just being. I run my hands down her arms, feeling every muscle, every scar, every line of her. I want to sink into her and never come up for air.

"Kiss me," she breathes against my lips, and I groan her name as I peel her blouse off, desperate to get my hands on her skin.

She shrugs out of her shirt, lets it fall to the floor, and stands there in a pale pink bra, lace so soft it's practically see-through. Her nipples are hard, dark against her pale skin. I can't stop staring.

She grins, impish. "You planning to look all night?"

"Maybe," I say, but I'm already reaching for her, already kissing down her throat, down her collarbone, licking every inch like I can taste her feelings if I try hard enough.

She fumbles with my shirt, gets half the buttons undone before she gives up and just yanks it open, popping two off.

She runs her hands over my chest like she's mapping it, fingers finding every edge and hollow.

It's strange, being touched like this. Gentle.

She's not trying to take control, but she's also not submitting. We're equals in this.

I cup her ass in both hands, lift her onto the bed like she's nothing, and crawl on top of her, straddling her hips with my thighs. She bites her lip, eyes wide. I want to see her come apart, want to make her sob and shake, but I don't want to scare her. Not tonight.

I undo her bra slowly, watching the way her eyes flutter when the straps fall. Her tits are perfect, round, and full, with dark pink areolas and hard nipples begging to be sucked. I take one in my mouth, roll my tongue around it, and she arches up with a gasp.

She's already grinding her hips against me, trying to get friction, but I pin her down, making her wait.

"Bossy," she whispers, but her voice is so breathless it comes out as a plea.

"Get used to being bossed for the rest of your life," I say, moving down her body. I kiss her stomach, her hips, her inner thighs, biting and sucking until she's shaking. I hook her panties with my thumbs and slide them down, slow enough that she whines in frustration.

Her pussy glistens from her juices while her clit peeks out like it's desperate for attention. I lick a stripe up her slit and she cries out, bucking her hips. I take my time, savoring every taste and tremor.

She's so wet it's obscene, and when I slide two fingers in, she clenches around me like a fist. "Ahh," she gasps, grabbing at the sheets. "I'm?—"

I suck her clit while I finger her, scissoring my fingers just right, and she comes so fast and hard I think she might actually pass out. Her whole body shakes, her thighs

clamp around my head, but I don't stop until she's twitching, begging me to slow down.

When I finally let up, she's panting with her hair stuck to her forehead and her eyes glassy and wild. I crawl up her body, lick the sweat from her neck, and kiss her jaw, her cheek, her eyelids.

"Too much?" I murmur.

She laughs, still breathless. "Not even close."

I want to fuck her slow, want to make it last, but my hands are trembling and my cock is so hard it hurts. I line up and push in, slow, letting her feel every inch. She moans, low and guttural, and wraps her legs around my hips, locking me in place.

As I start to move, she grabs my face and stares up into my eyes. "Don't stop," she says. "Please."

I don't. I keep my eyes on hers as my hips pick up speed. I want her to see how much I want this, want her, want everything.

We move together, slow at first, then harder, chasing the same high. She whispers my name, over and over, like it's the only thing keeping her tethered to earth. I press my forehead to hers, sweat dripping down, and fuck her until the world goes dark at the edges.

When I come, I crush her to me, every muscle straining, and empty myself inside her, shaking with the force of it.

After, we lay tangled up, her head on my chest, my hands stroking her back. She draws lazy circles on my ribs, tracing every scar.

We fall asleep like that, still wrapped around each other, city lights blazing outside the window, and for once, the world feels exactly as it should be.

NATALIE

The faint light of dawn filters through the curtains as I open my eyes, casting soft shadows across the room.

The sheets are a mess, twisted and knotted around me, evidence of a nighttime struggle.

I can almost feel the ghostly imprint of Declan's arms that had wrapped around me tightly, pinning me in place around four in the morning.

My right leg is numb, trapped under his thigh, and the left one is stretching out from beneath the covers to cool me off a little.

The minor inconvenience of being unable to move any part of my body without waking the six-foot-seven Marine glued to my body is a small price to pay for the cozy night of sleep.

I shift, gently, just to test the limits of circulation, and Declan's arm tightens around my ribs. His hand cups my breast, thumb idly brushing over the nipple like he's running a systems check before the start of business hours.

"Nice try," he growls, voice all gravel and heat. "Thought you could sneak out?"

"It's not sneaking out. More like trying to restore circulation," I say, but my voice is still lazy with sleep, and I can't bring myself to fake an escape. "Before I get up to face Monday and deal with my bossy boss."



I feel him smile into my hair, lips pressed to the back of my head. “You could just call in sick and stay in bed with your bossy boss.”

I consider this, weighing the pros and cons of what would happen if I called HR to say I can’t make it in today because my legs didn’t work from all the illegal things my boss did to me last night. “That’s tempting, but we have so much going on this week.”

He laughs, and the sound shakes my whole spine.

He’s in an absurdly good mood for someone who doesn’t believe in sleep or mornings.

I peel myself free enough to roll over and face him, taking in the evidence of our wild night.

My panties are hanging from the headboard, his black undershirt is wadded into a ball by the lamp, and my bra is somehow draped over the Glock on his nightstand.

Declan looks down at me with that wicked little squint, the one that says he’s plotting either a hostile takeover or round two, possibly both. His snake tattoo, coiled on his bicep, flexes as he props himself up on one elbow. The snake’s tongue flicks out, black as sin.

He drags his knuckles up my thigh, slow and deliberate. “You want coffee?”

“I want lots of things,” I say, wishing we had time for him to finish what he’s starting. “But also coffee.”

“I’ll make it,” he says, already half out of bed, but I yank him back by the wrist.

“You don’t make coffee,” I remind him. “You slip the little pod in the holder, refill the hot water, and then glare at it until it gives you what you want.”

He huffs, “It works.”

I raise an eyebrow. “Somewhat.”

He’s hovering, all tense and lean, like he’s about to start a new campaign and I’m just the first obstacle.

“Get dressed, Ms. Hollister, before I’m tempted to show you my bossy side,” he orders, but then he kisses me hard before rolling off the bed, leaving me stunned and flushed and definitely not interested in pants.

By the time I’m vertical, he’s already in the kitchen, bare-assed except for boxers, putting two mugs under the coffee maker that probably cost more than my rent.

I steal one of his button-downs from the closet and shuffle out, still bleary, and climb up onto a barstool.

The shirt hits me mid-thigh, which means I look like I’m prepping for the walk of shame at Harvard Business School.

Declan turns, arms folded, and eyes me up and down. “You’re not wearing pants,” he points out.

“Neither are you,” I say. “I thought it was the Monday morning look we’re going for.”

“Touché,” he admits. He pushes a mug across the marble, the steam hitting me in the face, which is nice because it distracts me from the way his eyes are raking over my

exposed legs.

He leans over the counter, not quite touching, but close enough I can count the lines on his lips when he says, “I was thinking about what you said last night.”

I rack my memory, sifting through a haze of orgasms and pillow talk. “I said a lot of things.” And so did he.

He ignores the snark, which is his special skill, and says, “I meant when you said you love me.”

Oh. That. I take a gulp of scalding coffee, burn my tongue, and try not to look as panicked as I suddenly feel. “Right.”

He reaches over and tugs my hair, just enough to make me look him in the eye. “Since we agree on the depth of our feelings,” he says, low and serious, “I want to make you my partner.”

I don’t know what to say. Partner? My mouth is full of a million responses, none of which seem to fit. I want to tell him that I’m ready to be his partner in everything. But the words won’t line up, so I just take another sip of coffee and hope he keeps talking.

He does. “I want us to go down to the courthouse and tie your ass to me for life. Then we’ll figure out what it takes to make sure half of everything I have is yours.”

I look down at my lap, suddenly very interested in the pattern of my own knees. “What about a prenup? To protect you.”

He scoffs, voice sharp, “You own me heart and soul, baby. There’s no way I’ll ever let you go, so I’m not worried about my money.”

I laugh despite myself, and the tension breaks a little.

He comes around the counter, wrapping both hands around my mug so I have to look up at him. The snake tattoo flexes as he squeezes, the scales catching the under-cabinet light.

“People are going to say I’m after your money.” I bite my bottom lip.

“And they’ll say I’m after you for your body.” He shrugs, and the movement is so perfectly Declan I can’t help but admire it. “Let the fuckers talk. I don’t give a shit about what anyone thinks. You’re all I care about. If anyone steps out of line, I’ll show them the error of their ways.”

It’s maybe the most romantic thing he’s ever said, and it comes out like a freaking battle order.

“I’m not going anywhere,” I tell him. “You’re pretty much stuck with me for life.”

He nods like he already knew. “Then let’s play hooky and get married on our way to work this morning.”

“Let’s do it.”

“Then we’ll get married,” he teases as he walks over to wrap his arms around me.

The kiss is a fucking hurricane, all teeth and tongues, messy and desperate like we’re trying to devour each other alive.

His hands move everywhere at once, rough and greedy, fumbling with the buttons on my shirt until they pop off and scatter across the kitchen floor.

His palms are calloused, hot as they slide up my back, then down to my ass, squeezing hard enough to make me yelp.

He's not gentle, and I don't want him to be.

I want him to leave marks, to make me feel it tomorrow.

He grins his fucking predator smirk that makes my knees weak, and growls, "Mine." I bite his shoulder in retaliation, hard enough to leave teeth marks, and he groans, low and dark, like I've just lit a fuse.

The counter is cold against my bare thighs, but his hands are everywhere, keeping me warm, keeping me on fire.

He dips his head, his mouth trailing down my chest, and when he takes my nipple into his mouth, sucking hard, I dig my nails into his shoulders, leaving crescent moons in his skin.

"Yours," I gasp, and he doesn't stop, just keeps working me over with his tongue and teeth until I'm arching off the counter, moaning like a porn star.

He shoves my shirt higher, bunching it under my armpits, and slides two fingers between my legs. "Wet and ready," he mutters, like he's worshipping me. His fingers are thick, and they slide in deep enough to make me see stars.

"You make me that way," I pant, clinging to his neck for dear life.

He doesn't even bother with his boxers, just pulls himself out, thick and hard and already leaking. He lines up, eyes locked on mine, and orders me, "Hold on tight." His voice is rough, like gravel, and it sends shivers down my spine.

“Yes,” I say, and he pushes in, slow but relentless. The stretch is perfect, so deep I see stars for a second. He’s big, and I feel every damn inch as he fills me up.

His hips snap against mine, the sound of skin on skin echoing through the room. He’s relentless, driving into me with a rhythm that has me clawing at his back, begging for more.

He brings me to the edge so fast I forget my own name.

Out of nowhere, an orgasm blasts through me.

My inner muscles clench around him, and he follows with a deep, guttural groan, burying himself to the hilt and holding me so tight I can barely breathe.

His cock pulses inside me as he spills, hot and thick, and I feel every fucking drop.

But he’s not done. Not even close. He pulls out slowly, his cock slick with both of us, and flips me over, bending me over the counter.

My ass is in the air, and he slaps it once, hard, before lining up again.

“We’re not done yet,” he growls, and I whimper as he pushes back in, even deeper this time.

He fucks me harder now, his hands gripping my hips so tight I know I’ll have bruises tomorrow.

So worth it. The counter is digging into my stomach, but I don’t care.

All I care about is the way he feels inside me, the way he’s stretching me open, filling me up.

He leans over me, his chest pressed against my back, and whispers in my ear, “You’re mine. ”

I climax again, screaming his name this time, and he follows right after, his cock twitching as he comes deep inside me again.

We stay like that for a moment, both of us panting, before he pulls out and collapses onto the floor, pulling me down with him.

We’re a tangled mess of limbs and sweat and cum, but I don’t care. I’ve never been happier.

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*Source Creation Date: July 20, 2025, 8:30 am*

DECLAN

I stand in the entrance to our penthouse bedroom, steel briefcase still in one hand, and breathe in my wife's delicate scent.

She's curled in the middle of the bed, knees up, blanket hiked to her chin.

My t-shirt swallows her whole, the neck hanging off one shoulder so I can see the faint line where she'd been napping face down on her arm.

Her hair's a mess, curls fanned out across the pillow like she got in a wrestling match with a tornado and lost.

Her eyes track me like a predator stalking its prey, half-lidded and lazy, but I know she's wide awake and fucking waiting for me.

The air between us crackles with tension, thick enough to cut with a knife.

"Honey, I'm home," I say, my voice low and rough, dropping my briefcase with a thud that echoes through the room.

My fingers fumble with my tie, yanking it loose like it's the only thing standing between me and her.

"About time," she purrs, her voice dripping with honey and sin. She uncurls and sits up straight, her body a fucking masterpiece of curves and softness. Her smile is small but lethal, the kind that makes my cock twitch in my pants. "I was about to start



without you.”

“Well, we can’t have that,” I growl, stripping down to my boxers in record time.

The fabric clings to my hard-on, and I don’t even try to hide it.

I cross the room in three long strides and drop onto the bed next to her.

The mattress dips, and she topples sideways, her face landing against my chest. She doesn’t move, just breathes, her warm breath ghosting over my skin, sending shivers down my spine.

Her hand slides up my chest, her fingers tracing the lines of my muscles like she’s memorizing every inch of me. “You’re late,” she murmurs, her lips brushing against my skin.

“Sanderson needed extra instructions,” I reply, my voice rough with need. “That fucker couldn’t find his ass with both hands.” Her body molds to mine, soft and warm and fucking perfect. I can feel the heat of her through the thin fabric of my t-shirt, and it’s driving me wild.

“I’ll have a meeting with him Monday and straighten him out.” I almost feel sorry for poor Sanderson. My wife is even more terrifying than I am. “Now, forget about work and kiss me.”

She tilts her head up, her lips inches from mine.

I don’t need to be told twice. I cover her soft lips with mine and groan as her tongue slips into my mouth.

My hand slides up her thigh, pushing my t-shirt up until it’s bunched around her waist. Her skin is smooth and warm under my fingers, and I can’t resist the urge to

explore.

My fingers dip between her legs, finding her already wet and ready for me.

She gasps, her hips bucking against my hand as I slide a finger inside her.

She bites down on my bottom lip and the slight sting causes my cock to grow even harder.

I add another finger, scissoring them just right, making her see stars. Her back arches off the bed, her tits pressing against my chest as she grinds against my hand. “You like that?” I growl, my voice thick with lust.

“Yes,” she gasps, her eyes fluttering shut. “Don’t stop.”

I don’t. I keep fucking her with my fingers, watching as her body writhes beneath me.

Her moans fill the room, each one sending a jolt of pleasure straight to my cock.

I can’t take it anymore. I pull my fingers out of her, earning a whimper of protest, and yank my boxers down.

My cock springs free, hard and throbbing, and I don’t waste any time.

I grab her hips and pull her onto my lap, her wetness slick against my cock. She sinks down onto me with a moan, her tight heat enveloping me in pure fucking bliss. “God, you feel so good,” I groan, my hands gripping her ass as she starts to move.

She rides me like she was born for it, her hips rolling in a rhythm that drives me wild.

Her tits bounce with every thrust, and I can’t resist reaching up to squeeze them, my thumbs brushing over her nipples until they’re hard and begging for attention.

She leans forward, her lips crashing against mine in a kiss that's all-consuming.

I flip us over, pinning her to the bed as I thrust into her harder, deeper. Her legs wrap around my waist, pulling me in even closer. "Fuck me," she moans, her nails raking down my back. "Harder."

I oblige, slamming into her with everything I've got. The bed creaks beneath us, the sound drowned out by our moans and the slap of skin on skin. Her pussy clenches around me, and I know she's close. "Come for me," I growl, my voice rough with need.

She does, her body trembling as she shatters around me. Her pussy squeezes me so tight it's almost painful, and I can't hold back anymore. With a groan, I bury myself deep inside her and let go, my cock pulsing as I fill her with every last drop.

We collapse onto the bed, both of us breathing hard and covered in sweat. She curls up against me, her head resting on my chest as we catch our breath. "That was..." she starts, but I cut her off with a kiss.

"Amazing," I finish for her, my voice still rough.

She smiles up at me, that same lethal smile from before. "I have something to tell you," she says, her voice soft but steady.

"What is it?" I ask, brushing a strand of hair out of her face.

She reaches over to the nightstand and pulls out a small strip of plastic. "Surprise," she says, holding up the pregnancy test with a grin.

I stare at it for a moment, my brain struggling to process what she's just said. Then I pull her into a tight hug, my heart swelling with a mix of emotions I can't even begin to describe. "We're having a baby," I whisper, my voice filled with awe.

“We’re having a baby,” she repeats, her smile brighter than ever.

I slide my hand down to her belly, palm splayed over the still-flat skin. “You happy about this?” I ask, just in case.

She nods, a warm smile lighting up her face, and then she places her hand over mine, her touch warm and gentle. “I couldn’t be happier,” she says, her eyes glistening with emotion. “I love you.”

“I love you, too,” I whisper, wrapping my arms around her curvy body and pulling her closer. Her lips meet mine, moving with a tenderness and intensity that makes my heart race and time stand still.

Before her, the idea of family was an abstract notion I barely understood.

But now, in this moment, feeling the warmth of her body against mine, I realize she's given me something I never knew I needed. A sense of belonging, a future filled with love and laughter. As I hold her, the truth settles in my chest, and I know I’m the luckiest fucker on earth.

I hope you enjoyed the story and will consider leaving a review.