



Cheaters: A Dark Romance Anthology

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Category: Dark Erotica

Description: The game: dishonesty. The goal: to gain advantage. Morals don't exist with these people. They do what they want, no matter the consequences. Rules are thrown out. Honor is void. Right and wrong is abandoned. Find out what happens when truth and loyalty are discarded in a world where what you want, is exactly what you get.

Cheaters is a limited edition collection of addictive stories from your favorite USA Today and bestselling authors.

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“Logan!” My mother’s voice traveled from the first floor, right up into my bedroom.

My heart skipped a beat. He’s early.

“Hi, Carolyn,” a deep voice replied, the tenor of it making my thighs clench.

Shit. I jumped off my bed. Shit. Shit. Shit.

“I thought you weren’t coming until tomorrow!” my mom exclaimed, a hint of an excited squeal in her voice.

Neither did I, I thought, frantically searching for something to wear. My pajama shorts and unicorn tank weren’t going to work. He wasn’t supposed to be here yet! I had a whole plan. One that required a shower, makeup, and a dress.

No time for that now.

“I took an earlier flight out. Jax was supposed to tell you.”

“He didn’t.”

“I didn’t,” my brother echoed, his feet pounding down the stairs as he went to greet his best friend. “I knew she’d make a big deal out of it.”

“I would do no such thing,” my mother lied, causing me to snort at the same time as my brother.

My mother loved Logan Pierce—who preferred to be called by his last name yet tolerated my mom referring to him as Logan instead—and would have made a fuss over dinner tonight had she known he was arriving today.

Which was the absolute last thing she needed with my other brother getting married this weekend. Hence the reason Pierce had come back for a visit. He and my oldest brother were both part of the wedding.

I ran my fingers through my blonde hair and pulled it back into a messy bun as heavy boots hit the stairs. My brother was obviously trying to pull Pierce away from our doting mother.

He's coming.

I checked my black pants and fitted short-sleeved blouse, the outfit perhaps a bit too sophisticated for just hanging out in my room. But I needed Pierce to see me as a woman, not a kid sister. And pajamas with cartoon unicorns on them wasn't the way to do it.

I really could have used an extra fifteen minutes' notice to do my hair and makeup properly, but this look would have to do.

Classy. Sort of.

I hopped back onto my bed and pulled my textbook into my lap, my expression studious. Just breathe, I coached myself.

It didn't work.

My heart was beating a mile a minute, the notion of seeing Pierce setting my nerves on edge.

It'd been eighteen months since I'd last seen him. Eighteen months since our paths had crossed. Eighteen months since he'd shattered my heart into pieces by kissing that woman at the bar.

But he hadn't known I was there.

And he technically didn't owe me a damn thing.

I was just his buddy's little sister.

The girl he'd grown up around, ruffling her hair and teasing her as though she'd belonged to him. Just not in the way I truly desired.

He treated me like his own sibling, taunting me right along with my brother.

However, I wasn't little anymore. I was a woman. Something I had wanted to tell him at that bar eighteen months ago until I'd realized he wasn't alone.

He's alone now, I thought, fighting a grin. Well. Alone with Jax, anyway.

And just like that, my grin fell.

Because Pierce would never see the real me with my brother standing between us.

"Shh, she's studying," Jax said now, his tone taunting as he neared my room, fully aware that I could hear them in the hallway. Our parents' home wasn't large, hence the reason I'd been able to hear them downstairs.

Well, that and my room was above the foyer. The vents in the house broadcast sound like a microphone.

“Senior year of college,” Jax continued. “Final exams. You remember that, right?”

“Pure hell,” Pierce drawled.

“And yet you’re willingly going back to it.”

“As a visiting professor,” Pierce replied, his deep tones filling my doorway. “Very different from being a student.”

“Hmm,” Jax hummed, sounding unconvinced.

I glanced up to find them both leaning into my room. Pierce’s eyes were on my book, while Jax’s focus was on me. “She has to head back first thing Sunday for her exams on Monday.”

“She can speak for herself, as she’s sitting right here,” I informed him.

He grinned. “And here I thought you were too busy studying to greet Pierce.”

I rolled my eyes. “He’s a day early. I’m busy.” And my heart is about to explode because he looks so damn good that I may faint.

Which was why I kept my focus on my brother and not on Pierce because I didn’t trust myself not to react.

“Too busy for me?” Pierce asked, pushing into my room in all his six-foot-two glory. He stepped in front of my brother, forcing me to look at him.

Shaved head.

Neatly trimmed dark beard.

Tattoos up and down both athletic arms, hidden only by a fitted T-shirt that accentuated his muscular physique.

Tight jeans that I knew showcased an excellent ass.

Sigh. He looked even better than he had eighteen months ago. Perhaps because he was closer to me now than before.

“What’s on your arm?” he asked, gesturing to my forearm.

I glanced down, frowning at the flower ink decorating my skin. “A tat.”

“Are you even old enough for that?”

My jaw clenched, my eyes narrowing. “I was old enough for it three years ago.” Which was the last time he had actually seen me since he hadn’t been aware of my presence eighteen months ago.

Which meant he hadn’t seen me since my eighteenth birthday.

And he’d missed my twenty-first birthday because he lived on the opposite side of the country now.

Not that the distance did anything to dispel my crush on him.

I had tried to forget him numerous times, dating other men in high school and college. But none of them had ever compared to Logan Pierce, the object of my fantasies.

It was pathetic, and I borderline hated myself for it. But I’d resigned myself to this fate ages ago, even while still dating my way through the college population.

“Someone is feeling testy about her age,” he teased, his forest-green eyes lit up with amusement. “I thought that happened to women later in life?”

“Maybe I’m older than you realize,” I shot back, unable to help myself. “I can even drink beer now.”

“Oh?” His eyebrows lifted, the right one glinting from the piercing through it. “Did you hear that, Jax? Your sister is drinking beer now.”

“Don’t remind me,” he grumbled, moving to stand beside him.

They were like night and day, with Pierce resembling the bad boy of the duo and my brother maintaining the perfect boy-next-door facade.

Of course, it was bullshit.

They were both each other’s wingman, vowing to never settle down.

And at twenty-nine years old, they’d maintained that promise to one another without fail.

Which almost made it comical that Jacob was the one getting married at age twenty-five, the middle child of our family of three kids.

“I suppose that’s a positive with you taking the gig,” my brother continued. “You can keep an eye on her and make sure she stays out of trouble.”

My brow furrowed. “What?”

“Oh, didn’t I tell you?” Jax’s bright blue eyes—the same color as my own—sparkled. “Pierce was asked to take on a guest professor role for a semester at Mason U.

Business for Beginners.”

Pierce snorted. “Fuck you, J.”

My brother laughed and ran his fingers through his thick blond hair—also the same as my own. “It’s a much better title than whatever the fuck you told me it was.”

“It’s a class about the influence social media can have on a business,” Pierce retorted. “Sorry that’s such a difficult concept for your engineering brain to comprehend.”

“You’re teaching a business class at Mason U?” I interjected before my brother could make another joke.

Pierce’s dark green eyes met mine, his easy smile in place. “Yeah, the professor who currently teaches it is out on medical leave, so he called in a favor. The university’s business program likes bringing in real-world professionals to teach sometimes. I actually took this class myself when at Mason. That’s how I know the professor.”

My brother snorted, and Pierce flashed him a meaningful look.

I narrowed my gaze, the story clearly missing some key detail. But I was too caught up on the notion that Logan Pierce would be teaching at my university. “So you’re... you’re moving back here?”

Mason U was only thirty minutes away. While I lived on campus, I tended to come home often on the weekends to see my parents.

“Just for one semester.” He shrugged, glancing around my room and then at Jax. “My mom’s thrilled.”

“Ours will be, too,” my brother pointed out. “So maybe wait until after the wedding

to tell her, or she'll be too focused on you to remember that her son is getting married."

Jax wasn't wrong.

Our mother considered Pierce to be her third son.

Pierce palmed the back of his neck, the gesture causing his inked biceps to bulge beneath his blue shirt. "It's not that big a deal. It's one semester, and I'm only doing it as a favor."

"It's a pretty big deal," my brother countered, his voice taking on an uncharacteristic seriousness that I wasn't used to hearing from him. "You created a whole new branch of marketing at one of the largest pharmaceutical companies in the world. And now the university has made you a visiting professor at the ripe young age of twenty-nine."

Pierce rolled his eyes. "I'm essentially a glorified TA."

"Except you're leading the class and have a grad student underling." My brother arched a blond brow. "Sounds like he's the TA and you're the professor."

"Jax is right," I said, reminding them of my presence. This was my room, after all. "That's a big deal, Pierce. Congratulations."

He smiled. "Thanks, Goldilocks."

My heart skipped a beat at the old childhood nickname, causing me to freeze on the bed.

He still sees me as a kid.

Even after all these years.

“And how the hell are you of drinking age?” he went on, obviously unaware of what his words were doing to me.

“Right?” My brother sounded just as shocked. “Seriously, you’ll need to keep an eye out for her at the campus bars. She’s too young for that shit.”

“I’m almost twenty-two,” I interjected, my irritation mounting. “And a fucking adult, thank you very much.”

My brother chuckled and shook his head. “You’re still a baby, Jeni.”

“God, I remember when you were only, like, this big,” Pierce tacked on, his hand going to his midthigh. “There’s no way you’re drinking beer now.”

My teeth ground together, both from my brother’s favored nickname for me—Jeni—and Pierce’s comments regarding my age.

Three years since I’d last seen him—because the bar didn’t count.

Three years of pining over him from afar.

And he still saw me as a child.

Yet I couldn’t take my eyes off his athletic physique and masculine jawline. Or those intense green eyes and full lips.

He was my walking fantasy come to life, the main feature in so many of my dreams.

I needed to make him see me. The real me. Adult me.

Pierce would be teaching a class at my university this coming semester?

Well, that just seemed like an invitation from fate.

He would have to see me as an adult in that situation. A serious student. Someone who was no longer Goldilocks.

Pierce and my brother left my room with a few more joking comments about their own ages and how they were getting old.

They weren't.

They were in their prime and they knew it.

And soon, Logan Pierce would realize that I had also reached my prime age.

I swapped my book for my laptop, then opened up the course schedule for next semester.

Business 501.01: Social Media Marketing

I checked the requirements, noting that it was only open to students who had completed a certain prerequisite.

One I hadn't taken.

I nibbled my lower lip.

Maybe I can cheat the system a little, I thought, opening up an email and typing in my advisor's name. As an honors student, I was often able to acquire special permission to take advanced courses.

I considered my phrasing and mentioned my future aspirations, only I twisted them a little to incorporate the course objective. I didn't actually want to go into social media marketing at all, but it did technically suit my major.

And social media marketing skills could only help me in the future, right?

Maybe.

I reviewed my request, my gut churning a little at flat-out lying to my advisor about my intentions. It also made me feel like I was somehow cheating on my actual aspirations, or maybe even cheating someone out of a spot in the course, but it wasn't full and I really did think it would be interesting.

If nothing more than because Pierce would be the professor.

However, it would also be intriguing to see him in a leadership role. He'd always maintained an "in control" air about him, which only made me want to worship him more. Which was probably why I found myself drawn to dominant men—they all reminded me of Pierce.

Except none of my exes had been able to maintain that dominance in a way that had held my interest.

Because I was hopelessly, stupidly, in love with a man I couldn't have.

But maybe I could convince him otherwise next semester when I showed up for his class.

I hit Send on my email and leaned back against my headboard, a grin playing over my lips.

Professor Pierce. Yes. That had a very nice ring to it indeed.

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Jenica Roberts.

I read the name on repeat all day, my gut clenching each time.

She'd signed up for my class. Her name was on the damn roster.

Jenica Roberts is going to be my student.

No. No fucking way.

It'd been hard enough to keep my eyes off of her at the wedding, to ignore the way that tight bridesmaid dress had accented all her feminine curves.

Fuck. It made me hard just thinking about it. That slit up her right leg had been designed purely to torture me. The way it had moved as she walked down the aisle, giving me a sweet peek at the long legs beneath the silky fabric.

The groomsman she'd been paired with had sure as fuck noticed.

Hell, every single male in attendance that wasn't a family member had noticed. She'd been the most beautiful woman in the room. The poor bride hadn't stood a chance against the allure of Jenica Roberts.

And now Jenica was enrolled in my course.

She'd probably taken it thinking it was a favor to me or a way to show her support.

Well, I'd just pull her aside after class, say "thanks," and tell her to take something more suitable to her interests. Not that I really knew much about her studies anymore. We hadn't exactly kept in touch much outside of the usual social media posts.

Her brother kept me updated.

But he had never mentioned her major.

So, naturally, I'd looked it up in the system after reviewing the roster—International Marketing and Global Business.

The same degree I'd sought when enrolled here.

Something about that made me warm inside.

Which I couldn't afford to feel.

Jenica Roberts was off-limits. She always had been. Always would be. It didn't matter that she'd blossomed into a stunning woman or that she had a body meant to tempt even a saint to sin. She was Jax's little sister. Not that she looked all that little now.

Well, she was still only five foot six, making her a good eight inches shorter than me, but somehow that just highlighted her femininity even more.

All those curves.

The ink decorating her right forearm all the way to her fingertips.

It'd been an unexpected surprise. One I found myself wanting to memorize with my tongue.

Yeah, she definitely cannot take my class.

I would end up distracted all damn semester.

This would be fine. I'd just have a chat with her and dismiss this false notion of solidarity and move on.

Easy, I thought, setting up my laptop near the podium of the classroom. Simple, even.

Except one look at her stepping through my classroom door turned that notion upside down and inside out.

Holy. Fuck.

She entered with her blonde hair pinned back into an elegant bun, a pair of glasses perched on her button nose, and a dress that hit her midthigh.

Which gave me a fantastic view of those long legs.

She used to run track in high school. It showed now as she strolled across the room without even looking at me. Maybe she hadn't noticed I was here. Maybe she didn't want to make things awkward by acknowledging me. Either way, I absolutely recognized her, and it would be hard as hell to concentrate through this lecture knowing that she was wearing barely any clothes.

All right. That wasn't really fair. The dress was modest in that it lacked cleavage, but it was fitted to her curves, showcasing her flat stomach and pert tits. Thin straps held the fabric up on her slender shoulders, though I suspected the dress would stay without the adornment, as it was practically glued to her skin.

"Hey, Jen," a redheaded male greeted as he entered, making a beeline for where she'd

chosen to sit in the second row.

“Hey, Carver,” she returned, giving him a beautiful smile. “How was your holiday break?”

“Good. Boring.” He shrugged out of his bag, letting it hit the ground beside his chair as he sat beside her. “You?”

She shrugged. “Good. My brother got married.”

“Yeah?”

She nodded. “Made the holidays interesting.”

“I bet,” he replied, the two of them engaging in more small talk as others trickled into the room.

I tried not to listen to Jenica’s sweet voice as she continued speaking, but her presence drew my attention in a possessive kind of way.

I didn’t care for the way Carver kept looking at her. His dark eyes danced over her dress in obvious appreciation—an appreciation she appeared to be completely oblivious to.

So innocent, I thought, sighing.

Yet another reason I couldn’t have her.

I didn’t go for innocents. I preferred experienced females.

But a sick and twisted part of me rather liked the notion of teaching this female a few

things.

Not. Happening.

I cleared my throat, calling the class to order. It was a minute or two early, but I'd never been one to stick to a schedule. Either you were early or you were late. And in this case, I had four students who were "late," as they arrived while I was introducing myself.

"Hello, I'm Logan Pierce. I'm not a real professor, so I'll just go by 'Pierce' for the course," I started, my gaze drifting to Jenica.

She gave me a little smile.

I didn't return it.

"I've been asked by the university to teach this course because of my experience with Wakefield Pharmaceuticals." I cleared my throat. "Particularly, my work in their social media marketing wing."

I pulled up the company website to give a tutorial on the enterprise and what they specialized in—blood products, plasma, and a variety of orphan drugs. There were also numerous research wings that I reviewed, just to provide a high-level summary on my background.

Then I went into the social media wing, showing them the various sites where consumers spoke directly to my team.

"The point is always being accessible to answer questions," I continued. "There is a lot of misrepresentation in the media about the pharma industry, as well as a lot of conspiracy theory propaganda. The purpose my team seeks to fulfill is the

dissemination of facts, ensuring consumers understand the truth about our products.”

When I’d first pitched the idea to my marketing manager, she’d laughed. But someone else had overheard my idea, and the next thing I knew, the CEO of the company was at my desk asking for details.

I left that part out in my introduction, though, instead focusing on my team and their purpose in the social media market.

“So what I’m going to teach you this semester isn’t just how to use these tools, but how to apply them in various industries. And at the end of the term, you’ll write a paper detailing your own use of social media in an out-of-the-box-style strategy to rival my own.”

A few of the students exchanged glances, some of them appearing intrigued.

Jenica merely continued to study me, her blue eyes giving nothing away.

I continued into a discussion on the course syllabus—most of which had been outlined by the professor who usually taught this course—and the subtle changes I intended to make to the curriculum. I also had a list of guest speakers who would be stopping by throughout the semester to provide their own experiences with social media.

Everyone seemed excited by the time the class finished, our first week together off to a positive start.

A few students stayed around after class to ask questions.

Jenica started to leave, her blonde hair shimmering beneath the lecture hall’s fluorescent lighting. “Miss Roberts,” I called after her. “Stay for a minute.”

She paused at the doorway, glancing back at me with a raised brow. Then she said something to Carver, who had stopped beside her with a startled expression. She laid her hand on his arm and smiled, speaking too low for me to hear. He grinned at whatever it was and gave her a nod before leaving her inside the room.

“Sorry about that,” I said to the student who had been in the middle of asking me a question. “I have a question for her about her schedule and didn’t want her to leave.”

Jenica’s eyebrow arched again at that statement, her arms folding across her chest in a way that told me she hadn’t appreciated my comment.

I ignored her and focused on wrapping up the conversation with the student in front of me. The girl had two classes she needed to miss due to a study abroad program over spring break that would run a week into the latter half of the semester. “Email the details,” I told her. “I’ll make sure your assignments can be done abroad.”

“Thank you, Professor Pierce.”

“Just Pierce,” I replied with a smile.

The girl’s cheeks flushed prettily, her lips curling in a way I recognized.

But it did nothing for me.

Not just because she was a student, but because a much more appealing female stood only a few feet away at the classroom door.

“Thank you, Pierce,” the girl—Emily—reiterated.

“Is that everything?” I asked, cutting off the flirtation before she could get the wrong idea.

She blinked. “Um, yep.”

“Excellent. I’ll see you next week, then.” This course was only on Monday evenings, allowing me to work remotely for Wakefield Pharmaceuticals on the other days of the week.

“Right,” Emily said, her brow furrowing as she stumbled backward a little.

I almost winced on her behalf.

But I had to set this precedent now. The rules might be a bit gray as a visiting professor; however, I had no desire to toe the line or engage in anything unsavory.

Besides, these females were too young for me.

Jenica included.

Although, she didn’t appear all that young now as she walked toward my desk.

The door shut behind Emily, leaving me very much alone with Jenica.

“You were going to leave without speaking to me?” I asked, adding a teasing flair to my tone.

She didn’t smile, her bag instead falling to the ground beside my desk as she crossed her arms again. “Was there something to say?”

My brow furrowed. “Hello, maybe?”

“Hello,” she repeated. “Anything else?”

Now I was scowling. “What’s with the attitude?”

“I don’t have an attitude,” she returned. “I’m asking what you want, Pierce.”

I almost corrected her with Professor Pierce, which made no sense since I’d just told the class not to call me that. But I found myself wanting to hear it from her lips.

Which was precisely why I needed her to drop this course.

“Look, I appreciate you showing up to support me”—even though she hadn’t been all that supportive yet—“but you don’t have to take this course for my benefit. I’m sure there’s something else you would rather study instead.”

Now it was her turn to frown. “I’m not taking this course for your benefit. I’m taking it for mine. And there isn’t another course I’d rather study.”

Well, shit. That wasn’t the response I’d expected at all.

“Okay...” I needed a new avenue, then. “Surely you can see how this is a bit of a conflict of interest. I mean, you’re like a little sister to me. Grading you feels wrong.”

“But I’m not your little sister,” she bit back, her tone one I’d never really heard her use before. Yes, she sometimes showed her irritation at being teased. But this was different somehow. This was... more. “There’s no conflict of interest, Pierce. You’ll grade me on my performance. End of discussion.”

“No, not end of discussion,” I retorted, a bit miffed by her dismissal and the manner in which she’d delivered it. “Look, Goldilocks—”

“I prefer to be called Jenica here,” she interjected, her irises reminding me of liquid fire. “I’m also turning twenty-two in ten days. I’m not a kid anymore, Pierce.”

Okay, wow. “That’s a nickname I’ve used—”

“Since I was a child,” she finished for me. “Yeah. I know.” Her arms tensed across her breasts, her body completely closed off, just like her expression. “I’m not a kid. I’m not your sister. I’m not Goldilocks. I’m a student. An adult. A woman. And I would appreciate you seeing me as such. Now, if we’re done...” She trailed off, bending to pick up her bag and dismissing me again.

“No. We are not fucking done.”

She paused and then straightened again, arching a brow. “Excuse me?”

“What the hell has gotten into you?” I snapped. “Did you have a rough day? Did that Carver guy say something to you?”

Her brow crinkled. “Carver?” She shook her head as though to clear it. “What? No. My day was fine. At least until you attempted to make me drop your class. Which I won’t be doing, Pierce. I can handle your course. I’m a good student.”

“I never said otherwise.”

“No, you just implied it by saying I was only here to support you. This is an advanced course. I had the grades and background to take it, and it suits my curriculum for graduation. I have no intention of dropping it.”

“You can’t take my class, Jenica.” Steel underlined my tone. Because I could not handle her here all semester. Especially not with this side of her coming out to play. She was checking all my “bratty sub” boxes right now, making me want to bend her over this desk and paddle her ass until she was a sobbing, wet mess and begging for my cock.

Which I absolutely could not do.

Jax would kill me.

“I can take your class,” she countered, her chin jutting out in an adorably regal manner. “I am taking your class.”

“Don’t make me go to the administration, Jeni,” I warned her. “I’ll do it.”

“Jenica,” she corrected. “And sure. Go ahead, Pierce. No idea what your complaint will be, as we’re not related.”

I blew out a breath in exasperation. “You’re practically my sister. That’s an absolute conflict.”

“Except I’m not,” she returned coldly. “You’ve seen me twice in the last three years. We barely know each other now.” She shrugged. “But if you feel that strongly about it, go to the administration. Otherwise, I’ll see you next week.”

She bent to pick up her bag, dismissing me for a third time.

“Jenica.”

“The answer is no, Professor,” she replied, glancing over her shoulder at me. “I’m not withdrawing. If you want me out, you’ll have to force me out.”

And with that, she walked her sweet ass out of my classroom.

Fuck.

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I checked my email every few minutes for the better part of a week.

Nothing came through about changing my schedule.

So I showed up again the next Monday for Pierce's course.

He didn't look at me this time, his eyes seeming to stray everywhere else in the room except for in my direction.

I wasn't sure why he'd been against me attending his class. Maybe he thought I couldn't handle the material. Maybe he questioned my intelligence. Maybe he still saw me as a kindergartner and not a college student.

Regardless, I was determined to prove him wrong.

So I engaged in class, making sure he knew I'd prepared for today's lesson. Or I attempted to, anyway. He refused to call on me.

Yet he had no problem pointing to Emily three times for answers.

By the end of class, I was fuming.

But rather than call him on it, I chose to leave without a word and prepare myself for the next class.

Maybe he thought I'd been raising my hand for his benefit, just as he thought I'd enrolled in this class for him.

Which, yeah, I had taken this course because of him.

But something told me his reasoning for my decision varied from the true cause.

He was oblivious to my crush on him, mostly because he saw me as a seven-year-old.

Well, I'd just prove him wrong in next week's class.

Only, he ignored me again, calling on everyone else except for me.

By the fourth week of this treatment, I was done.

We had our first assignment due next week, marking the fifth meeting of this class, and I knew exactly what I wanted to focus on for my project—sexual marketing.

There'd been a segment in our reading during week three about sensual advertising on social media and the difficulties with ad performance.

I'd spent my week studying and preparing my presentation. Then I'd paired it with an appropriate outfit, one I knew he wouldn't be able to ignore.

Of course, he would have to listen to me anyway since we were all supposed to present for five minutes on our chosen topic.

The purpose of the assignment was to pick something from our first four weeks to elaborate on and apply it to a real-life situation. I suspected the purpose was to prepare us for the final he'd mentioned during our first class.

If he continued to ignore me, maybe I'd just show up naked and make my final presentation about advertising my non-childlike body to him. See how he reacted then.

Of course, Emily might beat me to it.

Every week, she simpered and giggled and flirted shamelessly. Not that I could blame her. Pierce was hot. All the girls in class were fawning over him. Some of the guys, too.

Perhaps that was why he ignored me—he was too busy entertaining thirty-four other students.

Well, he wouldn't be ignoring me today.

I glanced down at my thigh-high boots, my lips curling in amusement. The heels added about three inches to my height. I'd paired them with a sleek black dress with capped sleeves. It was professional and elegant. And it fit me like a second skin.

It also ended right where my boots began.

I hid most of the ensemble beneath a black peacoat, the wool hem almost reaching my knees.

Which helped me walk across campus without any issues. Of course, the heels weren't the best shoes for the trek, but my feet had experienced worse.

I entered the classroom with my bag on my shoulder, my laptop inside for today's presentation.

Carver grinned in welcome, having already found his seat. "You ready for today?"

I smiled. "You have no idea."

I didn't take off my coat. I'd save that reveal for my presentation.

Pierce ignored me again, taking on his repetitive role from the last few weeks. He hadn't even wished me a happy birthday, something he usually did annually through social media.

I pretended not to care.

But I did.

I cared a fucking lot.

Maybe it was his way of distancing himself from me because of this class. However, it felt petty. Mean. Cruel.

And it made me angrier at him.

I wanted to rant and rave and demand that he see me as me. But reacting that way would only make me appear even more immature in his eyes.

So I'd ignored the slight, kept showing up for class while armed with information, and had bitten my tongue when he'd continued to act as though I didn't exist.

"We'll be going in alphabetical order by last name," he announced now, telling me I would be near the end of the presentations.

That was fine.

I'd go out with a bang.

Emily was among the first to go, her last name of Avery putting her second on the list. She chose to focus on images for advertising, breaking it down by platform to discuss the varying sizes.

It wasn't bad.

But she didn't apply it to a specific industry, so I found it a bit lacking.

However, Pierce praised her. Because of course he did. He probably wanted to make out with her at a bar later.

I nearly rolled my eyes.

Was the whole relationship in my head? Yes. I'd seen him shut down her flirting a few times now. But it really irritated me how he showed her preference during class.

Carver spoke about ad language and using punchy marketing lines to engage in social media posts. He focused more on being friends with the consumers, talking in comments and putting them at ease—similar to how Pierce's team always provided factual details.

It was a good application of the course material while also giving a nod toward Pierce's profession.

Unfortunately, he didn't appear all that impressed. Which was odd because Carver had one of the better presentations.

By the time it was my turn, my palms were slick and my belly felt weighed down by stones.

I swallowed. You can do this. It was about so much more than just applying what I'd learned. It was about proving my identity to the man who had captured my heart over a decade ago.

"Jenica Roberts," he said, using my full name in a monotone. He didn't look at me as

he spoke it either, his gaze on his tablet.

I grabbed my laptop and stood, then wandered over to the podium to set everything up.

He still hadn't acknowledged me with his eyes by the time I was ready to begin, something that irked me to no end. You had better at least look at me when I remove this coat, I thought.

"You can begin at your leisure, Miss Roberts."

So that's how it's going to be. All right, then. "My presentation will focus on sex," I announced.

And would you look at that? Pierce's eyes are still dark green. Fascinating how a few words can make that stare come out to play.

I smiled at him, but it wasn't a kind look so much as an arrogant one.

"Sex sells," I continued, unbuttoning my jacket. "I'm not talking about porn or naked people, though. I'm talking about sensuality that's both internet-appropriate and compelling to the consumers' eyes."

I shrugged out of my coat and walked over to lay it on my chair, fully aware that this gave Pierce an excellent view of my backside.

"But the key is making it personal enough that others can relate to you." I returned to my laptop on the podium, completely ignoring Pierce. "It's also important to understand where to add sexual advertising and where not to."

I pulled up my first slide, showing an image of children playing with a well-known

toy, and used that as an example of when not to use sexual advertising. It was common sense, obviously, but I started here and continued into more difficult marketing items for analysis.

Women's running shoes—sex sells, but only when marketed correctly.

Video games—sex obviously sells because men are more visual than females.

Chocolates—clearly sexual in nature, unless advertising candy for children.

I went into a few others but really focused on the importance of knowing the audience and tailoring the sexual imaging appropriately. Not just to ensure that the consumer felt included in the experience, but also to pass the infamous social media bots that loved flagging nudity and “inappropriate content” in imagery.

Which led me to my final topic—my outfit.

“This dress is practically painted on,” I said, smiling. “But it covers all the sexy bits a bot would flag on social media, thus making it an appropriate marketing piece. Unless, of course, I posed with Carver in an indecent pose.”

“I volunteer,” he replied, his voice deep and meaningful.

I grinned at him and shook my head. “Only if the branding requires it, Carver.” Which was how I ended my presentation.

The class applauded as I packed up my laptop. Rather than put my coat back on, I left it off to make a point to Pierce—sex sells—and settled into my chair.

He looked at me for the first time in weeks, his expression unreadable.

Then he cleared his throat and called on the next student.

My heart sank. He'd offered feedback to everyone else in class except for me.

This silent treatment had to end. I'd taken his course like any normal student would. I'd done all my homework. I'd read every fucking piece of material he'd handed out. And he still wasn't acknowledging me as an adult taking his class.

I'd stayed quiet about it because it was the mature option.

But his behavior wasn't mature at all.

It was downright rude.

The rest of class went by slowly despite there only being five more people after me. However, it was the right amount of time to stoke my anger.

Especially as he gave all five of those students feedback again.

My jaw ached from clenching it so hard.

"Want to grab dinner?" Carver asked me as he stood, his gaze traveling over my dress with interest.

At least he sees me, I thought miserably.

I cleared my throat. "I actually already have dinner plans." A lie. My only plans were to verbally beat the shit out of Logan Pierce. "Rain check?"

"If you wear that again? Sure." He winked at me and gathered his stuff to leave.

I forced a laugh, the sound breathier than it should have been because of my mounting ire. Which probably sounded flirty to him. And any other day, it would be.

Carver Matthews was a handsome guy with his shaggy dark red hair and striking hazel eyes. He was a swimmer, too. That sort of body looked good sans clothing.

But a certain professor still captivated my attention.

Even though he clearly had no interest in me at all.

I waited for the last student to finish talking to him after class, the two of them openly discussing the feedback from her presentation.

Something that only made me angrier.

When she finally finished, Pierce started packing as though I weren't standing there waiting to have a word with him.

The student left, the door closing with a finality that left us alone in the room like his first class.

"Are you seriously going to act like I don't exist?" I demanded.

"Oh, I'm very aware that you exist, Jenica."

My eyebrows lifted. "And that's why you didn't offer me a single statement after my presentation when you appraised everyone else?"

"What do you want me to say?" he asked, still not looking at me. "My best friend's little sister just gave a presentation about sexual advertising." His green eyes were a shade darker as he finally lifted his gaze to mine. "Do you have any idea how

uncomfortable that was to listen to?”

I gaped at him. “Why? Because you still see me as a child?”

“Because you’re my best friend’s little sister,” he snapped back at me.

“I’m also a fucking person,” I retorted. “A twenty-two-year-old woman—because my birthday was a few weeks ago, FYI.” Not that he cared. “I’m majoring in the same damn degree that you did. I’m not a child. I’m not your sister. I’m a student, and I delivered a presentation that deserved to at least be commented on just like everyone else’s!”

I was shouting now, but I didn’t care.

This was ridiculous.

“I get that all you see is a child when you look at me, but that’s not who I am. And I thought my presentation would wake you the fuck up to that fact. Apparently not. Apparently, all I will ever be is a kid to you.” I shook my head, done with all of this.

I’d wasted so much time pining for a man who would never see me.

Maybe that did make me a child. A thirteen-year-old girl with a crush.

“Never mind,” I muttered, stepping away from him. There was no point in trying to make him realize something he would obviously never truly comprehend.

“Because you’re my best friend’s little sister.”

That was all I’d ever be.

It'd been stupid of me to take this class. Stupid of me to think I could wake him up. Stupid of me to even try.

"Have a good rest of your week, Professor Pierce," I said formally, returning to my coat and pulling it on.

"Jeni..."

"Jenica," I corrected him shortly as I grabbed my bag. "You could at least try to respect me as a student." It came out as a quiet statement, my insides crumbling into pieces.

I needed to escape before I let those emotions cloud my expression.

He couldn't know how I felt.

He could never know.

I just had to get over him.

While I'd tried the last few years to find someone else, I'd always held him at the back of my mind. A what-if scenario for when I graduated college.

But if this experience these last five weeks had taught me anything, it was that Logan Pierce would never see me as anything other than his kid sister.

So I needed to move on and stop craving someone I would never have.

He said my name again as I started toward the door, but I didn't pause for him.

I was done trying to win his affection.

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Source Creation Date: July 23, 2025, 3:27 am

That fucking dress haunted me all week.

Every time I closed my eyes, I pictured Jenica's sweet ass in that tight fabric as she revealed herself in front of the class.

There was nothing childlike about her, despite what she kept accusing me of.

I ran a hand over my face and blew out a breath.

The female was driving me insane. It had taken physical restraint to ignore her the last few weeks, to act as though she hadn't raised her hand to respond to every question I'd asked. But I didn't want to show favoritism for her. It was a conflict of interest—something I'd warned her about after the first class.

I should have followed through on my threat to go to the administration.

But I hadn't.

Mostly because I hadn't wanted to.

A huge fucking mistake. Especially after the last class. I was almost terrified to see her this week, worried that she might show up in another of those short, tight dresses.

Fortunately, she stepped through the door in a pair of jeans and a sweater instead.

Unfortunately, Carver was right behind her, handing her some sort of drink. "You owe me," he told her, his tone teasing. "Carrying an iced mocha across campus in this

chilly weather wasn't fun."

She laughed. "I'll make it up to you."

"You will," he agreed, settling beside her in the second row, as usual.

It was on the tip of my tongue to separate them, but I didn't have a valid excuse as to why I would separate them. Other than to play the protective-big-brother card.

Does this little dick even know what I am to her?

I suspected he didn't, or he wouldn't be openly eye-fucking her in every class.

Why didn't she tell him about me? I wondered, my brow threatening to furrow. Is she protecting me? Protecting herself? Does she not really see me as a big brother to her?

That last thought stung a bit.

Of course, I deserved it after basically ignoring her all semester. I'd even gone as far as to not message her on her birthday—something I did religiously every year.

But she was my student now, and it felt awkward crossing that personal line.

Which would make it weird now for me to tell Carver to go sit in the hall instead of next to her.

Grinding my teeth, I pushed the thoughts away and focused on the lecture ahead instead.

Somehow, I managed to deliver it without once looking at Jenica. It helped that she was properly covered. Yet I felt a niggling of guilt when she silently left after class.

I'd placed feedback notes from last week's assignment on my table for everyone to pick up.

She hadn't even bothered to collect hers.

Probably because she assumed I didn't have anything for her.

I sighed. This was not working.

After class, I sent an email to her school account and attached the feedback. It was all favorable because she'd slayed her presentation. Which naturally made it that much harder to grade her. I felt like I had to be harder on her because of our history, yet I couldn't find a lot to critique.

She responded around midnight with a mere "Thanks."

I glared at the message.

That's it? That's all you have to say?

It'd taken me all of last week to figure out how to grade her, and she replied with a single word? Un-fucking-believable.

I grabbed a bottle of bourbon from the liquor cabinet in my kitchen and poured myself a healthy glass of it.

Then I downed the contents in a few gulps and poured another one before taking in the foggy night view from my floor-to-ceiling windows.

Beyond it was a view of the mountains overlooking Portland. Which I would have enjoyed seeing if it weren't for the perpetual clouds that seemed to hug the skies over

this part of the country.

A very different experience from my New York City home. I'd purchased a condo in Manhattan last year, wanting to be closer to the Wakefield Pharmaceutical headquarters. It was a two-bedroom, which would seem modest here, yet fit for a king there.

It was a bit of an overindulgence on my part, but I'd worked hard, and the company paid me well.

Part of my deal with Mason U had been to negotiate housing since I didn't intend to stay here long, and I really didn't want to pay rent on top of a mortgage.

I'd expected some cheap apartment near campus.

Instead, they'd put me in temporary faculty housing, which was a rather posh two-bedroom space near the top floor of a residential building a few blocks away from the university.

Jax's reaction to it had been priceless, the asshole poking fun at my success. He'd meant well. It'd been just a natural ribbing that I'd returned when he'd told me about his promotion at work.

We'd certainly come a long way in the last decade.

I missed hanging out with him on the regular, something living here these last few weeks had proved. I'd made numerous friends in New York City, but none of them were Jax.

And none of the women are Jenica, either, I thought, tossing the drink into the back of my throat again. It burned, but I swallowed it, my mood souring at the thought of

her one-word reply.

Yeah, that's not going to work for me.

I'd spent too much time on her critique for her to just ignore me.

I returned to my computer—which I'd left on my dining room table—and shot her another note. Come see me after class on Monday.

Then I drummed my fingers, waiting for her reply.

She didn't send one.

I checked again the next day.

Nothing.

And the day after that.

Also nothing.

She didn't reply all damn week.

Jax distracted me from it over the weekend, demanding that I head out to a new club with him. But I wasn't feeling the company, my skin itching the whole damn time. Mostly because women kept touching me and I wanted my space. So I left early, giving him the opportunity to entertain on his own.

If he'd found it weird, he hadn't said anything.

By Monday, she still hadn't acknowledged my request—which had quickly morphed

into a demand. I shot her another message before class.

Miss Roberts,

I'll be waiting for you in my office at eight.

Best,

Pierce

I knew the email would arrive on her phone. Yet she still didn't reply.

Then she showed up to class with Carver again, and I nearly lost my shit. Because he had his arm around her like he owned her.

She laughed at whatever he said, the sound genuine.

What do you even see in this guy? I wanted to ask her.

But a better question followed: Why do I care?

Because it was my job to protect her.

A duty assigned to me as Jax's best friend.

Surely he wouldn't approve of this joker fondling his little sister in class.

I glowered at them.

However, they were too lost in each other to notice.

A good thing, I supposed, because my reaction was entirely inappropriate. But this is why I didn't want her in my class—it was a goddamn conflict of interest.

I wanted to throttle her for not listening to me.

More, I wanted to throttle myself for my lack of control.

Fuck.

With a mental growl, I cleared my head and focused on the lecture. It was a bit gruffer this time, my anger making it difficult to enunciate words in the easy manner from before. Mostly because I wanted to take Jenica over my knee and beat some sense into her.

Which was precisely why I needed her to stay the fuck away from me.

Every time I saw her, my urge to tame came out to play. And she wasn't mine to tame. She wasn't mine to fuck, either. She wasn't mine, period.

This attraction was a serious problem.

It skewed my judgment and made me want to do things I shouldn't.

Swallowing, I forced my way through tonight's class and reminded everyone that midterm exams were next week. Since my assignment for them was a social media marketing campaign for a product of their choosing, we wouldn't be meeting in person. Rather, they would submit everything online, and I would review their work.

A few stopped by with questions, allowing Jenica to escape.

I almost called after her to remind her of our appointment, but I didn't.

Instead, I focused on the students in front of me, then packed up and headed to my office.

I was a few minutes early and half expected Jenica to already be there waiting for me.

She wasn't.

And at ten after eight, I started to question whether or not she planned to come.

I knew Jenica—ignoring a professor wasn't something she would do. So if she didn't show up, it was because something had happened to her or she didn't respect my position.

The former concerned me.

The latter provoked the Dominant inside me, making me want to find her and teach her a lesson.

She reminded me of a bratty sub, constantly pushing boundaries and trying to find a way to misbehave for the purpose of desiring punishment.

That wasn't true at all; it was just my mind wandering and conceptualizing a relationship that did not—would not—exist between us.

Yet it was so easy to picture her kneeling at my feet with her head bowed and that luscious body on display.

I should have stayed at the bar Saturday night, I thought, craving a drink and something a little darker. A little sexier.

Of course, none of those girls had really been my type.

Because I found myself only desiring one female right now.

In a tight black dress wearing fuck-me heels.

That outfit was designed for a sex dungeon.

Except for the fact that it covered her from shoulder to thigh.

But it was the kind of outfit that hid something sexy beneath—a present for a Dominant to reveal in front of the masses before worshipping the female with his fingers and tongue.

I glanced at the minifridge of my temporary office, irritated that I'd only stocked it with water.

This woman was driving me to drink.

And she was now over twenty minutes late.

Which meant she'd blown me off entirely.

I pulled out my cell phone and dialed her number, livid with her show of disrespect.

It went to voicemail.

“Jenica, this isn't cute,” I said as soon as the beep sounded. “I told you to see me after class. I told you to—”

A knock sounded, interrupting my message.

“That had better be you at my door, or I'm going to hunt you down and scold you in a

way you will never forget,” I threatened, hanging up the phone.

I opened the door to find her standing on the other side with slightly pinkened cheeks, her hair mussed.

My gaze narrowed. She looks freshly fucked.

It was a look I liked and despised at the same time because I wasn’t the one who had put her in that state.

But I absolutely wanted to replicate that look.

Beneath me.

In bed.

“Sorry,” she said, breathless. “I got all the way to my apartment before I saw your email.”

I arched a brow. “Even the one from last week where I asked you to meet me after class?”

She scrunched her nose. “No, that one I deleted without reading.”

Well, at least she was honest. “Do you treat all your professors that way?” I couldn’t help the note of censure in my tone.

“No,” she admitted, glancing downward in an uncharacteristic display of shame. Or maybe it was a natural submission to my tone.

I cleared my throat and stepped to the side, allowing her to enter.

She took in the small space—it was a temporary office for a reason—and the slender window behind the large oak desk. I had an empty bookshelf and two visitor chairs as well.

And a tiny fridge full of water bottles.

“I see you’ve settled in nicely,” she deadpanned, noting the plain off-white walls and lack of items on my desk. I’d set my bag there and nothing else. There wasn’t even a lamp.

“I don’t intend to stay long,” I reminded her.

“Right. New York City.” She sat in one of the chairs, her gaze on the window rather than on me. “Jax says you have a nice place there.”

I muttered a version of an agreement as I took a seat behind my desk.

Now that she was here, I couldn’t really remember what I’d planned to say.

Her messy hair and flushed cheeks appeared to be from sprinting back to my office. Fortunately, she was wearing jeans and a sweater rather than those fuck-me heels again. I strongly doubted she could have run in those.

“Did you need something?” she asked after a beat of silence. “There wasn’t anything in your feedback I had questions about, and I’m prepared for my midterm assignment.”

“Another sex ad?” I asked, unable to stop myself from quirking up an eyebrow.

She shook her head. “No. My marketing plan is for children’s coloring books.” Her eyes glittered as she finally met my gaze. “I figured you would find that more

appropriate.”

Jenica used to draw a lot as a kid. She’d also loved coloring. So I actually did find that suitable for her, but I suspected that wasn’t what she meant at all.

“Do you still color?” I wondered aloud, trying to break some of the tension.

“No. But I have taken a few art courses as electives.” She resumed staring out the window over my head. “I haven’t colored since middle school.” The latter part came out in a low mumble of sound that appeared to be more for her than for me.

“What art courses have you taken?” I asked, genuinely interested.

She shrugged. “Mostly painting. A few in graphic design, as it goes hand in hand with marketing graphics.” She looked at me again, her expression holding a note of exhaustion. “You didn’t ask me here for small talk, Pierce. What do you want?”

“Maybe I wanted small talk.”

Her eyes rolled. “Then ask Emily to come to office hours instead.” She started to stand as though we were done, her audacity slapping me across the face.

“Sit. Down.” The command left my mouth in a way similar to the word kneel, but I ignored that and focused on her submissive form.

Because the moment I spoke, she sat.

And her head immediately bowed.

Then she frowned, some part of her registering that she’d just submitted without meaning to, and snapped her gaze back up to mine, a hint of fury lurking in the pretty

blue depths. “What the fuck do you want, Pierce?”

“For starters? Some goddamn respect would be nice.” I was really tired of this attitude. I hadn’t done anything to deserve it other than to ask her nicely to drop my course. Then I’d spent the better part of the last seven weeks acting as though she meant nothing to me to avoid any awkwardness.

And now I had her acting out like a fucking brat in my office.

Because I called her, I thought angrily. Why did I do that, again?

“How have I disrespected you?” she asked, her voice a touch softer now. “I’ve shown up every week prepared to answer questions and participate, only for you to treat me like I was invisible. Then I gave a presentation that you could barely find any faults in—because, let’s be honest, we both know your nitpicky comments were a stretch at best—and now you’ve demanded I show up to your office hours without once telling me why. If anyone has been disrespectful, it’s you. Because you refuse to take me seriously.”

I stared at her, momentarily at a loss for words.

Because she was right.

I had disrespected her immensely by ignoring her.

I hadn’t taken her seriously as a student, too focused on the distraction she created by being in my class rather than considering the reason for her enrollment—to learn.

And I had absolutely graded her more harshly than the others in an effort to overcompensate for any perceived favoritism.

This was such a fucking mess.

All because I couldn't seem to think straight in her presence.

Why did she have to grow up to become such an alluring goddess?

This would be so much easier if she were still twelve.

But she wasn't.

She was twenty-two—a fact she continued to remind me of.

A grown woman.

A beautiful woman.

My shoulders fell as I released a long breath. "I've struggled to reconcile you being in my class," I admitted, giving her a half-truth.

What I really meant was—I'm struggling to reconcile the fact that you grew up to be a knockout, one I really want to touch but can't, and I'm being an asshole in response to that desire.

I would never admit that to her, though.

"It's a distraction," I continued. "I don't want to show you any favoritism."

"Well, be assured, you've done the absolute opposite of that," she muttered, her attention going to the damn window again. "I haven't told anyone in the course that I know you, and I'm sure none of them have even questioned it. I've prepared for every class as needed, and I've conducted myself professionally—"

I snorted. “That black dress and those fuck-me heels were not professional.”

She slowly shifted her eyes to me, blue flames lighting up her irises. “That outfit was worn for a purpose that everyone in the class understood.”

“Oh, they understood all right. Especially Carver.”

Her eyebrows lifted. “Excuse me?”

“I heard him ask you out. Was that your goal? Using my class assignment to seduce him?” It wasn’t a fair question and I knew it, but thinking about that exchange infuriated me all over again.

I’m reacting like a fucking teenager, I chastised myself. This wasn’t me at all. I commanded every situation, my natural inclination to lead coming through in everything that I did.

Yet this female flipped me upside down and danced all over my instincts. It made me feel dizzy and out of sorts. Which only increased my need to tame her, to right the world around us by asserting my control over her, over us.

“Yes,” she hissed. “My goal was to dress up in a sexy number to seduce Carver Matthews.” She rolled her eyes again, standing. “I’m not going to sit here and take your insults, Pierce. We both know that dress was a prop.”

She planted her hands on the desk, leaning down to stare right into my eyes.

“Are you one of those men who say a woman asked for it just because of the way she dressed?” she asked, her voice serious. “Because if you are, then I’m disappointed in you. I thought you knew better.”

Her words were another slap across the face, so much so that I couldn't even think of a reply.

So instead, I asked, "Are you dating him?"

Her eyebrows flew upward. "Are you fucking kidding me?" She stepped back as though I were the one who had delivered the slap this time. "That's none of your business, Pierce."

"Your brother would disagree." This was coming out all wrong.

I hadn't asked her here for this.

Or maybe I had.

Maybe I'd wanted a reason to fight.

No, that wasn't right at all.

I wanted to tame her. Punish her. Make her mine. All things I couldn't do. I shouldn't have invited her here at all. I should have just let it go. Continued to ignore her.

But when she'd turned the tables and ignored me, I hadn't been able to take it.

I'd needed to break the silence.

Fuck. This was a dangerous tightrope to walk, and I was failing miserably at it.

She took a step back, shaking her head. "You and Jax have no say in my sex life."

"Sex life?" I repeated, seeing red. "You're having sex with Carver Matthews?"

Her cheeks darkened to the same color as my vision. “That’s none of your business,” she repeated, stepping backward toward the door. “Next time you call me into your office, try to keep it course related, Professor.”

I stood, ready to stop her, but she was already leaving, the door swinging harshly in her wake with a slam to punctuate her words.

Shit.

My fists fell to my desk, a curse leaving my lips.

Well done, Pierce, I snapped at myself. Well. Fucking. Done.

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I hit Save on my midterm project, then closed it so I could focus on the evening ahead.

I'd designed a social media marketing campaign for coloring books, just like I'd promised.

Except with a little twist.

I'd decided to make them adult coloring books instead of children's coloring books.

That probably took away a few maturity points, but I no longer cared. Not after the way Pierce had spoken to me on Monday after class.

He'd been astonished that I might be having sex. What the hell did he expect? A twenty-two-year-old virgin?

Oh, wait, but he saw me as twelve years old. So of course he thought I was untouched.

I rolled my eyes for the millionth time this week and shoved my computer away. I only had one other midterm assignment to wrap up, which was on my agenda for tomorrow. Then I would submit all my projects and have a relaxing week of no classes.

Tonight, however, was reserved for sin.

My roommate, Adalyn, had scored tickets to a masquerade party tonight, one that

involved strong erotic undertones, which was exactly what my “virgin body” needed to blow off some steam.

It was at a sex club that she enjoyed. I’d never been, but I understood enough about it to know it was the perfect place to find a man who would take my mind off of Logan Pierce for a night. Or at least a scene to observe and distract myself from thoughts of him, anyway.

Adalyn was sexually explorative by nature. And a submissive.

I knew enough about her lifestyle to know it intrigued me.

And tonight, she was inviting me into her world as a spectator.

She belonged to the sex club we were heading to, which was how she’d acquired the masquerade tickets. Apparently, members were allowed to bring a guest tonight. Which meant a lot of the activities would be more restricted than normal since outsiders would be wandering around.

I didn’t know a lot about what that meant, but Adalyn had said it would provide me with a healthy introduction without overwhelming me.

As this seemed like a good way to kick off Operation Forget Pierce, I’d agreed.

It was that or call Carver and ask for his help to distract me.

Which would never actually happen. While Carver and I liked to flirt, we were just friends. Something we’d agreed on ages ago after trying and failing to go on a date together.

Of course, that didn’t stop him from teasing me about going on a second one.

But whenever we actually went out, it was as friends.

Yet, apparently, I wore that dress for him in class, I thought sourly, recalling Pierce's words from the other night. Asshole.

Shoving him from my mind, I started the ritual of preparing myself for a night out.

Shower.

Shaving.

Blow-drying my hair.

Trading my glasses for my contacts.

Light makeup.

Barely there lingerie.

A pair of lacy, elbow-length gloves to match the lingerie beneath.

Flirty black dress—not the same one from my presentation, although the temptation to wear it in spite of Pierce was absolutely there—and strappy black heels.

Fortunately, I wouldn't be outside for long, as I was absolutely going to freeze in this.

Adalyn met me in our shared living area, her curvy figure dressed similarly to mine. She was about four inches shorter than me, though. Something she compensated for with her killer shoes. Which meant we'd be the same height if I traded my heels for flats.

“I don’t know how you walk in those,” I said, eyeing her feet. “Anything over three inches is dangerous.”

She grinned, her teeth a perfect slash of white set against her olive skin. “I personally prefer eight or nine.”

It took me a second to follow her dirty mind, my laugh leaving me on a puff of air. “I’m sure you’ll find a few tonight that meet that requirement.”

She shrugged. “We’ll see. But I’m more interested in what they can do with their hands and tongues.” She wagged her brows suggestively. Then she handed me a black mask with crystal-like beads embedded into the rim. “This says you’re a visiting submissive so that the Doms in attendance know to go easy on you.”

I wasn’t sure how I felt about the term submissive, but it was the latter part of her statement that gave me pause.

“Go easy on me,” I repeated. “Meaning?”

“Meaning no one will touch you without a lot of conversation first. It’s a good place to explore. Or, you can just watch.” Her dark gaze met and held mine. “I won’t leave you unattended unless you ask me to. And if you’re uncomfortable, we can go.”

I nodded, trusting her.

She visited this club almost every weekend, and she’d invited me to attend a few times as her guest.

This was the first time I’d agreed, mostly because I needed something new in my life. A way to move on. An experience to chase away my past.

Because nothing I'd tried in the last few years had worked.

So why not try this?

"All right," I said, taking the mask from her. "What color are you wearing?"

She pulled a black mask with red jewels from her bag. "This says I'm a member looking for a playmate. Yellow stones say you're a member, but not yet ready to play. And black ones mean you're a member and already taken."

"What do the Doms wear?" I wondered aloud as she started toward the door.

"The Doms and Dommes won't be in masks," she said. "Most of them will be in suits, too." She paused in the foyer, glancing back at me. "You may see a few submissives with collars as well. That means they're into Master/slave play. If there's a lock around their throat, they're taken. If the lock is unfastened, they're open."

I swallowed. "Oh."

Her dark eyes sparkled. "You're about to enter a whole new world, Jen. And something tells me you may never want to leave it."

"I'm glad you're confident," I said dryly, following her through the door and into the hallway. We both had little clutch purses for our money and keys. I slipped my mask inside mine, not wanting to wear it until we reached the club.

Adalyn's long black hair swished along her back as she walked, the delicate strands having been pulled back into a ponytail.

I idly wondered if I should have done the same, but I preferred wearing my hair down, as it barely touched my shoulders.

A car waited for us outside, the ride one Adalyn had arranged. I slid onto the leather back seat beside her and listened as she made small talk with the driver.

She was always the outgoing one in our duo.

I didn't mind speaking in groups, but I often preferred to stand on the sidelines and observe. Something told me tonight would be no exception.

The ride to the club was about twenty minutes, the area of Portland familiar to me as I exited the car. There was a donut shop around the corner that I liked and a bar I'd been to with Adalyn several times.

Which now made sense.

She would meet me there and come here afterward.

Although, she didn't typically dress like this to go to the bar.

Maybe she took a change of clothes with her in her bag or something?

"We'll start with a tour," she told me as we ascended a set of stone stairs toward an unassuming door. It was so quick that I barely felt the cool air. Or maybe I was just too warm with excitement and nerves to sense the evening chill.

A pair of security guards opened the door before we could reach the handle, one of them greeting Adalyn by name. She smiled at him. "Hey, Gavin."

His light eyes moved to me, his expression kind. "I see you brought a guest."

"I did. This is Jen." She always called me Jen instead of Jenica, something that didn't bother me. Especially tonight, as it gave me some anonymity to stand behind a

version of my name. “I’ve already given her a mask.”

I pulled it from my purse to show him, just in case.

He nodded. “Just need to check ID.”

Adalyn handed over her driver’s license, and I did the same with mine.

He reviewed them with a nod and handed them back to us with a pair of bracelets. They weren’t the standard plastic ones provided by a typical nightclub, but delicate silver chains with heart-shaped crystal charms hanging from the middle. I put mine on over my lacy gloves.

“Have a good night, ladies,” Gavin said. “And make sure you brief her on the rules, Adalyn.”

“Of course,” she replied, her tone playful.

“The real rules, Adalyn. Not everyone is a bratty sub.”

She feigned shock at that. “I would never break rules.”

“Hmm,” he hummed, causing his buddy to chuckle.

I glanced between them, but Adalyn was already pulling me inside before I could ask for whatever story lurked between them.

Bratty subseemed like a good way to define Adalyn. I only knew of her submissive tendencies because she’d shared some of them with me. Not in a seductive sort of a way, but in a confiding one. She’d been afraid of what some of her desires had meant at first—such as the fact that she enjoyed being spanked—and she’d asked me if I

ever had similar yearnings.

I hadn't been able to answer her because I didn't really know.

The notion of Pierce bending me over and smacking my ass sounded enjoyable. But I couldn't really think of anyone else I'd allow to do that.

Hell, I wasn't even sure I'd let him do it.

Especially not after the last few weeks.

"Stop scowling," Adalyn chastised. "Tonight is Operation Forget Pierce, right?"

She knew all about Pierce and my pining obsession and how badly taking his class had backfired. I'd told Pierce that no one in the course knew about him. What I hadn't mentioned was how much I'd told Adalyn about him.

She was one of my closest friends at Mason U.

Naturally, she knew about my childhood crush.

And how I'd enrolled in his course with the hopes of proving myself to him.

What a great plan that was, I muttered to myself.

"Hey!" Adalyn snapped her fingers in front of my face. "Earth to Jen."

I blinked at her.

"Operation Forget the Douche," she said slowly. "Remember?"

“Yeah.” I shook my head trying to clear it. “Forget the Douche.”

“Exactly.” She grinned. “Now put on your mask unless you want to be mistaken for a Domme.”

My nose scrunched. The notion of making a male submit to me didn’t really appeal.

Except for maybe—

No. Not thinking about him again.

And even if I was, the notion of him submitting was laughable.

Logan Pierce did not seem like—

Stop.

I cleared my throat and donned my mask, deciding that tonight was about being Jen. Jen didn’t have a crush on anyone. Jen just wanted to have fun. Jen was curious about this world of submission and wanted to learn more. Jen needed some orgasms.

“That’s my girl,” Adalyn murmured, sliding on her own mask. “Let’s explore.”

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Lockers.

That was how Adalyn had changed after going to the bar with me.

She showed me the women's area first, explaining that it was reserved for club members but that I could use certain parts of it tonight. Such as the bathrooms and shower areas, but the locker room had a guard in front of it checking memberships.

Wealth and opulence defined the area, giving the club—which I now knew was called Ecstasy—an expensive appeal.

“How did you get a membership here, again?” I asked Adalyn in a whisper as she led me down a hallway framed by red velvet and golden adornments.

“A friend,” she replied vaguely.

“A friend,” I repeated.

She nodded. “A family friend.”

In other words, it was from her background, which I knew was rooted in the elite world. My family came from modest means, our home large enough for a family of five, but cozy and in need of some standard repairs.

Adalyn, however, had grown up as an only child in a mansion large enough to share with a dozen brothers and sisters. Her parents were hardly ever home. And she'd essentially been raised by a nanny.

I didn't know the full history because she rarely spoke about her family.

I actually hadn't even known she was rich until last spring when a random man had showed up at our apartment to "escort" her home for some sort of summer retreat. She'd shut down with his arrival, making me question what the hell was going on. I'd never seen my roommate so solemn. So I'd cornered her in her room and demanded an explanation.

That was when she'd first told me about her bizarre relationship with her parents. She'd also confided that she'd spent most of her childhood with her nanny before going to boarding school for ages thirteen through eighteen. From what she'd explained, she rarely saw her family.

I'd asked why she had to go for the summer, and she'd waved it off, saying it was a tradition for the women in her family when they turned twenty to go on some special retreat thing. She'd kept in touch with me weekly, sending me messages and telling me how much she hated it.

Although, she'd never truly explained the experience to me.

But she'd been the same old Adalyn when she'd returned, all smiles and happy confidence.

Just with a brand-new car that was worth more than my parents' house.

I'd asked why she even bothered with a roommate or our shitty apartment, and she'd given me a look deep with emotion as she'd replied, "I need this normalcy."

I'd gathered from those few exchanges that she did not like her family life.

Given what little I knew, I couldn't blame her.

So instead, I became her family at Mason U.

And now she was introducing me to another part of her world—Ecstasy. Which I'd deduced from the interior was an elite club for high-ranking members of society to play.

There were scantily clad women everywhere, as well as a few men. Adalyn explained quietly that they were part of the Ecstasy circuit, working in the clubs and enjoying the clientele.

“So they're prostitutes?” I whispered back to her.

She shook her head. “Not quite. They're professionals.”

I slid my gaze to her. “Professional prostitutes?”

“That's not the right term.”

“Well, no, that would make it illegal.”

“They're more like mistresses,” she explained, ignoring my comment. “That's why most of them are collared.” She stroked her throat.

“The whole Master and slave thing.”

She nodded. “Essentially, yes.”

Something told me she was leaving out some details of the arrangements, but I wasn't here to judge. I was here to learn.

She showed me the main areas of the club, explaining the bar and how the bracelets

the guard had given us earlier worked. “The diamond pendant has a chip in it that allows them to charge my account.” She gave me a smile. “I added you under my name since you’re my guest, so don’t worry about the cost of anything.”

“Wait, did you just say diamond pendant?” I glanced down at my wrist in alarm. Forget the barcode insanity. “I’m wearing a diamond?”

She eyed my mask and arched a brow behind her own. “You’re wearing several, Jen.”

My lips parted. “Adalyn.”

She gave me a look. “You’re in my world for the night. Own it.” And with that, she spun away. “Your purse is in my locker, so you might as well keep following me.”

I glared at her swinging ponytail as I forced myself to catch up to her. “What kind of club is this?”

“An exclusive one,” she replied.

That would explain why I’d never heard anyone other than her mention it.

But... “Adalyn, this is crazy.”

“Everything in life is crazy,” she countered. “Don’t fret about it. I’m not asking you to join. Just enjoy the night. It’s all about Operation Forget the Douche, remember?”

“You’re doing a pretty damn good job,” I admitted, glancing around and taking in all the adornments of the club through a new lens. “That’s real gold on the walls...”

She glanced at it and shrugged. “Probably. Most of the clubs have a flair to them, and

this one seems to favor gold.”

“There are more clubs like this?”

“All over the world.” Her gaze took on a faraway gleam, then she blinked. “So anyway, this is the main bar. We can hang out here and have some drinks before we head into the public playrooms for some observation. But the downstairs levels are off-limits to nonmembers, so the public playrooms will be the last part of our journey unless a high-ranking member invites you to a private room.”

“Private room?” I echoed.

She nodded. “They can be reserved. Usually only by Doms, but some subs have the ability to request a certain space. Typically at the request of their Dom, though.” She gave another of those nonchalant lifts of her shoulder, like she wasn’t blowing my mind with each statement, and headed toward the bar.

I followed because I wasn’t sure what else to do.

The bartender greeted her by name, recognizing her even with the mask on, and scanned her wrist before making her a drink—a drink she didn’t actually order. But the bartender clearly knew her preferences because he returned with a chocolate martini. “Does your guest want anything?” he asked, his eyes on Adalyn instead of me.

She glanced at me, her dark eyes lingering. “She needs something strong. It’s her first time in a club like this.”

“Ah.” He nodded. “Something strong, but not too powerful. Consent is important.”

She dipped her chin in agreement, but her gaze took on that faraway gleam again.

Except it disappeared in a blink as she pointed to a section of couches. “That’s where I usually like to wait.”

“Wait?” I repeated.

“For someone to approach me,” she explained, her gaze twinkling. “Come on, I’ll teach you. Francesco will bring the drink to us.”

“Will I?” he drawled.

She gave him a sweet smile. “Won’t you?”

He returned her look with a knowing one. “Brat.”

“You love it.”

He shook his head and chuckled. “Go to your throne. I’ll serve you in a minute, Your Majesty.”

“You’re too kind,” she replied, blowing him a kiss before picking up her martini and carefully leading the way to her favorite couch. She set the glass on the table in front of it, then sat down with a graceful flourish I envied. Adalyn always made everything look easy.

I settled beside her—far less gracefully—and crossed my legs. “This is a really soft couch.”

“I know. I’ve slept on it before.”

I glanced at her. “You spend a lot of time here.”

“I have a quota,” she replied, giving me a grin.

“A quota?”

She merely smiled again, then started searching the room without explaining her word choice. Knowing Adalyn, it was her way of making a joke about her need for sex.

I wished I could be as open and as adventurous as her. But my mind had been thoroughly wrapped up in—

Nope.

Not thinking his name tonight.

I’m Jen.

And Jen wants orgasms.

Which meant I needed to scan the room with Adalyn to find someone interesting to play with.

Or at least someone to watch.

I suspected I would be more into the latter than the former. This whole world was too foreign for me to play with someone I didn’t know. Although, if I was going to have sex with a stranger, I supposed this was the kind of place to do that in, especially since there appeared to be security everywhere.

Francesco brought me a citrusy drink and set a plate of cheese and vegetables on the table with a little tin of mints beside it. “Behave.” His eyes were on Adalyn as he said

it.

“Do I ever not behave?”

He snorted, similarly to the guard outside. “You just want a spanking.”

“Always,” she replied, giving him another sweet grin.

He shook his head, his dark, wavy hair falling into his eyes. “You’re incorrigible, princess.”

“I try.” She batted her long lashes at him, and he left with a chuckle.

“You seem to know each other well,” I commented.

“He’s helped with my aftercare a few times,” she replied.

“Aftercare?”

“Post sex,” she explained. “Most Doms manage it. Some do not.” Something dark entered her expression as she said it. But it was gone in a blink again, her mask falling into place.

She did this often at home.

Whenever I asked about it, she waved it away, saying the past wasn’t something she enjoyed reliving, and moved on to other topics.

Sometimes I wondered how well I knew her. Tonight was one of those times as I watched her survey the crowd while we sipped our drinks in silence. Mine was citrusy and sweet, but it tasted good.

So good that I nearly drank the whole thing in the span of minutes.

“There are much hotter men out there,” she said conversationally, clearly feeling my eyes on her. “Like the duo who just entered.”

I took the hint and followed her gaze.

And almost dropped my mostly empty glass on the floor. “Oh, shit.”

“What?” she asked.

But it was too late.

Pierce’s gaze landed on me the moment I spoke, almost as though he could hear me from all the way across the room. An impossible feat, considering we were so far apart.

My brother stood beside him, his focus on the bar.

I immediately turned to face Adalyn. “That’s Pierce in the all-black suit.” I swallowed, my eyes fluttering closed as I tried not to think about how delicious he looked in elegant attire. “And the man next to him is my brother.” I hadn’t caught the color of his suit, my focus having been solely on the man I was trying not to think about tonight.

Her lips formed a little “O.” Then she glanced around me. “The blond is your brother?”

“Yeah,” I whispered.

She nodded a little. “He’s heading toward the bar.”

My shoulders sagged in relief.

“But the other one is heading our way,” she added, immediately causing my shoulders to tense again. “And the ruby ring he’s wearing means he’s a member.” She spoke those words with a softness that bordered on fear.

“Is that bad?”

“It means he knows people,” she whispered, her gaze lowering. “Powerful people.”

I frowned. “Pierce doesn’t—”

A hand landed on my shoulder, the heat branding my skin. A cloud of minty aftershave surrounded me in the next second as the male in question leaned down to press his lips to my ear. “What the fuck are you doing here, Jenica?”

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My pulse had skyrocketed the moment I saw Jenica sitting on the couch across the room. And it only increased in rhythm on my walk over here.

Now it was so damn loud I couldn't even hear the soft music playing in the club around us.

I'd sent Jax over to the bar to grab a drink, saving him from the rage of finding his little sister in this club.

The mask did a good job of hiding her face, but that body was the one I'd fantasized about for the last two months.

I knew it well.

In my mind, anyway.

And this dress was even more revealing than the one she'd worn to my class.

However, there'd been no denying Jenica's perfect form or the way her eyes had widened upon seeing me.

Her movement to hide had only confirmed her presence.

And then I'd heard her saying my name as I'd stepped up behind her.

Now she was frozen against me. The female beside her appeared just as frigid, the rubies on her mask confirming her membership to the club. We had never met. That

wasn't surprising, as this was my first time visiting this location.

I'd waited to visit until tonight because I'd wanted to bring Jax for the visitor party. He wasn't a member. However, he'd been to the New York City club with me on several occasions, as we went every time he came for a visit.

The Manhattan location was one of the few with a monthly allowance for visitors due to the elite clientele residing in the area. They often wanted to take colleagues out for a night, and Ecstasy was a great place to finalize business agreements over sex.

"Are you going to speak?" I asked, my grip sliding from her shoulder to her chin so I could tilt her head toward me.

The diamond-encrusted black mask framed her blue eyes beautifully, making her heartbreakingly gorgeous in this sinful little number she was wearing. A quick glance down told me she'd paired the sexy dress with lacy lingerie to match. It made me want to strip the material off of her and fuck her on this couch.

Which pissed me the hell off.

I already hadn't been in the mood to come tonight, but I knew how rare visitor evenings were and I didn't want to disappoint Jax.

Plus, he was starting to wonder about my sexual dry spell. Not that he usually cared much about my sex life, but he'd noted that I seemed off, and I knew that was what he meant.

I was "off" because I wanted to fuck his sister.

His sister, who was sitting on this couch, wearing a mask that proclaimed her as an inexperienced submissive.

My dick was so damn hard it hurt.

“Introduce me to your friend,” I said when she still didn’t speak.

Jenica’s lips moved, but no sound left her mouth.

“Adalyn Rose, Sir,” the female beside her said, making my eyebrows fly upward.

I knew that name.

She was on the list of untouchables for this location.

An Elite Bride in training.

Which meant she’d been promised to someone important. And she was here to learn from a select list of trainers.

Sometimes they shared.

Usually they didn’t.

It was a part of this world that I didn’t fully understand and often stayed out of. I came for the consensual sex, not the other shit.

But Jenica... How the fuck does she know this woman? “Did you two just meet?”

“No. We’re roommates, Sir,” Adalyn replied, her eyes respectfully downcast. “Jen is my guest for the night.”

“I see.” Jenica is roommates with an Elite Bride? And that Elite Bride brought Jenica here? To the proverbial lion’s den as an untried sub? Jesus Christ... I wasn’t sure

whom I wanted to throttle more—Jenica or her roommate.

Probably Jenica.

Only because I knew better than to touch an Elite Bride. That rule had been very clearly stated when I'd gained my Ecstasy membership—something that had only happened because of my role at Wakefield Pharmaceuticals. I had rubbed elbows with some very powerful men over the years, and one of them, Geoff Strider, had taken me out to the club one night for drinks.

He'd wanted to celebrate one of my social media campaigns that had gone viral about a specific orphan drug. My informative marketing had caught the interest of a renowned scientist who'd later joined the Wakefield Pharmaceutical team and changed the landscape for that medication.

What I hadn't known at the time was that Geoff was suffering from the disease that the orphan drug treated.

The research team was what had saved him.

But he'd claimed that my campaign had been the reason behind it.

And he'd gifted me a membership to Ecstasy as a way to show his gratitude.

Which meant I took the rules very seriously and followed every single one of them. That was why I knew Adalyn's name—I'd memorized those on the untouchable list before coming tonight.

It hadn't been a difficult task, considering she was the only Elite Bride listed.

I'd filed it away as a name to remember, thinking I wouldn't meet her.

Never in my wildest dreams could I have thought up a scenario where she would bring Jenica as her plus-one.

“Did you find something interesting?” Jax asked, his voice behind me.

Jenica’s lips parted, her eyes widening even more as she attempted to fight my grip.

“I did,” I replied, holding her gaze for a beat. Then I released her chin to grab the back of her neck, my thumb pushing on her head, to force her to bow the way Adalyn had. The only difference was Adalyn had tied her hair back as most subs did, while Jenica had not.

Which meant her face was now hidden beneath a curtain of blonde hair.

“Two beautiful women in need of refills,” I said, taking the mostly empty glass from Jenica’s hand and setting it on the table beside what appeared to be a chocolate martini glass.

“Hmm,” Jax hummed. “I think I can help with that.” He set a pair of amber-colored drinks down on the glass, obviously having ordered one for me as well as himself. “What will it be?”

I glanced at Adalyn first and arched a brow. “Another martini?”

“I would prefer a water, Sir,” she whispered dutifully.

Good girl, I thought.

“I think they both could use some water,” I told Jax, giving him a meaningful look.

Alcohol should be imbibed in moderation, and the untouched tray of food told me

they hadn't eaten anything with their last drinks.

"On it," he said, gathering the two soiled glasses and disappearing.

I waited until he was closer to the bar to press my lips to Jenica's ear again. "Here is how this is going to go. You're going to kneel on the floor beside me like a good little sub in training with your head bowed just like this. You're not going to speak or move. Your obedience will be resolute. And if you're good, Jax won't have a clue you're here."

I looked at Adalyn.

"And you are going to stay right where you are and do all the talking. Your friend, Jen, is nervous and shy. I'm going to offer her comfort, something we both know you understand. When Jax gets bored, we'll move on. Then you're taking Jen home."

"Yes, Sir," she whispered, her training resolute.

Jenica, however, lacked the finesse and understanding of being a sub and attempted to lift her head. But my grip on her neck held her in place in front of me with ease. "You can't tell us what to do," she hissed.

"I can," I corrected her. "You're not a member, Jenica. All I have to do is snap my fingers and you'll be removed. But it'll be your roommate who pays the price for that more than you, as I suspect her trainer won't be pleased by her pissing off a member."

The pale coloring overtaking Adalyn's olive skin tone confirmed my statement. "We'll go, Sir," she promised.

"Trainer?" Jenica repeated.

“We don’t have time for questions,” I told her before glancing over my shoulder to check on Jax. “Your brother is on his way back. Now, are you going to be a good little sub, or do I need to make a scene?” This served as an appropriate punishment—forcing her to kneel.

It would also please me immensely.

And it would allow me to help her hide her face.

Because if Jax caught her here, he would lose his ever-loving shit.

“Please, Jen,” Adalyn whispered. “Please kneel for him.”

Her plea almost made me want to go back on my threat. I didn’t know the full extent of what the trainers did with the Elite Brides, but her palpable distress felt wrong. Subs typically craved punishment. This one appeared to fear it.

“You’ll need to let go of my neck,” Jenica bit out, some of her spirit returning.

“No, darling, I don’t think I will.” I applied pressure, pulling her up into a standing position.

I stepped around her as I used my grip on her neck to angle her head back, allowing me to stare down into her eyes.

“I’m going to sit, and you’re going to move between my sprawled legs and slowly kneel before me. Then you’ll bow your head and lower those beautiful eyes for me.”

Jax had returned, the clank of glasses making Jenica jump.

Her eyes widened, and I gave her a meaningful look.

Obey, and I'll keep quiet.

React, and you'll regret it.

I slowly released her neck and allowed my fingers to trail down her non-inked arm in a display of possession, one Jax's eyes tracked with interest.

It was a purposeful move to keep his gaze focused on the arm closest to him rather than the other one detailed in ink he would absolutely recognize. Her lacy gloves did a good job of masking the colorful tattoos, but if he looked hard enough, he'd see them.

And then the game would be over.

Fortunately, his rapt attention remained on my hand more than on her.

Fuck, if he only knew whom I was caressing, he would not have that look on his face.

It wasn't an intimate one so much as a pleased one. I'd rejected countless women over the last few weeks during our evenings out. He'd asked me a few times if I was feeling all right, and I'd just claimed not to be interested.

He seemed relieved now that I'd found someone to play with. He probably assumed I just hadn't found the right submissive bedmate at the bars.

Yet clearly I'd come across one I wanted to play with now.

Which wasn't an inaccurate assessment. However, that didn't make it right, either.

"Teaching?" he guessed.

“Yes,” I said, still holding Jenica’s gaze. “She’s new to kneeling, and I offered to explain it.”

“An intriguing lesson,” he mused.

Her horrified expression almost made me want to let her run, but there weren’t many options here unless she wanted to show him her face.

She swallowed, her blue eyes lowering just enough to tell me she was preparing herself mentally for the submission.

I gave her that moment, my thumb tracing the elegant line of her throat.

Then I took over her seat on the couch and spread my thighs for her.

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Jenica stared down at me for a beat, her cheeks flushing with embarrassment.

I leaned forward and held out a hand.

“Here, you can use me for balance while you learn,” I told her, aware that she’d probably never attempted to kneel in this manner before.

Jax arched a brow behind her, surprised by my offering. It wasn’t like me, but I also didn’t normally take new subs to bed. The women I fucked knew what they wanted. They were experienced. They could detail their limits and make arrangements in minutes.

Not Jenica.

She had no idea what she was doing, and it showed in the tremble working its way through her body.

“I can demonstrate,” Adalyn offered, standing and almost immediately going into the appropriate position beside us.

Her form was exquisite.

She didn’t falter at all, her knees bending beautifully as her head bowed in sweet reverence.

Jenica watched her from the corner of her eye and swallowed again.

Then she ignored my hand and lowered herself to the floor with perfect balance. Her movements weren't as practiced or as graceful as Adalyn's, but they were certainly natural. She sat back on her heels just like Adalyn had done, clasped her hands in front of her on her lap, and bowed her head.

Which allowed all that silky hair to hide her face again.

Having her between my legs allowed me to shadow her arms, which made her lacy gloves almost appear black.

There wasn't a single marker on her that Jax would recognize.

Unless he saw her face.

I ran my fingers through her hair, ensuring it fell right where it needed to as I said, "Very good, sweetheart." It was a voice I'd never used with her before, at least not outside of my dreams and fantasies.

She shivered in response, goose bumps pebbling down her arm in a manner I recognized. Mutual interest.

Because of the tone? Because of this club? I wasn't sure. But it was an interest I wanted to explore, one that captivated me enough to almost forget her brother's presence.

When I went into a scene, all my focus went to the sub.

And having her kneeling before me almost put me immediately in that place, my desire to see to her every need a calling I had to fight to ignore.

I ran my fingers through her hair again, my touch lingering near her jaw. "You can

join me again on the couch, Adalyn,” I said as I caressed Jenica’s neck and then her shoulders before drifting back up to her hair.

Some Doms left their subs to kneel, the general air of dismissive dominance a turn-on for both parties.

But I preferred to pet my females—something Jax knew, as he’d observed it countless times before.

So I allowed my fingers to explore lightly, touching Jenica’s collarbone, her upper arm, her throat. I kept it gentle and coaxing, avoiding all the intimate areas on purpose. It was the sort of thing a man in my position would do to tease his intended conquest.

In this case, I meant it to be polite and to not cross a boundary.

However, the subtle hitch in Jenica’s breath had me acutely focused on her reactions. She liked this. I could see it in the way her body reacted to mine.

Fuck, even her nipples were hard.

They were pointy little invitations beneath her dress, begging to be explored.

And the skin above her neckline was flushed with arousal.

Or maybe embarrassment.

Perhaps a bit of both.

But she seemed to be leaning into my touch now, seeking my warmth and affection as though she needed it to remain calm.

I gave it to her, only barely aware of Adalyn returning to the couch beside me.

Jax took the chair adjacent to the couch, placing himself closer to Adalyn. He handed her a glass of water. “Can you give that to my friend, please?”

“Of course, Sir,” she said, passing it to me.

“Thank you.” He picked up the one for her. “This one is for you.”

“Thank you, Sir.” She sipped it eagerly, whether it was a result of wanting to please us or because she needed the refreshment, I wasn’t sure.

I pressed my palm to Jenica’s cheek over her hair, ensuring it hid the side of her face that Jax would be able to see from his angle, and brought the glass to her lips.

“Drink,” I said, tipping her head back enough with my hand to allow her to accept the command. Her eyes flashed up to mine as her throat worked, my hand keeping her profile hidden from her brother. A note of gratitude glimmered in her gaze, the look one I rather enjoyed.

Even though it was fucking wrong to do this with her while her brother sat only five feet away.

I should turn her head to reveal her presence.

But I couldn’t do it.

Some sick and twisted part of me actually liked the way this felt—forbidden and secret. It added a decadent layer to the scene that made me even harder.

Not a scene, I reminded myself.

Only it sure as shit felt like one.

Especially with the way her throat worked to swallow more of the water as I tipped the glass again.

I could imagine her drinking down my cock in a similar manner with those full lips wrapped around me as she sucked me dry.

I'm so fucked.

“Have they shared their names?” Jax asked, reminding me of his presence once more.

He usually deferred to me when we visited Ecstasy in New York City, allowing me to take the lead. I wasn't surprised that he repeated the behavior here.

Jax was as Dominant as I was in the bedroom.

But this was my playground.

Therefore, he followed my lead.

I glanced at him and he gave me a knowing look, one that said he knew I wanted the woman kneeling between my thighs. He usually gave me a signal when he wanted to share a sub.

Thankfully, he didn't do that now.

If he had, I might not have been able to stop myself from reacting.

It would just be too fucking wrong.

“This is Adalyn,” I told him, giving him a warning look I knew he would understand.

He didn’t know about the Elite Bride program, as that was a members-only detail. However, I’d explained to him that some submissives were off-limits.

Which was confusing because her mask suggested she wanted to play, but that didn’t mean she was allowed to play.

He gave a subtle nod to say he’d received the message.

“And this little angel with the diamond mask is Jen,” I said, setting the water on the end table beside me and running my fingers through her hair again. I allowed him to see her elven chin and nothing more.

He would assume I was being possessive by not showing her off.

Another accurate assessment that wasn’t quite right.

Because yes, I did feel possessive.

But I was hiding her from him for an entirely different reason.

Or maybe I wasn’t.

Maybe I was hiding her for me.

A forbidden pleasure that I craved to indulge in even knowing it was wrong.

Her gaze slid up to mine, her pupils dilated in a way I recognized.

She definitely likes this.

She bowed again, her hair hiding her features once more.

“Are you thinking about introducing Jen to life at Ecstasy?” Jax asked, his lips curling into a knowing grin.

“I am,” I replied, not even bothering to lie. Because maybe a good spanking would teach her never to return here.

It wasn't safe for her.

She didn't know this world or the requirements to be involved. She wasn't even sure of her submissive nature.

Unlike Adalyn, who was the picture of submissive beside me. Even seated on the chair, she possessed an air about her that whispered submission. She enjoyed being dominated.

Although, her reaction to her trainer still confused me.

I'd taunted her with the notion of making a scene, knowing that even if she was punished, she'd still end up enjoying it. All submissives did.

Or they should, anyway.

But her reaction had lacked the undertone of excitement typically found in that situation.

Perhaps it was her gimmick. Without knowing her, I couldn't read her tells.

Unlike Jenica.

I could absolutely read her reactions.

Which were interesting at the moment, as she appeared to be almost content now, her eyes having closed while I continued to pet her.

If she were a cat, she'd be purring.

Maybe there was a hint of submissiveness in her after all.

Was that why she'd chosen to come here tonight? To explore that side of herself?

I had so many questions that I couldn't ask with Jax sitting beside us.

"I've never trained a new sub before." I brushed her jaw with my knuckles and skimmed them down her throat, admiring the flush against her pale skin. "Perhaps the university has put me in a teaching mood."

Her nostrils flared, her breath quickening in response.

"It would be a new experience for you," Jax offered. "Perhaps it'll help you get out of whatever mood you've been in lately."

I cut him a look. "I've not been in a mood."

"He's been in a mood," he confided to Adalyn, his expression filled with warmth and humor. "Your friend is the first woman he's paid any attention to since moving back here."

Jenica's eyes flashed up to mine, a curious emotion lurking in her gaze.

"I think you should teach her," Jax continued.

You would not be saying that if you knew this was your sister kneeling between my legs, I thought, fighting the urge to grimace.

“Do you want to learn from him, little angel?” he asked, his voice softening for her.

Jenica held my gaze for a beat, her head still bowed but her eyes looking upward.

She nodded.

And I wasn't sure if that was because she actually wanted me to teach her or if she thought that was the only way to escape this situation.

Because her expression strongly conveyed the former.

As did the pretty blush painting her collarbone and her stiff nipples beneath the dress.

“‘Yes, Sir’ is the appropriate response,” Jax murmured. “Verbal consent is important, as is communication.”

Fuck, this was weird.

Jax was teaching his sister how to submit to me.

I palmed her cheek again, mostly because I needed something to ground me before I lost my shit.

“We'll work on it,” I managed to say, my throat resembling sandpaper.

I needed to offer Jax a distraction before I accidentally outed his sister.

Fuck, not even just that.

Before I accidentally outed myself and the way I felt about his sister.

I cleared my throat, the sound lacking my usual finesse, but I didn't care. This was too complicated for me to divide my focus between swagger and whatever the fuck this was with Jenica.

"I know I promised you a proper tour of the playroom, but perhaps you want to have a peek while I help the little angel find her voice?"

It was my way of asking him to give me a private moment with her, which I knew he'd accept. Especially since he seemed keen on the idea of my teaching her.

But consent mattered.

And I needed her to be able to speak to acquire it.

Not that I actually planned to teach her. However, he didn't know that.

My dick didn't seem to know that either.

These suit pants were getting really uncomfortable.

"I could show him," Adalyn offered softly. "If it would please you, Sirs." She spoke to both of us with that use of the plural, making sure we knew she desired to please both of us with her suggestion.

"I would love a tour, Adalyn," Jax said, grabbing his untouched drink. "You can lead the way, and we'll come back in a bit to check on our friends."

Hopefully, by that point, Jenica would be gone. Leaving just me behind as the only friend.

Jax stood and moved behind Jenica, his gaze on her head. “Try your best to please him, little one. He’s earned it.”

My thighs tightened with his words, my fingers longing to curl into fists.

This is so fucked up.

Yet I’m hard as a goddamn brick.

Tonight was not going to end well.

Or maybe it’d be the best night of my life.

I hadn’t yet decided.

“Shall we?” Jax held out his arm in a chivalrous move for Adalyn, his opposite hand still holding his drink.

She stood on sky-high heels and moved toward him with the grace of a well-practiced ballerina.

Jax wouldn’t do anything other than wander around with her, my earlier warning well received.

Which meant he’d definitely be returning to check on me and Jenica.

We had maybe thirty minutes to resolve this before he came back.

And the clock started now.

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This felt like a dream, having Pierce's hands on me while I knelt between his legs.

I'd been afraid at first. Embarrassed, even.

But now... now I just felt content.

There was something undeniably freeing about giving him control and trusting him to see me through this. When he'd started talking about training and teaching me, I'd melted.

I want that, I thought. I want to learn everything from you.

It was a fantastical notion, one I'd lost myself within.

I'd barely heard my brother speaking. His words had processed within my mind, then fluttered off into the wind. Because they didn't matter. Nothing did. Only Pierce.

And his palm.

His fingers.

That lingering touch.

"Jenica," he whispered.

I hummed, leaning into him.

Adalyn had become a completely different person when he'd arrived. She'd said something about his ring and how he was a member, and she'd lost her usual sarcastic flair behind a mask of submission.

Or perhaps the sarcastic part of her was the mask.

I wasn't really sure. It'd been a bit shocking at first.

But then Pierce had told me to kneel. He'd taken charge. And it'd been all too easy for me to just let him lead.

It had provided a freedom unlike any I'd ever experienced before. A freedom I reveled in now, trusting him to just let me exist.

"Fuck," he cursed, drawing my gaze up to his face. His eyes reminded me of a rainforest, all dark green leaves with a hint of sunlight making them glow. I could lose myself in that stare for days. Months, even. He cupped my cheek again and I sighed, his touch exactly what I craved.

His thumb traced my lower lip, sending a shiver down my spine.

I parted my mouth on instinct. More.

I had no idea what he was doing to me or why I'd given myself up to this freedom, but I didn't want it to stop.

"Jenica." His gentle tone stirred a deep warmth within me that left me breathless. No one had ever made me feel this way.

"I like this," I confided in him. "I like you touching me." It was something I'd dreamt of a million times, but never quite in this manner. Him being soothing yet dominant,

caring yet in charge.

“You need to go before your brother comes back.” He removed his hand, leaving me cold in his wake.

I started to lean again, seeking his heat, only to realize he wasn’t there to catch me.

The world twisted, my vision crossing as I began to tip sideways.

His palm caught my shoulder, righting me again. “Jenica. I need you to snap out of it and go.”

Snap out of it? I blinked. Snap out of what?

“This isn’t you,” he told me. “You’re not...”

I’m not what? I met his eyes once more.

He wore a tortured expression, his forest-green irises swirling with a myriad of emotions.

“Did I do something wrong?” I wondered aloud, my voice oddly choked. “Have I...?” What was it Adalyn had said?

“If it would please you, Sirs.”

I’d felt the approval radiating from Pierce when she’d spoken. His relief at her words.

I wanted that.

I wanted him to feel that way for me.

So how did I accomplish that?

“Will you teach me?” I asked him. “Will you...? Will you teach me how to please you, Sir?” The words sounded foreign on my tongue, yet right. They sounded almost like a tease. A game. A way to seduce.

And the flare of his nostrils told me they were working.

His grasp on my shoulder tightened.

His pupils dilated.

His jaw set.

“You’re Jax’s little sister.”

“I’m Jen,” I corrected him. “Tonight, I’m Jen. And Jen wants orgasms.” I had no idea why I’d voiced that out loud. It should have embarrassed the hell out of me. Especially since it stirred a shocked laugh from him.

“I don’t even recognize you right now.”

“That’s because you don’t know me,” I whispered, suddenly feeling very vulnerable. “All you see is Goldilocks. But I’m not a kid anymore.” My gaze dropped to the ground, my shoulders rounding as the hurt of the last few weeks settled through me.

Something about this place, about this position, left me feeling so exposed. Like I’d just put all my cards on the table for him to see and knew how easily he could take advantage of that.

How could I be so stupid? Allow myself to be degraded like this?

All the warm parts of me chilled, the world spiraling out of control around me once more. Pierce was no longer in charge, no longer directing me.

No. He was still directing me.

He wanted me to leave.

How had this all gone wrong so quickly?

I wanted to crawl into a hole and hide. To weep. I felt lost.

The evening had started out so promising, just to take a turn when he'd arrived, and now... now I couldn't even remember why I'd agreed to come here with Adalyn.

To forget.

But how could I forget the male sitting right in front of me? Touching me?

A tear escaped my eye, my heart breaking all over again.

I felt worthless. Na?ve. Angry.

How much time had I wasted on him? Why couldn't I seem to escape him?

Why can't he see me?

Does it even matter anymore?

I felt too exposed here. Too other. I needed to run. To hide. To never see him again.

My legs shot an ache up through my spine as I started to move, attempting to stand.

This damn dress made it difficult to move properly. So did my shoes. And his knees weren't helping. I refused to touch him. Refused to let him help me.

He'd abandoned me.

He'd thrown my title back at me, reminding me of my place and dismissing my needs.

Some foreign part of me hated him for that.

I'd shown him my vulnerability, submitting to his control... and he'd twisted it. Cursed at it. Degraded it.

I would never forgive him for this.

"Jenica," he breathed, his hands going to my shoulders as I fought to stand.

"Let me go," I said, despising him more than I'd ever thought possible. "I hate you."

He reared back like I'd struck him. "Jenica."

"Don't." I needed to run. To hide. To not let him see me cry.

But it was already too late.

Tears were streaming down my cheeks, my heart shattering into a thousand pieces. "You never saw me at all," I whispered brokenly. It felt like a decade of pain had just slammed into me at once.

He'll never understand.

It was hopeless.

I twisted from his grip, only to lose my balance because of my uncooperative legs.

He caught me again, his hands on my hips as he lifted me into the air. I wanted to fight him, to scream, to pound at his shoulders and demand he release me, but I had no strength left.

I felt weak, like all the air had been sucked from my lungs, my limbs lifeless and incapable of movement.

It was terrifying.

“I need a room,” I heard him saying. “Now.”

I shuddered, the dominance in his tone seeming to ground me once more. But only for a moment because the club started to spin again around me.

I couldn't feel my legs.

It was as though I were walking on air.

Well, not walking. Floating.

He's carrying me.

I tried to frown, but I couldn't. Maybe because I was already frowning. My cheeks were damp, my lips dry.

I hate you, I thought. I hate you. I hate you. I hate you.

“Shh,” Pierce hushed.

Did I say that out loud?

Oh, who cares!

He needed to hear it.

Except now he really would think I was a child, throwing a tantrum in the middle of a sex club. Fuck. What is wrong with me?

“I’ve got you,” Pierce said.

What does that even mean?

Cool air whirled around me as we moved.

Gold. Velvety red. Black. The colors all swirled together, the sounds of the club seeming to disappear.

In the next instant, I was surrounded in blissful silence, wrapped up in a minty scent of masculine aftershave. Pierce’s arms resembled bands of steel around me, holding me against him in a way I longed to loathe yet intimately craved.

“You’re safe,” he whispered against my ear. “I have you.”

I wanted to protest, to tell him that wasn’t true at all. He didn’t have me. He barely knew me. All he saw was a little girl who loved to color. And I hadn’t been that girl for many, many years.

His lips ghosted across my forehead, the heat searing my skin and intensifying my

focus. He was still holding me. We were on a bed in a luxurious room decorated in modern black and white colors. Silver furnishings finished the look, providing an undertone of opulence.

I swallowed, my heartbeat seeming to slow as I studied my surroundings.

It wasn't calming. It was just different enough to pull me out of my head. At least until my gaze found Pierce watching me.

I flinched, my desire to flee rising once more and shooting my pulse into overdrive. He'd done something to me. Snapped a fragile part of me. Made me distrust his intentions.

I... I had asked him to teach me. I must have phrased it wrong because he'd responded with a reminder of who I was to him.

Jax's little sister.

My throat worked, my instinct to squirm away from him taking hold as I tried to escape his touch.

But his arms tightened instead, trapping me against him.

This wasn't where I wanted to be. Not anymore. Not after he'd essentially rejected me.

I'd seen his interest when I'd asked him to teach me. But then he'd shut me down with four words.

"You're Jax's little sister."

“Let me go,” I said, trying to shove him away from me, my panic swirling out of control again. I’d been so warm. So safe. So... so... content.

And then he’d shifted.

He’d told me to go.

To leave.

A stark rejection.

All because of something I couldn’t change. I would always be—

“Jenica.” A hint of a command underlined his tone, stilling me. I’d been in the process of trying to shove him away from me, my mind seeming to have lost complete control of my body.

“I don’t even recognize you right now,” he’d said.

Yeah. Well. I didn’t recognize myself either.

I was confused.

Lost.

Content one minute and wandering the next.

“What did you do to me?” I demanded, my voice borderline hysterical. “You... you...”

“Broke your trust,” he interjected, making me freeze once more. “I’m sorry, Jenica. I

didn't realize... but I should have realized. Fuck, it all makes so much sense now."

I hung on his every word, my mind solely focused on his deep voice. "Didn't realize what?"

"That you weren't faking it." His forehead touched mine. "I thought you were playing along, Jenica. But I should have realized where your mind had gone. You were submitting and relying on me to take care of you, and I failed you."

I blinked. "What?" Is that what I'd been doing? When I'd felt safe? Giving up control to him? Had I been submitting? My lips parted, understanding taking root inside my mind.

Was this why I'd never been able to find what I'd needed from my previous boyfriends?

I'd thought it was because of Pierce. And maybe it had been. His dominance and presence had always called to me, making me want to follow him around and beg him for attention.

But I'd never been good enough.

No, that wasn't right. I'd never been old enough.

Yet he'd spoken to me tonight in a voice that I longed to hear again. He'd stroked my hair, calming me inside, and protected me from discovery.

It had made me feel safe.

Cherished.

Warm.

Until he'd taken it all away by telling me to leave. By reminding me of who I was to him. Jax's—

“Jenica.” My name on Pierce's lips pulled me back to him. “Have you ever submitted to a Dom before?”

My brow furrowed. What is he asking? No, why is he asking me this? To chastise me? Take on the brother role and try to tell me never to grow up?

“Communication, sweetheart. It's important. I need to know how experienced you are.”

“Why?” I whispered, wary.

“Because I'm going to give you what you need. But I need to know if you've ever done this before. I can guess, but there is no room for guesswork during a scene.”

“S-scene?” I repeated, not understanding him at all. “What are you talking about?”

“I'm talking about dominating you.” His fingers clasped my chin, pulling my gaze up to his. “I broke your trust once, and I won't do it again. Now, I need to know if you've ever done this before.”

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I already knew the answer—she had no experience with this lifestyle.

Yet there was no denying how badly I'd fucked this up.

She'd fallen into a near-submissive state, leaning on me for my strength during what had to have been a traumatic moment of seeing her brother at a sex club with his best friend, and I'd told her to leave.

Worse, I'd made her feel small.

Rejected.

“I hate you.”

Those three words would forever haunt my mind. Because she'd meant them. I wasn't sure when or where we'd gone so wrong, but this was the only way I knew how to fix it—by giving her what she needed.

She stared up at me with big, watery blue eyes. “D-dominating me?”

“Yes. We started a scene when you went to your knees, and I unfairly ended it.” I released her chin to cup her cheek. “I read all your cues. I knew you were interested. But I allowed other factors to influence my mindset. It won't happen again.”

Because I was firmly treating her as Jen. A baby sub. Brand new to this world. Probably not even aware herself of how easily she'd fallen into her role here.

That made her mental state fragile.

She might not even be ready for this.

Perhaps we should start there instead since she didn't seem keen on sharing her history.

"Why did Adalyn bring you here tonight?" I asked, opting for this route of questioning. "Did she tell you what Ecstasy is about?"

She nodded, her eyes drooping a little as the motion caused her cheek to rub my palm.

"What did she tell you?"

"It's a members-only BDSM club," she whispered, her eyelashes flickering as she forced her eyes open again. "You're a member."

"I am."

"And my brother..."

"Is my guest tonight," I told her. "But we're not talking about Jax right now." I couldn't think about him, or this would all go to hell again. "Why did Adalyn bring you here tonight?" I asked again, needing to take charge of this conversation.

"Operation Forget..."

I frowned. "Operation Forget what?"

She shook her head. "It doesn't matter."

“It does. This is all about communication, Jen. I need to know why you’re here. Aside from your desire for orgasms.” Which had probably been one of the most shocking things I’d ever heard from her. And I’d reacted exactly the wrong way to it.

I’d reacted the wrong way to everything.

“She brought me here to...” She trailed off. “To watch. To learn. To, I don’t know, find a guy for the night. She comes here often. She thought it would be a good way to help me move on.”

“Move on from what?” I asked, frowning. Or “Who?” might be the better question. Had she been seeing someone? Had he hurt her?

What idiot would be dumb enough to hurt her?

Her gaze shuttered, telling me I wouldn’t get much out of her on this topic.

I supposed that was fair, given what I’d just done.

“It’s nothing. Just an old crush.” She shook her head. “Adalyn thought this would be a good idea.” Her expression cleared a bit, some of the Jenica I knew peeking through. “It obviously wasn’t.”

“Or maybe it was,” I countered.

She stared at me. “In what way?”

“You’re a submissive, Jenica.” I ran my fingers through her hair, my eyes tracking the movement. It made so much sense to me now—this intense attraction I suddenly had to her. It wasn’t just that she’d blossomed into a gorgeous woman, but her nature called to mine.

I wanted her.

I'd wanted her since the moment I'd seen her on that bed in her room before the holidays. Before the wedding.

I'd thought it was just a subtle surprise at seeing how much she'd grown up.

But then she'd worn that stunning dress to her brother's wedding. And I hadn't been able to stop thinking about her since.

Because a base part of me desired her. The part of me that wanted to tame.

She had "bratty sub" written all over her.

Yet she had no idea.

"You asked me to teach you." I combed her silky blonde strands again, my gaze returning to hers. "I don't have a lot of experience with training, but I can try. Or at least I can provide you with an introduction." I'd technically already done that with the kneeling. However, that was basic compared to what else I could show her.

"You want to teach me?"

"I do." More than I should. "It's important to learn from someone you trust, especially in the beginning. It's very easy to be taken advantage of in these situations." And while Ecstasy might be a prestigious club with elite membership, that didn't mean it was always safe.

Money ruled the elite world. Money, favors, and politics.

The security in place was to protect the wealthy members, not necessarily the

submissives.

She straightened a little, her eyes holding mine. “So you want to teach me how to be a submissive because I’m supposed to learn from someone I trust?”

I nodded. “Yes. Trust and communication are key items in this lifestyle. You need someone you trust to show you the ropes. I can do that.”

“Because you’re my brother’s best friend.”

I winced at the reminder. “Perhaps in spite of the fact that I’m Jax’s best friend. But I suppose he would want someone trustworthy to walk you through it. I won’t hurt you.” That sounded like a reasonable justification.

Jenica was an adult, something that she kept telling me I didn’t know, even though I very much recognized her as a woman now. Jax might not. But I did. And if she was going to try this lifestyle, then she needed someone to look out for her.

I could do that.

He’d hate knowing I had to touch her in the process, but it was a better option than bringing in a stranger—someone who might hurt her.

“So you want to teach me out of some fucked-up duty to my brother,” she summarized, her brow coming down. “No.” She shoved me back and slid off my lap onto the bed next to me. “I’m going home.”

My eyebrows shot up as she attempted to push away from the mattress and stand.

Her heels made her unsteady, her balance causing her to teeter backward.

I took advantage of the motion and pulled her back down into a seated position beside me. “What do you mean, no?” I demanded. “Didn’t you come here to watch? To learn? To find a guy for the night?”

“Yes,” she confirmed, her expression cold as she looked at me. “And you’re not that guy.”

I gaped at her. “You were just asking me to teach you ten minutes ago.”

“And you told me to go home,” she returned. “Which is what I’m doing now.”

I blew out a breath. “Look. I’m sorry. I shouldn’t have said that.”

“Yes, you should have,” she corrected me. “I’m not letting you teach me out of some misguided loyalty to my brother. Sorry, but that’s not a turn-on, Pierce. It’s a turnoff.”

She stood again, her balance seeming to have returned.

“Jenica—”

“It’s fine,” she replied without looking at me. “I’m fine.”

She started toward the door.

“You can’t go out there alone,” I told her. “We’re in the members-only area, and you’re not a member.”

She froze, her hands going up to the mask on her face. “Someone will show me out.”

“Not politely,” I warned her. “You need me to walk with you, and I’m not ready to

leave this room yet.” It was a power play, but that was the point, wasn’t it? “I need you to give me a safe word.”

“A what?”

“A safe word,” I repeated. “It’s what gives you the power in the scene. If you use that word, everything stops. And it’s my job as your Dom to make sure you never have to use it.”

She finally faced me again, her blue eyes glistening with more tears. But these appeared to be more angry than sad. “I already said no.”

“You did. And I’m sure you’ll say it again. However, I think you’ll find that it’s a common word subs use around here. Yet they never mean it.” I stood, my fingers brushing down my shirt to help fix the wrinkles caused by carrying her in here. “A safe word is the only way to truly say no. But you should only use it if you genuinely mean it. To do otherwise can destroy the relationship between a Dom and a sub.”

I started toward her.

“As I’ve said, trust is vital. As is communication. You can have more than just a safe word; you can have a cautionary word that tells me if I’m pushing too far.” My gaze ran over her slowly as I stopped before her. “But your body should tell me what I need to know well enough that we never reach that point.”

I wrapped my hand around the back of her neck and pulled her flush against me.

She gasped, her pupils blowing wide as she placed her hands on my chest—not to push me away, but to establish a new balance.

Then her fingers curled just a little.

And that hint was exactly what I needed to push forward.

“Your body is how I know you don’t really want to say no to me, Jenica.” I glanced at her tongue as she dampened her lips. “Your body is saying yes.” I squeezed her nape as I wrapped my opposite arm around her slender waist. “So I’m going to need your safe word now. Then we’ll begin.”

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I'd read enough books to understand the concept of a safe word. That wasn't why I'd repeated the phrase to him. I'd been confused as to why he wanted my safe word. I'd just told him I was leaving.

And now...

Now I wasn't leaving.

Not with his palm branding the back of my neck and his forest-green eyes holding mine.

He wants a safe word.

He wants to begin.

How had we even arrived at this point? Did I even want to reject him?

Not with him staring down at me like that. It was an intense look. One that made me go weak in the knees.

"Goldilocks," I whispered, my stomach twisting with the nickname. "My safe word is Goldilocks."

His nostrils flared in response, his gaze narrowing slightly. "Goldilocks. An interesting choice."

"I'm not ten anymore."

“No, you’re twenty-two,” he replied before I could give him my age. Then his focus slowly shifted downward to my breasts before returning to my face. The blatant interest in his gaze nearly sent me to my knees.

That was the look of a man who wanted a woman.

And Logan Pierce was directing it at me.

“Goldilocks,” he said again, nodding. “All right. Hold up your hand.”

I swallowed but did as he demanded, leaving one palm on his chest while I lifted the other in the air.

“Hold up your first two fingers and curl the others,” he instructed.

I obeyed, keeping just my index and middle fingers up.

“Squeeze them together.”

I did.

He released my waist but maintained his grip around my nape. His hand engulfed mine as his thumb stroked the two fingers in the air. The touch burned even through the gloves.

“If you can’t find your voice or your mouth is otherwise engaged, and you need to safe-word, then hold up two fingers just like this. The scene will stop immediately.”

Such serious words spoken in a voice that made my stomach tighten with anticipation.

“Tell me you understand,” he said.

“I understand, Sir.”

His irises darkened to a smolder. “Good girl.” He released my hand. “Now remind me of your safe word.”

I frowned. Did he already forget?

“It’s how we begin the scene,” he added, obviously seeing the confusion on my face. “I ask for your safe word. You say it. We begin.”

Oh, shit. We really are going to do this. My pulse thrummed to life in my ears, making me feel a bit light-headed. But my insides burned with interest.

I’d never seen this side of Pierce.

And I very much wanted to see more.

He arched a dark brow. “What’s your safe word, Jenica?”

“Goldilocks,” I replied, my voice raspier than I’d intended.

He dipped his chin and released me. “Good. Now take off the dress.”

I gaped at him. “What?”

He canted his head, eyeing me with interest. “I assume those gloves match whatever you have beneath the dress. I want to see it.” He took a step back. “And you should know that I don’t like repeating myself.” With that, he started toward a bar area set off in the corner of the room. I hadn’t really noticed it when surveying my

surroundings, my focus having been on the modern colors and then the door.

But now my attention was on him and his all-black suit.

He was sin personified, strolling over to the bar as though he didn't have a care in the world.

I shivered.

“Jenica,” he said, his voice low and underlined with warning. “Are we going to begin this scene with a punishment, or are you going to do what I asked?”

He wasn't even looking at me, yet he knew I hadn't moved an inch.

Swallowing, I debated my options—obey or disobey.

The former seemed easier.

So I tugged at the zipper along my side to begin removing the dress.

I'd chosen sexy black lace to wear beneath, just in case I found someone to spend the evening with. Never in my wildest dreams had I imagined that someone would be Pierce.

But I was eternally grateful that it was him.

And that I'd worn this thong and a thin-strapped bra.

They were both mostly translucent, but with enough of an embroidered design to make the lingerie pretty.

“Good choice,” he murmured as he lifted up a bottle to read the label. He still wasn’t facing me, but I suspected he’d heard the rustle of fabric.

When I finished, I folded the dress and set it on the bench at the foot of the bed.

“Kneel for me on the rug,” Pierce said, still not looking at me. “Hands in your lap, just like Adalyn demonstrated. Head bowed.”

He set the bottle down and grabbed a glass, then started playing with the ice cube bucket.

For someone who had claimed to want me out of my dress, he didn’t seem all that interested in seeing the results.

Rather than question him, I moved to the only rug in the room—which happened to be near the bench at the foot of the bed—and carefully went to my knees.

The braided fabric smarted against my skin, making it an uncomfortable sensation. Somehow, the marble floors of the main room had felt better.

But I didn’t comment or complain.

Instead, I bowed my head and waited.

Pierce said nothing, his movements across the room all I could hear.

The clink of ice cubes against a glass.

The sound of liquid being poured.

The bottle being returned.

Silence.

I swallowed, the desire to lift my head nearly overwhelming my thoughts. But I suspected that would defeat the purpose of this pose.

My palms began to sweat, anticipation warming my veins. What is he doing? Is he looking at me right now? Is he still staring at his glass?

It took physical restraint not to look for him.

My knees began to protest, the rug biting into my flesh.

Don't move. Don't move. Don't move.

Seconds turned into minutes.

He still hadn't said a word. Did he leave the room?

I almost frowned. No. I would have heard that.

He would have had to walk by me as well. Unless he moved along the edges of the room. I couldn't see that or him in my peripheral view. And my focus was primarily on the stone floor beyond the rug.

Goose bumps pebbled along my arms, not from the chill but from the heightened sense of awareness around me. I... I felt exposed. Watched.

So he is looking at me, I marveled. Unless I'm losing my mind.

No. I could feel his intense stare from across the room. It resembled a brand against my skin that left me feeling warm and desired.

“You’re gorgeous, Jenica,” he murmured, confirming that he was studying me. “That was my first thought when you walked down the aisle in that sexy dress. It was the slits that killed me, giving me teasing glimpses of your legs as you walked.”

My heart skipped a beat. He watched me at the wedding?

“Then you showed up in my class.” His voice was closer now, the deep tenor an alluring caress to my senses. “And for your first assignment, you wore that damn dress with those fucking boots.” He growled, the sound making me shiver. “I wanted to bend you over my desk and spank the disobedience out of you.”

I could feel him behind me now, the heat of his legs warming my exposed back.

“You wore that outfit to make a statement, didn’t you?” His fingers threaded through my hair, taking a fistful of my strands. He tugged my head back to meet his gaze as he stood over me. “A sexual statement.”

“I was advertising, Sir.” The answer slipped from my mouth unbidden, my need to confirm his statement overriding all thought.

He hummed in agreement. “Just like you’re advertising yourself now.” He lifted his drink to his lips, his opposite hand still in my hair.

“Yes, Sir.” Calling him Sir seemed natural to me. I couldn’t define why. Perhaps it was the same reason I didn’t mind thinking of him as Professor Pierce. It gave him a ring of authority that I found appealing.

His throat moved as he sipped the contents of his drink. He’d removed his suit jacket at some point, leaving him in just the button-down shirt—the sleeves of which he’d rolled to the elbows. It left the ink of his forearms exposed, which I found hot as hell.

I also loved the way the light above glinted off the piercing in his eyebrow. He resembled a sexy badass with all his tats and expensive clothes.

Part of the reason for my own ink was because of him.

And also because I enjoyed art.

I'd paired the two loves together by creating my own design and having it put on the same arm he'd used for his first sleeve.

I supposed that qualified as an unhealthy obsession.

Couldn't say I minded much right now while observing him from my knees.

"That look in your eyes has me wondering a thousand different things," he said, slowly lowering his glass. "What are you thinking about?"

"Your tattoos, Sir," I admitted. "And my own."

"Hmm." He glanced down at my lace-clad hands. "Remove the gloves."

I gently pulled them off, then placed them on the rug beside me.

"Lift your arm so I can see your work."

My insides did a little dance as I obeyed, my stomach suddenly in knots as I wondered what he would say.

He was quiet for a long moment, his gaze intent. Then he took another sip of his drink and released me. "Don't move."

The words froze me in place, my neck awkward as I continued to stare up at where his face had been.

I heard a soft clank as he set his drink down. Then he returned to grab my hand and pull it higher. He stood behind me again, his strong legs against my back. His opposite palm went to my throat as he held me there, his focus still on my wrist and forearm.

“You designed this.” Not a question. “It’s beautiful.”

“Thank you, Sir.”

He bent and pressed his lips to my inner wrist before releasing my hand. “You’re doing very well, sweetheart.”

“Thank you, Sir,” I repeated, his praise sending a wave of warmth over me.

“However, I’m still disappointed in you for wearing that outfit to my class. You made focusing impossible. I was hard the whole goddamn time.”

I tried not to smile in response, but I couldn’t stop my lips from curling. Because he’d just admitted that I’d turned him on. In class.

“I see,” he murmured, his palm tightening a little around my throat. “You’re not sorry at all.”

I considered that. “No. I can’t say that I am.”

His gaze narrowed.

“Sir,” I added belatedly, swallowing at that intense look.

“So you enjoyed teasing me.”

I frowned. It hadn't been about teasing him, necessarily. “I just wanted you to see me as an adult.”

“Be assured, Jenica darling, I absolutely see you as an adult.” He pressed his legs more firmly into my back, which brought his groin close to my head.

Using his hand on my throat, he guided me backward into his prominent arousal.

My lips parted at the feel of him, my fingers tingling with the desire to touch him. But I'd returned my palms to my thighs when he'd released my wrist.

“I feel like I've been perpetually hard around you for months, Jenica,” he confided. “And that fucking dress with those fuck-me boots have haunted my dreams.”

My lips started to curl again, the idea that he found me attractive making my heart soar with excitement.

But his darkening expression told me that smiling was the wrong response.

“You like teasing me.” Not a question, but a statement. “That's all you've done for weeks now.”

I parted my lips to argue that I hadn't done it on purpose, but his grip tightened around my throat in warning.

“You may only speak when I ask you a direct question,” he informed me, his voice deep and authoritative.

My first instinct was to argue and tell him to go fuck himself. I would speak

whenever I damn well wanted to, thank you very much.

But then I caught the glint in his gaze.

This is part of the scene.

He wanted a reason to punish me because I hadn't actually done anything wrong. I'd obeyed his every command.

Teasing him was something he could use against me now, even if that hadn't been my intent at all.

I lowered my gaze, telling him I understood the game now. Or I thought I did, anyway.

What would he do to punish me? I wondered, my thighs clenching. Will I like it?

Suddenly, I wanted to play along just to find out. "I'm sorry, Sir," I whispered, the words feeling right.

"A lie," he replied, his fingers combing through my hair. "But I'm about to make it a reality, baby. Now stand up and get on the bed. I want you on your back, knees bent, and legs spread."

He fisted my strands again to yank back my head as he bent to press his lips to my ear.

"I'm about to tease you until you can't see straight. We'll see how you feel about your behavior then. And if your apology becomes more believable, maybe I'll let you come. If not, well, at least you'll know how you've made me feel these last few months."

He released me, and I nearly fell on the floor.

Because oh my God.

This had to be the hottest I'd ever been in my entire life.

I felt like I was going to melt.

Die.

Scream.

Maybe cry.

And beg.

It was a torrent of reactions that left me breathless.

“What did I say about repeating myself?” Pierce snapped, his domineering presence shooting electric sparks down my spine.

Why is this so damn attractive? I wondered, dizzy with the need to obey him.

It took all the guesswork out of everything. All I had to do was let him lead.

And enjoy the ride.

Or in this case, let him tease me to his heart's content.

Yes, please.

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Jenica was a goddamn natural.

She blushed at all the right moments. She rebelled beautifully. And she played right into my game.

None of it was a lie.

I'd been painfully hard for her for months. And that dress really had haunted my dreams.

But seeing her sprawled out in a lacy bra and thong on the bed? Yeah, that image would absolutely be overtaking the previous one.

That she'd left her heels on only added to the allure of her pose.

She had placed her arms over her head without me even asking, giving me an unobstructed view of every part of her.

She wasn't nervous or embarrassed. She owned her sensuality instead, her eyes—still covered by the mask—observing me with interest.

“You're teasing me again, Jenica.” I started unbuckling my belt, allowing the threat of my movements to linger between us. “Maybe I should flip you over and see how red I can make your ass first. Then you'll feel my markings every time you squirm in agonized bliss while I torture your clit with my tongue.”

Her lips parted, the faint hint of pink on her cheeks telling me she wasn't entirely

opposed to that plan.

I pulled the leather from the loops and allowed the belt to drop. “Or maybe I prefer just teasing you endlessly instead.”

She shivered, her expression remaining unchanged.

So spankings appealed to her. But they weren't a requirement, either.

I filed those little details away as I started unbuttoning my shirt. Her gaze tracked the movements, her blush deepening with her rise of anticipation.

It was a heady sensation to be admired like that by such a gorgeous woman.

I pulled off my shirt, aware of her approval in what she found beneath the fabric. My arms were fully inked with a few tats completing the masterpiece along my shoulders and upper pecs. But the majority of my chest and abs were just skin and muscle, my daily workouts showcased by the defined lines of my abs.

I worked hard.

And I very much appreciated her noticing.

That adorable pink tongue traced her lower lip, her eyes glued to me as though she wanted to lick every sculpted line of my torso.

I just might let her play.

After I tasted every inch of her.

I slipped out of my shoes and unfastened the top button of my dress pants, then

placed a knee on the bench at the foot of the bed.

“Are you wet, Jenica?”

“Yes, Sir,” she breathed, her back arching in blatant invitation.

“Are you aching for me, baby?”

Her thighs visibly flexed as she repeated, “Yes, Sir.”

“Good girl,” I replied, bending forward to place a kiss on her calf. It wasn’t a normal place to start, but I’d learned long ago that women enjoyed being worshipped.

And the longer I worshipped them in the places they didn’t expect, the more aroused they became.

Jenica was no different, her legs tensing and squirming as I kissed a path from her knee down to her ankle.

I caressed her dainty foot and removed her strappy heel, then repeated the action with her other leg.

She released a little moan at having her feet free from the shoes. I massaged them a little, giving her some relief before moving off of the bench and onto the bed to better reach her thighs.

“I love your legs,” I confided softly, memorizing her with my mouth and hands. “So long and lean. You teased me with them in that dress at the wedding, then gave me a full view during class. I’ve been dreaming about having them wrapped around my waist while I fuck you into oblivion.”

Another truth.

She would soon realize everything I'd said tonight was true.

I wasn't sure what that would do to our relationship. But I didn't really care right now. Not with her pussy only inches away from my face.

"I can smell you, sweetheart. So fucking sweet." I nuzzled her, inhaling deeply and growling in response right against her clit. The fabric was so thin that I knew she would feel it, and her little responding moan didn't disappoint.

But I moved on to her hip instead, continuing my torture of touching her everywhere else except for where she desired me most.

When I reached her tits, she was practically panting with need.

But like a good little sub, she kept her arms over her head.

Either Adalyn had provided a tutorial, or someone had read up on popular techniques.

Or someone has shown her this before, I thought, my gaze narrowing at the notion. She hadn't actually answered my question regarding her experience.

My teeth sank into her fleshy breast, hard enough to leave a mark and eliciting a sharp gasp from her throat.

I didn't explain the possessive need to mark.

Mostly because it wasn't something I usually did.

But something about Jenica made me want to brand my territory, to ensure all men

who came after me knew they didn't belong here.

Just the idea of other males touching her caused me to bite her again, this time on her other breast.

“Pierce,” she breathed, her back bowing as she responded to the torment.

It was a favorable response.

One that told me she could handle a little pain with her pleasure. Even more than that, she appeared to like it.

Noted.

Her pale skin pinkened beneath my mouth, pleasing me immensely. Her ass would color just as beautifully—an image that had me rock-hard in my pants.

I ran my fingers up her sides to her arms, then lowered them so I could pull her bra straps down and expose her rosy nipples. They were so stiff that they looked painful.

But I didn't touch them.

I merely blew on the tips before nibbling the flesh beneath.

Jenica whispered my name again, her body arching beneath me. I pressed my palm to her stomach to force her back down, then went to her neck to suck on the tender point above her pulse. “Do you feel hot, sweetheart?” I asked, my lips skimming her ear. “Like you're on fire?”

“Yes, Sir.”

“Good. I want you burning so hot that you feel like you’re going to explode.”

She whimpered in response, the sound encouraging me to continue my teasing assault.

I removed her bra, setting it to the side, then lifted her arms back over her head. Only to straddle her waist and follow her wrists with my mouth. I planted my palms on the bed on either side of her and focused on memorizing the path of her non-inked forearm before teasing her inner elbow.

She squirmed beneath me, her thighs seeking friction.

I sat up and reached behind me to grab her legs. “These stay open.”

“Pierce.”

“Sir,” I corrected, giving her thighs a squeeze. “Do not close your legs unless I give you permission.”

Her chest heaved, her lips parting on a complaint. However, she somehow managed to force out a “Yes, Sir.”

So good, I thought, leaning down to press my mouth to hers in a soft reward for her compliance. She gasped a little, the contact clearly one she wasn’t expecting.

And the taste of citrus on her breath had me slipping my tongue inside.

This wasn’t part of the plan.

But now that my mouth was near hers, I wanted to kiss her. To devour her. To own her.

So I did.

I kissed her as though she were my one link to life. My new oxygen. My only reason to exist.

Fuck.

It was like kissing someone for the first time.

All my desire to tease left me on a breath, my body flattening above hers as I continued to explore her mouth.

Her arms came around my neck, which was a break in our scene, but I didn't reprimand her for it. Mostly because I enjoyed it too much to demand she stop.

She drew her nails up and down my back, then started exploring my skin with her palms.

It was decadent.

Fresh.

Sweet.

Which wasn't at all my usual flavor, but it suited her.

I gave in to the impulse to palm her breast and smiled at her hiss of breath.
“Sensitive?”

“Yes...”

We were completely out of the scene now.

I needed to take back control, to continue this lesson. But I couldn't. I desired her innocent touch and the allure of her mouth.

She branded me almost as much as I branded her, her nails going to my shoulders and biting into my skin as I tweaked her nipple.

Fuck.

I needed to taste more of her.

I licked a path down to her tits, taking her taut peak between my lips and swirling it with my tongue. Her palm went to my bare head, the touch burning me to my core.

It was so wrong. She wasn't supposed to react like this. But I was too far gone for her to comment. This was merely an introduction. We would work on the rest later.

I continued my journey downward, her thong disappearing beneath my hands and leaving her pussy exposed to my view.

Shaved.

Pink.

Beautiful.

And wet.

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“You’re perfect,” I told her, my lips skimming her clit.

She jolted, her legs tensing beneath me.

“You want more?” I asked, some of my dominance finally returning.

She must have sensed it because she dutifully replied with a breathy “Yes, Sir.”

I moved my mouth away from her alluring center to nibble her inner thigh. “Maybe I want to make you burn hotter, baby.”

She moaned in protest, her hand leaving my head to drop to the comforter beside her hip. I smiled as her fingers dug into the white fabric, her colorful tattoos flexing with the movement.

And calling my attention.

I left her sweet heat and pressed my mouth to her hand instead, my tongue dancing along the flowery designs. She’d woven in shells as well. Jenica had always enjoyed the beach. There were also swirls that tied it all together, the pattern delicate and beautiful, just like her.

She watched me from beneath hooded eyes, her cheeks pink.

I placed a final kiss on her hand and set it back down before returning to the glistening arousal between her thighs. She was practically weeping for me. “Are you about to explode, Jenica?”

She swallowed. "I think I might come the second you finally touch me, Sir."

I smiled. "I appreciate your honesty, sweetheart. But you don't have my permission to come yet."

Her lips parted. "Wh-what?"

"You heard me," I replied, adding a hint of reprimand to my tone. "You will not come until I give you permission to."

She appeared ready to argue.

"Don't test me," I warned her. "I told you I wanted you teased and ready to explode. Then I want a heartfelt apology for how badly you've tortured me with your pert little ass and perfect tits. Only then will I decide if you can come."

The pink in her skin bordered on red, sweat gleaming across her brow and stirring a little sheen on her chest.

"Tell me you understand me, Jenica."

"I understand, Sir," she replied, her voice lacking the bite I suspected she'd intended to use. But she was too far gone to argue now. Her pupils were fully dilated, her skin pulling tight across her breasts, her breaths coming in needy little pants.

I almost had her where I wanted her.

I just needed to tease a little more to truly push her over the edge.

My teeth grazed her hip bone on my way to her mound, where I gently traced every inch of her soft flesh before exploring the lips of her pussy.

Her scent wrapped around me, begging for more, but I merely took hold of her thighs and spread them wider to continue my sensual torment.

Jenica groaned, her grip tensing so severely on the comforter that her knuckles turned white. “Please, Pierce.”

I moved my lips to her clit and corrected her with a stern “Sir.”

She arched, begging for more, but I pressed her down again with my palm, then held her there while I licked her deep from her entrance to just below her swollen little nub.

“You’re soaking my beard,” I told her with a chuckle, loving how wet I’d made her.

Her legs trembled around me, her orgasm clearly right there, waiting for me to edge her into oblivion. I loved this part, where the woman was so sensitive from being licked and touched everywhere except for the place she desired most.

But Jenica just made it that much more intense. That much more exciting.

“No coming,” I reminded her as I took her clit into my mouth and rolled it with my tongue.

She froze, her body tense with exquisite need. “Please, Sir.”

“No,” I said, circling the point of her pleasure before sliding my tongue down to her entrance once more. I speared her twice, groaning as more of her arousal coated my tongue. It was an aphrodisiac that had me nearly exploding in my pants.

Every part of her was trembling now, her legs covered in goose bumps, her nipples even harder than before.

And that sweet little part of her looked painfully swollen.

I took in her tortured expression, her blown pupils, and her reddened cheeks. Then I settled my lips right at her clit again and said, “You can try apologizing now.” The words vibrated her slick flesh, causing her to tense even more.

“Oh God...”

“That’s not an apology,” I whispered, my tongue flicking out to torture her even more. “Perhaps this will help.” I inserted two fingers into her channel and hooked them upward to stroke that spot deep inside—the one that drove all women crazy.

She screamed, her body again trying to come up off the bed. But my opposite palm remained against her stomach, holding her down.

“Start apologizing, Jenica,” I said, aware that I’d pushed her into a new state of existence. She wasn’t even seeing the room anymore, her mind so lost to my domination that she couldn’t focus on anything else.

“I’m sorry.” It came out on a sob. “Oh God, I’m sorry. I’m so sorry. Please, Sir. Please... Pierce...”

I almost chuckled at the way her words garbled together in incomprehension, but seeing her shattering from the need for release was enough for me.

This had never really been about believing her apology; it was about ensuring she reached this point.

And she was there.

The fact that she couldn’t even articulate what she was apologizing for said

everything. In her mind, she knew. Just as she also knew I wasn't really upset with her for it.

"Hmm," I hummed, right against her clit. "You do sound very apologetic."

"I am," she promised, her fists shaking from clutching the comforter so hard. Her legs were also so tense that it had to be almost painful. And her abdomen was clenched as though she were fighting the impulse to fall into her climax. "Please, Pierce. I'm sorry. I'm—"

I closed my mouth around her clit and sucked her deep.

She screamed, her body unable to take the pressure. Every part of her locked up as she fought the urge to orgasm. "Pierce!"

I didn't correct her this time.

Instead, I gave her the word she desired. "Come."

Her head tilted back as she released the most alluring sound, her body falling apart beneath me as I laved her little bud and worked her over with my fingers.

She was entirely gone, her body mine to care for, mine to fuck, and mine to please.

It made me feel powerful. In charge. Dominant.

I wanted to thank her profusely for that trust, for giving me this irresistible gift of submission.

I sucked her clit, forcing her into another orgasm within minutes of her first one, totally in control of her and her body's reactions.

She was panting.

Crying.

Writhing on the bed.

And I needed to be inside her.

I pulled out a condom before kicking off my pants, boxers, and socks.

She barely noticed, too out of it to even see straight. Subspace.

It was exactly where I'd wanted her to go, back to that plane of existence she'd flirted with in the main part of the club. The one where she'd put all her faith in me to lead her. It was a reward every Dom craved, especially me.

"You're stunning," I praised as I knelt between her sprawled thighs and rolled the condom onto my throbbing shaft. She still wasn't seeing me, her eyelashes drooping low, and she fought to catch her breath from her last orgasm. I slowly aligned my body with hers, ensuring she felt me on top of her.

She responded by wrapping her arms around me, her mouth tasting mine. "Mmm," she mumbled, her tongue darting out to lick some of her arousal from my bottom lip.

I shuddered, her reaction causing my balls to tighten in anticipation. "You're fucking exquisite, Jenica."

"Pierce," she breathed, her mind caught somewhere between reality and our scene. "Sir."

"I'm going to fuck you now." I guided the head of my cock to her entrance.

“Please,” she whispered, lifting her hips in invitation.

I didn’t bother correcting her with formalities. I merely slammed into her instead.

She gasped and I growled, her tight sheath hugging my cock so damn perfectly that I nearly came on the spot. “Wrap your legs around me.”

I knew she was still recovering from her orgasm and finding her balance once more, but I needed that connection. I needed her.

And she obeyed.

Because she was meant for this.

Meant to be mine.

A dangerous concept. A forbidden desire. But I didn’t care.

I wanted her. I needed her. I had to ensure she felt every inch of me, that she would realize just how flawlessly we fit together.

It was edging on hazardous, this intensity between us.

But fuck if I cared anymore.

I took her to oblivion, driving into her over and over, stamping my name into her goddamn soul. Because I owned her now. Every bit of her. Mine.

This wave of foreign possession made me dizzy, my control threatening to snap as I continued to drive us both toward that cliff of no return.

Some part of me warned that I should pull back, that I shouldn't be doing this. However, a louder part of me overruled the other, telling me to take, take, take.

I threaded my fingers through her hair and kissed her, fucking her with my tongue just like my cock drilled into her below. She moaned, her nails dragging down my back and marking my skin in a way that made me wonder if the possessive instinct had taken hold of her, too.

She thrust up to meet my hips, fucking me back just as harshly.

I released her hair to palm her nape, causing her to arch her head back just a little more for my bruising kiss. She groaned, accepting the dominating thrusts of my tongue while I slid my opposite hand down to where our bodies joined below.

I pressed my thumb against her clit, applying just the right amount of pressure to send her closer to orgasmic bliss.

She shook, her eyes blowing wide in shock.

Her expression told me she didn't think she could come again.

I proceeded to prove her wrong with my cock and my thumb.

Stroking.

Fucking.

Pounding into her sweet heat until all she could see was stars.

She came apart with my name on her tongue, her body slick with sweat as she clamped down around my shaft, demanding I follow.

I almost denied her, merely to prolong the torture of our union, but I couldn't do it. I was too consumed by her rapture to pull back.

So I tumbled over the cliff with her and lost myself to one of the most intense orgasms of my life.

It ripped through me, tightening my balls and tunneling right into my shaft to explode inside her. It was so fucking overwhelming that I worried I might have broken the condom.

Which led me to forbidden thoughts of her carrying my child.

A fantasy-style image I'd never considered with anyone else but found myself craving for her.

I buried my face in her neck, consumed by both the pleasure still thundering through my veins and the intense need to claim.

I wanted to mark her. Tattoo my name on her ass. Inform the entire fucking world that I owned this woman.

It was an insane urge.

One night with her, one lesson, one measly fuck, had led me to this point.

Except she wasn't just anyone. She was Jax Roberts's little sister.

Fuck.

Fuck. Fuck. Fuck.

I pulled back to stare down at her, noting the way her eyes had shut as she'd fallen into the tender oblivion, one that required me to focus on her and not us right now.

I palmed her cheek and pressed a kiss to her swollen lips. "You were amazing, Jenica," I praised before running my fingers through her hair. "You did everything I asked. And you came apart so beautifully for me." I nuzzled her nose, then kissed her again.

She reciprocated lazily, her body completely shattered beneath mine.

I was willing to bet she'd never felt this way before.

Which pleased me immensely because it meant I'd done something for her that no one else had. Just as she'd done the same for me, though in an entirely different manner.

But I wasn't going to think about that right now.

She deserved my focus.

I gave it to her by rolling off of her and running my hands over her, massaging her tender muscles and helping to loosen her limbs. Her hips were a little red from my harsh thrusts. However, she didn't seem to mind. When I brushed my fingers over them, she moaned and opened her eyes, giving me a drowsy smile. Then she shifted to her side and nuzzled into me, clearly on the verge of sleep.

I took care of the condom—noting that it hadn't broken at all—and tied it off before tossing it into a bin beside the nightstand.

She didn't stir.

So I pulled the blankets up around us and held her the way a Dom should while a sub came back from this unique state of existence.

We were in so much trouble, perhaps me more than her.

But we'd discuss it when she woke.

Until then, I would be hers.

And she would be mine.

Even if just for the night.

Source Creation Date: July 23, 2025, 3:27 am

The acrid scent of burnt rubber filled my nostrils as I rushed to the scene. On the cold hard street lay the body of a woman, and it wasn't just any. It was Donnatella Rossi, my best friend. A fear unlike any other filled me, but I couldn't concern myself with any of that now. I crouched down and immediately grabbed at her hand which was when I realized how still she was. My shaky fingers fumbled around her wrist as I tried my hardest to detect a pulse, but was wholly unsuccessful with that.

"Donna," I whispered, softly at first, then a bit more forceful. "Donna!"

The tears that had already sprung to my eyes began to spill forth, even though I tried to squeeze my lids shut for a few seconds hoping to ward them off. It didn't help and when a tear or two slid down my cheek, I swiped them away. I couldn't stay like this. I needed to get Donna to the hospital as fast as I could and pray that they could save her.

Opening my eyes, I shook her body and when I did, something warm and wet coated one of my sandaled feet. I looked down, and even though it was turning dark outside, I could still surmise what it was covering the tip of them. It was blood, and in that moment, I feared that I had been too late after all.

My earlier terror grew exponentially, and I rolled my lifeless friend over onto her side. It was then that I saw the large gaping wound on her back, especially on the area bared by the nearly backless dress she was wearing.

"Are you sure you don't wanna go, Viv? This party is going to be so much fun," Donna had told me earlier this evening before she left for the club.

I wished now that I would've gone with her instead of feigning a headache so I could stay in our hotel room. A million daggers of regret pierced me knowing that not only was my best friend dead, but she had died seemingly alone in a country that we were only visiting. So many questions ran through my head, and I had no answers for a single one of them.

I immediately removed my hand which was now as sticky as my foot and scrambled onto my feet. Donna had mentioned a club earlier, but as I tried to wrack my brain, I couldn't for the life of me remember ever hearing a name come from her. I was terrible at thinking under pressure, so no matter how hard I tried to remember anything that might help explain what happened, my mind was drawing blanks.

"It'll be so much fun, Viviana. We're only here for two more nights. Surely you don't want to waste the rest of this holiday cooped up in this place," she'd told me, even waving her hand to emphasize the suite we had been in for the last ten days.

Donna's father had spared no expense when it came to his daughter and her spontaneous jaunt across the ocean. We'd not come alone, but Donna's cousin basically ditched us at the airport and he'd barely been seen or heard from since. I doubted that Raphael met the same fate that my friend just had, but I couldn't say it with any type of certainty. I wasn't concerned at all with that pompous prick, though. Rumor around Napoli was that he was involved with the mob, not that I kept up with any of the mafia stuff. I was a bookworm, and the most adventure I saw came between the pages of the fictional works that I read.

"You're always so boring," she'd told me, half teasing and half insulting me at the same time. "I'm glad the Vaccaro's know how to throw a party because this sitting around the hotel is not for me."

"Hey, I'm not sitting around the hotel all night. I've been telling you for days that I wanted to do the bus tour of the city at night." I'd only wanted to do that for the last

week, but every time that I mentioned it to Donna, she'd wrinkle up her nose in disgust. "They're double decker ones like we rode in London."

The two of us had been best friends since birth, even having shared a nursery together for those first few days of life. We often vacationed together, and a few months earlier, we had both gone to England to see the sights. Granted, Donna was not as impressed with some of them as I had been, but she'd humored me out of something that didn't extend to the United States. In fact, since arriving in New York City, she'd been fantasizing about the type of men that her cousin was infamously rumored to hang with.

In Italy, the mafia was well known. The Southern port city of Napoli handled its fair share of imports, and none as secretive, or evidently lucrative, as what those men did. I wasn't born yesterday even though I often kept my head in the clouds. One day, I would be a doctor while Donna wanted to become Italy's next top supermodel.

I looked down at her face which was pale as snow. Her bright auburn hair was damp from her blood and tousled not from what should've been a pleasurable night, but from what looked like a struggle. There were cuts on her arms and throat, most defensive looking in nature. She'd put up a fight against whoever did this, and wanting to preserve evidence, I snatched my hand away from hers in case any DNA was available.

A part of me wanted to continue to plead with her to come back to me, but I knew what a dead body looked and felt like, and this was it. "Oh, Donna," I cried out, choking back a sob. Those same questions about who, what, why and where came rushing back and weren't so easily pushed back anymore.

"Don Vaccaro is—" she'd told me before I had cut her off.

"I don't care if the Pope himself is going to be there. I'm going on the city bus tour

tonight and you can either join me, or make sure you put a card on the door if you're busy by the time that I return."

That warning had to be placed, because Donna was so beautiful, and sensual, that she attracted attention no matter where she went. I was more of a wallflower, and an introverted one at that so I didn't garner the same reaction from those of the opposite sex. I was practically invisible, and knowing as much, I was suddenly cursing the fact that I hadn't gone along with her after all.

I could've blended into the background as I so often did, and even if I couldn't have stopped the actions that had taken place tonight, I could've at least known who to finger as the culprits. "Snitches get stitches," Donna had once told me. "Unless you're talking about the mafia. With them, you'll end up dead in ditches."

"Why did you have to be right about that," I murmured. I continued to stare at the woman I loved like a sister, and knowing that we would never share a laugh or good cry again had another sob escaping. Someone would pay for this if it was the last thing that I did. I didn't make many promises, but this was one I now swore that I would.

I took a few calming breaths as I tried to clear my head of my fear and grief, so I could focus more on the last conversation that we'd had together. The Vaccaro's. The name came up more than once and I knew they were involved. Their names were synonymous with crime in Italy, the family part of the Camorra organization. I remembered reading about them in the headlines more than once. I'd even attended scuola superior, or what I learned was called high school here in America, with one of them. I tried to put a name to a face that now seemed to haunt my vision. He was much taller than me, and had dark hair as well, even though his was a tad lighter than mine. Something else that seemed to strike me as odd now was that he had different color eyes. I'd learned a little about heterochromia from my studies, and I knew it was rare.

Donna had a slight crush on the kid at one time, but she seemed to outgrow that. Now, she tended to go after older men. She referred to them as sugar daddies and I just thought it was gross. Who wanted to have sex with someone as old as their father? Certainly not me. I didn't know if it was a combination of that visual, or the fact that I was hanging out with a corpse in a darkened alley, but I suddenly had a violent need to throw up.

I turned and covered my mouth with my hand. I heaved once or twice, but nothing came out, so I turned back to Donna. I needed to be able to provide something to the authorities and dropping the Vaccaro name of all ones wouldn't be the wisest decision I could make, especially if they had nothing to do with it. It would be signing my death warrant, and as much as I would miss my best friend, I was in no hurry to join her in the afterlife.

I needed to think. I closed my eyes as I retraced my steps from earlier. I had immediately taken the subway back to the hotel after the bus tour had ended. The station was a little over three blocks away, and I had nearly made it here when I saw a vehicle. I tried my best to focus on the Italian sports car speeding off into the night. If I could make out a make or model, then maybe it could help me identify her killer. All I could remember, however, was that it was silver. There were three people inside, and one had pushed the body onto the concrete moments before it sped away.

I went to kneel back down and that was when something warm, but hard, wrapped around my wrist. After I was jerked to my feet, I turned in time to see the kid I had thought about earlier staring directly into my eyes. Mine widened in terror while something else flashed in the one brown, and the other green one of his. Nazario Vaccaro. I managed to keep any signs of remembrance to myself and when I was about to speak, he covered my mouth with his free hand.

"You didn't see anything, Viviana Spataro," he whispered, and I knew why he spoke my full name. He was confirming that he not only knew who I was, but that I would

be sorry if I said anything.

His warning sent a shudder through me and I spoke as soon as he pulled his hand back. “I don’t know what you mean. I—”

“Don’t fucking play with me. I know you, and your elders. You’re going to go into the hotel and—”

“Did you do this?” I had to ask, abandoning my common sense on the ground with my slain friend.

“No.” he answered emphatically. “It doesn’t matter who did, either. You’re going to go to your room and forget seeing me or her. In the morning, you will call the authorities and report her missing. You’ll then board the next plane back to Napoli, and never speak of this night again.”

“I will do no such thing,” I retorted as I tried to free myself from his grasp. I had to have a death wish after all because I was speaking to the son of one of Italy’s most feared and dangerous families, and defying him openly.

“You will or else,” he warned menacingly.

His words were as cold as the glare in his unique eyes. I squared my shoulders and tried my best to give him a look of my own. “Or else, what?”

“You’ll be killed in a much worse way than your friend. In fact, no one will ever find the pieces of you by the time they’re done with you.”

I gasped, and my body started to tremble violently. The very type of people that she idolized were the ones responsible for her demise and might end up being the same for me.

“You’re going to do what I tell you and live, or...” He stopped to look down at his watch. He then turned to look over his shoulder. “They’re coming. You need to get out of here and heed my warning before it’s too late.”

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I rubbed my hands over my throbbing temple. I had been staring at numbers for more than two hours and I was honestly about to blow a fucking blood vessel if I stayed in this room any longer. The techno beat of the music outside of the door raised and lowered depending on the song, and it made me wish I was out there even more. I had work to handle, however, so until it was done, I was stuck inside of my father's office. Stefano Vaccaro owned a number of businesses including a night club here in Napoli known for two things. Sex and drugs. Often times, the guests came for both.

I could use a half-hour with one of the squillos that flocked to this place. Prostitution wasn't frowned upon in these parts like it was in other corners of the world, and the whores kept on the premises had one job and that was see to the needs of the family, no matter how depraved they might be. I knew most by name because they were kept alive as long as they did what was asked of them. As soon as one betrayed the family as my father often put it, they would be sold off and trafficked out of the country.

Going back to the migraine I was nursing, I tried to close my eyes, hoping it would alleviate any of the pounding in my skull. That was for naught, so I returned my attention to the bank accounts dancing in my line of vision. Leonardo Di Salva was the one responsible for making sure our laundered funds ended up in those banks in other parts of the world. My father trusted the man, but I did not. Mistakes had been made lately, and although they were so miniscule that even Stefan hadn't gotten wind of them, I couldn't allow them to continue. It was the reason I was now going through every last digit myself and paying for that initiative tenfold.

"Maybe I just need a distraction," I said aloud.

A half-hour with one of those call girls was what I needed. I tended to want to fuck

other women that could do something for me, but having lost my virginity almost two decades ago to a long time squillo, I still didn't mind letting one suck me off when the mood struck.

A hard cock was a normal state for me, and deciding that maybe stuffing one of their mouths with mine would drown out the noise in my head, I picked up my phone. I only needed to send a few words in a text message. I stood up after hitting send and undid the button to my jeans. I lowered my zipper and had pulled my dick out just as a knock sounded at the door. I knew who it was, and she came quickly.

“Entrare!”

As expected, Ruth entered on command and locked the door behind her. I didn't mind public spectacles, even harboring a bit of an exhibitionist side to me, but since I wasn't out on the main floor but rather in my father's office, I opted for privacy. As she moved closer, I hit the save button on my laptop, then moved the screen out of her line of sight. She stopped in front of me, and no words needed to be exchanged as I pushed down on the top of her head. She dropped to her knees, and seconds later, her small hands and hot mouth were working in perfect tandem.

I stood there with my legs somewhat spread, and I dropped my head back when her teeth grazed a sensitive spot. She was so damn efficient, her ministrations aimed at my pleasure alone. She didn't even give a single indication of any discomfort at being on her knees on the concrete floor, and I wouldn't have given a fuck if she had, anyway. I weaved my hands through her long hair and tangled my fingers up in it, allowing me to immobilize her, and once I did, I began to thrust into her mouth.

“Cazzo!” This had been a good idea at the moment because the rush of blood from my skull to my cock had all of the earlier thoughts fading away. Ruth had quite a mouth on her, and it was one that I had made use of often over the last several years.

She'd come to Italy from Brooklyn a half decade ago, and it'd probably been that long since I'd been to New York City myself. Back when I was twenty, a woman had been killed and it nearly destroyed my entire family. What my father hadn't realized when he'd gutted the girl was that she was the daughter of someone so powerful and influential back home in Napoli that her murder had done more harm than good. My own family was also as strong, but ours wasn't on the right side of the law as hers had been.

New rules were enacted practically overnight, even though I had retrieved the corpse and made sure to make it look like some random homicide on the New York City streets. It hadn't mattered to Giorgio Rossi. He'd intended to make any, and everyone, pay for the loss of his only daughter. The mayor was on a warpath and a decade later, not much had changed. If he had his way though, women like Ruth and what she did, would also become illegal, threatening something I never took lightly.

Sex. I lived and breathed for the rush of the thrill and the orgasm that often accompanied it. I'd fucked more women than I could count, and outside of my desire for power, it was a badge of honor. These prostitutes weren't harming anyone but themselves. They were offered protection by the family as long as they did what was asked of them, and I'd be damned if I let some grief stricken mayor take this away from me. And it wasn't that I was law abiding, because once this squillo brought me to an orgasm, I intended to get back to the numbers and if they didn't match up down to the last euro cent coin, Leonardo would become fish food in the Gulf of Naples.

"Cazzo," I cursed again as I loosened the grip I had on Ruth's head, and allowed her to work my cock further.

My head still hung back, but I was losing my ability to focus on how good her tight mouth felt as she sucked me deep in her throat. When she'd swallow, I would let out a low growl, but even that didn't seem to help. I was too fucking wired right now to even bust a damn nut. Finally, I stepped back and became regretful for the loss of

warmth she provided.

“You can leave,” I instructed, and while she was confused, she didn’t allow it to affect her. Wisely choosing not to question me, or worse, she rose to her feet and scurried out the door once she unlocked it.

I could see the bottom of her ass from underneath her short skirt. Even the sight of it did nothing for me other than make my head hurt worse. I needed to finish what I was doing and get out of this godforsaken place and maybe then, I’d feel better. If not, I’d nurse my headache with a bottle of whiskey.

I returned to the desk after tucking my still hard cock back into my pants. I picked back up where I had left off, and spent the next hour working between my handheld calculator and the one on the computer. Technology was great, but like executions, sometimes the classics worked better. I kept crunching numbers and coming back to a specific account. It was a Swiss bank account and there was a slight discrepancy that gave me cause for concern.

It wasn’t enough that my father would have one of his most trusted men made an example of, but the same couldn’t be said about me because my loyalty didn’t lie with him. In fact, it didn’t lie with my father either. The patriarch of the Vaccaro family, Stefano, ruled everyone with an iron fist. I had been used to his vitriol and the way he made everyone, including his own family, come to heel. I’d been on the receiving end of his venom more than once and one of these days, the son would take out the one obstacle standing between him and global power.

For now, my focus was on the weasel Stefano trusted so much. I used my phone to take a screenshot of the numbers that were there compared to the ones that should’ve been there, and rose from my desk. I hadn’t zipped or buttoned back up my pants earlier, so I made sure to do that now, then I left my father’s office and went into the club in search of him. My head was still throbbing incessantly, and I knew aspirin

would also be in order.

I eventually made my way into the crowded club and I stopped to look around. Catching sight of Alberto, I motioned for him to come to me. When he did, I cut right to the chase. “Where’s my father?”

I needed to tell him that his most trusted loyal servant was slowly and methodically milking one of his foreign bank accounts dry. The sooner I got that over and done with, the sooner I could alleviate this pounding in my skull so I could pick back up where I left off earlier and get that orgasm that evaded me.

“He’s at the bar with his mistress. He’s—”

“His what?” I asked, wondering when my father had gotten himself a girlfriend.

“His mistress. She’s very beautiful.”

I had no doubt that Stefano would land himself a woman of impeccable beauty, and likely even one with the proper training. After all, a lot was expected of a mistress in the mafia, and our family was no different. It was another reason why I purposely chose not to appease my father and get one of my own. I didn’t give a fuck about an heir, and had often told him as much.

“Grazie,” I responded, then pushed past the man.

I strode purposely to the bar, and I did see my father with a woman. She was facing the bartender so obviously had her back turned to me. My eyes narrowed. Even though I could see nothing more than the color and length of her hair, something seemed familiar about her posture.

“Father,” I spoke as I approached him. He turned, and the shit-eating grin on his face

still irked me to this day. Being one of the most ruthless leaders of the city's most infamous crime family, he had a hell of a lot of reason to be cocky. His smirk just infuriated me, though. And, I think he knew it as well.

"Figlio," he told me as he stepped closer and clapped his hand against my shoulder blade. "You haven't met my Bellissima yet."

"I haven't," I said, stating the obvious. Stefano leaned in and whispered something in her ear. She slowly turned and when she did, the color had to have drained from my face. It was obvious to me as to why she appeared so familiar to me. I had often observed her from behind in school. I almost called out her name, but thought better of it. "It's nice to meet you."

Her eyes registered something momentarily before her façade was wiped clean and her piercing dark eyes returned to their normal shade. I hadn't seen Viviana Spataro since that night in a New York City alley. Remembering it, my own eyes narrowed further, although I tried to not give any indication to my father as to who she was, or what she could be with him for.

She smiled, and extended her hand which I did the noble thing and picked up with one of mine. I brought my lips to the top of her soft, delicate skin. "My name's Viviana."

I almost told her that I knew exactly who she was, but since she wanted to play coy, I kept up my act as well. "As I said before, it's a pleasure to meet you."

"The pleasure is all mine," she replied, a bit more breathless than she likely intended to.

I released her hand from mine and turned to my father. "Have you two been together long?"

“It’s been about—”

My father had just been about to speak when he was interrupted by his mistress. “We’ve been together for nine months now.”

She turned to my father and when he leaned in to kiss her, she eagerly pressed her lips to his. I didn’t know what the fuck was going on, but there was no way that the awkwardly shy girl I once knew had gone from that to this.

The “this” had one smoking hot body. Cazzo! Her hair was dark and pin straight, and those piercing eyes of hers were highlighted by the dark eyeliner she was wearing. Soft, long lashes fluttered slightly, and I continued my perusal until I had reached her lips. They were a lot fuller than they had once been, and I briefly wondered if she used fillers. It didn’t matter, however, because they’d look the same when wrapped around my cock.

Yes, I knew she was with my father, but there had to be an angle there. The rest of her package was as equally stunning as her face, and I might’ve even stared at her lush cleavage as her tight dress pressed her ample breasts together. I didn’t think I could get harder than I had been an hour or two ago, but I was now proven wrong.

“I need to take care of something, Nazario. Would you keep my Bellissima company until I come back?”

My father didn’t have to ask me twice. “Sure.”

For the first time, Viviana appeared nervous about that because she began to fidget. I watched her pick up the cocktail napkin and turn it over repeatedly until it began to slightly tear. Waiting until my father disappeared completely from view, I grabbed her hand to not only stop what she was doing, but to get her attention as well.

“Come with me,” I ground out through gritted teeth.

She looked up at me, but didn’t even attempt to move. Her defiance was as foolish as it was admirable, and I wanted to punish her the same way for both.

“It wasn’t a request, but a command, unless you want me to tell my father where our familiarity goes back to.”

That sparked something within her, and she quickly slid off the barstool. Long legs completed the package, and I had to admit to myself that she had grown into a ravishing beauty since the last time I had seen her back in that dark alley. She was in a tight mini-dress that only went mid-thigh, and the low cut in the front was highlighted even more by the jewels adorning her neckline from one side to the other.

I grabbed her hand and pulled her with me to a hallway right outside the main part of the club. This was my father’s establishment, but I knew it like the back of my hand. There was a secret entry-way down the hall and when we’d reached it, I pressed one of the bricks and as soon as the piece of the wall started to turn. I pushed her through the opening. We were now encased in darkness and feeling around, I finally located the touch switch and the small place illuminated with the dim lighting.

“What the hell happened to you,” I asked her matter-of-factly.

“I don’t have any idea what you mean,” she told me, the earlier defiance turning into the same type of arrogance my father was known to display, however it didn’t bother me as much with her. Where I wanted to knock Stefano down a few pegs, it only made me want to bend her over and fuck the over-confidence right out of her.

“I’m not one to play games, Viviana.” And, that was well known to most, but obviously not all since she had wanted to toy with me.

She shrugged as if that warning didn't matter to her. "Call it my glow up."

I let out a growl. "I wasn't talking about your looks, although they have certainly improved since school."

She smiled again, this time all of her amusement on full display. I wanted to push her to her knees; and unlike earlier with Ruth, I knew I would come down her throat while making her swallow every fucking drop. Viviana knew exactly what I was referencing, and I knew even with her silence that she was here with my father because of her friend.

"You're going to leave my father tonight, and you're never going to look back."

Her small hands went to her slender hips and she pursed those full lips of hers together. They were painted the same candy apple red shade as her skirt, and I inwardly groaned. My father could never satisfy her the way I could. I...

"I'll do no such thing," she retorted, interrupting my thoughts.

I stepped closer, causing her to take another step back. The space was already limited so after a few steps back, she was now pressed between me and the hard stone behind her. "It wasn't a suggestion, but a direct order."

She reached out to touch me, not that it was hard seeing as I was close enough to feel the rapid beating of her heart through our clothing. Her hand moved up my chest and I didn't miss the way she nicked my nipple with one of her manicured nails. "I don't take orders from anyone, least of all – you."

She practically spat out the last word and I leaned in close to press my forehead to hers. "You're going to do what I tell you to do, or else—"

“Or else you’ll kill me like your father did my best friend.” She had thrown it out there and everything I had suspected was now confirmed. There was venom laced within the smoky sensuousness of her voice, especially when she mentioned him.

“You need to let that go,” I warned, more for her protection than anything else. She couldn’t go around throwing things like that out there or else someone would connect the pieces, and she would experience a death far worse than Donnatella had.

“I’ll never let that go,” she told me while pushing forcefully at my chest.

“You must,” I repeated.

“Fuck you,” she said, her voice now completely filled with pain that the man who’d sired me had caused her. “You don’t get to tell me what to do. You just make sure that you keep your big mouth—”

Knowing where she was headed with it, I grabbed her by the throat and fused my mouth to hers. I had never wanted to kiss her in all the time that I had known her in the past, but as soon as our lips touched, I never wanted to stop. I quickly neutralized her, my tongue tangling with hers in some forbidden dance. She was my father’s mistress, and a witness that should’ve been snuffed out a decade earlier, yet I couldn’t stop kissing her as she held my very life in her hands when it should’ve been the other way around.

She struggled against me, as I suspected she would, until she didn’t. The lack of resistance elicited the same response that being doused with a bucket of ice water would, and I slowly released her from my grasp. When I stepped back, I had miscalculated her mood because she slapped me so quickly and with such force that the entire side of my face stung.

“I’m not leaving until I get what I came here for. Get in my way, Nazario, and it’ll be

your last fatal mistake. I am not about taking prisoners. I am collecting body bags.”

I shook my head to not only stop the ringing inside of it from her blow, but the words she spoke. Even back in school, she’d been the soft-spoken type. The night in New York City, she’d been scared but resembled the girl I had once known. The vixen in front of me was like something out of my wet dreams. She was arrogant, definitely not a damsel in distress, and someone I would enjoy fucking into submission over and over again. I couldn’t do any of those things, however, because she was going to get her ass killed if she didn’t drop this vendetta and leave this town immediately.

“You’re not the only one that wants him dead,” I stated, causing her to look up at me and deadpan.

“Yes, but unlike others, I don’t lack the balls to get the job done.”

I scrubbed my hands down my face. “It’s too dangerous.”

“Then leave the heavy lifting to those capable of doing it, darling.”

Viviana then turned and moved back to the door. She began slapping around at the bricks until she found the right one. Flattening myself against the stone, I waited for her to leave and the door to close again before I pushed off the rock. I shook my head at her arrogance. I had no idea how she planned to destroy him, but I needed to make sure that I wouldn’t go down as collateral damage with him. Our enemies would be licking their chops, and wondering if she wasn’t working with, or for, one of them. I left the secret space myself. I’d take care of Leonardo, and Viviana, and without either one knowing about it.

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I couldn't escape fast enough from that bunker, but I dashed down the hallway away from it and it was no easy feat since I was wearing seven inch heels. I managed to make it back to the bar and just in time to join Stefano. He looked at what had to be my flustered appearance and his brow raised in question. I smiled in reassurance and leaned in to kiss him.

Unlike my kiss with Nazario, there were no sparks when I did this with his father. The very first time I had allowed him to touch me had almost made me call this entire thing off. I didn't, however, because I couldn't erase the image of Donna's lifeless body on those cold, dank streets. I would then remember her as she was, and while tears used to come to my eyes, now only anger filled them. That was an emotion I had to work to keep hidden because I couldn't allow anyone to ever suspect that my feelings for the Don Vaccaro were anything other than sincere.

I had worked behind the scenes studying the type of women he enjoyed, and sometimes even making myself sick in the process, but once I had that information, I would work on finding ways to get close to him. I studied him more than any of the books I did at school or the university. I'd even eventually had to choose between vengeance and a career, dropping the latter as I was then able to put all of my time and energy into seducing my way into a life that I would one day violently end.

Nazario knew that, and there was a chance he'd rat me out, but if he did, I would make sure my death hadn't been in vain as Donna's had. My best friend's father was the Mayor, and he'd been on the warpath doing anything and everything he could to expel the mafia from Napoli. It was too late for his own daughter, but not for the other countless lives either ruined or ended at the hands of the Camorra. If anyone was going to be able to bring them down, it wouldn't be because of newly enacted

laws, but rather that of someone on the inside with an ax to grind.

“Bellissima,” Stefano murmured when he finally pulled away. I glanced up into the eyes of the devil and smiled prettily at him.

Nazario was practically a spitting image of him. Where Naz’ hair was dark, his father’s was a salt and pepper gray. They both had the same sharp jaw and face, but Stefano had two eyes the same shade. They were as black as his heart, and one I hoped to plunge a stake into, someday.

“Where’s Nazario?” he asked, and I remembered him asking his son to keep an eye on me.

Stefano had grown quite protective of me over the last several months, and I suspected that it was because he knew his enemies were getting close. What he didn’t know was that his greatest one was the same woman who writhed underneath him at night, feigning heights of pleasure she only achieved when picturing his demise.

It’d been hard to get close enough to seduce him, but once I had, I pulled out all the stops. So much had happened in these last nine months, and just earlier before his son interrupted, he’d asked me to move into his estate with him. Stefano wanted to keep me in his bed, and I wanted him dead. I couldn’t have one without doing the other so I had agreed, and this time tomorrow, I would be the lady of the manor.

Nazario didn’t know about any of that and I smirked as I pictured his reaction once he found out. From what I had learned, his own mother had been killed during a strike from a rival family that the Vaccaros had annihilated afterward. Stefano was very protective of those that he considered his, and all the hard work I had put in studying him over the years was now going to be rewarded.

I had taken great pains to change my appearance. I needed to garner his attention and

the night that I had was like the culmination of a dream, although not the kind I had foolishly grown up thinking about night after night. I had changed a lot since that first evening. I no longer flinched at his touch, and he was very handsy. At the moment, his hand was slowly creeping up my bare thigh. The first time, he'd removed my dress and touched me all over — even in the spots where his mouth, tongue, hands, and cock had not— I still felt him. He was very imposing, and I used all my best acting skills to pretend that I was as infatuated as him. He fucked me so many different times that night, and oftentimes very roughly. I used to wonder if Donna had experienced any of that herself before she was brutally murdered, and it would fill me with shame. That was until I remembered why I was there and doing the things I was doing. I let him choke, restrain, and beat me with his little toys.

“He had to leave,” I answered as I stepped into the arms of the enemy.

Damn, he smelled so good. That was a plus, I supposed, but he didn't make my heart skip a beat like his son did. I had studied him as well during those years, and the things I had heard about him were even worse than the ones about his father. Still, I allowed him to touch me earlier, and my body was now craving more of him.

Just as tall as Stefano, he had that hair that made me want to grab it and pull. And those eyes. They were so different from one another, and I couldn't decide whether I liked the brown or green one best. Those hands... that tongue... Cazzo! I was going to imagine fucking Nazario when in bed with Stefano tonight. I was the worst kind of person, or at least I used to think that I was. My parents would be rolling over in their graves if they knew what I was doing, and why. They'd never understand, though.

“No one ever will,” I muttered under my breath.

“No one will ever what, Bellissima?” Stefano asked.

I kept my smile plastered on my face as I ran my hand up his chest the same way I

had his son earlier. “No one will ever know how badly I want you to fuck me right now, signore.”

He grinned at that, his pearly white teeth a direct contrast to his sun darkened skin. “Let’s do it here.”

My eyes widened at his question. “Here?” I asked.

He gave a nod, and I was about to backtrack until I saw Nazario darken the nearby doorway. I watched him as his eyes narrowed when looking at us. I turned to Stefano. “Sì!”

Stefano chuckled, the sound drawing my ire. I kept my facial expressions in check, and closed my eyes when his hand moved between my legs. He was literally going to fuck me with the very hands he used to kill countless others, and his son was watching as if I was must-see television.

“Mia puttana,” he rasped in my ear as he thrust four fingers inside of me and jerked me closer.

He might think I was his whore now, but he’d one day be my bitch, and this would all be worth it. Nothing would bring Donna back into my life, but had I actually had one since she was murdered? I already knew the answer to that, and it was a resounding “no.”

All were not the same, though. “Sì.”

Stefano’s fingers continued to move inside of me, and I was actually glad for the location because I didn’t have to cater to his vanity by pretending to be something I wasn’t. I could actually please him more by acting as if it was physically paining me to hold back. “Cazzo, Bellissima!”

He found the spot inside of me that usually helped his cause when it came to getting me off. I gripped the top of the barstool and briefly closed my eyes. I wanted to know what sex was like when it was for love, but all I had known was what it would be like to do so out of hate. It was like adrenaline, fueling me to continue this vendetta. I had worked so hard to get to this place, even if it meant getting finger-fucked in the center of a mobster's nightclub while his son watched.

I didn't know for sure if Nazario was still there, I only assumed that he was because my skin was aflame. Stefano's warm breath wasn't the reason either, even as he kissed along my neck and collarbone. His hand was moving more urgently, the sudden roughness causing pain to radiate inside of me. He got off on the misery of others so perhaps, we actually had something in common after all.

"Per favore," I pleaded, knowing he also liked to hear me beg. In fact, that first night, he tied me up and after abusing me, he strapped a vibrating toy to me and dared me to come. I didn't for fear that he would kill me, and I learned what both forced orgasms and orgasm denial were, and those were two more sins he'd one day pay for.

"Come for me," Stefano finally told me, and when my eyes opened, I imagined a younger, and much broodier version of the same man, and I came as he demanded.

My breath caught in my throat as my climax gripped me in its clutches. It was so sharp and sudden, and when Stefano pulled his hands away and licked at his wet fingers, I realized it was also weakening.

I quickly focused on my breathing, and once it was controlled, I sat down on one of the barstools. Stefano wasn't into public displays so I knew there was no chance of him asking me to repay for the deed, but that would all change once I got to the place that I would now be calling home. Knowing that, I motioned for the bartender and when he stopped in front of me, I turned and looked over my shoulder at Stefano. As if he knew what I wanted, he looked at the bartender.

“My Bellissima will take a Merlot.” I had needed something stronger, but deciding to take what I was allowed for now, I turned back around and smiled at him.

He moved down the bar and returned with a bottle and glass. Seconds later, I looked down into the glass, gave it a swirl, then practically gulped it down. Much to my chagrin, Stefano stayed right there with me the rest of the night, and he only allowed me another glass before he wanted to leave for the night.

I let him help me off the barstool and to his waiting car. Once we arrived at the Vaccaro estate, a small voice inside of my head tried to warn me to abandon this mission, but I ignored it like I had Nazario, and followed the man’s father into his house.

Source Creation Date: July 23, 2025, 3:27 am

I had wanted to catch back up with my father, but by the time I had actually found him, he was having an intimate moment with the very woman I had just warned away from him. Viviana thought she had this handled, but she didn't. She couldn't. If she thought by letting him finger-fuck her like a whore in public, or spreading her tantalizing legs for him in private would help her take him out, she would soon realize her miscalculation. I just hoped the foolish twit didn't end up learning that lesson with her life. One dead girl on my conscience was enough. I didn't need another.

Still, I couldn't help but watch her as she so effortlessly played along. She was either one hell of a good actress, or she truly could get off on my father's touch. I wasn't quite sure why that seemed to bother me, but it did. Watching her in the throes of passion, I had been bitter that it hadn't been because of me. Maybe I was just mad because I had her in my arms minutes before my father did, or it was also possible that somewhere deep inside, I wanted to make her scream as he would undoubtedly make her do once they got back to the estate.

Rumors always circulated about my family, and some were confirmed firsthand. I knew my father was a rough man. He treated no one, or nothing, with respect or care, including his own family. He'd break Viviana, and I had tried to warn her, but her own stubbornness wouldn't allow her to listen. I'd have to try to find another way to convince her. But how?

I decided to answer that another night. The evening was still young, and since my father had left with his comare, there wasn't anything that I could do about Leonardo, or was there? Pulling my phone out of my pocket, I hit a number I knew well. As soon as the recipient on the other line picked up, I spoke, "Get Di Salva and bring

him to the cells.”

“Will do.”

The line went dead, and I leaned against the wall. I planned to talk to my father in the morning, and who knows, maybe a night in the dungeon might make Leonardo squeal like the rat he was so I could take him out. No one dishonored the Vaccaro name, including friends of my father, and that was the reason he wouldn't question me on this. Once I presented the evidence, Stefano might even want to do the deed himself.

I chuckled at that. It would take balls, and my father's were probably slapping against Viviana Spataro right now. I scowled at that visual. I'd always thought her pretty enough in school, but now, she was a feisty temptress that I wanted to subdue in so many ways. I could still feel her heart beating wildly in her chest as I held her very life in my hands back in the bunker. As my hand wrapped around her throat, she was aroused, very aroused. And Cazzo! I was, too.

I remembered the feel of her lips beneath mine. I never kissed the squillos, but she was more than some common whore. She was my father's mistress, so she should've been off-limits for me. Too bad for him that it didn't mean a thing. Viviana wanted me, and I didn't have proof outside of the bunker to prove it, but I knew that she did. My own inflated ego wouldn't accept anything less.

My thoughts returned to school and how innocent she had been. Oftentimes, we'd been thrown together, but I had never given her the slightest inclination that I desired her in any way. She'd wear those long skirts and tight shirts, a lot like the teachers would. Thinking back on it now, I supposed one of the reasons I had fucked those various women there in the school and never anywhere else, had been because of Viviana. It should've been as obvious to me back then as it was now because as I took a trip down memory lane, I'd often bend those women over Viviana's desk and raise their long skirts to their waists.

I was so fucking hard. Damn, I needed to find Ruth or someone else that I could take all that pent up energy out on, especially because I knew my father was enjoying the one thing I now wanted above all others. I was about to dial the number to one of those squillos when my phone actually rang.

“Is it done?” I asked. When I heard “Sì,” I smirked.

Leonardo was in one of the cells. They were kept just off the main property, so I grabbed the keys to my powder blue Huracan and headed toward home. Once in my Lamborghini, I sped away from the city and didn’t slow my speed until I reached the area where more men were executed than anywhere else in the city. It wasn’t often that a prisoner would emerge alive from underground. If I had my say, Leonardo would definitely not buck that trend, and would be just another statistic and example for those employees who thought they could cross a Vaccaro and live to tell about it.

I veered off sharply and came to a stop right outside of a small building that was the entry to hell. It was for most, and as I thought back to the various points of my own childhood, it had been that for me, too. I let out a growl, but pulled my favorite Glock out of the glovebox, then ventured inside.

I made sure that I kept it fully loaded, and switching the safety off, I fingered the trigger. It wouldn’t be the only weapon I would need. Producing a small, but ultra-sharp blade, I intended to torture the man before finally showing mercy and killing him where he sat. I entered through the interior door, and took the familiar descent underground.

The walls were thick and cold, most of the stone discolored from the punishment they withstood. There was a stench that had me nearly holding my breath. If these walls could talk, the stories they could tell. Thankfully, they couldn’t, so some secrets could stay hidden inside. They might not be out there for the world to know, but they would never be forgotten either. In fact, just walking these same halls, a sense of

shame filled me that couldn't be erased no matter how much I wished for it to be.

I ignored the revulsion bubbling up inside of me, and continued down to the end of the hallway and through the door where a trio of cells sat and in the center one, a scared Leonardo Di Salva stood in the corner.

"Oh grazie, a dio," he uttered when he saw that it was me.

"God can't save you here, Leo. No one can, including my father who is otherwise engaged at the moment."

Fear crept into his eyes around the same time that recognition did. I smirked. His eyes grew wide, practically bugging out of his head while I stood there and watched him squirm. Seeing these prisoners plead for their lives made me feel a certain kind of way, and I was thankful that this one didn't insult my intelligence, and temper, by trying to do the same. There was no honor in dishonor, regardless of how it was spelled.

"Do you know why you've been brought here?" I asked.

Leo shook his head. "This is a mistake."

"Is it?" I produced the blade and the stripe of light coming from inside of the cell bounced off of it. "I think you know exactly why you've been brought here."

"I don't. I swear. I—"

"If you want to keep those slick fingers of yours then I suggest that you start talking about that Swiss bank account."

"What account?"

I loved to watch these men sweat. I hated to hear their pleas for their lives, but everything else about these encounters made me hard. “The one where over a hundred thousand Euro have disappeared.”

“I don’t understand. I—”

I moved to the cell door and knowing his feet were shackled, I wasn’t worried about him escaping, so I didn’t even bother to close the door behind me. I laid my gun down just outside of what would be his ultimate reach and proceeded closer with my dagger in hand. When close enough to him, I grabbed the old man by his hair and pressed the blade against his throat.

“An insult for me is one for my father who has done nothing but protect you over the years. Right now, he can’t do that so I would suggest you start talking and tell me whatever I want to know.”

“Y-you’re going to kill me,” he stated, and I grinned.

“Actually, I’m going to cut off every finger, starting with each phalange. If you still don’t tell me what I want to know, I will continue to the metacarpal, and if you don’t pass out or die from the blood loss alone, I will cut off both fucking hands until I decide to end your miserable life. Just know, Leo, it won’t be until you have truly suffered.”

“B-but, I have been by your father’s side for—”

“Thirty years. I know. Spare me the sob story. It’s for that reason alone I won’t show you an ounce of fucking mercy, so unless you want to lose the tip of your thumb, I suggest you start giving me what I want to hear. You’ll learn I’m a very impatient man.”

A sob escaped him, and I grabbed one of his hands. As easy as taking candy from a baby, everything came spilling forth. Stefano should be proud of me for my actions, however, something told me that he wouldn't be. Nothing I've ever done had ever made him respect me the way that a father should a son. The man was pure evil and as other memories came rushing back, clarity only proved that nothing I did would ever be good enough for him. He hated me, perhaps even more than I hated him. He had everything I wanted from power to fear, and he even had the girl. I had his right-hand man, or what was left of him, and as he bled out on the floor, I picked back up the Glock and a shot between the eyes ended his miserable life. Now, it was time to take what Stefano had, everything that was rightfully mine. Maybe not tonight, but it would be soon.

Source Creation Date: July 23, 2025, 3:27 am

I'd been in this massive fucking house for almost two weeks now and I was slowly biding my time. The night I had accompanied Stefano home, he had tied me up once more and used a whip on me. I supposed I had it coming seeing as I was actively plotting his demise all while fantasizing about his son. Speaking of Nazario, I had heard raised voices in the hall that first morning, then both father and son mentioned something about Geneva before they left on a trip. It was for the best as it allowed my body to heal in Stefano's absence.

Now, it had been two weeks and I had barely seen either man since they arrived home a few days earlier. They had been gone exactly ten days, ones I mentally marked off on my calendar. If everything went according to plan, I would be able to secure myself enough cash so I could do what I came there to do and flee. I'd live the rest of my life off on some island somewhere until my own sins caught up with me and my life was cut short like Donna's had been.

I still had no idea what had happened that night, and I supposed that was the hardest part of it to swallow. She'd been so excited about a party at a club, yet she ended up dead in an alley from obvious signs of trauma. I used to drive myself crazy with worry about whether they killed her swiftly or tortured her. The latter kept me up more nights than I could count. Just imagining that she suffered for even a single second made me physically ill. It also fortified my resolve to make the others feel the same way.

I'd been able to piece together a lot of the partygoers that night, and two had met their early demise after I'd gotten everything that I could from them. I used my newfound sexuality to my advantage. My body was a weapon that I flaunted and wielded, and one that had even landed me the prize of all prizes. Stefano wanted me, but unlike

those whores he surrounded himself with, I was the only one in his sheets. Outside of them, I possessed class and dignity, two things he hadn't had in a woman since his wife was murdered. During a blow-job one night, he'd told me the entire sordid history and even claimed it had been at the hands of a rival family. That might be true, but it wouldn't have shocked me if I later learned it had all been a lie.

The nights here were lonely and if it wasn't for my aimless wandering and fantasies of revenge, I would truly hate it more than I did. "I'm going to get payback for you, Donna. I promise you that with every fiber of my being."

I pulled my robe tighter as a chill passed over me. I had explored a lot of areas of the estate, except for the ones I had been warned to stay away from. I assumed it was where the killings I often heard about actually took place, but I wasn't adventurous enough to defy him in order to find out for sure. There was plenty of other real estate to explore, including a secluded area covered with trees. It overlooked the Gulf and also was a favorite landing spot for hummingbirds.

A few days earlier, I had been sitting on a blanket and enjoying the view when what had to be about ten of them converged in my safe space and flittered wildly as they drank nectar from some of the vibrant flowers. They were absolutely amazing and proof that something so beautiful could survive in a place so cold. They had green iridescent feathers that glimmered in the sunlight, and long smooth beaks. They were impressive to watch and something I now found myself looking forward to seeing.

It was nearly night now, so I would see nothing but stars in what would eventually be pitch darkness. The sun had recently set, and it would only be a matter of time before all semblance of light, outside of the moon and stars, would disappear until sunrise. I was too restless to sleep though, so I knew I had to do something. Gathering up what was left of my waning energy, I headed to the other wing of the house where I knew Nazario lived.

“You must have a death wish or something,” I’d told myself the first night that I ventured over there.

It’d been a while they had been in Switzerland. I had found his bedroom and I was slightly disappointed to learn that it wasn’t the same as I had once imagined it would be. I had this image of him in my head at school and I was quickly proven wrong when I saw his space in person. Still, I tended to go there a lot. Maybe I did have a death wish, or maybe he fascinated me that much. I was truly demented to even harbor any feelings for him, especially of the sexual kind, but here I was walking down the hallway to his room where I’d open the door to have a peek inside.

When I reached it, I pressed my face to the door to see if I could hear any sounds. When no noise was detected, I quickly looked around before slipping inside. The space was very sparse, and I actually wasn’t surprised because it matched the cold sterility of his heart. Just in the short time I had been there, combined with the stories I’d heard about the father and son, I honestly couldn’t decide which one was worse. Well, I knew Stefano killed Donna, but how many like her had Nazario taken out all in the name of family honor, or shits and giggles.

I moved closer to his bed and ran a hand along the silk bedspread. I already knew he liked silk sheets underneath because I had stupidly rolled around on them the second time I had come inside of his bedroom. I was about to leave before I got caught, but that proved to be for naught.

“Not exactly how I pictured you on my bed, but it’s a start,” came the gravelly voice from the doorway.

I flashed a guilty expression at him, before feigning innocence. “I didn’t know this was your room.”

My voice creaked slightly, and I swallowed down the lump in my throat. I couldn’t

allow either of the Vaccaro men to detect any weakness in me. “I will see myself out.”

Nazario had already stepped inside, so I had a clear path to the door. Walking casually to it, I was about to flee when I found myself pressed face first against it. “You’re lying.”

“A-about?” I asked a hell of a lot more breathily than I’d intended.

“You came here because you feel what I do.”

His answer was correct, but I certainly couldn’t let him know that. After all, I was his father’s mistress so I was off-limits to him. Stefano would kill us both and not bat an eye. Despite knowing that, I allowed Nazario to trace the shell of my ear with his tongue, then moaned as he nibbled on the lobe.

My thong was getting damper by the minute, and I suspected he knew that too because his hands moved to the front of me while he kept me imprisoned with his body alone. They found the strap to my robe, and I could barely even remember to breathe, much less tell him to stop, because the truth was that I didn’t want him to. Stefano had told me he would be at the club late, and I knew what they meant. He would expect me to be up waiting for him, and tonight, there was no telling what type of depravities he wanted to take out on me.

“I need to go,” I managed to eek out just before his hand slid between my legs. I squeezed my thighs closed, but he was able to wedge them apart enough to find what I wanted to hide from him.

I flinched at the feel of his fingers sliding along my slit. His mouth was still wreaking havoc on my self-control, and now his fingers were threatening to weaken me further. “You’re so wet.”

I had learned how the Vaccaro men talked, and dirty was at the very top of that list. “Tell me something I don’t know,” I finally replied to his obvious statement. Of course, I was wet. He was stroking my pussy while biting my neck.

I had planned to play coy, but what was the use. His father could physically get me off, and usually after I imagined his son instead, so there was no need to act innocent. I was a sensual woman, and while only here for vengeance, it didn’t mean I couldn’t have a little fun on the side. I didn’t love Stefano Vaccaro. Hell, I didn’t even like him. I hated him. There were never any promises made nor did I plan to have a future with him. I didn’t intend to allow him to live much longer. What harm would there really be in giving in to passion.

“Cazzo, you’re also so tight,” he told me the moment he thrust two fingers inside of me.

His were longer, and a little wider than Stefano’s and remembering him that night at the bar, I had to ask, “Did you wish that it was you?”

“Me, what?” he asked as he trailed kisses from my neck to my shoulder.

“Did you wish that it was your fingers inside of me? Did you want to trade places with him, especially when I came all over them. So wet... so hot... so—”

Before I could get another word out, his fingers were gone, and I was in his arms. He carried me over to his bed and dropped me on top of it. I could see how dark both of his different-colored eyes had gotten and when he removed his shirt, I stared up at the most glorious sight I had ever seen. Hard chiseled muscle as far as the eye could see. There were some noticeable scars which I assume came with his lifestyle, and the dark ink that crept up his tanned arms. There was a lion from his wrist to elbow, and something else just below his shoulder that I couldn’t make out.

His muscles rippled, especially when he tore at his sweats. My mouth watered at the sight of his cock as it bobbed against his stomach once his pants were gone. I wasn't even the slightest bit surprised that he went commando, but I was glad that he did. He leaned over me, and in a flash, my thong was gone. My bra soon followed, and I shook my head when he went to take my robe, too.

I didn't know why I was even concerned about it when I should've been ending whatever this was between us. There was something there, however, and maybe in a different world or a different life... No, I stopped myself from thinking about that at all. If there had been something other than this nightmare I'd been in over the last decade, I would be the doctor that I had always dreamed of becoming and more focused on healing people than the bitter, revenge fueled woman dead set on ending lives, instead of saving them. Oh, how the naïve had fallen.

"I'm going to fuck you so hard and give us both what we've been wanting," he warned and that promise made me whimper.

Nazario covered my body with his, but he didn't thrust into me as I had hoped. Instead, he smirked as he teased me. I was too far gone in this moment to give a damn, though. He was incinerating my control and I loved every second of it, rubbing myself wantonly against him. He could distract me with just a kiss and weaken me with his touch. The longer I allowed this charade to play on, the more he'd destroy me in the end.

I knew it. And, he knew it, too. Yet, when the tip of his cock pierced my opening, I welcomed him, and the world of hurt that would follow. "Yes, Naz. Fuck me!"

Those large hands of his spread my thighs even farther apart and held them roughly causing pain to skyrocket down each of my legs. Still, I pushed forward needing to feel every inch of him inside me.

“Damn, you’re so fucking tight,” he groaned.

I felt his shaft as it split me open, the pain morphing into a pleasure I’d never felt before. Did I actually think he’d destroy me afterward? I underestimated him because once he was fully seated and I looked into eyes as dark as coal, I realized that he already had.

Our eyes stay locked together even when he started to move. Enter. Retreat. Enter. Retreat. It went on forever and every second that passed only unraveled me that much more. I was lost in the moment. Every nerve ending in my body was aflame, and when his dark shadow fell over my body once more, he stopped.

“What are you d—” I went to ask, only to be interrupted.

“I want you to promise me something,” he said, his voice low and terse.

“And I want you to fuck me,” I told him, grinding my hips trying to make him move. He was as impenetrable as the concrete walls surrounding this estate.

“First, a promise,” he responded.

“What,” I whimpered in frustration.

“I want you to promise that when we’re done, you’ll go anywhere but here.”

Suddenly, I realized what he hoped to accomplish with this seduction attempt. My own need to climax could easily be remedied by myself so I pushed at his chest. He was unmovable and when my eyes reached his again, I saw the amusement in those darkened depths.

“No,” I told him, insolently.

“No?” he asked, slowly pulling out. He kept my gaze pinned to his, then slammed forward.

“N-no,” I stammered as I repeated myself. Fuck! He felt so good inside of me.

Nazario pulled out again and although I was bracing for the next thrust, he slid back inside me so slowly, making me groan. “His undoing is all mine, Viviana. You don’t want to challenge me on this.”

I once again tried to push at his chest, this time moving him possibly an inch at the most. My own frustration, sexual and mental, was growing. “No, I’ve come too far to turn away now.”

There was no way I would agree to this. His growl of displeasure made me shiver but I held firm.

“He’ll hurt y—” he began to say.

“I’m going to kill him, Naz.”

“It’s too dangerous,” he hissed.

I’ve had enough of this conversation. There was no way in hell I’ll simply forget all the time I put into exacting vengeance and just walk away. There was no dick on the planet good enough for that.

“Either make me come or get the hell off of me,” I spat out.

A grin spread across his lips, making him even more devilishly handsome than before. “That’s what I’m doing, Viviana.” He started moving with a little more urgency, but he never took his eyes off of me. There’s an intensity inside them and it

was as if he was trying to save my face to memory. I opened my mouth to speak, but he beat me to the punch. “Whether I allow you to come or not depends on whether you answer correctly.”

“We’re back to this again,” I asked between pants. His speed increased, and each thrust had me catapulting closer to the edge. I only needed a little more. As if he recognized that, he lowered his head to my neck and chuckled, the vibrations from the sound sending goosebumps up and down my arms.

His wicked mouth continued to move higher until he was able to latch onto my ear lobe. “So, what’s it going to be?”

Whatever trance I was in broke, and I turned away from him. Nazario truly thought he could fuck me into submission. He was wrong. Nothing would stop me from exacting revenge on those who’ve wronged me. “No, I won’t leave until I do what I came here to do.”

He bit down onto my ear while he slowly pulled out of me. My frustration continued to soar higher. I was able to slip my hands between his hard chest and mine, and was about to try to use my palms to push him off when he slammed back into me. This time, he doesn’t stop to tease, or harass, me.

“Wrong answer,” he said as his tongue dipped into my ear.

“Naz” I moaned out in pleasure.

He was driving into me with such power and force that all I could do was cling to him. The edge of release was finally within reach. The months and years I’ve spent getting close to Stefano, working my way into his trust and organization, never yielded the climax that Nazario was teasing me with. I needed it, desperately, more than even my next breath. Then, he stops.

“More,” I cried out as I tried to angle my body into a position that would allow me to rub myself against him until I orgasmed.

He was having none of it. “Not until you give me what I want.”

“I hate you,” I told him, positive that I truly meant it in that moment. If I had to get myself off tonight, there would be hell to pay. I opened my mouth to tell him as much, but his lips seized mine in a brutal kiss. There was nothing tender about the way he tried to neutralize me. His tongue darted inside, tracing the roof of my mouth before he pulled away.

He pressed off me, yet still caged me between those muscular arms of his, ones already showing the strain from him holding back. Nazario was now back to fucking me with long, powerful strokes. I closed my eyes and arched toward the release I hoped to find. And then just like that, he withdrew from me and rocked back onto his heels. “Tsk tsk, Viviana, and just when I was about to make you scream.”

I pushed him away from me and scrambled into a seated position of my own. My body was primed and ready for something he wouldn’t give me without my having to give everything up that I’d worked so hard for. Fuck that!

“Fuck you, Naz.”

I pushed him off of me and slid out of bed. My lingerie was in a torn heap on the floor, but my robe was in good enough condition to cover me as I hurried to the door. Before I could open it, I found myself pressed against it. “I won’t allow you to get hurt, Viviana. At least any more than you’ve already been. I—”

Able to use my ass to gain some much-needed space, I slipped out of his grasp. Taking advantage of his surprise, I pinned him to the wall, keeping him imprisoned via my kneecap to his balls. “I don’t like being toyed with, and I sure as hell don’t

take to being threatened.” I pressed my kneecap harder against him. “You’re either friend or enemy, and darling, you’ve just chosen your side. Keep away from me or I’ll rip these off and feed them to you.”

I stepped away quickly, then escaped out the nearby door. I didn’t stay long enough to even catch my breath. I hurried back to my quarters and made sure to lock the door behind me. Only then did I exhale, breathing harshly until it normalized.

Source Creation Date: July 23, 2025, 3:27 am

I didn't see Viviana for several days after my last attempt to get her to drop this suicide mission she was on. I had tried to find her later that night, but she had been with my father, and I couldn't allow Stefano to suspect anything. I did see her with him in a room that he often reserved for those times when he needed to get truly rough. I had thought about interrupting him, even if just to tell him about Leonardo, but when I heard her screams of pleasure, I left the two of them alone. She might enjoy what he was doing to her, but there was no way she could ever prefer anything he did over me.

I had shaken my head as soon as that thought entered it. What the hell was I doing? I was becoming obsessed with her, and it wasn't even because I was all that attracted to her. Well, that might not have been a lie years ago in school, but it was now, because all I wanted to do was sink back inside of her and make her cry even louder than the monster upstairs.

"Pot meet kettle," I muttered when I realized that I might actually be eviler than the very man who'd sired me. I wasn't bad in the same ways as Stefano, but I was certainly more ruthless than him, and one day soon, everything he had would be mine. That included the woman I now couldn't shake.

Viviana Spataro was a bombshell. She had a body that others would kill for, including mile long legs I wanted nothing more than to drape over my neck as I ate at her wet pussy. It was more than sexual with her, though. Even fully dressed, she wore her greatest feature which was confidence, and it would also be her biggest downfall if she didn't listen to reason. She would hear nothing of it. Her rage and indignation at my very suggestion that she try didn't even mar the classical beauty of her face.

Her face was sharply defined, especially those gorgeous eyes and full lips. Her skin used to be pale like porcelain, but she'd been tanning, and the sun-kissed hues made her even more irresistible. She was more than simple looks. Unlike other mistresses of my father, I knew she was intelligent, book smart to a fault. She was so smart back in school, and while she wasn't using common sense right now, I knew she had truly thought and planned this revenge scheme out. Unfortunately, even the best laid plans often went awry, as hers would undoubtedly do.

"You're acting so foolish," I said aloud, calling her every bit of the fool she was acting like.

Despite all of that, I had still gone in search of a squillo on the estate and spent the remainder of the night fucking her while thinking of another woman. When I had finally accomplished what I'd been trying to do, the orgasm I had was fucking powerful. I left the woman in a boneless heap in the room I had taken her, and then I returned to my own.

The following morning, I had gotten a chance to tell my father about his trusted friend, and I let him hear the confession for himself. Something akin to pain flashed across the old man's features, but I knew it couldn't be regret or hurt because that would require a heart and we both knew he didn't possess one. Stefano then told me that he and Viviana were going to the Sicilian countryside for a few days, and then they were gone.

I had hoped to use that time to forget about her. After all, it'd be a matter of time before she was tossed aside as all the others had been, and that was if she lived to regret ever getting mixed up with him to begin with. My father often tired of women and after he broke them down, they became disposable which often meant they would be forced to live out their days as a squillo for the organization to run through while watching him move on to the one that had taken her place, or he would traffick them off to someone else where they'd never be seen or heard from again.

Viviana would be the perfect candidate for the latter simply because she had no siblings and her parents had both passed away in a car accident years earlier. There would be no one to miss her, so he could upgrade without anyone batting an eye. If she fought him on it, she'd end up like her friend, and so many others before and after, that struggled until their very deaths.

“I can't let him destroy you,” I swore with vehemence. By saving her, perhaps I could save my own soul. While one woman didn't make up for all of the others I had allowed to be hurt, it would make sure that another didn't suffer a similar fate which had to count for something.

I didn't know how to convince her other than through seduction so the night that they returned, I went down to the pool to plan my next move. Stefano was gone to his nightclub and would be there for hours, and I knew Viviana would stay home. It wasn't often that my father would allow any woman at his different businesses, and that hadn't changed when he'd gotten together with her.

I looked up from my chaise lounge when a shadow crossed in front of me. It was Viviana. I could not only tell from the shape of her silhouette, but from the scent that I knew was uniquely hers. She always smelled of raspberries, the tartness mingled with a hint of something so sweet and intoxicating that it often grabbed my attention. And, it wasn't the only thing that did. As I raised my brow and watched her from beneath my lashes, my dick immediately got hard. She was in another sheer robe that hid nothing from my hungry gaze.

“If you take a picture, it'll last longer,” she told me as she moved closer to where I sat.

There was a fluidity in the sway of her hips that had me imagining how it'd feel to have her sweet pussy riding my long, thick cock. She'd take in every inch of me, and I would come so hard inside of her. I already knew how tight and hot she was, and it

merely pissed me off more that my father was the one to get to enjoy it day in and day out. Even taking away her sensual charms, she was feisty, and I knew she'd keep my cock hard long after I fucked her.

“Are you going to say something, or just stare at me all night?”

Her question had me smirking. She didn't want to carry on a conversation with me, and we both knew it. I rose from my seat and moved over to her. She shivered when I lightly dragged two fingers down her arms. “And, what is this something that you want me to say?”

I leaned in and used my nose to nudge aside the long, silken locks of her ebony hair. I then trailed kisses along her collarbone, causing her breath to hitch in her throat.

“I came down here for a late night swim, and nothing more.”

I continued to grin at her lie. She knew I'd been down here because I had seen her on the balcony not even an hour before. She'd been with my father. Seeing the two of them together infuriated me. I had come to realize in the weeks she'd been with Stefano that he was very fond of this woman. If he didn't get bored, or her true intentions stayed hidden, he might even marry her.

Everyone knew to whom she belonged, or did they? The way that Viviana was moaning at my touch only confirmed what I knew. She was attracted to me, and in a way that she would never be with my father. She was also putting herself in harm's way and it would pain me to have her get caught up in my thirst for revenge against Stefano, and end up nothing more than collateral damage in a deadly game she'd been warned to give up.

My hands moved up the front of her and when I squeezed her firm breasts in my palms, she let out an aroused sigh. “I think that you're lying. To me, and to yourself.”

She slapped my hands away and turned around to face me. Her eyes burned with all the passion that I one day wished to unleash. The wicked things that I had dreamed of doing to this female burned inside of me like adrenaline, fueling me to pull her closer and take her where we stood. The only reason I did not was because the same way we had seen one an hour ago, my father could return home and step outside onto the balcony and see the same.

“Believe what you want, Naz.” She then looked down to see how hard I was for her. To be honest, it was a constant state of arousal, and had been long before I ever laid eyes on her a year ago. I watched as she began to smirk, and nearly growled when her dainty hands moved to the belt of her robe. My eyes narrowed in on her candy apple red nails, perfectly manicured, and long enough to leave hellacious scratches down my back.

“Be careful,” I warned, my tone conveying just how close she was to being bent over this chair and fucked six ways to Sunday.

She ignored the warning and opened the robe completely, displaying her full breasts and toned flesh to me. She was completely flawless, and I knew exactly how smooth her skin was. I wanted to fuck her. Hell, I wanted to completely own her in every way, and maybe once I took out my father, I could take everything that was his, including this female. Was she really that, though?

If she was Stefano’s, she wouldn’t be shedding her robe and teasing a man known to despise such things, while looking up at me with such pleading eyes. Mine locked in on hers, and I felt myself sinking beneath the dark surface of them. I was drowning in those black pools, and she knew it. Her tongue slowly peeked out from between her luscious lips, and I had to tamp back my growl and show some restraint when she slowly slid it across her bottom one. Side to side. I watched as she dangerously provoked me, all while imagining that hot mouth of hers wrapped around my cock.

“You’re seconds away from getting fucked,” I told her.

Her haughty laugh should’ve grated on my nerves, but it only made me harder. “Promises, promises, Naz. I remember the last time, and I’ve had better.”

I knew exactly what she was referring to, and her last quip was brushed aside. She wanted me that night, and she still did. I’d wanted to convince her to give up this suicide mission she was on, but she had rebuffed my offer to her. In return, I’d punished her by showing her what she was missing out on as long as she intended to hold onto this stubbornness. Her earlier words only confirmed that she was not reconsidering my offer, or warning, as she’d soon see.

I didn’t respond to her attempt to get my goat. I instead turned and walked back to my chair. She let out a small huff, and I only turned around when something soft and silky hit my upper back. I looked at my feet where her robe now lay, then turned to see her dive gracefully into the pool.

A streak of moonlight cut through the center, illuminating one side of the pool while leaving the other cloaked in darkness. That one corner was of course the one she chose to swim to. I smirked and removed my shorts, now just as naked as she was. Since she had her back turned to me, she didn’t know that I had gotten undressed, too.

I didn’t even dive into the water, instead choosing to step into the pool from the shallow end, then swimming stealthily underwater toward her. When I was in grasp of her, I tugged on her leg and could hear her scream from above the water. If I could hear it, odds were that someone else might as well.

She kicked wildly as she fought her way back above the surface, and only when her foot got close to a specific region of my anatomy did I let her go so she could. I then joined her and when she turned and raised her hand to me, I grabbed it in time to stop

her from slapping me.

She raised her other and I growled out in warning. "I wouldn't advise that if I were you, Viviana."

She let out her own version of a growl, and I felt her relax. I still held onto her small wrist, especially once I backed her into the corner. Our bodies were now skin to skin, and I knew she could feel my cock twitch against her. Her breath was still coming in short pants, and this time when I looked into her eyes, there was definitely something burning inside of them.

I didn't give her a chance to say anything as I fused my mouth to hers. There were a few seconds of resistance, but as she'd come to realize, fighting me was futile. Teasing me, however, was not, and as she rubbed one of her upper thighs against me, I only got harder. We both knew what was going to happen soon. I was going to fuck her so completely that no one, including my father, would ever be able to claim her. Stefano might own her at the moment, but it was superficial at best. She didn't come for him, as I had realized early on. It was me that she was picturing when taking my father's wretched cock inside of her. Her desire was mine, and one day, her heart would be, too.

I deepened the kiss, plundering every inch of her mouth with my tongue before I started to nip on hers. Viviana's hands moved over me, and once or twice, her nails would nick a specific spot or two. Eventually, she wrapped them around my neck and surrendered so beautifully to me. Our tongues dueled with one another, neither willing to give up complete control, although I suspected she was partially there already.

I was Nazario Vaccaro, the only man feared more than my father in these parts. I ruled this area with enviable power, leaving a string of bodies in my wake. Some were ones that I had taken out due to necessity, and others were ones destroyed

simply because I could. The women were different, though. I did leave a trail of destruction where they were concerned, although it was more from broken hearts and wounded pride than anything else.

One of her hands slid lower and I groaned against her lips as her hand wrapped around my cock. Even though it felt good as hell to feel her stroking me, it was her mouth I wanted to feel there more. Pulling away, I didn't mince words as I told her as much. "I want your lips on me."

She smirked, drawing attention to those very lips I just spoke about. Her tongue darted out as she wrapped her hand around the back of my neck and drew me closer. She traced the seam of my lips with it, and when they parted, she slid one of her fingers between them instead.

"Show me how to please you, Naz."

I blinked, unable to believe that I was hearing the words coming out of her mouth. She'd gone from being confrontational on the lanai, to being so submissive at the moment. I looked into her eyes to see what type of game she was playing, but all I found was some remarkable form of sincerity swirling around inside of them.

I pulled her hand away from my mouth. "What kind of game are you playing?"

She smiled, but remained silent for a few long seconds before she spoke, "Why must I be playing with you. Are you really some toy able to be easily manipulated?"

I chuckled. "Hardly. You're crossing a dangerous line, not just with me, but with the man that you pretend to love. You—"

"I hate him," she seethed, returning to the woman I had recently come to know.

“And you hate me, too,” I replied, stating the obvious.

“I do,” she confirmed, before pressing her lips to my bearded chin. She kissed her way to my ear all while melding herself to me like a second skin. All it would take was for her to raise her leg just an inch and I would be able to push inside of her. “But I want you. When I was in Taormina, I would lay with your father, but it was your touch that I ached for.”

While I suspected there to be some truth to this, the fact that she was so openly admitting it had me wondering what angle she was working on now. I grabbed her by the throat and held her away from me. I was about to end this, but before I could even get the first word out, my father’s voice echoed in the darkness. I released her immediately, and she disappeared under the surface of the water just as Stefano rounded the corner.

Source Creation Date: July 23, 2025, 3:27 am

Stefano had come home earlier than expected, and I wished now that I would've waited to come down to the pool. I had just been so restless in that big house all by myself. I grew up in much more modest place, and I didn't have staff at my beck and call like Stefano did. As it was, I tended to see and speak to them more than the man who'd brought me here. I wasn't too torn up over that as I had spent years learning the ins and outs of his life, and I knew the man at this point better than he probably knew himself. Unfortunately, that research hadn't stopped at him. I also knew Nazario that well, and I was less able to avoid him.

He was my lover's son, and he would soon be an orphan once I took out his father. I should've been avoiding him, yet here I was rubbing against him like an animal in heat. Perhaps my jaded mind had turned me into one over the years. I knew with each one that passed, I grew more determined to finish what I'd started. Would tonight be the night I would need to do that?

Before I could even think about that, I had to hide to avoid being caught. There was no way I could get out of the pool and not be noticed, so I did what I had to do. Ducking under the surface of the water, I was now glad that I had perfected holding my breath for long lengths of time. I'd heard the rumors. Hell, everyone in Napoli had. Stefano, Nazario, and a lot of other criminals like them would resort to a number of different tactics to get what they wanted. I had been terrified of the tales of those water boarded, and because of those horrible stories, I made sure I would be able to outlast something like that if it ever came down to it. I certainly didn't plan to be the one begging for my life, but I was prepared in case my arrogance was misplaced.

I could hear the two voices, although I couldn't make out a syllable of what either were saying. I had to bide my time and as I reached around for his body to keep

myself steady, I rubbed up against something else. Inwardly, I smirked, then ran my hands up and down his shaft. He was so hard, and I hadn't been lying when I told him that I ached for him. It'd gotten so bad for me that I had to even imagine his voice and the very thing I held in the palm of my hands when I tried to make myself come.

"You're crossing a dangerous line," he'd just warned me minutes earlier.

If he only knew how true that was for not just me, but him as well. I wrapped one hand around the back of his legs while the other continued to stroke him. I pulled myself closer and once steady, I replaced my hand with my mouth, feeling his body tense up immediately.

I'd never gotten this far with him before, but I had a feeling that I knew what he liked. I researched him and his lifestyle enough, and it was one of the reasons why I wasn't scared of anything he could do to me sexually. The Vaccaro men had connections, but I did as well. Over the years, I'd cozied up to some bad men, and they had made me stronger. Under their hands, I was able to learn everything that I would need to in order to satisfy men with insatiable appetites like them. There was very little I wouldn't allow these men to do to me, and only because I knew they would pay for every hurt in the end.

The thrill of the chase was exhilarating. After Donna had been murdered and I returned to Napoli, I was but a shell of myself. There was a gaping hole in my chest, and I supposed it was where my heart once sat. I didn't love anyone or anything anymore. All I lived for was revenge, and soon, vengeance would be mine. Until that time...

I focused on sucking him into my mouth. It was a slight bit harder, considering I was underwater, but I could tell by the tension in his body that he felt it all. I also knew how much he was enjoying it because every time I went to pull away, he would push my head down. I wanted to see his eyes as I sucked him off. Gripping his balls in my

hand, I tried to massage them the best that I could from this vantage point, and I imagined the look on his face as he came down my throat. He'd want to gloat about having me on my knees, but we both knew deep down that I'd always have him by the balls as I did now.

Seconds later, I was yanked so hard from the water that I almost forgot to breathe when my head broke the surface. I choked once or twice, then rapidly sucked oxygen back into my air starved lungs. My throat burned and tears leaked pitifully down my cheeks. My breaths came in sharp, heavy pants until I finally got it under control. Once I did, I looked up into eyes so dark that it made the sky above seem lit.

"Viviana," he rasped, his voice sounding strained. Before I could answer, he fused his mouth to mine.

I wrapped my arms around his neck and didn't even offer the slightest bit of protest when he pinned my back against the tiled wall of the pool. Seconds later, more than just his tongue plunged inside of me and I arched closer to him. He drove into me like a man possessed, and I savored every moment of it.

Nazario bit at my tongue and lips and when he finally pulled away to suckle on my neck, I remembered his father. "Stefano?" I asked in a whisper.

He stopped and I almost thought that I had angered him at first. He tipped my chin up so that I was forced to look up at him. Our eyes met and the heat in his gaze nearly singed me. "He didn't see us."

I let out the breath that I hadn't realized I'd been holding, then tried to pull him back to me. If Stefano hadn't caught us, then why did he stop and why wouldn't he continue? "Fuck me," I pleaded, needing to take everything that had been promised to me and more.

“We can’t do this.” His words made my head fly back as if I had been struck.

“But I...”

“He intends to marry you.”

I shook my head vehemently at that. “Never,” I spat out. I didn’t even care if it was in revulsion or disgust. It was an honest reaction, and I realized that was what was so different between father and son. With one, I had to fake an attraction... fake my orgasms... meanwhile with the other, it was all genuine. “I won’t do it.”

There seemed to be a slight note of sympathy in his gaze, but I didn’t want that. What I needed was for Nazario to fuck me enough to make me forget the world I was in, and why. If anyone could stop time and give me an ounce of pleasure that wasn’t forced, coerced, or rehearsed, then it would be him.

“You must, so I have to let you begin planning the festivities until I can find the right moment to take him out myself.”

“I’m going to do it,” I told him, grabbing his face and holding it between my palms. “I deserve this, and you will stand back and let me or else...”

He smirked, and it was the dangerous kind that still managed to turn me on. This very man could easily push me back under the water and hold me there until I took my last breath, but he wouldn’t because he liked me, too. I could sense it in the way he looked at me, and looked over me. Most of all, I knew it because he couldn’t keep his hands off of me any more than I could keep mine off of him.

“You will do nothing of the sort or else I’ll tell him what you’ve been planning, and death will be something you beg for, instead of something you fear, Viviana. You wouldn’t get out when I told you to, and now you’ll pay for it.”

“Fine, I’ll stay, but I’ll never marry him.” I was resolute in that.

“And, that’s why we can’t do this anymore.”

With those words, he pushed me away and turned his back on me. “I don’t understand.” God, how I wished that I did.

“And, you never will,” was all he said as he stood still in the pool.

Tears continued to streak down my cheeks. What have I gone and gotten myself into? This felt like a goodbye, and I had missed everything before it. I didn’t love Nazario. I didn’t even like him. I just wanted him more than my next breath. Almost forgetting to take it, I let out a small cough, then gathered what was left of my dignity and started toward the other end of the pool.

Halfway there, I turned. “I hate you, Nazario Vaccaro. Maybe while I’m fucking your father later tonight, I will convince him to take you out. After he does, I can end him and erase the memories of both of you forever from my head.”

I then held my head high as I continued toward the steps. I barely made it to them before he grabbed me from behind. He was inside of me within seconds, and with one hand in front of my mouth, the other wrapped around my throat. He powered into me with long, forceful strokes. Each one was more punishing than the one before it. The intensity of what could only be described as a “hate fuck” nearly did me in. Nazario showed no mercy. He kept fucking me harder and faster until all I could do was come over and over again. Each orgasm wrung from me felt hollow, but they still flowed like the water sloshing around us. By the time he finally pulled out, my arms and legs gave out and I fell onto my knees.

Nazario took one look at me, then walked around me before exiting the pool. No more words were said, but there didn’t need to be. He had given me what I so badly

wanted, and proved to me that I might think I could forget about him, but I never would. If he hadn't been imprinted inside my head already, he would be now.

I waited until he grabbed his things and left before hurrying out of the pool myself. My legs were like jelly, but I had to pull myself together because Stefano was home and there was no telling what he would want to do to me. I physically ached inside from Nazario's rough fucking, and I had to prepare myself for at least the possibility of having to endure another, this time from someone whose dick I wanted to cut off and not suck dry.

Source Creation Date: July 23, 2025, 3:27 am

I had tossed and turned all night, unable to get what I'd done with Viviana out of my head. I'd allowed her to bait me into giving her exactly what she wanted, and now I would be the one to pay the price for it. I'd like to say that she wasn't worth it, but I'd be lying. I was truly and impossibly obsessed with this woman, and one I knew would take me out if ever given the chance. Her warning about me and my father rang in my head, but I was not worried about her. I'd let her win last night not because I was afraid, but because I needed to truly fuck her out of my system so I could focus on family business. Once I assassinated Stefano, I would have to act swiftly to claim control of the organization. I needed to make sure every soldier underneath me would understand that I was the one in charge now.

She was like a fucking drug in my bloodstream, and one I couldn't easily work out with time. Back when I could've had her in any way that I now wanted her, I would've broken her. Now, she was trying her damndest to break me. Back then, she was meek and quiet, but not in the cunning sort of way. She was a bookworm and introverted. Now, she was a voyeur and vixen, a siren whose call I couldn't even lie and say that I was completely immune to. Viviana still possessed a sense of quiet about her, but it was because she was plotting, and I knew on who and why. She was also so fucking beautiful and seductive that my dick stayed hard just thinking about her. In fact, I had stroked myself to a few more orgasms throughout the night as I thought about her.

"We can't do this," I'd told her moments before succumbing to her verbal jabs. Psychological fucking warfare was what it was. "Cazzo," I cursed as I sat upright in bed.

I ran my hands through my curly hair, and scowled. I kept saying that I was the one in

control, but I had done little to back those assertions up. I would need to leave to clear my head, and once I returned, I would need to play the role of the dutiful son as my father planned his wedding to the woman I nearly fucked unconscious the night before right under his nose.

I got up and after a quick shower, I threw on some jeans and a t-shirt, before grabbing my motorcycle helmet and keys. I had a sleet of vehicles at my disposal, but when I wanted to be alone with nothing more than my thoughts to haunt me, I would choose one of my bikes. I walked over to my Ninja H2R from Kawasaki, and saw my reflection as I looked down onto the silver paint. My expression was equal parts annoyance and frustration, and I knew both would be expelled, courtesy of a ride down the Italian countryside.

I got onto the bike and put the keys into the ignition. I had been riding for many years, especially once I found out what kind of man my father truly was. At first, I'd been appalled, but over the years, I had learned to live with it while knowing it wouldn't be permanent. One day, he'd get his comeuppance and he'd burn in Hell for eternity which was exactly where he belonged. Until that day arrived though, he'd be buried balls deep inside a woman that hated him almost as much as I did. Stefano would have her hot, tight sheath wrapped around his cock as he thrust into her. If he wasn't fucking one of her delectable holes, he'd get to feel those lush lips instead.

"Cazzo!" I growled aloud.

She'd been a fucking water nymph the night before. Since I saw her that night at the club on my father's arm, I had thought of little else besides fucking her in every way possible. Amongst all those twisted fantasies, I had nearly driven myself mad picturing that sassy mouth of hers on me. It'd felt so fucking good once I did. In fact, as my father talked about marrying her soon, she was choking on my dick and loving every second of it. Maybe, I'd even have her once she was officially a Vaccaro.

I chuckled at that notion, not because it was far-fetched, but rather because she would rather die than carry our name. It held weight and importance to me, but to Viviana, it'd be a noose around her dainty fucking neck. Of course, I knew what kind of depraved things my father was into and I wouldn't be surprised to learn that she was into those same things. I knew he'd taken her to his chambers and she often bore the temporary welts from his rough play, and that only made me want her more. Stefano might have her body, but it was hollow at best. I controlled her orgasms, holding her pain and pleasure in the palm of my hands. She could submit to my father, but he'd never make her come for him like she had for me.

"But I want you... I would lay with your father, but it was your touch that I ached for..."

Her words had me shifting into highest gear as I sped down the street. The bike was supercharged and might be my vessel of destruction one day, but I refused to die until the old man went before me. I needed to either spit or piss on his grave, and I would decide which one as soon as he was dead.

"I'm going to take Viviana as my bride," he'd told me.

"Are you serious?" I'd asked.

"She's earned it, and unless I'm given some reason to doubt that, she will be my wife," had been his answer.

I didn't even want to think about what she'd had to do to earn that title, that so many others before her had tried and failed to obtain. It would've been amusing knowing that she hated him as much as I did so he'd essentially been had, but I couldn't even shake her, and I didn't know why. All I wanted was to run this organization and make Stefano pay for past regressions at the same time. I sure as hell didn't need to involve myself in the head of someone so twisted that they lay in bed with a man each night

only to plot his demise, likely while they were doing the act.

She was so fucking responsive, and had I not been laser focused on power, I might've dragged her back into my bed so that I could make her come. "Cazzo!"

The things I could do that body of hers would make even the most adventurous of females blush, or cower as some have done in the past for much less. I could make her forget this scheme she was running, along with her name as she screamed the roof right off the damn building. She obviously liked it rough, and I could manhandle her so sinfully that she would beg for more, and I'd be more than happy to oblige her. The trouble with Viviana outside of the fact that she'd already gotten in my way more than once was that she'd be nothing more than a broken shell once revenge had been served. If I couldn't afford the distraction of her at her best, I sure as hell couldn't when she was at her worst. I desired power and control, and she couldn't help me achieve them. As far as I was concerned, she was more trouble than she was worth, so I'd have to do better at resisting her in the future. I couldn't fuck her as I had the night before in the pool and still keep her at arm's length. It felt too damn good inside of her. Now, I know how Adam must've felt when it came to Eve. The only differences between them and us was that we were sinners to the core, and nothing would change that.

"It'll be a wedding befitting a queen," my father had gone on to say as he elaborated. "And, you'll be a big part of it. In fact, I want you to give her to me."

"Give her to you?" I'd asked, confused and wondering if he had caught on to her presence.

"She has no family, Figlio. You'll walk her down the aisle and give her to me."

I had smirked, fully knowing that he had something coming, but it wouldn't be that woman. She was venomous, and he had not the slightest idea of her toxicity. I did,

and she'd be like a black widow spider on their wedding night if they made it that far.

I had agreed and left it at that. He then mentioned going to find her, and I went back to enjoying the mouth wrapped around my cock. If this farce of a marriage actually happened, perhaps I would make use of her again. By then, she would've had ample opportunity to take him out and if she hadn't already, I'd surmise it was because she liked the lifestyle that he afforded her. She'd then be a squillo for me, and I'd make her scream night after night, fully knowing that I would be plunging a stake into the heart of a man who'd torn mine out time and time again.

I decided at that point to head back to the estate. The sky was turning dark and I could tell that a storm was approaching. It hadn't been that long since a powerful one had rocked the entire city. The wind and rain caused widespread damage and driving along the cliffside on a bike wasn't wise. One didn't get and stay in power by being stupid. My father might be testing that theory now, but for all I know, he might be very well aware of the snake he was lying in bed with night after night and toying with her right back.

I shook my head, then reversed my course. One of the things that made my motorcycle illegal was the fact that it had no mirrors or headlights. I never followed the rules in anything else, so it would come as no surprise to anyone that I wasn't now. I liked danger. I lived for it. The adrenaline rush enough was more fuel to my fire. The only thing better than escaping death was sex, and even then, I barely played by the rules. I made them, and broke them often. Point in case was the night before.

I sped back as fast as the supercharged bike would take me, winding around the sharp curves and steep incline with ease. The feeling of exhilaration I felt each time was nothing short of magic, and try as he may, Stefano hadn't made me forget about those childhood days when I was carefree. They might be over and done with, but they would never be completely forgotten. A loud boom of thunder roared over the sound of the bike and I accelerated my speed and managed to make it back to the estate

before the first fat drop of rain fell from the sky.

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The thunder continued to boom overhead long after the sky had opened up. Thankfully, I had been inside, but it didn't matter. From any spot in this massive house, I could see the lightning streaking across the dark canvas. I'd always been scared of storms since I had been little, and that fear had only grown when I took up with those Sicilian mafia men who'd trained me over the years to get me into the position that I was in right now. I'd been made to endure so many different things over that time, but I had done it for the opportunity now presenting itself. Those men I had trusted inexplicably, and I was forever indebted to them. After all, they were the ones to show me the inner strength that I possessed, and trying my best to channel it, I left the empty bedroom and went downstairs.

I could try to push past the fear, but deep inside, I was still the same scared child I had once been when it came to storms. I'd been in Napoli during the last one, and I just prayed to any God out there that he would let me survive long enough to see this through. After all, I would have no life once I took out Stefano, so these were essentially my last days anyway. I no longer had any hopes of a future, but I would've accomplished what I set out to do before my death. Donna's murder would be avenged, and the one solely responsible would burn in Hell right alongside me. She'd be able to finally rest in peace while I would be in a nightmare of my own making.

Another loud crack of thunder and burst of light interrupted my thoughts. I pulled my robe together, then knew where I needed to go. If anything, it was the safest place in the house. I was alone, and knew I would be for some time. Nazario had left an hour ago, and his father was at the club. Neither would venture out on these streets in the midst of a monster storm, so I was alone with the estate staff which seemed commonplace these days. Hurrying to the wine cellar, I closed the door behind me

before fumbling for the light switch.

“You’ve got to be fucking kidding me,” I cursed aloud as the dank space filled with light only to be plunged back into darkness mere seconds later when the bulb had blown.

I had forgotten my cellphone in my haste and not wanting to go back upstairs for it, I decided to just grab the first bottle of wine I could get my hands on, the hell with the kind. That task wasn’t hard, and I had even located an opener for it. Once the cork was released, I brought the bottle to my mouth and took a large swallow.

“Red. Thank the heavens,” I murmured before taking another swig.

The darkness didn’t bother me because for several years, I’d been entranced in it literally as I trained to become the cold blooded killer I would soon be. Those days and nights were some of the hardest of my life, but I would think about Donna and her lifeless body on that cold ground and it’d remind me of why I was here and what I would soon become.

“Revenge will be mine.” I had come so far and did far worse than allow others to torture me all so I could miss the anticlimactic moment that would be forthcoming soon. Nazario wanted me to leave, but I couldn’t. I wouldn’t.

A sound jolted me out of my thoughts, and I looked up to see the door open. Not sure if maybe Stefano had come home after all, I was about to rise until the shadow appeared in the center of the light. It was the very man I had just been thinking about. How predictable.

I glanced up and watched him look around. His eyes eventually made their way to me and I smirked when his gaze locked in on mine. “Here for the party?”

His brow furrowed, but he stepped inside anyway. The door closed behind him with a resounding click and a shiver of apprehension passed over me. We were cloaked in darkness once again, only this time it was with a man I couldn't decide from one minute to the next if I wanted to kill or fuck. Sometimes, I wanted to do both.

I continued to tremble as I remembered what we had done the night before. I'd baited him only to be taken so roughly that I could still feel his possession a day later. And my traitorous body reminded me of it. Seconds later, his scent enveloped me, and I couldn't help but breathe him in. It was a mixture of soap and musk, with some exotic notes of cedarwood mixed in. The way he had fucked me with such force and anger was more of a turn on than it should've been. I needed to forget all of that, however, because he was right about one thing.

"What's that," he told me as he took a seat beside me.

I hadn't even realized I had spoken aloud. "You were right about us. We mustn't ever do what we did last night."

There. I had said it, even though I didn't even believe the words coming out of my mouth. I then flinched when his hand traveled up my bare leg. There was an electricity in his touch that his father lacked, and I briefly wondered if it was only present due to our combined hate for Stefano. I'd always heard like father, like son, and while there were some similarities between the men, there were also too many differences which overshadowed those other things completely.

"It's not all that I'm right about," he finally said.

Somehow, the gravelly tone of his voice in the pitch black made every word spoken more ominous. All those years that I'd researched Stefano, I had also done the same for his only heir. I'd also remember his expression and demeanor on that New York City street that night and I couldn't help but convince myself that he hadn't been the

one to end Donna's life. If anything, he was trying to treat her lifeless corpse with dignity, which I could respect.

"Are we back to that again?" I asked.

I picked up the bottle and took another swig. The wine was amazing, and I knew Stefano had a vineyard in the countryside. It was one of the places he took me during the early parts of our courtship. It'd been so hard to not castrate him where he stood as he wrapped his arm around me and pointed out the grapes that would one day make wine like the bottle I was drinking. It'd also been the first time that he had kissed me. I'd prepared for the moment, but it didn't make it easier. Only remembering my end goal allowed me to lay in bed with him night after night ever since, and only thoughts of the man beside me made me come while doing so. It was such a tangled web that I weaved, but I was doing what needed to be done.

"It wasn't supposed to have been this way, you know." I don't know why I even voiced that aloud, but his hand stopped midway up my thigh.

"What were you supposed to be doing?" he finally asked.

I let out a small sigh, then decided I might as well tell him. It wasn't as if anything would change by doing so. "I was supposed to be a doctor. I wanted to heal people."

"Yet now, you want to take them out instead?" His question was followed up by a chuckle, and even that had goosebumps raising on my arm.

"Shit happens," I said, then decided I'd had enough of this conversation. After setting the wine down, I scrambled to my feet and placed my hands out in front of me as feelers until I reached the door. I grabbed the handle, but it wouldn't budge. "What the hell?"

“We must’ve lost power in the house and—”

“What are you saying?” I had an idea, but I was hoping that I was wrong.

“I’m saying that the door is controlled with a pin pad outside that requires electricity. It looks like we’re stuck in here together.”

This couldn’t be fucking happening. I pressed my forehead against the door, then lightly began to hit it against the hard wood. I stayed like that for several seconds before spinning around. I couldn’t see anything in front of me. I tried my best to get back to where I had been, but I couldn’t find my way. I’d only been down here a few times, but there’d always been light.

I assumed that all my bumbling around had caught Nazario’s attention because a pair of strong arms wrapped around me. I settled immediately, even though I knew that he could so easily take me out where we stood if he so wanted. At the moment, he seemed more interested in pinching my nipples through my robe. They hardened at his touch, and that familiar ache returned. It was almost comical that the son of my enemy was the only one that could set my body ablaze. Not Stefano, or any of those other men I trained with that took me with such ruthless voracity all in preparation for times like this. They’d made me come, most likely because of the trust factor that I had with them, and I realized in that moment that I trusted this man currently biting along my collarbone as well.

I leaned back against him, then wrapped one arm around the back of his neck. His hands moved stealthily, parting my robe so he could touch my aching breasts with no silk barrier in the way. I wanted and needed more, and as if he realized that, Nazario dragged one hand down to my panties which were more a flimsy piece of lace than anything else. His fingers teased me by dipping beneath the waistband of them, but he never touched me where I needed him to. The throbbing in my core grew more insistent.

“I beg you,” I pleaded, although I didn’t know for what.

“You’re begging me for what?” he asked as he licked along the throbbing pulse point in my neck. “Tell me what you want, Viviana.”

A shiver wracked me as he said my name. I loved the way it slipped so easily off of his tongue. “I want your head between my legs.”

He froze in that moment, but I wasn’t worried that I had been too blunt. I didn’t need light in this dark cellar to confirm that he was smirking, because I knew and had studied him enough to know that he was. When he removed his hands from me, I almost thought I had erred in my earlier thinking. Thankfully, he’d only released me so that he could spin me around. Seconds later, he lifted me up and pinned me against the wall. There was nothing else to hold onto, so I rested my hands on the top of his head.

His hair was so curly, and it made the perfect thing to hold onto when he used his hands to push my panties off to one side. The moment his tongue touched me, I let out a small cry. “Sì.”

My head lolled from one side to the other as his wicked tongue and mouth teased me. He wasn’t doing exactly what I wanted and as the seconds turned to minutes, my own frustration started to set in. Stefano was a big proponent of making me wait for orgasms, and I realized his son had perfected that art even better than he had. The one thing I had learned over the years was that life was short, so I wanted what I wanted, when I wanted it. I wasn’t going to beg Nazario any more, even though I knew he probably wanted me to.

Finally, I pushed at his head and was able to eventually wriggle back down the wall. I sat in that spot and cursed him inwardly. I’d need to remember the feel of his mouth on me and get myself off once we were able to get out of this damned hole.

“You’re a bastard,” I told him when he sat down beside me. “Maybe, I’ll kill you along with your father.”

“Many have tried and failed,” he retorted, and I let out a huff.

“Why do you hate me so much?” I hadn’t meant to ask it, but since it was out, I waited for his answer.

“I don’t hate you, but I do hate everything that you represent.”

My brows furrowed at that. “And that is?”

He took my hand and cupped it between his. “I want you too fucking much.”

“I don’t understand.” Well, I did, but I didn’t.

“Ever since you walked back into my life, all I can do is think about the ways that I want to ruin you. You’d break so beautifully, but then again, you already have for him.”

I didn’t miss the way he referenced his father with such disgust in his tone. His other words echoed in my head, and I knew that he would love to break me. Men like him, and his father, liked their women subservient and submissive. With Stefano, I played that role, and while I could with Nazario too, I knew it was a much deadlier game because he could probably reach parts of me that my friends in Sicily and his father couldn’t.

I’d had everything done to me in the name of revenge. I wore battle scars from those nights, and carried the mental reminders in my head. I’d never taken the kiss of a whip... the cut of a blade... or the psychological warfare others inflicted on me in the name of pleasure. I did get off, but it had never been the intention and rather just an

expected result.

“You’re right. I’m already broken,” I finally said. “And we both know who’s responsible for that.”

“You’re fractured, but not truly broken beyond repair. If you continue to play this deadly game, you will be, though.” I didn’t need his warning, and pushing away from the wall, I pulled my robe back together and tied the belt back around me. “Where are you going?” he asked when I stood up.

“I’m not having this conversation with you again. Just because you tickled my clit with your fucking tongue doesn’t mean that I will fall back, so you can do something that you claim to want to do yourself, but have had years to do and haven’t.”

I started walking away, even though I had no idea where I was going. I heard him rise to his feet and seconds later, I was pushed face first against the cold, stone wall. “I’ve been waiting for the right time. There’s a—”

“The right time,” I responded with sarcasm, “Just go on and admit that you’re not man enough to do the job. Afterward, you can step aside and let someone who is do it.”

That earned me a growl, and when Nazario wrapped his hand around my neck, I briefly wondered if I was pushing him too far. The tightening of his fingers around my throat made my panties get wetter. I used to be terrified of things like this, but in working with those that I trusted, I had learned to enjoy it. In fact, I also fucking craved it. Pain was an emotion, and one of the only ones that made me feel alive. Everything in my world revolved around it, so when he slipped his other hand into my panties, I didn’t even flinch.

I also didn’t moan or cry out when he pinched the very clit I mentioned earlier. He

rolled it between his fingertips and alternated between squeezing and rubbing it. My knees were growing weak, yet I wouldn't allow him to see how easily he affected me. Any touch of his was done with the sole purpose of manipulating me into doing what he wanted. I wouldn't cave. I couldn't.

And as if on cue, he spoke, "I will put you up somewhere and fuck you to your heart's content as long as you leave this house tonight. Do not marry my father. Don't even—"

I used my elbow to muscle my way away from him. I caught him by surprise enough that he released my neck from his grasp and I quickly rubbed out the soreness in it. I was glaring, not that he could see. "I'll never leave until I've done what I've come here to do."

"You're a goddamned fool," he cursed, and I glared harder. I didn't give a damn what he thought about me.

"You want me gone so badly. Why?" I didn't think he would respond, so I wasn't holding my breath.

"I need to be the one to take him out. What would it look like for you to do it? The price on your head would be astronomical. You wouldn't live a day after carrying out your vengeance. Can't you see that I'm only looking out for—"

"I don't need you to look out for me. I don't need your protection or concern. Do I give a damn if I die? No! Just know that I won't be the first one to succumb."

I was livid, and physically shaking. Nazario didn't understand how important this was to me. He couldn't. From what I had learned about him, there were things that mattered, but friends, family, and women were not on that list.

“Cazzo!” His tone was short and clipped. “Do you think that you’re the only one that he’d scorned?” I went to answer, but he started talking so quickly that I closed my mouth instead. “I once had a heart. A soul, too. I lost it all the last year of school when Stefano took the only thing that mattered to me, and broke her into pieces.”

“I don’t believe you,” I stated. He’d likely say anything to try to appeal to me.

“I loved her, or at least I think that I did. I tried to keep our relationship secret because I knew the type of man that my father was. It wasn’t enough. Her father owed a debt and turned her over to him as repayment. He drugged and raped her, then sent her away where she was later killed by animals even worse than him.”

I gasped, the sound much louder than intended in the enclosed space. “Did you try to help her?”

“How could I? It’d happened before I arrived. The bastard recorded the entire thing and made me watch. The things he does with you... Let’s just say that not everyone else is so willing to submit.”

“D-Donna,” I cried out.

“He’d been in town on business and had his local crew round up a few girls. Stefano likes them young, but bordering on legal. She tried to fight him off, but it’d been too little too late. He was enraged and instead of selling her off to others, he killed her. Dead women can’t talk so his secrets remain safe.”

“No,” I cried out, the truth even more heinous than I had ever imagined. I knew Stefano Vaccaro was a monster, but I had no idea of how much of one. To think that I was willingly allowing this man to lay a single finger on me had me nauseous. I had to end him tonight. My mind started to conjure up past scenes and I allowed the tears to fall as I remembered every ounce of pain that he inflicted on me, and how I would

beg for more. It'd all been a mission, and with each second longer that Stefano was allowed to breathe, it was a second longer than he deserved. "Don't you see? I have to do this now for sure."

"No!" The word cracked in the air like a whip, and I flinched as if waiting for the blistering strike from a single tail. "I believe that he also abused my mother before she was murdered. In fact, I have it on good authority that he was behind it all."

I read what had happened to her. She'd been killed by a rival strike, or had it been intentional. "Do you think he turned her over to them?"

Nazario chuckled. "Even worse. I have proof that he killed her himself and set them up for it, like he did others for Donna's death. And for Kristalina."

I remembered that name and now thinking about it, I did recall that he was very close to her. Visions of the two of them sitting together, or standing by one another's lockers came flashing back. I also remember that she went home one day and was never seen at school again. I wanted to feel bad for Nazario, but I knew firsthand that he was no saint.

"Did Stefano see us last night?"

"No, but one of these nights, he will. He will watch me break his wife, and only then will he know how sour the taste of betrayal really is when you're on the receiving end of it."

"You're fucking crazy. I'm not marrying..." And before I could get the rest of my thoughts out, the lights flickered on and I raced to the door. Tonight, Stefano would die, and this nightmare would be over.

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I had gone upstairs and locked the bedroom door behind me. If Nazario really wanted to get to me, I knew he'd tear the door off of its hinges. He likely assumed I was crying like a girl, but he'd be wrong. The first thing that I did upon entering the room that caused bile to rise in my throat was to get my most prized blade out from the hidden compartment of my suitcase, and place it under the pillow. After, I also got out the syringe which contained something that would neutralize Stefano long enough for me to make him suffer, and that I planned to do. I then sent a text message to him, pretending to be concerned about him with the storm. He replied back that he was on his way home, so I spent the rest of my time getting the shower prepared.

I knew he would be tempted to join me, so I placed the small syringe out of eyesight, and leisurely began to shampoo my hair. The fragrant scent of roses in bloom filled the steam filled capsule and I closed my eyes. Most people, even when planning out a murder, were rarely this calm, but I had been waiting for this day for an entire decade. I finished with my hair and had just clipped it atop my head when the door to the bathroom opened.

My eyes zeroed in on Stefano who was staring at me with such lust in his eyes. They were as dark as his soul, and one which was about to take a trip south to hell where he belonged. Kristalina. Donna. All of the others without names or voices played like some sick slideshow in my head. He was about to die, and I would finally have fulfilled what turned out to be my life's purpose.

Ignoring him, I turned and picked up the bar of soap. I began to run it over my breasts and down my belly. He loved my body, often telling me in both Italian and English how much. When the door opened, I wasn't surprised as this was exactly what I expected him to do. He was playing into my hands. Placing the soap back onto its

small dish, I made sure to cover the syringe.

“I’ve missed you,” he rasped as he pulled me against his naked body. His cock was long and proud, bobbing between us.

“I’ve missed you, too,” I lied. His head lowered to my neck and I let out one of those soft feminine sighs that he liked so much, and moaned when his roaming fingers found the same area that Nazario had licked, bit, and pinched a half-hour earlier. Remembering how hot I’d been for him, I couldn’t hold that feeling long enough. Stefano was none the wiser, however, and he continued to kiss me while murmuring things to me in Italian.

When he jerked one of my legs up and thrust inside of me, I reached for the syringe. I managed to get it into my hand without accidentally pricking myself or alerting him to my actions. Stefano drove into me, his erratic but strong thrusts meant to mark me. So many others had been subjected to him, and this, but I would make sure that no one else ever would.

Raising the syringe, I brought it down on his ass and stabbed him with it. A sound unlike any other that I’d ever heard from him echoed in the small space. It would only take seconds for the ketamine and whatever else was added to take effect. He reached back and jerked it from him, but before he could do anything else, Stefano slumped against me, nearly knocking me over in the process.

I was able to step around him, and pick up the evidence. I tossed the syringe into the bathroom sink, then I draped a bathrobe around me. I went into the bedroom and pulled the chair from his desk in the corner, then gathered up enough ties to firmly bind him in place. When I returned to the bathroom, he was awake, but unable to move. I turned off the water, and not even bothering to dry him off, I used all of my strength to drag him across the tiled travertine floor and into the bedroom.

I was nearly exhausted by the time that I got him bound to the chair. His pupils were dilated, but his wide eyes were fully open. I slapped him in that moment, and they turned toward me. I knew he was confused, and it was highly arousing to see his fear, too. “Mio signore,” I said, mocking the title of Lord that he liked for me to call him.

He tried to speak, but the garbled sound was incoherent. I smirked as I continued to circle around him. I wanted to kill him when he could move, and as fast acting as these sedatives were, they’d only last for so long, and once he regained feeling in all extremities, I would end him and this nightmare once and for all. While I waited for that to happen, I discarded the robe and put on a set of lingerie. I made sure to wear red because I knew how much he loved that color on me. Memories of my past with him came rushing back, but I pushed them away. Every reaction of mine had been forced, and I didn’t need a trip down memory lane to remember how much he liked to fuck me. I pulled the clip out of my hair and proceeded to brush and dry it before moving back over to him.

I retrieved my blade from under the pillow and slapped the blunt end against his cheek. I did it a few times before he spat out a curse that had me smiling. I didn’t care that he thought I was a bitch. He was about to see just how much of one I could be.

“Is that any way to speak to your fiancée?” I hadn’t agreed to become anything with him, but I knew what his intentions had been.

“I’ll never marry you now,” he swore and the vehemence in his voice would’ve been comical if I had given a damn about what he had to say. “Untie me and I might let you live, though.”

“Tsk, ts,” I chided. “I think that I’m the one in control now.”

I moved in front of him and because I had bound him to the chair, he was unable to do anything to stop me from climbing onto his lap. Even now, he was still so hard.

That must be a Vaccaro male thing. I almost wanted to tell him as much, but I had other things to say first. Maybe, I would tell him how thoughts of his only son would get me off whenever I was with him. It'd be a fitting way to send him off to the afterlife.

“I used to like when you tied me up,” I told him, and he looked at me with confusion, especially when I dragged the sharp tip of the knife down his bare chest. “When you would drag your blade against my skin, I would imagine that the tables were turned, and it was you wondering whether your next breath would be your last while having to pretend to enjoy it.”

He didn't say anything until I grabbed his cock with my free hand. “Stop! I'll give you whatever you want.”

I let out a soft giggle. “If only it was that easy.” I brought the knife to his cock and having to resist actually cutting it off for now, I instead slit him nearly from base to tip. The sound he made had me smiling wider. I then brought the bloody blade back to his chest and using the dull side, I pressed it against his heart. “Is this why you did it?”

“Did what?” he asked between groans. His breath was coming in shallow pants and I just hoped that he didn't hyperventilate to death before I got to say everything that I had to say, then slit his throat.

“Those women. All the ones who wouldn't let you touch them. Women like Donna Rossi.” At the sound of her name, I heard his sharp intake of breath. I knew if nothing else, Stefano would remember the hell that her father had inflicted on criminal organizations like his in the aftermath of her death. “You ended her life and now, I'm here to end yours.”

I hopped off of him and circled around the chair. Stefano was silent for one of the

first times since I had met him, and I felt a twinge of regret that he wasn't begging for his life like others did at his hands. I heard his chuckle, then looked up to see why. In the doorway, Nazario stood with a gun in his hand.

"This game is over, Bellissima," he told me, the endearment more scathing now than anything else. "Take her out, figlio."

Nazario looked between his father and me, and I couldn't quite make out his intentions. I knew that he said he hated his father and wanted him dead, but the moment he pointed the gun at me, I began to rethink that. My hand began shaking so badly that the knife fell from it, but thankfully it landed on Stefano's shoulder. The small nick had blood rushing to the surface, and he roared out in pain.

"Kill her, Nazario. Do it now!" Stefano ordered.

I looked up at his son who was now smirking, silently. I grabbed the knife and was about to get done what I had planned before the son fulfilled his father's dying wish. Before I could, however, Nazario quickly turned the gun on his father.

A loud bang pierced the silence and seconds later, Stefano's head fell forward but not before a spray of his blood splashed onto me. The knife I'd been holding clattered to the floor and I fell to my knees. Blood pooled from the wound in Stefano's head and quickly gathered into a puddle below me. It was over. A sense of relief should've filled me, but Nazario had done the one thing I wanted to do more than anything else. He'd taken the kill shot and sent this bastard to hell. All of those years of training and the months I'd spent cozying up to a killer had been for nothing.

I looked up at Nazario and found enough strength to scramble onto my feet. He was still standing in the doorway. He had plenty of opportunity to shoot me, yet so far was declining to do so. It didn't matter whether he did or not because I wanted to kill him. I grabbed the blade still covered in his father's blood and lunged toward him.

Something gripped me just as another shot rang out, and this one had me falling to the floor. My head bounced off the travertine and I felt the warmth of my own blood as it seeped from my wound. Everything ached, and as I lay there beside my arch enemy, both of us now stricken at the hand of my nemesis. I tried to glance up at him, but my eyes grew heavy as everything faded to black. If this was the end, I'd have to take solace in knowing that my own death hadn't been for naught.

Source Creation Date: July 23, 2025, 3:27 am

It had been two weeks since the death of my father, and after the applicable mourning period, I was ready to emerge as leader of the family. There was no opposition, not that I expected there would be any, but one never knew. Just like Leonardo Di Salva, there were always loyal soldiers of my father that might try to take his place. So far, none had emerged. After all, Stefano was dead and gone and because of me. Word traveled fast, and the Camorra would see that there was a new leader of this independent family.

I had planned a party and I knew it was already in full swing. I always liked to make an entrance, and I would definitely do that tonight. I looked over at the dark-haired woman beside me. She was fucking gorgeous, and all mine. “Are you ready to make a proper entrance, Viviana?”

She smiled up at me. Her lips were the same candy apple red shade that drove me wild in the beginning, and they matched her long nails to perfection. Her dark ebony locks had been straightened and she was in the tightest black dress I had ever seen. Her curves were on full display, as was the large rock on her finger.

“I’m ready when you are,” she answered.

“You’re being very amicable tonight,” I said in observation. She’d been fit to be tied when she came to and realized that she hadn’t gotten to kill my father after all. I had thought the first shot ended Stefano, but when he grabbed Viviana, I put another bullet between his eyes. She’d fallen to the floor and hit her head so hard that it had knocked her out. Plenty of ice and an hour later, and she returned to the land of the living.

That night, she railed at me for taking her mission from her, even though I had always told her that she wouldn't be the one to take him out. She'd struck me... threatened me... and when she realized her attempts were futile, she came so fucking beautifully for me. I'd kept her underneath me for much of the next few days.

"You're mine," I told her as I leaned in and nibbled on her ear.

She loved when I called her mine, even though sometimes I wondered if it was joy or some sort of planned retribution that made her so happy. Tonight, I wouldn't worry about it because she was about to walk out into Camorra society on my arm. I not only took my father's life and organization, I also took his queen, and this would serve as a reminder that Nazario Vaccaro was in charge.

"I'm all yours," she murmured before leaning in to brush her lips against mine.

I grabbed the back of her head, then held her prisoner as I thrust my tongue into her mouth. She surrendered to me so genuinely, but I knew this wasn't a sign to come. She still was just as much of a venomous hellcat as she'd always been to me before, but she was behaving quite nicely tonight. I'd have to reward her later for it.

Our tongues danced in rhythm with one another, and I'd never tire of having her this close to me. I'd never not desire her, and that would never change. We fucked like a couple in love, but neither trusted the other completely. She'd fooled someone so infallible as my father, and I wouldn't put anything past her when it came to me. I'd ruined her purpose in life, and although I had given her a new one, I still slept with one eye open.

I kissed her for a few more seconds before pulling away. She traced her now swollen bottom lip with her tongue, and I was tempted to put that hot mouth to use. "Stop looking at me like that or else you'll make your debut with my cock in your mouth."

Her eyes twinkled and that smirk of hers that I had come to know, returned, and she

gave me a small shrug, then returned to the vanity to touch up the lipstick of hers that I had smeared. When she turned back around, she looked completely untouched which only made me harder. Life with her was definitely different, but it wasn't bad. She challenged me... invigorated me... and even if one day she decided to destroy me, I realized it would be one hell of a ride. I was then reminded of a quote I had read somewhere. It mentioned something about feeling like Heaven when flirting like Hell, and as Viviana took my hand, I realized that described us perfectly. I gave her hand a squeeze, then walked alongside her as we entered the stage area of the club. We're Nazario Vaccaro and Viviana Spataro, and this is the beginning of the rest of our lives. It could also be the end, and when our presence was detected, I looked down at my soon-to-be bride, and grinned. Only time would tell which it would be.

The extended version is coming Fall 2022.